The education of resettled young Syrian refugees in England and the figured world of mobility

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To the young people I was honoured to meet,
and to the millions of mobile people,
seeking solace away from the familiar.

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List of Abbreviations:

ARAP	Afghan Relocation Assistance Policy
EAL	English as an Additional Language
ESD	Education for Sustainability
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
EU	European Union
HE	Higher Education
ICEM	Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
KRI	Kurdish Region of Iraq
MIPEX	Migrant Integration Policy Index
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
REIP	Refugee Education Integration Policy
RO	Resettlement Officer
SDF	Syrian Democratic Forces
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
US	United States
VPRS	Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme
WHO	World Health Organisation
WW ll	World War 2

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Abstract

Refugee education has yet to provide adequate provisions for quality education for refugees. This thesis seeks to highlight the lived experiences of young, resettled refugees to challenge the taken for granted assumptions on refugee youth. Drawing on a longitudinal qualitative study with young people resettled via the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS), this study shows how they engage with the sociocultural constructs in education and their communities.

Using the figured worlds theory (Holland et al, 1998), the research examines the identity production of resettled, young Syrians in England within the figured world of mobility, relying on the mobility approach (Nail, 2015) to understand their migration journey and its influence on their identity and education.

As young Syrians are forced to migrate, they soon recognise the privilege of the non-mobile and the 'burden' bestowed upon them. The term 'burdened mobility' is introduced to represent the un-privilege of the mobile population. This research also portrays the capacity of young people to create avenues of change by figuring their desired position to re-imagine their future self amid the altered physical and emotional spaces. The findings discuss the living spaces of the young people pre- and post-resettlement, the significance of social connections and the diverse scope of their educational experiences. It dives into their stories to uncover legal artefacts of the refugee status, the home as family artefact, food as hospitality artefact to nurture social bonds.

The research provides thought-provoking revelations on challenging our assumptions that are conditioned by non-mobility for what is deemed ordinary and how we foster and sustain belonging. This thesis also advocates for youths' education to be unbound by schools harnessing the collective capacities within communities to imagine an education that traverse the physical space and standardised notion of measuring in education.

In discussing the implication of the research, the thesis advocates for establishing a network for reciprocity for those engaging in research with forced migrants. This is a necessity as the power imbalance continues to grow between researchers and those involved in the research particularly in the field of forced migration.

Preface

In this section, I reflect on my positionality. Conducting this research began as a token of my responsibility towards forced migrants, as I was exiled from Syria, the country I called home. Throughout the research, I struggled with my position as both a researcher and Syrian refugee, and with my privilege that granted me the opportunity to undertake this journey. For that, I put forward my personal reflections as a declaration of my continuous awareness of my identity which drove my pursuit to research this topic. This Preface also discusses issues related to terminology in the context of forced migration. Terminology matters, and I acknowledge that there are challenges around the terminology used in migration research. I therefore accept that my chosen labels, terms and descriptions might not be well received by all migrants.

Personal reflections

In many ways, this research is personal. I am Syrian and was recently naturalised British after a lengthy relationship with the Home Office. When my journey in the UK began, I was an international student, then an asylum seeker until I was a recognised refugee. I am now a British citizen. I am a woman with no apparent ties to the religion into which I was born, and as many have told me over the years, I 'don't look Syrian'. Perhaps to be Syrian is to possess some features that I was not aware of and am not still. The first time I came to England was on an undergraduate student visa in 2007, a few years before the conflict in Syria began in 2011. I was always interested in education for social development and emancipation. For my undergraduate dissertation, I compared the education system in India under the British Empire to that of Syria under the French mandate. As far as I can remember, it was simply because 'colonisation' bothered me, and I could not come to terms with the injustices of it. I struggle to detach myself from my background and from fears of unconsciously experiencing what Edward Said illustrated as:

> 'The formidable structure of cultural domination and, specifically for formerly colonized people, the dangers and temptations of employing this structure upon themselves or upon others.' (Said, 2003, p.25)

As I bring my fears and privileges to the forefront of my work, I also acknowledge my privilege, although it is sometimes a 'hidden privilege' (Flores, 2016).

> ‘Unlike white or male privilege, which are granted consciously and unconsciously, the hidden privilege is fleeting, and works only when verbally revealed in occupations held in lower prestige.’(Flores, 2016, p. 190)

This hidden privilege is not only demonstrated among members of my own community because of my British degrees, but also among members of the research community who consider me an ‘insider’.

My interest in refugee-related studies began after the Syrian conflict and emerged from a personal desire to voice an alternative perspective on Syrian refugees. Suddenly, ‘You don’t look Syrian’ started to offend me. I believe my migration journey is part of who I am and what I believe to be true as much as it is for any young person involved in this research. I accepted that it was almost impossible for me to co-construct any knowledge with the students without genuine engagement. Enhanced inclusivity required a genuine relationship to be formed with the participants and their families. Any claims of inclusivity and the co-construction of knowledge ought to accept the responsibility of creating meaningful relationships with the participants. For relationships to be transparent and facilitate personal growth and capacity, we must commit to be genuine, responsible, and empathetic (Rogers, 1952). The level of transparency in the social engagements of this research varies, based on the willingness of the young people and their families to let me into their lives.

I acknowledge my struggle to come to terms with the ‘refugee identity’, even after almost eight years of resettlement in England. I vividly remember the day I left home, pushed by my parents who believed I was too young to be trapped in the uncertainties of the war. The legal journey to earn the ‘refugee status’ in the UK is draining. I was conflicted and still am. I decided to seek asylum because I am eligible due to my circumstances, but I did not want to be a ‘refugee’. Hence, my personal journey to accept the ‘refugee’ label is behind my decision to discuss terminology and why it matters. The following section is important for this thesis as it helps locate the terms used in this research in a wider context.

Terminology

A discussion of labels and terminology within the context of forced migration is essential to acknowledging the difficulties faced in writing and presenting this research. I started with an

assumption that the 'refugee' label is undesirable. Admittedly, this was driven by my personal struggles to accept the label upon myself. Throughout the PhD journey, I have come to realise that it is the language used in the 'making' of the 'refugee' that is problematic (Zetter, 1991). Language is important on many levels, most importantly on the legal and social levels. Discussing the language and various labels relating to forced migrants by definition makes for a dire situation.

The connotation of the legal label

The negative connotation of the refugee label has introduced a shift towards the supposedly more inclusive general label 'forced migrant'. As if the word 'migrant' has a better connotation. Several contradictions arise for re-labelling a group of people or an individual (Zetter, 2007).

The term 'refugee' is legally defined by the 1951 Refugee Convention as individuals who:

> 'owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.' (UNHCR, 2010)

The definition of a 'refugee' based on the 1951 convention, is a restricted definition, particularly the use of the term 'persecuted'. Conflict and war create chaotic situations that are rarely mindful of individuals. To elaborate, as the conflict escalates, different sides become increasingly violent, which in consequence puts all those residing in the country at risk, no matter whose side they are on. An expanded definition of refugees has been developed at the OAU convention (UNHCR, 1969). This definition acknowledges the general situation for affected conflicted countries, and it states:

> 'The term "refugee" shall also apply to every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin

> or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or nationality.' (UNHCR, 1969)

One is rarely engaged in definitions when it comes to legal status. What matters most is the rights extended to people of certain status.

The construction of stereotype

There are many concerns about the way these definitions are used and reproduced. One concern is expressed by Chimni (2008) over 'the relationship between power and knowledge' (p.15). Definitions which have been developed within a policy context in an institution such as the UNHCR, find their way into academic literature as the basis on which refugees are discussed. As the field of refugee studies expands, the definition of a refugee has not been problematised in its core. Academic refugee studies have reinforced the 'refugee' as passive victim (Robinson, 1993), medicalising refugees to attract mental health-related funding (S. Taylor & Sidhu, 2012), and through policy concern-led research (Black, 2001), which consequently made the research overtly problem-focused. Polzer (2008) argues that successfully integrated refugees are invisible to the point of becoming 'uninteresting' to research because 'they don't need help' (p.477). Additionally, in the context of need, painting a positive picture of those who are refugees may not be in the best interests of the majority of the refugee population, as many charities use pictures of those most in need to raise public funding. As long as funding is based on the kindness of people, there is little to be done in terms of advocating for a less vulnerable concept of refugees.

Questions ought to be raised about the impact of those issues on the field of refugee studies, the concept of 'being a refugee', and the individuals. The gap between the mobile (migrant) and the non-mobile is influencing the social and political world, which is impacting on the experiences and rights of people. The labelling of different groups in society is problematic, but the lack of it also often dilutes the needs of a particular group which indeed requires specific support (Dryden-Peterson, 2022).

Terms in this research

With consideration for the above and for the purpose of this research, the young people will be described using their legal status 'resettled refugees', with occasional use of the more inclusive label 'forced migrants' when the content is relevant to asylum seekers and refugees who have not been part of a resettlement scheme.

Imagine us in pictures, imagine us in any given moment in time, how much of us is really us? And how much of us is a reflection of what others imagine us to be?

The above is my provocation to everyone reading this work to the notion of fluidity of self, because the longitudinal nature of this study meant that I interviewed the young people over a period of 20 months, which allowed this research to capture the young people presenting themselves in different ways. Often, they had little deliberation over what they would discuss beforehand, and they reflected on their thoughts, aspirations, and concerns in that particular moment in time. What matters most is that they each shared part of who they were at that given moment, which means that at different times they shared another part or sometimes another version of themselves. For that, throughout this thesis, please remember that every young person involved granted us entry to their word on their own terms, and for that particular moment in time.

1. Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter begins with the presentation of the rationale for this research and the questions by which this thesis is guided. It highlights the scheme responsible for making it possible for the young Syrian people involved in this research to be resettled in England. The chapter ends with a section explaining the structure of this thesis.

1.1 Rationale and research questions

> *'The problem started when they didn't let me go to school.'*
>
> *Nour*

Nour's statement as our conversation was coming to an end, evokes the importance of formal education. Schooling is perceived as an absolute priority an embodiment of education for young people. The topic under investigation is the nature of education accessible to resettled refugees throughout their life journeys up until this point. Education as a concept shifts, depending on individuals and contexts. Schooling, on the other hand, has some universal elements such as classrooms, teachers, curriculums and outcomes, the latter often represented in grades and certifications. As individuals move from one context to another, the characteristics may appear different, but often they are comparable. In contrast, education systems are often very different as they are highly political. Thus, navigating the education systems in different countries is challenging. The barriers to the education of young refugees are often associated with access to education, which is in turn represented by access to schooling. The latter remains high on the agenda for international human development agencies and national education policies in countries hosting refugees. Access to education is highly dependent on the nature of legal residency extended to refugees' countries of transit vs destination countries. Variously described in different terms, refugees, asylum seekers and forced migrants are viewed to be a 'problem', arguably the 'problem' of our time. Moving from a deficit approach to an asset approach and highlighting the potential and uniqueness of each young person involved in this research, the aim is to explore the education of resettled Syrian refugees in England within the figured world of mobility. In doing so, the study examines the extent to which their migration journeys influence their educational experiences pre- and post-resettlement, and how the young people involved in this study view education amid the figured world of mobility.

In pursuit of an inclusive method of enquiry into the scattered education journey of these young people, I aspired to develop a research design that will enable reciprocity and an organic social relationship to mitigate against issues related to power dynamics and to ensure an ethical conduct of research. The goal is to make a contribution not only to education as a discipline, but also to qualitative research methods and the ethical conduct of social enquiry in complex contexts.

The research will comprise two phases. Each phase is concerned with a different focus that aims to answer the research questions:

The education of resettled young Syrian refugees in England and the figured world of mobility

1. In what ways does the migration journey impact the production of identity for young Syrian refugees?
2. How do young Syrian refugees navigate educational spaces?
3. How can education enable/disable young people in the context of forced migration?

These questions aim to contribute to the existing body of knowledge related to the education of young people on the move and to construct nuance knowledge in this field. Resettled Syrian refugees left Syria, their 'home country', due the escalating conflict and they resided in a neighbouring 'transit country' before resettlement in England, their 'new home country'. The data that emerged explored the barriers of refugee education pre- and post-resettlement. It also highlighted instances that transformed young people's lives. This has enabled an understanding of the caveat of mobility on the lives of young people. The contested identity of the mobile is a feature that has left young people exposed to the judgements of society and the suspicions of the government. Resettled refugees certainly enjoy the benefits associated with the legal route to the refugee status in the UK, as well as government funding that mediates against the insecurity experienced by most forced migrants in the UK. However, the bearings of the mobility journey continue to influence their lives and the production of their identity.

The global refugee population reached 25.9 million in 2018 with 52% being under the age of 18 (IOM, 2019). The figures of forced migrants have dominated the public discourse as

migrants found their way into Europe seeking safety in a new home country. This has been depicted in the media and European policy discourses as a migration 'crisis'. This 'crisis' is predominately attributed to refugees and asylum seekers regardless of the UNHCR attempt to advocate for refugees and asylum seekers not to be considered migrants. It is important to highlight that the current number of refugees in 2016 was not the highest in the history of the EU, however the label 'migration crisis' prevailed in that year (Lucassen, 2018). The visibility of the 'crisis' can be traced back to the introduction of a new visa by the 'Convention on Controls on Persons Crossing External Frontiers, 1993' which made 'low skilled' workers and asylum seekers ineligible for an EU visa (Lucassen, 2018). The European constitutional commitment to human rights and refugees is contradictory to the practices of border control and its enforcers (Menéndez, 2016). The demand for smugglers has increased, consequently making migration journeys for forced migrants precarious and dangerous. The exclusion from legal rights for migrants has also contributed to their marginalised lives (Dembour & Kelly, 2011). As different countries in Europe formulate policies and practices to deal with the 'deficit' created by the increased number of forced migrants, the public frame forced migrants into a stereotype under different labels. The discourse of migrants as inferior beings has emerged, as demonstrated in popular media depictions. Ultimately, forced migrants are bound by the legal system of their destination country that in turn sits in the wider European and International legal systems.

This research was conceived in a period that saw a surge of refugees and asylum seekers arriving at EU borders and as governments in the Global North were urged by international development agencies and members of the public to provide a solution to the 'problem'. The UK response fell short and the hostility towards refugees and other migrants, including Europeans, has emerged (Batsleer et al., 2018). Nevertheless, the UK launched a programme to resettle specifically Syrian refugees residing in Syria's neighbouring countries. This programme has ended its commitment to Syrian refugees and has transformed into the Afghan Relocation Assistance Policy (ARAP), which addresses the exodus of Afghans when the Taliban took control over Afghanistan as a result of the withdrawal of US forces from the country in January 2021.

1.2 The UK response to the migration 'crisis'

In response to the conflict in Syria, which began in 2011 and resulted in 6 million internally displaced and another 5.5 million internationally displaced (UNHCR, 2018), David Cameron announced in September 2015 that the UK government agreed to resettle a target of 20,000 of the most vulnerable Syrian refugees by May 2020 under the VPRS policy. The Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS), was introduced in January 2014 to aid those requiring urgent medical treatment, torture survivors, children at risk, and those with existing family links in the UK (Home Office, 2017). The eligibility criteria for this programme meant that resettled refugees under this policy are the most vulnerable of the Syrian population and those in need of critical medical care. The programme has its merits, as resettled individuals under the VPRS have received an expedited refugee status upon arrival to the UK compared to other asylum seekers who can wait an average of six months for a decision on their asylum application (Chapter 2). Almost all Syrians resettled under the VPRS were allocated accommodation within weeks of their arrival into the UK and most school places for children and young people were secured within a month of arrival. Also, there was an extra funding opportunity for those resettled via the VPRS.

1.3 Navigating the thesis

Following this introductory chapter, the second chapter presents the relevant contexts to the young people involved in this research, starting with an overview on conflict, migration, resettlement, and challenges relating to forced migration. There follows an outline on Syria's education system and schooling and the reality of the education of refugees in the neighbouring transit countries, Lebanon, Jordan, the Kurdish region of Iraq and Egypt. This chapter also provides a policy analysis of the VPRS programme that resettled the participants and their families in England. The different indicators of integration goals set by the Home Office are then discussed in an interview with a VPRS resettlement officer to gain insight into the enactment of the policy within the local authority.

The third chapter covers key literatures on pre- and post-resettlement educational experiences of resettled youths. It also draws on the literature discussing the purpose of refugee education to build on the existing knowledge of academics, practitioners, and

educators. This chapter also seeks to discuss identity production in the context of migration through multiple approaches.

Chapter 4 will discuss the theoretical framework around deploying a mobility approach to theorising the migrants (Nail, 2015) and the figured worlds' sociocultural theory on understanding identity development (Holland et al., 1998). The mobility approach pushes the status quo, arguing that the current societal hierarchies are indeed un-privileging the mobile. This un-privilege prevails in the stories of young people within the figured world of mobility. Entering the figured world of mobility through the young people's lived experiences, we encounter artefacts and cultural models and witness the complexity of identity production.

Next, Chapter 5 will provide details of the methodology and research design and the process of developing the methods used to gather data. The longitudinal nature of this research is achieved through two phases: phase one consists of life-grid interviews with 16 young people; and phase two is following up with five of these young people for a period of at least 20 months in a case study-inspired approach. In addition, Chapter 5 highlights the ethical challenges of researching young people in the context of forced migration. This chapter also endeavours to contribute to knowledge by means of ethical research in the field of forced migration by introducing a different dimension of reciprocity.

The following three Chapters, 6, 7, and 8, will present the findings. Chapter 6 will present the data gathered in the first phase of the research, exploring the following dimensions of the young people's pre- and post-resettlement: living space, education, social and family relationships, and future aspirations. In Chapter 7, the longitudinal data from the five focal youth cases monitored by this research will be presented in five pen portraits. Chapter 8 focuses on the different artefacts of the figured world of mobility and discusses the configuration of these artefacts in relation to the resumption of 'ordinary' life framework by Ravi Kohli. That is, through safety, belonging and success (Kohli, 2011).

Chapter 9 offers a discussion of the findings through Holland et al. (1998), focusing on concepts of positional identity, self-authoring, and improvisation. This chapter connects the dots of the social and identity sites with the artefacts, offering an unbound understanding of

young people's lives through accepting continuous self-development through a hybrid identity.

The tenth and final chapter will reflect on the research questions, discuss the implication of this research and offer some concluding remarks.

2 Chapter 2: Context

2.1 Introduction

When considering the education of refugees, academics and activists repeatedly highlight their heterogeneity (Debbonnaire et al., 2017; Jones & Rutter, 2001). This chapter aims to offer a comprehensive approach to the context of the young people involved in this study. It is first necessary to examine conflict, migration and the crisis of difference in the context of Syria. This chapter then offers a brief overview of education in the subjects' home country (Syria), focusing on the roots of education in the modern history of the country and the pre- and post-conflict state of education in Syria. This account of the education in Syria not only draws attention to the colonial impact, but also seeks to highlight that education in Syria is state-controlled, highly academic and competitive. Then follows an account of the education of refugees in the four neighbouring countries which were the first stops on the subjects' journey to resettlement. The citizen to non-citizen transition is complex, governed by the legal and economic powers of place. It was possible to find commonalities among the families of the young people involved in this study, mostly in relation to the trajectory they took and conditions they were subjected to. Indeed, the fact that they were resettled through the Vulnerable People Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) meant they had to fit the same eligibility criteria.

Additionally, this chapter describes the education of Syrian refugees in the four transit countries: Lebanon, Jordan, the Kurdish region of Iraq, and Egypt, where the youngsters involved in this research resided before resettlement in England. Each of the young people involved in this study lived in one of these four countries for at least two years prior to their resettlement. By studying education in these transit countries, we begin to understand the attitude towards educating refugees and we can explore the conditions and realities faced by these young Syrian refugees in transit countries. This chapter ends with a policy analysis of VPRS that examines the different dimensions of this policy and its enactment within the cities the young people are living in. The complexity of the policy makes its analysis far from simple. There are multiple theories on approaching policy and different frameworks for analysis, which aid the unpacking process. In Bourdieu's (1998) account, the state holds a monopoly over the universal, which means the states dictate who is deserving of help and

who is not, and this frames the discourses around their basic rights. Therefore, almost all policy is derived from a state's national policy and interest, which ultimately casts a shadow over the construct of all policies, even those concerning foreign affairs. To understand what forms this construct, Rizvi and Lingard (2010) introduce a framework to examine three different dimensions: (1) contextual issues, (2) policy and textual issues, and (3) implementation and outcomes issues. These dimensions guide the policy analysis in this chapter. This chapter also includes extracts from an interview with a resettlement officer working with families resettled by the VPRS, as well as discussion on insight gained from interacting with practitioners during the field work. The testimony is meaningful as it adds further depth to the contextual knowledge provided in this chapter.

2.2 Conflict

Conflict remains a part of our world. Conflict is a struggle (Coser, 1956). The nature of the struggle is often highly contextual, yet it is rarely bound by the context itself. The Syrian conflict affected Syrian people within the Syrian border, however it soon spread across the globe, especially impacting neighbouring countries. The international community is highly concerned for individuals displaced both in Syria and outside Syria. The media presented the conflict in Syria as an internal struggle with authoritarian government. Nevertheless, it is important that we acknowledge multidimensional factors involved in this conflict. Countries like Russia, the United States, Iran, Turkey and Israel play a role in this conflict. On the ground, Syrians rejecting to unfair practices by the government and corruption led the people to the streets, expressing their dissatisfaction. Additionally, Syria is home to a high number of Palestinian refugees with a history of conflict with Israel concerning the occupied Golan heights. Historically, Syria is an ally of Russia, and the government of Syria maintained a close relationship with Russia even after the dissolvement of the Soviet Union. Over the past 11 years, both Russia and Iran have supported the Syrian government to maintain their status in the capital city Damascus, even though the government has lost control in the north. The number of Syrian refugees soared at 5,363,155 (UNHCR, 2019c), most of them in neighbouring countries, with Turkey hosting 64%. Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan are also among the neighbouring countries to bear the brunt of one of the largest refugee exoduses in history as described by UNHCR (2019c). The number of internally displaced Syrians has also reached a record high at 5.9 million in June 2019. The infrastructure damage to

hospitals, schools and energy plants has created a major deficit in the country. Since 2018, many cities in Syria have had access to electricity for only one hour a day. The financial situation has crippled the economy and as a result, hunger is spreading across the country. According to the UNDP, nine out of 10 Syrians are at risk of going hungry. This conflict has had a tremendous impact on the region and beyond. This will continue to cast a shadow, jeopardising any future peace endeavours. For instance, Al-Hawl camp's overflowing population is highly problematic. Al-Hawl is a refugee camp in northern Syria, controlled by US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and populated with the families of ISIS fighters. Women and thousands of children are in a dire situation. The children who continue to grow within this camp are at risk of radicalisation and weaponisation for future conflicts.

The Syrian refugee crisis captured on the news headlines led to a picture of the refugees potentially destabilising the security, economy and demography of host countries (Braithwaite et al., 2019). It contributes to the endemic of the modern world: the conflict of cultures (Clammer et al., 2004). The literature on conflict covers a range issues, but what matters to this research is what contributes to the resolution of conflict between cultures. Based on the historic argument on conflicts that is still relevant today, conflicts happen as a result of competition over resources. The Syrian conflict forced the Syrian migration crisis and, as Syrians become resettled refugees, they walk into a conflict of cultures. As they are transiting through neighbouring countries and resettling in new home countries, they adjust and exist in an already established hierarchy of society where class, race and gender are identified differently.

2.3 Migration

Migration as a social phenomenon has been part of human history for decades. The perception of migration is bound by culture, time, and place. Migration is a fluid concept, and types of migration are defined and re-defined throughout history. According to Nail's (2015) 'The figure of the migrant' conceptualisation, the theory of movement or mobility is intrinsic to the figure of the migrant. Historically, individuals on the move are traced to four figures, namely the nomad, the barbarian, the vagabond, and the proletariat. These figures are directly associated with the state. Migration is viewed from a mobility perspective. In today's world, mobility equals migrant and sedentary equals state (Nail, 2015). It is argued that the foundation of states comes from people's shared genealogy, language, culture and

religion. Nevertheless, Ibn Khaldun, a Tunisian scholar whose work has been acknowledged by the 19th century European scholars as the foundation for many disciplines in social science, engaged in theorising the concepts of society and cultures with emphasis on relating societies to social connections and 'belonging'. Among the many functions of society, Ibn Khaldun stressed the notion of cooperation, in that humans cannot exist individually, and a social organisation is needed for 'self-preservation'. Durkheim (2009) agrees that society will not be, if there is no solidarity among its members. The sustainability of a society is driven by a sense belonging (Ibn Khaldun, 1958). States have evolved from requiring the shared foundations mentioned above, yet still societies have not moved towards creating meaningful social connections among its members. One possible explanation could be that social connection and belonging are not easily measurable. Of course, a belonging questionnaire could be designed where participants can respond via Likert scale on indicators relating to social cooperation and belonging. Yorke (2016) has attempted to measure students' belongingness to their HE institution, and according to the author it is statistically valid and the instrument is of 'adequate technical quality', though the author notes that nevertheless scores should be treated with 'considerable caution' (Yorke, 2016, p. 163). The concern in measuring the likes of 'belongingness' is not the statistics, nor the quality of the instrument. It is rather the results that may overclaim on what works and what does not. Another explanation could be that, historically, states have often used the shared characteristics of people to establish nations. Whether it is religion, colour or simply traditions, these shared features are imbedded in the fabric of national societies. Governments use the fear of the 'other' or simply the unknown and different to control people, and this is often evident in election campaigns. In a world where states are being forced to listen to the 'other', both states and societies are confronting uncharted territory.

Nowadays, modern societies praise themselves on diversity and multiculturalism. Since the 1970s, Western nations have moved towards this political philosophy as result of migration, both voluntary and forced, and 'criticism has never been lacking' (Vertovec & Wessendorf, 2010). The compositions of societies in the Global North began to be visibly more 'ethnically diverse' as the 'other' became more skilled, was granted more legal rights such as citizenship and property ownership, and as other acts came to light such as the Race

Relations act (Legislation, 1976). Additionally, the UNHCR called for recognition of the indigenous people rights (UNHCR, 2008). After the fall of colonisation, many people (formerly colonised subjects) found themselves in the country of their former coloniser. Being moved there as salves or labourers, they and their families account for the majority of the first generation of migrants such as for the Windrush (Goulbourne, 2018). There are also voluntary migrants leaving their countries for 'prosperity', which can be economical, educational or both. The popular argument for the exclusion of 'non-citizens' or migrants from particular rights in the UK is founded alongside the creation of the welfare systems funded by taxpayers, and this depends on the political and legal regulations of states as well as a state's economic needs. The exclusion legislations widened the gap between the 'citizen' and the 'non-citizen', with people viewing the resources extended to migrants as a direct loss of what could rightfully belong to the nation's citizens. This, however, omits the imperial inheritance. Many policies and nationals of former empires rarely remember that some of the prosperity of their current states is founded on the resources of other countries and often at the expense of other people. To put it simply, the ancestors of migrants today have formerly contributed for many years in the making of what is called 'first world countries', including Britain, even with its long history of multi-ethnic society. Until recently, to be culturally and ethnically different is to be a 'foreigner'. Many would argue that the political sphere in Britain is enhanced through the diversity of cultural celebration, multiculturalism, and tolerance of the 'other', while in fact, the white male dominance of positions of power is still relevant today. Problematising multiculturalism, Phillips published an article in The Guardian in (2004) stating that:

> 'Multiculturalism is in danger of becoming a sleight of hand in which ethnic minorities are distracted by tokens of recognition, while being excluded from the real business.' (Phillips, 2004)

There is no doubt that Britain has gone further in its diversity policies and legislation than many other countries in Europe, yet still it is a long way from equality. All of this is relevant because it impacts on social interactions. In social interactions, legal status is almost irrelevant. Being naturalised as a citizen only matters when it comes to legal rights. The 'residency status permit' is an artefact that has little relevance when engaging with other members of society in day-to-day life. It is what visibly makes people different that matters.

Migration literature sides with the view that the decision to leave is multifactorial, and the push and pull factors offer an incomplete, simplistic view of migration (Richmond, 1993). Policymakers in Europe emphasise the 'pull factor' idea, which claims that the economic rights and other policies in Europe attract individuals to seek asylum (Mayblin, 2016). However, the research by Day and White (2002) suggests that there is no direct link between the rights afforded to asylum seekers and refugees by the host country and their final destination, as they do not usually have much choice over where they will end up. This is true for some refugees, but many others are able to endure the risks of migration journeys as they are exercising personal agency through the choice to move. Asylum seekers and refugees often know little about their rights in the host country; thus they may not be able to make an informed decision. Nonetheless, it is a decision. Nowadays, migration is endorsed as a 'crisis' and used to shift political and electoral debates around the world (Lucassen, 2018). Maintaining secure borders became high on governments' agendas, especially in Western states (Stewart & Mulvey, 2014).

The lack of stability for migrants makes them more self-reliant as they are constantly required to adapt, moving back and forth with the pressure of new customs, habits and cultures. The primary aim for moving individuals is not war or violence (Deleuze in Buchanan and Parr, 2006). For forced migrants, violence sometimes comes from pressure against their movement, stress over lacking basic human rights, and continuous humiliation (Nail, 2015). Radicalisation is another common term linked to migrants, and it strongly associated with humiliation. Self-conscious emotions such as humiliation, embarrassment and shame, induce vulnerability and contribute to 'significance loss', which is the first step of what is named the radicalisation process by Kruglanski et al. (2014). Those self-conscious behaviours trigger violence and aggression as a form of restoring pride. Being disrespected and insulted – personally meaningful insults can include commonly used terms – cause an overwhelming sense of shame that can be counteracted by utilising coping mechanisms such confidence, self-esteem and high sense of pride (Walker & Knauer, 2011). The complexity lies in defining and building those coping mechanisms to deal with racism and other forms of humiliation. The entanglement of these complexities can occur in conjunction with evolving concepts of migrants and citizens which transcend from an understanding of a solidary society. That is, a society built on a shared sense of belonging,

such as that of the mobile people (the Bedouins in Ibn Khaldun) rather than shared visible features.

2.4 The crisis of difference

The aggravation of the migration crisis contributed to the visibility of the differences between European citizens and the contemporary migrants in the Global North. The number of refugees today is not greatly different from the numbers seen during World War II (Lucassen, 2018). To be specific, the UK hosted a high number of Belgian refugees during WWII, a number that far exceeds the number of Syrian refugees today, but it was not a 'crisis' then (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2020). The former refugee/migrant of World Wars I and II has shared characteristics with the host communities, for example skin colour and religion. In the UK, invisibility was afforded to the previous refugee populations such as that of the post-war resettled Polish population. Moreover, in the UK the Alien Act (UK Legislation, 1905) emphasises the difference between citizens and migrants. This act is built on the government's belief that migrants are a threat to state security (Campbell, 2019). Over the decades, discourse and the implications of the label 'immigrant' within the UK context have changed dramatically. Foreseeing the upward social mobility of immigrants is a pressure on the education system (Swann, 1985). Immigrants taking low-end jobs within the community does not reflect the realities of immigrants today.

In the broader UK migration system, it is crucial to demonstrate the nature of state response, which plays a major role in stirring the public view on migration and migrants. Miles and Cleary (1993) argue that based on a historical overview of migration in Britain, the state response holds a racial character within. As the 'migrant' has had multiple faces over the years, there is a distinct difference in the political and policy engagement with migrants, based on physical appearance and cultural difference from what is considered 'British'. This is often described in policy documents as 'our way of living'. Visualising the history of migration in Britain based on Miles and Cleary (1993), migrants are on the spectrum.

Figure 1: Visual illustration of the colour-based migration spectrum in the UK



Along with being 'coloured', the role that difference in culture and religion plays is prominent in the construction of policies related to the unique migrant group, which consequently impacts the image of that group in the eyes of the media and public (Miles & Cleary, 1993). Reflecting previous and current resettlement policies, the spectrum argument can account for much of the content and processes. The whiteness of those resettled by the Polish Resettlement act (Legislation, 1947) meant they were granted invisibility because of colour. However, a higher level of awareness for human rights exists nowadays. Hence, many of the resettled Syrians might be unable to be invisible on account of their non-whiteness, but they are more supported by the visibility of human equality rights.

In 2022, Ukrainian refugees hit the borders of Europe via Poland. Poland admitted unprecedented numbers of refugees, reaching over 1.5 million (UNHCR, 2022c). Almost unanimously, European nation politicians condemned Russia's involvement in Ukraine and advocated for Ukrainian refugees, referring to their 'whiteness', 'Christianity' (Global Detention Project, 2022) and oddly enough the Ukrainian's ability to use a washing machine. The white favouritism in migration crises and resettlement policies is not new nor unique to the example of Europe and the Ukrainians. The Australian white migration policy in the World War I era 1901 (Australia Federal Register of Legislation, 1901) specifically targeted those who are white, fit, Christian and, mostly, men (Balint & Simic, 2018). It is the Syrian and Lebanese migrants who managed to later fit the bill as their fair skin and ability to become invisible allowed them to migrate to Australia.

2.5 An overview of the education system and schooling in Syria

The roots of schooling in Syria are traced to the Islamic 'Madrasah'. Education began in the region as a duty by religious leaders to educate people. Missionary schools and the Westernisation (Dawn, 1962) of the education system during the French colonial era has

brought the Western influence to education and schools. Syria's education system is similar to that of the French (Potter, 1961). Post-independence in 1945, the Middle Eastern scholar Satii Al Husari (Al-Husari, 1951)heavily influenced the education system. His views of an education aligned with army values, and this was evident from the military uniforms required for middle and secondary education, to the integration of military classes in the timetable and curriculum. Major education reforms in the 2003 post-Assad the father period have set the system as it stands today. The military uniforms were abolished, and the education system is now divided into four cycles: the first two cycles are compulsory basic education, followed by secondary education cycle, and post-secondary education. It is a 12-year system and children must be in full-time compulsory education at the age of five years old, the same as the UK. The age of starting school is calculated differently in England compared to Syria. Thus, sometimes pupils can be put in a class ahead of their schooling year from Syria or the neighbouring transit countries.

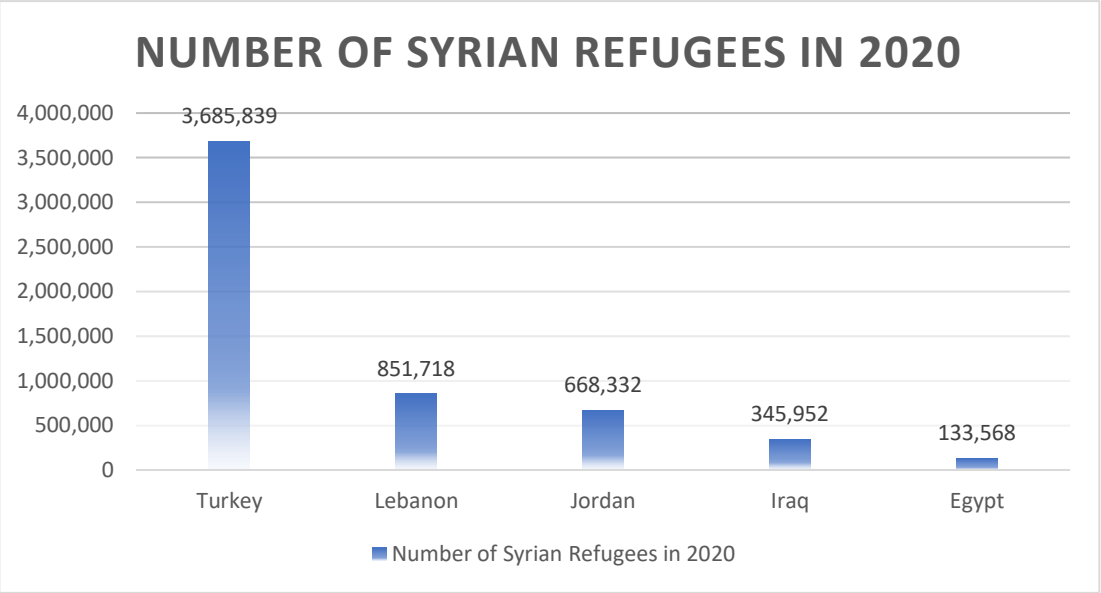
Syria has had a good record of primary school enrolment that reached 93% in 2010 before the conflict. By 2015, an estimated five thousand schools had closed in areas of conflict, and two million children were out of school (Immerstein & Al-Shaikhly, 2016). Therefore, the gap in literacy between children correlates to age and city of residence before fleeing the country. It is also important to mention that the vast number of subjects studied at Syrian schools makes the education system in Syria more academically challenging than that of the UK. Considering the experiences of the young people involved in this study, youngsters who have attended school in Syria for longer are more able to adapt to schooling in general, compared to those educated only in refugee settings or not educated at all.

2.6 Education for refugees in transit countries

The Syrian exodus owing to conflict in the country placed a strain on other countries the Middle East. While countries took different approaches to addressing the large influx of Syrian refugees, it is possible to identify the vulnerabilities associated with being a refugee in the major host countries in the Middle East. The figure below shows the largest Syrian refugee-hosting countries in 2020, six years after the initial launch of the resettlement policy in the UK. Even though the highest number of Syrian refugees is in Turkey, the young people involved in this research lived either in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq or Egypt before they were resettled with their families in England. Therefore, this section will provide four country

profiles to grasp some background knowledge about Syrian refugee education in what I refer to as the 'transit' countries of resettled Syrian refugees. It is however important to mention that the VPRS policy deems Syrians eligible in all five countries.

Figure 2: Graph showing the number of Syrian Refugees in 2020



Source: Statistical data by UNHCR 2020

These recent numbers represent the rate of exodus of Syrians due a conflict that began in 2011 but is still prevalent in present times. Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan are not only the top three Syrian refugee-hosting countries, but the refugee population of these countries is a high percentage of the total population. In Turkey, 5% of the total population are refugees. Almost 11% of the population in Jordan are refugees, compared to 19.5% in Lebanon. The true numbers are likely higher, but in such precarious situations many individuals do not register as refugees, and some state policies, such as that of Lebanon in 2015, demanded the UNHCR stop registering refugees (NRC, 2020). The conditions of refugees vary based on state policies, the economic situations of individuals and state, cultural social norms and language, as well as historical matters that render Syrians desirable or undesirable. These four sections to follow describe the situation in the transit countries: Lebanon, Jordan, the Kurdish region of Iraq and Egypt. It offers some discussion about the dynamic between Syrians and host communities in the four countries and gathers insights into past events

that have impacted the dynamics of the relationships among Syrian refugees and transit host communities.

2.6.1 Lebanon

The situation in Lebanon continues to exacerbate as the developmental and humanitarian needs overwhelm the Lebanese government and aid agencies. In addition to the 1.5 million vulnerable Lebanese and 277,985 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, the Syrian conflict has displaced 1.5 million Syrians and 34,000 Syrian Palestinian refugees into Lebanon (The government of Lebanon & United Nation, 2018). Lebanon does not recognise refugees under the 1951 Refugee Convention. The government allows displaced Syrians to reside in the country but reserves the right to restrict them from work and other civil rights based on their nationality. Although resident permits are available for Syrians, usually the high cost and lengthy legal processes make it more difficult for those most in need to obtain one. In 2018, research into the needs of vulnerable communities in Lebanon reported 76% of displaced Syrians live below the poverty line (The government of Lebanon & United Nation, 2018). It is their expulsion from the legal system that contributes to the deepening of socioeconomic disparities and creates a space for practices such as child labour, child marriage and illegal work, which in turns increases the humanitarian need. Although the Lebanese government adopted a national plan to eliminate child labour, the rates have been increasing over time (Human Rights Watch, 2016). Both the international agencies and the Lebanese government acknowledge the need for support through the national system.

In terms of access to education for Syrian children and young people in Lebanon, there is no determination to enhance the quality of education through accessing the national formal education systems. The non-formal education providers have a substantial role in educating the displaced community in Lebanon. It is indeed pragmatic to allow NGOs to run education programmes for refugees in the short term, but regulating those providers is important to ensure the quality and experience of young people within the non-formal education sector. From a literacy perspective, any form of education in times of conflict is important. Children with no background of schooling struggle the most when resettled in a new country. An un-regulated non-formal education sector has an impact on reporting accurately on the number of children accessing education in Lebanon. This is not to imply that the current experiences of those accessing the national education system are better. Public schooling in

Lebanon has been in challenging circumstances since even before the Syrian conflicts, where Lebanese nationals had to pay an enrolment fee to educate their children. According to Human Rights Watch report (2016), only 30% of Lebanese children are enrolled in the public system. The rest are in private schools. The public schooling system did not only suffer from lack of capacity, but also other issues such as high dropout rates. An agreement has been made between the UN and the Lebanese government to waive fees to increase the rates of refugee child enrolment in Lebanese public schools. The Lebanese government ensures that fees are waived for both Syrian refugees and Lebanese nationals. Up until recently, the percentage of refugee children enrolled in the public system is not quite 50% of the total number of school-aged children (The government of Lebanon & United Nation, 2018), and many of those attend an evening school with other Syrian refugees (Human Rights Watch, 2016). Double shift schedules have been introduced in public schools to accommodate the increasing number of Syrian refugee children in Lebanon. Nevertheless, the Lebanese Ministry of Education requires at least 25 students to register in a given school at primary level to open classes, and 20 students for post-primary level. For many children, this means that they are either repeating classes or not continuing in schools because classes to progress onto were not opened (Human Rights Watch, 2016).

In Lebanon, the economic situation continues to move towards greater disparities within the Lebanese community, accompanied with a concern for security in the area. This has had an impact on increasing tension, violence and negative behaviours towards Syrian refugees in Lebanon (Geha & Talhouk, 2018; Yahya et al., 2018). Therefore, many attempts by the UN and the Lebanese government on policy level have not been translated into practice. For example, the Human Watch report (2016) states that Syrians have reported that although school fees are waived, and schools are instructed to accept Syrian refugees, the number of children out of school is rising due to child labour, school capacities and the high dropout rates from evening shift schools.

2.6.2 Jordan

The number of Syrian refugees in Jordan is lower than that of Lebanon, but Jordan is still considered the second country hosting the most refugees per capita, with about 654,681 from Syria alone (UNHCR, 2019c). Refugees comprise approximately 14% of the Jordanian population. Jordan has done better than Lebanon with registering and regulating work

permits for refugees, however it still falls short considering the total number of refugees in the country. According the UNHCR (2019c), almost all Syrian refugees in Jordan are registered through biometric technology. In 2016, the government of Jordan started issuing work permits which allow refugees to work in construction and agriculture. The number of work permits issued reached 156,000 in 2019 (UNHCR, 2019c). The better livelihoods associated with regulating the work of refugees was essential, as the challenges and barriers for Syrian refugees in Jordan have been the concerns that many international and national organisations have highlighted. Among those challenges are child labour and child marriage.

Many Jordanians, including academics in Jordan, argue that the Syrian crisis has impacted Jordan negatively and posed a threat to national security and the Jordanian identity (Salameh et al., 2020). Jordan receives international funding to host Syrian refugees, and according to the European Commission report (European Commission, 2022), the EU channelled approximately 3.2 billion euros to Jordan since the beginning of the Syrian crisis. As recently as 2021, Jordan received 15 million in humanitarian aid. Yet still, a UN report states that 62% of refugees in Jordan are severely vulnerable, struggling to access basic needs such as food, shelter, health and education. Young people and children continue to be at risk of child labour and child marriage. According to the UNHCR, 3% of Syrian children of non-legal working age (that is, between five and 15), engage in work. Young boys are likely to be working approximately three times more hours compared to girls, who average working 11 hours per week. Only 18% of child labourers are girls, but 4% of girls aged between six and 16 are married. There are no reports of boys being married at this age.

2.6.3 The Kurdish region of Iraq

Most Syrian refugees are in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) and are connected to the Kurdish ethnic identity. One in four of the population in KRI are Syrian refugees (Petersohn, 2022). The number of Syrian refugee school-aged children in this region reached 71,000, but only 51% are enrolled in school (UNHCR, 2022). Government schools in KRI have Kurdish as the main language of instruction, with Arabic as a second language for year 4 and above. In 2022, the refugee education integration policy (REIP) began rolling out in KRI to allow children to access inclusive and equitable quality education provided by the government of KRI (UNHCR, 2022b). Syrian refugees residing in KRI have national Kurdish ethnic bonds that go beyond the geographical proximity which encouraged many of the Syrian Kurdish

population to seek refuge in KRI (European Commission. Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion., 2020). According to Refugee International report (2012), KRI made a considerable effort towards Syrian refugees, granting them rights to education and social services, but in both cases the government was already struggling to meets its goals for citizens, as those services were themselves underdeveloped. This report also describes the situation in KRI refugee camps and services to be inadequate due to overcrowded spaces and unreliable services. Another survey by the Norwegian Refugee Council and UNICEF identified seven main challenges in KRI: 1. limited availability of Arabic schools, 2. public schools refusing to accept refugee students, 3. economic challenges hindering refugees from sending their children to school, 4. concentration of refugees in areas far from schools, with inadequate safe and affordable transportation, 5. neglect of children with special needs, 6. exploitation of refugee workers by employers, resulting in sub-standard pay, and 7. secondary school and university students facing rejection from local schools and universities (NRC and UNICEF, 2013, p.11). Despite the relatively small number of Syrian refugees in KRI compared to Jordan or Lebanon, those residing in camps face extremely difficult circumstances. The support from the international community is limited in KRI, and the government is inadequately prepared to absorb the increasing number of refugees in the region (Refugee International, 2012).

2.6.4 Egypt

The number of Syrian refugees in Egypt is lower than Lebanon, Jordan and KRI. The geographical location of Egypt means access to the country is restricted by one of the other three countries. Nevertheless, up until July 2013, Syrians were not required to apply for visas to enter Egypt (Kira et al., 2017). This was due to the historical connection between the two countries (the United Arab Republic between 1958 and 1961), which in turn may have lessened the discrimination against Syrians in Egypt (Kira et al., 2017). According to the UNHCR (2021), the total number of registered refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt is 271,000, and over 50% of those are Syrians. Unlike in Lebanon, Jordan and the Kurdish region of Iraq, Syrian refugees in Egypt have not been hosted in camps and they are among the first refugees in Egypt who have been granted the right to send their children to school.

2.7 Policy analysis: The Vulnerable People Resettlement Scheme (VPRS)

The complexity of policy as a concept contributes to the difficulties of its analysis. To understand policy, it is first necessary to effect the universality of the state, which sits within the bureaucratic functions, structures, and discourses. This is what Bourdieu (1998)suggests on the interpretation and contextualisation of policy. Bourdieu also suggests that the state universality detriments capitals and what is highly valuable for the society. By analysing this policy, it is possible to identify key debates that are instrumental to contextualising this policy and to determine the social political climate at the time. Ball (1993) argues that 'policy' as a concept is often taken for granted, highlighting that the meaning extended to policy determines the analysis and interpretation of any given policy. Public policy in the UK is shaped by 'historical institutionalism'. Thoenig (2012) explains that this perspective makes the UK's public policy 'path-dependent', because it is influenced by the present and past arrangements, which makes radical changes very difficult. However, Ball (1993) argues that even in such contexts, changes that seem radical can become a necessity over time. He states 'in practice, the impetus or direction of policies is made up of a continuous series of small moves, which in themselves, may seem relatively insignificant or marginal, punctuated by occasional grand flourishes' (Ball, 2013, p. 119). An example of the latter is that since 1989, public policy in the UK has seen more 'immigration legislation passing through parliament than any other time during history' (Jones & Rutter, 2001, p. 73). This has taken its toll on asylum and immigration policy as well as contributed to the public opinion. Arguably, this played a role in the general election that resulted in Britain exiting the European Union.

Policy can be formulated to respond to a crisis or to implement political goals via strategies. Treating policy as a technical process overlooks policies as 'operational statements of values' (Kogan, 1975, p. 55). Ball (1993) argues for a dual definition of policy that includes the structure (policy as discourse) and agency (policy as text). In an increasingly globalised world, even national policies are formulated to offer response to global crises (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). The VPRS is an example of a UK policy responding to the global migration 'crisis', particularly the Syrian conflict. Acknowledging the complexity of policy analysis, Rizvi and Lingard (2010) introduce a framework to understand how policy evolves over time and how it is shaped by different perspectives (the perspectives of those creating the policy, and

of those enacting the policy at different levels in institutions). This framework is based on the three elements:

1. Contextual issues
2. Policy and textual issues
3. Implementation and outcomes issues

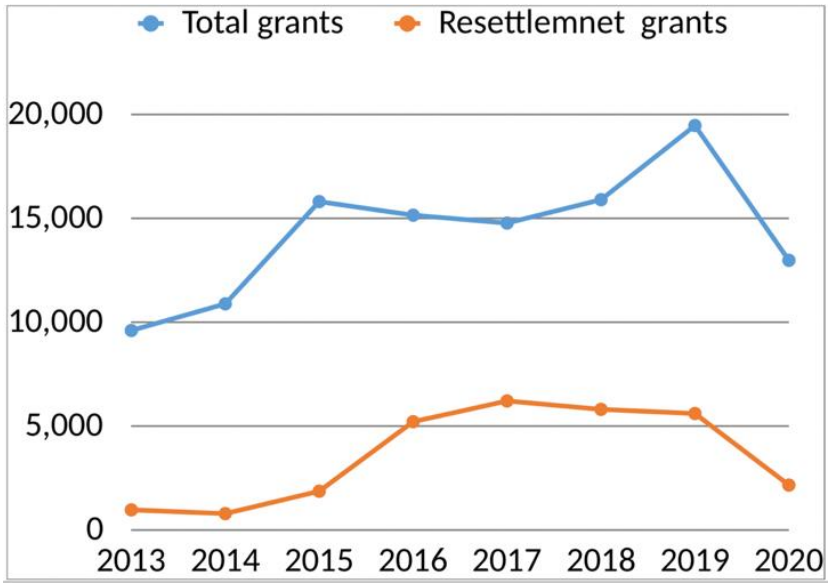
(Rizvi & Lingard, 2010)

2.7.1 Contextual issues

Contextual issues are the origins and the global factors contributing to policy adaptation, as well as incremental links to earlier policies and those benefiting from the policy (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). It was the pressure of the British public, criticism from the international communities and the picture of a drowned child, Aylan Al-Kurdi, washed up on the seashore, that finally drove the prime minister David Cameron to commit to resettling a specific number of Syrian refugees via the Vulnerable People Resettlement Scheme (VPRS). The VPRS was launched in September 2015 to resettle Syrians, in particular those deemed to be most vulnerable. The target number for this resettlement policy is relatively small, compared to the number of vulnerable individuals residing in neighbouring countries to Syria, facing an uncertain future, not to mention the number of those displaced from other countries. The eligibility for this scheme depends largely on the 'vulnerabilities' and 'victimhood' of the individuals being recruited for resettlement in the UK. These 'worthy refugees' (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2014) are those most vulnerable and deserving of an opportunity to start a new life in a 'new home' country.

The exact number of refugees present in the UK is unknown. The international community has criticised the UK for the lack of transparency around this, and the introduction of the scheme became a band aid on a deep wound. According to UNHCR statistics, at the end of 2019 there were 133,094 refugees. It is around one quarter of a percent (0.26%) of the UK's total population. A further 61,968 pending asylum cases and 161 stateless persons are residing in the UK. The number of granted asylum applications was rising until the year 2020, which shows a decline:

Figure 3: Number of asylum applications granted by the UK Home Office between 2013 and 2020



Source: Home Office

The differentiated treatment by the government towards VPRS refugees has created what Debbonnaire et al. (2017) describe as a two-tier system. Nevertheless, a lack of cross-departmental strategy is identified as a major barrier for UK refugees, including those under government resettlement, to realise their full potential and integrate successfully (Debbonnaire et al., 2017). The quality of support and resources available for the Syrian families on the VPRS programme are far better than the support available for the rest of UK refugees and asylum seekers.

The resettlement of forced migrants

Assisted international migration dates back to after the Second World War and the overpopulation of Europe (Marks, 1957). Countries of immigration and emigration have sought the benefit for organised migration and funded migration movements through ICEM, now known as the IOM. This was soon transformed to self-funded migration movements around the year 1957. It has transferred what is described as the financial burden from nation state to individuals, based on the view that migrants are provided with better opportunities to seek an economic livelihood in their new host society and therefore they should invest their own resources. Nevertheless, funded resettlement schemes still exist, but they are a small percentage of the total international migration flow. Resettlement policies are not unfamiliar to the migration system in the UK. Earlier resettlement policies such as the European Voluntary Workers in Britain (1945-1951) are developed on a strong

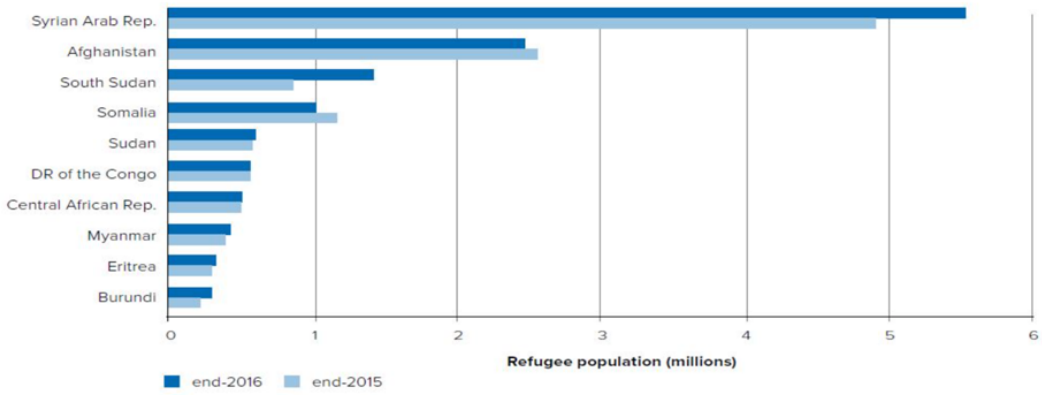
link between the economic benefits of refugees (Kay & Miles, 1988). This contradicts the basis of how refugees are resettled through more recent programmes that advocate solely for a humanitarian purpose. The VPR programme (Home Office, 2017) is an example of a funded resettlement programme by the United Kingdom which is discussed in detail in the next paragraph. While those able to be resettled by such a scheme may save on the relocation resources and find better support by local authorities as they arrive in the UK, the challenges they often face do not differ greatly from other forced migrants.

The Syrian conflict

Syria was declared an independent country in 1946 after the French rule which lasted more than 25 years. Before that, Syria spent 400 years under the Ottoman Empire. After its independence, the country went through a long period of political instability until the rule of Assad the father in 1971 through a military coup. As a military man, Hafez Al-Assad brought political stability, which pleased the merchants of Damascus as the political instability was not considered good for business (Kienle, 1997). The government of Assad has been in power ever since, and the current president, Assad the son, has been ruling since the death of his father in the year 2000. The Arab Spring uprising which began in Tunisia as an anti-government movement, soon spread to other countries in the Middle East. Among those impacted is Syria. The Syrian conflict has transformed from a Middle Eastern problem to an international European issue, as the number of refugees arriving in Europe increased when the neighbouring countries such as Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon were overwhelmed by the large number of displaced people arriving daily on their borders.

The scale of the humanitarian crisis in Syria has had an impact on the number of refugees globally. The figure below shows the major source countries of refugees, with Syria leading by more than double compared the second major country of refugees.

Figure 4: Major source countries of refugees



Source: (UNHCR, 2017)

The alleged threats to state security and austerity and concerns about integration, especially for refugees and asylum seekers, have dominated the anti-migration rhetoric in the UK (Rutter, 2006). Armed with hostile environment policy, the UK immigration discourse led by the Conservative party aimed to decrease the number of migrants, and this policy was formed and introduced with caution. The cautious resettlement policy created an immigration system that is described by Madziva and Thondhlana (2017) as a 'two-tier system'. One tier includes those resettled via the VPRS. That is, vulnerable Syrian refugees, and only those recognised by the UNHCR as vulnerable who are residing in the neighbouring countries of Jordan, Turkey, Iraq, and Egypt. Not opening the programme to Syrian refugees on European boarders is a message to those leading the anti-migration debate that this policy will not motivate refugees to make their way to Europe through illegal ways. The VPRS resettled Syrian refugees are at the top of the hierarchy of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK. This is evident when it comes to government funding and access to the welfare system, education, and other provisions.

2.7.2 Policy and textual issues

Conceptualising the problem addressed by the policy text and recognising that through the deconstruction of the issues constructed the policy, as well as the values articulated, is key for the policy analysis (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). A concern for the well-being of refugees and the vulnerability of the target group dominates the policy. This is aligned with British and international public perceptions of refugees, as well as the shift in resettlement policies

from labour demand to humanitarian aid. Additionally, by targeting the vulnerable and children, the policy addresses security concerns in the UK. Policy created in one department of the government often impacts others. Therefore, complementary policies are required to provide guidance to local authorities and relevant government organisations to deal with the consequences of the policy. The role of local authorities in the programme was not very clear and their participation was voluntary (Home Office, 2017).

Unpicking the policy text, the policy is introduced by stating the exact number of refugees Britain is willing to resettle, 'Prime Minister made a commitment to resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees through the programme by 2020' (Home Office, 2017). The use of figures in this policy, both in terms of the number of refugees to be admitted and the funds estimated to be spent on this programme, is a strategy that will tackle the concerns of those leading the anti-migration discourse in the UK. Dustmann and Frattini (2014) report that the UK public is concerned about migrants' fair tax contribution and access to the welfare system.

As mentioned, the nature of the commitment required from local authorities around the UK is voluntary (Home Office, 2017). The policy text did include a clear role for the authorities beyond the guidelines during the first few months after its introduction, which proved to be a challenge for local authorities. Local councils with more experience and an established infrastructure have been more successful in achieving the Home Office goals, as measured by the indicators published in the 2019 Home Office paper (Home Office, 2019).

2.7.3 Implementation and outcome issues

How did the policy dissemination target its population? Implementation timeframes, managing unintended consequences, and how the policy fits with the education policies in particular, are issues to be discussed under this matter (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). It is particularly difficult for refugees to integrate because their access to education and work is restricted by many challenges. 'Policy text presents refugees as homogenous group, preventing a detailed examination of the different pre-migration and post-migration factors.' (Rutter, 2006, p. 4) The eligibility criteria is limited to those recognised as vulnerable by the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (Home Office, 2017). Refugees are forced into an economically vulnerable position because they will be dependent on the welfare system. That can contribute to their marginalised lives as well as

place them in more deprived areas where schools and local services are already struggling to meet the needs of those living there.

According to Berry (1997), integration is a process and it is a dimension of acculturation. There is need for a process to cover the basics as families arrive in England, but integration as a linear process is a narrow view (Hall, 1990).To achieve integration, the Home Office (2019) published a guideline based on Ager and Strang 's (2008) framework, which focuses on four different domains: markers and means (work, education, housing); social connections (social bonds, bridges and links); facilitators (language, culture, safety and protection); and foundations (rights, responsibility and citizenship). This aim of this framework is to highlight how the four indicators sought to foster the integration of migrants to achieve economic and educational equality, as well as to be part of a welcoming community in which the migrants develop positive relationships with others. These various domains are facilitated by skills and competencies such as language, and government protection against discrimination, racism and hate crimes. Earned citizenship is a notion introduced by the 'immigration bill 2009', and as explained by Phillimore (2012), refugees need to demonstrate their worthiness of citizenship through a 'life in the UK' test, proof of English language skills and by being active members of the society.

In an interview with a VPRS resettlement officer (RO), we discussed practices and goals within the four different domains (see figure 5). Resettlement officers are assigned 10 to 13 families. The officer would be employed by the local charity commissioned by the local council. The job includes finding decent accommodation, school placement, and language courses, and acting as point of contact for the families. The RO described the plan for each family as 'five-year journey'. It begins with two to three support visits a week for two years, then periodical visits and check-ups for the following three years. At the end of the five years, each RO refers the families to the citizenship advice bureau and other national services available for residents in England. The RO stated that often families seek resettlement for their children, and they emphasise on the education opportunities post resettlement. The statement below is the RO reiterating what he heard from his engagements with the families:

'We are here for the future of our children. We admire and appreciate the education here and it is the way for a better future. Many parents expressed this view upon their arrival.' RO

Throughout the interview with the RO, I asked how they addressed the Home Office integration indicators in practice when supporting the families. The figure below represents the RO's description of each of the four indicators.

Figure 5: Integration indicators explained by the VPRS resettlement officer

Means: work, education, housing	⇒ Housing is arranged before arrival according to the UK criteria of decent housing ⇒ Children are placed in schools within 2 weeks if possible ⇒ Many of the parents come with vocations rather than professions ⇒ Employability team to support training and work experience	⇒ Local community events ⇒ Religious places of prayers ⇒ Yearly graduation events recognising achievements and English progress of the families. ⇒ *'We have noticed that the families placed in less diverse towns develop their English language quicker,'* RO	Social Connection: links and bridges
Facilitators: language, culture, safety	⇒ At least 8 hours of ESOL for each adult 'family' member. ⇒ Local library registration to access books and internet ⇒ Visits to city monument recognising the history of the city ⇒ Familiarising the families with the post office, places to shop, police station and hospital. ⇒ *'And always a trip to the Fish and chip shop,'* RO	⇒ Access to the welfare system ⇒ Responsibility toward children (they are not to be left alone at home unless with an older sibling of appropriate age) ⇒ Consequences of domestic violence ⇒ Residency guidelines and conditions of citizenship application.	Foundations: rights, responsibility, citizenship

The RO highlighted the importance of flexibility and adaptability in planning each journey. Also, as the programme has matured, changes have been made in order to improve the support given to families, such as introducing free bus passes for all as soon as the families arrive. According to the RO, this 'silly small thing' helped improve attendance at the college ESOL courses as well as encouraging the families to go out more and familiarise themselves with the city.

In addition to language, the recognition of skills proved to be a challenge for the adults in the families. The RO explained that even with the employability team's support, many were not able to continue working in England, even those with extensive experience working as carpenters or hairdressers. 'We did help some, such as van drivers, but still it took a long time.' (RO). Having unemployed fathers really impacts the family dynamics. The overarching

expectation within the community is that men are the breadwinners of the family. For the families involved in this research, only one mother used to work before resettlement, compared to all the fathers who used to work before resettlement. Some stopped after fleeing Syria and others continued to work in transit, but post-resettlement there were only two who managed to find employment three years after resettlement.

In many ways, the VPRS meant the families and young people involved in this research were, arguably, privileged. Their resident permits confirming their legal status in England were handed to them within days of arrival. Apart from a few families who stayed in the hotel for few days awaiting housing to be allocated to them, they were all housed in reasonable furnished accommodation. These families were supplied with the involvement of an RO who had the authority to assist families in their engagement with the government and its services. These ROs acted as a point of contact for the families, and the ROs continuously checking on their settlement in England meant that they were far more likely to access welfare, health care, education, and other public services. Families also reported a positive relationship with their case workers and local authorities. This scheme represents an institutional effort by government, local authorities, public sector, and charities to support the vulnerable Syrians who were legally resettled in the UK. Questions remain, however, as to whether this type of scheme can actually be considered a comprehensive response to the growing numbers of international refugees. Does the scheme improve the livelihood of forced migrants? Or perhaps these ad-hoc reactive schemes exist in a realm of party policies that serves electoral agendas and risk becoming insignificant compared with the more established hostile attitude towards migrants and particularly forced migrants.

The wider concern is the rapidly growing number of both internally and internationally displaced forced migrants, which correlates with a sharp decline in their individual capacities for livelihood. The migration debate is gathering more attention on news and acdemic outlets in the UK due to the new deportation scheme for asylum seekers and refugees to Rwanda, in addition to consideration from the British government to withdraw from the refugee convention (UK Government and Parliament, 2021). The overarching rationality for not offering refuge to forced migrants includes the risk to national security and the strain on public services and funds. This suggests that the UK policy is experiencing redirection and a potential reversal of policies relating to human rights. Refugee assitance

schemes such as the VPRS are then trivial, and used as camouflage to maintin a world that widens the gap between the Global North and Global South.

2.8 Conclusion

In Chapter 2, I mapped out the socio- economic and political conditions as well as the policies and practices in education systems in the four transit countries in which the young Syrian people involved in this research resided before resettlement in England. In doing so, I sought to highlight the complexity attached to mobility, the role of states and state policies determining not only the conditions in which they experience but also their future prospects. The chapter 2 also emphasised on the diversity of the forced migrant experience.

3 Chapter 3: Literature review

3.1 Introduction

To comprehend in what ways forced migration impacts the identity of youth and their education experiences, it is necessary to connect with the existing literature to unpack the experiences of forced migration, both pre and post resettlement. This chapter engages with empirical and theoretical literature on the education and lived experiences of displaced young people, and through an analysis of the existing knowledge in this field, highlights both the dominant discourses and the research gaps to which this study can contribute. In recent years, research on refugee education has grown significantly in response to increased global attention on the challenges arising from high numbers of forced migrants internationally. Yet, there is still a pressing need for nuanced inquiry to narrow the gaps in the literature and our understanding of the phenomenon. My research will primarily contribute to three areas in which research is limited. Firstly, it will contribute to the increasing number of longitudinal studies that explore the impact of the forced migration journey on young people over time, but which currently lack data from the field of refugee education. Secondly, it will extend our understanding of the critical role of gender in the multiple dimensions of the lives of the young people. While various studies highlight the gendered experiences of refugees, there is still much to learn about the extent to which gender intersects with different aspects of young people's lives, including, most significantly, education. Thirdly, this thesis notes that there is limited research which emphasises the importance of individual contextual experiences; the tendency is to examine global trends and determine patterns across contexts, which often overlooks the individual circumstances and socio-economic and familial conditions that young people face.

This chapter examines the current educational experiences of displaced youths pre- and post-resettlement with a specific focus on the purpose of refugee education. It explores the complexities that influenced and continue to influence the experiences of youths post-resettlement. Taking into account Kohli's notion of 'resubmission of ordinary lives', which underlines the importance of a sense of safety, belonging and success to the lives of mobile young people (Kohli, 2011), the chapter discusses the role of school in the education of youth, provoking a re-thinking of traditional interpretations of schools in a world that is

changing rapidly. Finally, this chapter positions identity as an instrumental concept through which we can better understand the ways in which the migration journey contributes to the lived experiences of refugees in education and beyond. The identity literature examined in this chapter sets forth an important element of this thesis' theoretical framework which will be discussed in the Chapter 5.

In terms of 'identity', it is important to note that a considerable amount of research in the field of migration studies lacks established definitions for 'children' and 'youth' (Pritchard et al., 2019). The studies referenced in this chapter use one or both of the terms to define their research participants, therefore my own terminology is consistent with their usage.

3.1 The purpose of refugee education amid the uncertainty

In a call for consensus over refugee education, Dryden-Peterson, Adelman, Bellino, and Chopra (2019) highlight that understanding the purpose of refugee education is fundamental in a time of unprecedented forced migration globally. In their research analysing the policies and practices of including refugees in national systems, they trace the purpose of refugee education to Dewey's (2004) conception of education as social process and a function which is determined by a desire for a specific kind of society. The kind of society which is desired is determined by the nation state, which in turn renders most research on refugee education state bound, examining the ways to integrate refugees into existing state systems in the Global North countries or to provide basic aid to those residing in the Global South to lessen the 'burden' on existing strained public services. Morrice (2021) argues that the nation state (in studies based in the Global North or Global South) examination of refugee experience 'blinds us' from noting the commonality of challenges faced by refugees. For research on post-resettlement refugee education, it would seem appropriate to understand its purpose of refugee education in general by unpacking the complexity of nation state education systems. However, conceptions of pre-resettlement refugee education have, until recently, been based on the assumed temporality of the migration and, subsequently, the eventual return of the refugee to the country of origin (Dryden-Peterson, 2016). However, the UNHCR Global Education Strategy in 2012 shifted the assumption of temporality noting that the majority of refugees are destined for long-term displacement (UNHCR, 2012).

> ‘People who were refugees at the end of 2015 have been in exile for an average duration of 10.3 years.’ (Devictor and Do, 2016, p.1)

Therefore, an examination of the purpose of refugees’ education from the nation-state temporal perspective is inadequate and there is a need to understand ‘purpose’ through more nuanced determinants. With consideration of existing approaches to education inclusion in the pre-resettlement context (host countries/transit countries) for resettled refugees, Dryden-Peterson et al. (2019) have categorised the current state of refugee education into three different models: a) no access to national schools, b) access to national curriculum and exams, but physical isolation, and c) refugees and nationals studying together. The three models are often shaped by host countries’ social and educational policies, practices and resources. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the majority of refugees reside in neighbouring countries to areas of conflict, and in the case of Syria, more than two million refugees reside in transit countries such as Lebanon and Jordan(NRC, 2020). In both countries, the education infrastructure is fragile and overpopulated. The lack of state resources and school spaces is a major obstacle for refugee children who have no access to national schools and are placed in a dual shift model. This represents a form of physical isolation for refugees, who attend school in evening shifts, while national students attend school in morning shifts. In Egypt, it is common for older refugee students to have access to the national curriculum and exams but have no physical presence in schools. However, Egypt has introduced legislation to promote primary-aged refugees’ access to national schools. This legislation was initially aimed at Syrian refugees but was then expanded to include refugees from other countries.

This differentiated access to education for refugees pre-resettlement makes understanding and assessing refugees’ education complex. As it is highly dependent on context-specific external factors, ensuring its quality requires greater attention to individual circumstances and context, such as mode of migration, transit countries and family background. The outcomes of such a distorted educational experience for refugees is detrimental to their countries of origin, in the unlikely case of return, to transit countries, which is most likely (Devictor & Do, 2016; Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019), and to the countries of resettlement. Moreover, post-resettlement experiences are in large part dependent on the national policies of resettlement countries and their integration efforts.

3.2 Pre-resettlement educational experiences of resettled youth

Pre-resettlement experiences are shaped by pre-migration circumstances (financial, educational, and social), as well as the nature of the experienced migration journey in terms of its length and level of uncertainty and the individual's legal status at various stages. There is consensus in migration research that pre-resettlement experiences are fundamental to shaping forced migrant youths' navigation of their world (Devictor and Do, 2016). Pre-resettlement education experiences for resettled young Syrian people today are those educational experiences prior to conflict in their home country, in conflict, and in transit. In Chapter 2, I described the contexts of education in Syria and in the transit countries where the Syrian youngsters resided pre-resettlement (Lebanon, Jordan, the Kurdish region of Iraq, and Egypt). This chapter analyses empirical and theoretical literature relevant to the pre-resettlement experiences of young, forced migrants.

Economic power is pertinent to the lives of migrants (Nail, 2015) as it influences other aspects of family life, determining not only the migration journey, but also the tangible and intangible resources of families, such as social capital/status, education, and physical and emotional resources for people on the move. Nail (2015) also argues that mobility contributes to a more precarious economic situation for people; as migrants move from one state to another, they are faced with legal barriers to working (Crisp, 2019), lengthy migration journeys (Honwana, 2014), loss of property, deskilling (Madziva et al., 2016), and social exclusion. These challenging circumstances create, amongst other things, a greater disparity between the mobile and non-mobile. According to Suárez-Orozco (2018), the financial situation, education, and social status of families pre-migration, assign young people different starting points post-resettlement.

This research also explores the detrimental developmental impact of migration on youths due to 'growing up without an education' before embarking on their migration journey (Human Rights Watch, 2016). Burde et al. (2017) argue that, overall, conflict impacts educational access, 'reducing the level of attainment for those who are exposed to violence' (p.629). They also add that this impact is gendered. Males and females are affected differently, and while female students face exceptional challenges in accessing education, in some instances, the access to education for male students is 'conscription' (Lai & Thyne,

2007). Pre-resettlement experiences are relevant not only to understanding the experiences of resettled Syrian refugees, but also to overcoming the limitation of migration research which tends to overlook the ordinary lives of youngsters before they became refugees and asylum seekers, 'as if their stories only begin when they become visible as asylum seekers' (Kohli, 2006, p.708). Rutter (2006) reiterates this, stating that there is rarely any dialogue about the pre-migration lives of children. This remains relevant today in conceptualising the experiences of refugees in education. Efforts in both emergency and post-resettlement education lack coherence and congruence as they exist in silos not only in terms of practice but in terms of purpose.

The Education for All Agenda placed education at the centre of basic human rights (UNESCO, 2000; UNHCR, 2011). This push for education for children and young people was highlighted again in the Agenda for Action on Children, Migration and Displacement, which called for government policy on migration which put children at the centre to ensure they received quality learning and health services (UNICEF, 2016). The international agendas for education promote inclusion in national systems as a pragmatic mechanism for refugee education. Nevertheless, national efforts towards the inclusion of young people in schools are frail. Syrian refugee children resettled in neighbouring countries are less likely to access school compared to non-refugees as a result of lack of schooling capacity, child labour, child marriage, and the poor quality of both formal and non-formal education provisions (Human Rights Watch, 2016). This means that the practical implementation of international and national refugee education policies is limited.

Interrupted schooling experiences are associated with the journeys of forcibly displaced young people (Matthews, 2008; Kohli, 2011). The most challenging time in the education of young migrants is that of education in emergencies, both in times of conflict and in transit countries where most global refugees reside (IOM, 2019). To comprehend the pre-resettlement educational experience, it is important to unpick what is meant by being in transit for those resettled by UNHCR schemes. The time spent in transit is usually around two years; the rights granted to refugees during this period are highly state dependent and the overall situation filled with disadvantages. Nevertheless, international aid programmes are often governed by urgency and accountability to funders, and that includes education in emergencies which is a concept conceived by aid organisations. This approach to education continues to receive global attention, as education gained ground as part of the

humanitarian aid agenda (Burde et al., 2017). This paradigm of urgency in response is placing the education of millions of children in a state of emergency, not temporarily as it was intended to be, but for years and, for some children, until adulthood. The education in emergencies concept has been viewed from a positive perspective as its focus is primarily on protecting children in times of conflict and war. However, this perspective is now shifting as scholars raise concerns about its narrow focus (Kagawa, 2005) and the importance of casting a critical lens on this field of education, for instance, when education promotes violence and contributes to continuing instability in conflict (Novelli & Lopes Cardozo, 2008). This highlights a need for the field to examine the complexity of education in emergencies and post-emergencies and expand its parameters from the urgency, responsiveness, and funders' evaluation by understanding holistically what it is to a forced migrant.

3.3 Post-resettlement education experiences

Only 1% of refugees globally are resettled in a new home country and intend this move to be a new beginning (UNHCR, 2014). Despite its challenges, this unlikely future is still the most durable solution (Androff, 2022) and the most desired by refugees in transit countries (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019). As discussed in the previous section, pre-migration defines the starting point for young people post-resettlement, and this is also subsequently influenced by the nature of the migration journey (Suárez-Orozco, 2018). Resettled refugees are favoured particularly by the authorised route for resettlement which is granted by a country with high Gross National Income per capita. In a literature review on the integration of refugees post-resettlement, Pitchard et al. (2019) highlight that most studies are qualitative, capturing the lives of refugees in a specific instance on their journey. While these studies are important to conceptualising part of the forced migrants' lived experiences, they fall short in developing a comprehensive understanding of their needs to create a more sustainable and meaningful integration approach. Conversely, tracing the trajectory of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children towards safety, belonging and success, Kohli (2011) uncovered elements of assimilation and coping mechanisms that became strategies of adaptation which bring about 'the possibilities of recovering an ordinary life' (Kohli, 2011, p.313).

3.4 The current challenges for refugee youths

The literature on refugee education examines key domains that affect the lives of forced migrants: the role of state policies and legislations; language and learning; psychological needs and well-being; social relationships and family; and resuming 'ordinary' lives amid mobility. In the following sections, I examine these domains in more detail.

3.4.1 State policies and legislations

It is important to underline the significance of the role of state and legislation to refugee education, however, it is wrong to imply that quality education can be secured through the absence of legal constraints alone. According to Gladwell and Chetwynd's (2018) UNHCR refugee support report, no region in the UK has hit targets of placing children in school within 20 days, although Syrians were placed in school faster than any other refugee group. In this case, the absence of legal concerns did lessen the challenges for resettled Syrian children, however, this finding was less evident for secondary school children. The report suggests that, in the UK, there are multiple barriers for refugees and asylum seekers, not only in terms of accessing but also in terms of thriving in education. Dryden-Peterson et al. (2019) state that 'simply enrolling refugees in schools is not enough to develop an environment of belonging' (p.67). Resettled forced migrants may be considered an 'elite' group when compared to forced migrants residing in neighbouring transit countries, yet they are still expected to navigate a complex legal system with limited language capacity.

3.4.2 Language and learning

Communication is essential for people to be active participants in any society, therefore, learning English is instrumental for young people and their families. Acquisition of the host country's language is the most evident gateway to the education of resettled children. It is a necessity not only for practical navigation within the new educational space, but also for forming meaningful relationships. International organisations advocate for the integration of refugees in mainstream education as opposed to educating them separately (Ahad & Benton, 2018) and one of the most common models for overcoming language barriers is separate language classes which act as a transition period before moving the newcomers into mainstream education (McBrien, 2005). Educational institutions are important sites of refugee integration (Hyndman, 2013) but these sites can also be places of marginalisation (Suárez-Orozco, 2018) as they often lack the appropriate assessment tools for newcomers'

placements (Beyon et al., 2005) and all subject learning is centred around language competency (Wilkinson, 2002). Furthermore, teachers are not sufficiently trained to understand the unique experiences and challenges faced by resettled forced migrants' children (McBrien, 2005). This may cause miscommunication and unintended discrimination towards youngsters in the classroom. Drawing on work on education and asylum-seeking children in the UK, 'teachers' contestation drew on the notions of compassion associated with caring and empathy but also a political notion of compassion that related to notions of equal rights and entitlement to equal treatment' (Pinson et al., 2010, p.14). Even though the findings of this research by Pinson et al. (2010) breathe hope and confidence into the teaching profession in England, it makes the experiences of young people highly dependent on the individual conscience of the adults they meet within the education system.

3.4.3 Psychological needs and well-being

Empirical evidence highlights the psychological needs of young people in the context of forced migration. Refugee children experience a range of mental health issues, including depression, anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), suicide ideation, and emotional and behavioural problems (Daniel-Calveras et al., 2022). The severity and prevalence of these issues is multifactorial. Among these factors is the length of displacement, the level of exposure to trauma (Müller et al., 2019), and the availability of social support. Academic research also identifies pre-migration experiences, forced migration, and post-migration stressors as contributors to the development of mental health problems in refugee children. A study in Lebanon found that children and adolescents continue to suffer from mental health disorders one year after witnessing war events (Karam et al., 2014). Additionally, a systematic review of gender difference in the mental health of refugee youths in Europe found that female minors are more vulnerable to mental health problems (Mohwinkel et al., 2018). Another review into the health of refugee children found that mental health support interventions for refugees include schooling, building relationships, and developing a sense of belonging to their resettlement country (Curtis et al., 2018). While research in the field of forced migration stresses the importance of psychological support (for example Pritchard et al., 2019; Dryden-Peterson and Mark, 2017) almost all studies confirm that the mental health support of resettled young people is inadequate. It has also been demonstrated through research on Syrian refugees in Egypt that loss of identity is one of the factors that contributes to their mental health problems

(Kira et al., 2017). The researchers found the Syrian conflict has threatened the existence of their nation and collective identity, which has a profoundly negative and 'threatening' effect on their psychological and physical health, as well as on their livelihoods and social identities (ibid). The precarious nature of the forced migration journey and the increasing number of protracted refugee situations demands mental health support intervention be tailored to young people's needs and circumstances, and further research will be needed to offer an understanding of the impact of displacement on young people's lives.

3.5 Re-thinking schools

In research which seeks to understand the education of resettled young refugees, schools and access to schooling are portrayed as the antidote to the unstable, uncertain, and variable conditions of forced migrants' children. Matthews (2008) states that 'schools are a stabilising feature in the unsettled lives of refugee young people. They provide safe spaces for new encounters, interactions and learning opportunities.' (p.33). Similarly, Maadad (2020) argues that:

> 'A school which is free from war and fighting is the first place in which refugee children and young people can start to regain what is very much taken for granted in Western countries: Safety, friendship, order and peace.' (p.7)

While emphasising the role of schools in the education of refugees is important, portraying schools as powerful institutions for peace, safety, social relationships and opportunity underestimates how many refugee children experience the opposite at school. Indeed, schools, in principle, have the potential to 'represent continuity and where hope can be restored' (McIntyre & Neuhaus, 2021, p. 802); however, 'school' as taken-for-granted education institutions can become an imagined solution that is suitable for some children but not for all. For instance, the current schooling system in England falls short in restoring hope, not only for refugees but also for non-refugees. Most schools in England are underfunded (Fazackerley, 2022) and are facing pressures due to teacher shortages and high staff turnover (Fullard & Zuccollo, 2021). Moreover, the English schooling system has become increasingly assessment- and accountability-focused. This performative culture (Ball, 2003) is stressful for both students and teachers. Thus, schools in England are already

stretched, consequently, their capacity to accommodate refugees appropriately and provide them with the additional support they may need to overcome language barriers (Baynham, 2006), cultural differences (Pritchard et al., 2019), bullying and discrimination (Suárez-Orozco, 2018) and psychological challenges (Müller et al., 2019) is limited. The experiences of refugee children in schools are determined less by the ought to be school rather than by the practicality of being in schools today. These experiences are not dependent upon whether young refugees can be empowered by the school, but whether they are marginalised within it.

Schools are not only falling short in supporting refugee children, they are also accused of being outdated and not fit for purpose if the purpose is 'continuance' (Collet-Sabé & Ball, 2022), or in other words sustainability. Modern mass schooling is being called into question as more young people are excluded than included. School reforms are not improving schools (Korsgaard, 2019). Collet-Sabé and Ball (2022), argue against the school as a 'non-place' decontextualised, and re-focus on schools and education as an 'inter-relation of place, context and meaning' (p.6). Thinking of the Greek origin of schooling, the inception of schools was 'free time' to acquire knowledge and experience for the 'common good' (Masschelein and Simmons, 2013, p.9). However, nowadays, the knowledge acquired in schools is often state-specific. For example Thompson and Hall (2008) argue that the introduction of the national curriculum in 1988 in England created a shift in schooling driven by inspections, devolution of school management, standardised testing, and league tables. The overarching promise of this national curriculum was to promote access to a 'common core of learning' for all, regardless of their locality or background (Thompson and Hall, 2008, p.91). In this vein, schooling and education have been transforming into a competitive market governed by state policies that intend to protect their interests and sustain their powers.

Korsgaard (2019) and Masschelein & Maarten (2013) call for a return to the original purpose of schooling: the common good. This is aligned to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) 2030, the role of education in sustainability (UNESCO, 2020). By contrast, Collet-Sabé and Ball re-envisage education as the communing activity of self-formation. Can we imagine schooling not from the stasis perspective? This inter-relation considers place context and meaning through mobility. More specifically, if schools are about acquiring knowledge for the common good, there are two main concepts to re-imagine from a mobility stance: knowledge and common good. What would the nature of knowledge learned in schools be? And how do we define the common good globally?

3.6 Forging identities in the context of migration

Kira and colleagues (2017) argue that the loss of identity for Syrian refugees due to the conflict and the hardships experienced by them as refugees can lead to trauma and other mental health issues.

> 'Identity traumas increase existential fears of a total self-loss or loss of an authentic and agentic identity.' (Kira et al., 2017, p.178)

The World Health Organization has reported that Syrian refugees are at a significantly higher risk of experiencing mental health problems. According to research on the WHO intervention for depression in Syrian refugees in Lebanon, the health care provided for displaced people in low- and middle-income countries is inadequate. Consequently, the risk to their mental health is a grave concern which in turn results in 'threatening their identities'(Kira et al., 2017).

The migration journey introduces individuals to multiple social landscapes that are shaped by different communities and values. Researchers have explored how youth identities develop during their own migration journeys (Chang, 2018; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015) and as a result of their ancestors' migration (Fine & Sirin, 2007), advancing theories of ethnic identities (Schwartz et al., 2015), bicultural identities (Huynh et al., 2011), hyphenated selves (Fine & Sirin, 2007), and hybrid identities (Bhabha, 2004).Young people's identities are generally promoted and performed as a consequence of economic, political, sociocultural influences in the present (experienced) and in the past (historical and experienced by ancestors). In reviewing ethnic identities, Schwartz et al. (2015) highlight migrant-origin children, their sense of being different, and the challenge this brings to their identity development. Unlike migrant youths who experience migration themselves, migrant-origin children navigate personal beliefs about their identity as well as their perceived selves, without fully experiencing the culture and/or ethnicity in a context that is not influenced by difference.

This sense of being different is shaped by ethnicity and the salience of this difference. As Huynh and Devos (2011) argue, even in the United States, which is historically an immigrant nation with a diverse population, some ethnicities are more likely to be considered American than others, while some are treated as 'perpetual foreigners'. This phenomenon

underlines how the children of immigrants of white ethnicity are able to become indistinguishable among the white population as soon as they have mastered the language, and how they are able to assimilate through their appearance and behaviour. Therefore, ethnicity matters less if you are European or white (Schwartz et al., 2015). Additionally, people who are bicultural and biracial are often perceived as 'perpetual foreigners' if their difference is physical and apparent. As Fine and Sirin (2007) argue, many Muslim Americans were 'invisible whites' prior to 9/11. In theorising the hyphen in hyphenated identities, the authors state, it is 'a dynamic social-psychological space where political arrangements and individual subjectivities meet' (Fine and Sirin, 2007, p.21). These attempts to theorise identity in the context of migration foreground the interdependency between internal and external factors enacted and perceived through the subjectivities of individuals. The social world is continuously prevailing to be a contributing force to identities in the making.

Social identity theory is important for identity-related research and for the context of migration. The origins of this theory developed by Tajfel (1981) and Tajfel and Turner (1976) explain how social identities develop. The theory emphasises motivational and cognitive factors that contribute to the development of social identity. To explain cognitive factors, Tajfel 1981, argues that self-categorising extends to identity formation through self-perception of social category and labels. In the context of migration, the refugee label influences individuals through the social categorisation of refugees in society. In social categorisation there is also evidence of salience categorisation (McGuire, 1978). Salience means observable distinct features that denote the individual's belonging to a certain group. Skin colour, dress code, and even certain behaviours project certain categories. The headscarf for a woman means that she is categorised as a Muslim, so the social perception of her is not solely based on Islam as a religion, but also on a social construction of what it is to be a Muslim. Gendered roles are another example. For example, there is an expectation for males to be the main salary earners in some communities, and this translates into young boys' behaviours which are then illustrated in the high number of boys seen in child labour statistics. Indeed, this social perception is not static, and it changes based on the social and spatial context (Huddy, 2001).

In social identity theory, categorising is not sufficient to explain one's behaviour and membership to certain groups. There are also motivational factors that explain intergroup

connections (Turner, 1996) and elicit discrimination against others (Brewer, 1979). Tajfel argues that motivational factors, that can be committed to certain groups or categories, are stronger when there is positive gain from this commitment. Low status identity groups can also develop an identity based on their shared salient or non-salient features, but that development revolves around either social creativity, which means shifting the focus onto the positive attributes, or social change, which is attempting to change the image of the group in order to revert to the positive distinctiveness of social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner 1979). One of the challenges to social identity theory is that empirical research is more concerned with behaviours as consequence of membership to certain groups and less with the development of certain social identities (Huddy, 2001). Another challenge is identity choice. Identities are moving beyond categories such as birthplace, religion, occupation, and economic status (Charles and Taylor, 1989). The role of such categories is still relevant but, according to Giddens (1991), they can be altered much more easily now compared to other times in history. Mobility facilitated much of the refashioning of such categories. Programmes such as skilled work visas in the UK highlight the gaps in the UK job market, and the programme includes certain jobs that are less regarded in other countries. Identity choice might be less possible for certain salience categories, but societies have managed to lessen the negative association for certain groups. Feminist movements, for example, have influenced women's experiences today compared to fifty years ago. It is also important to add that identities are fluid, and one's ability to be a member of multiple groups, and to choose an identity, reflects not only on that individual's perception of their identity, but also on their behaviour towards others.

3.7 Conclusion

The aim of my research was to highlight why it is that the migration journey impacts the identity development and education of resettled refugee youths. It is notable that the conditions (financial, social, and educational) in which young people endure as forced migrants are predominately disadvantageous. However, within these unfavourable circumstances potentially a reveal of an opportunity to normalise the necessary state of being a migrant.

The grounds are shifting in refugee education, and there is therefore greater consideration for the complexity in the field. This chapter examined research on refugee education pre-

resettlement and post-resettlement, highlighting how pre- and post-resettlement experiences are contextualised in dimensions that are personal and global, encompassing the past, present, and future. The diversity in histories and subjectivities framing each young person's experience means that conceptualisations of refugee education must account for the multi-dimensionality of context interlocked with the mobility experience. These subjectivities and contextual dimensions are highly influential when it comes to the formation of young people's identities, granting them the opportunity to re-invent and portray themselves differently in different spaces.

Research on pre- and post-resettlement experiences reveals how present and historic experiences of refugee education, and their mobility-shaping patterns, might influence the figured world of the young people in this study (Collet-Sabé & Ball, 2022; Dryden-Peterson et al., 2017; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2020; Kohli, 2011; Suárez-Orozco, 2018). These young people negotiate their lives through these patterns of education and schooling, legal status, financial difficulties, the building of relationships and gendered experiences. The identity development literature (Chang, 2018; Fine & Sirin, 2007; Huynh et al., 2011; Schwartz et al., 2015) emphasises how their identities might be produced in the figured world.

However, this literature review indicates that more research into the lives of refugees and migrants is needed, especially as the number of forced migrants increases due to conflict and environmental disasters. Pritchard et al. (2019) argue that the lack of longitudinal studies in the field creates gaps in knowledge in conceptualising refugee integration. It is therefore important for research to not only view pre- and post-resettlement together, but also to incorporate the subjectivities and contextual dimensions influencing the identities of migrant youths to collaboratively contribute to a refugee education that accounts and works for all. Dryden-Peterson et al. (2017) highlight pressing issues with regard to promoting educational success, such as how and where to seize educational relationships as a recourse for success that goes beyond borders. The scholars also ask, since relationships are a source of success, what are the strategies that can be implemented by educators to enable young people to build trusting relationships across countries?

This leads me to refine the focus of my research questions accordingly:

1. In what ways does the migration journey impact the production of identity for resettled young Syrian refugees?

   How society and community mediate the production of identity?

   What role can social and familial relationships play in the production of identity?

2. How do resettled young Syrian refugees navigate educational spaces?

   How do young people respond to uncertainty in their education journeys?

3. How can education enable/disable young people in the context of forced migration?

   To what extend the education policies contribute to the opportunities available for resettled refugee youths?
   How social dynamics shape the experiences of young people in education?

4 Chapter 4: The theoretical framework

4.1 Introduction:

This chapter begins by offering a conceptual understanding of migration through the figure of the migrant theory (Nail, 2015), which emphasises on mobility as the norm, not the exception. The next section discusses the sociocultural analytical approach to identity, exploring the continuous dialogue guided by the three concepts of positional identity, self-authoring and improvisation. Then, the chapter examines figured worlds and education, drawing on the educational research which has already implemented this framework. Finally, it explores the young people's identities as learners and the role of artefacts in identity making. In this research, artefacts are not chosen arbitrarily. They have been made important through the lived experiences of young people, and these artefacts are configured through the Kohli's lens of 'resumption of ordinary life', exploring material and conceptual understanding in relation to 'safety', 'belonging' and 'success'.

4.2 Rational for the theoretical framework:

This research aims to uncover the lived experiences of resettled young refugees to explore the positions, traditions and discourses which contribute to their identities as ever-changing beings. The lives of young refugees are subjected to continuously shifting grounds of politics, society, and culture. The element of mobility within their lived experiences magnifies the powers of economy and legal systems (Nail, 2015), and destabilises the 'known', evoking a strain of uncertainty as it casts young people and their families away from everything that is familiar. However, as explored in Chapter 2, there is an element of predictability to their journeys as they arrive in England as VPRS resettled refugees. This resettlement policy (VPRS) sets out a road map for refugees which brings a layer of predictability to an otherwise extremely uncertain situation and provides legal documentation that is important to their lives. In this research, I aim to answer the following questions:

1. In what ways does the migration journey impact the production of identity for resettled young Syrian refugees?

2. How do resettled young Syrian refugees navigate educational spaces?

3. How can education enable/disable young people in the context of forced migration?

This research aims to highlight young people's experiences as active agents navigating the social world from a variety of perspectives, including that of a migrant. The extensive discussion on migration is an attempt to accept the shadow which 'the figure of the migrant' casts. It is Nail's (2015) 'figure of the migrant' which emphasises the importance of movement and the role of states that guides the analysis through place (home, transit, and new home) and begins to unpick the construction of refugees' identities. This by no means intends to overplay the migration experience in the subjects' journeys. Rather, it demands an appreciation of the conditions migrants endure by 'movement'. However, to honour the individual experiences of the young people involved in this research and steer away from a prescribed approach to understanding the lives of child refugees, I use Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, and Cain (1998)'s theory of 'figured worlds' as a framework. This sociocultural theory has its roots in Vygotsky, Bakhtin, and Bourdieu, but is also grounded in social activity theories. It focuses on the heuristic development of personhood in a social cultural world and the interdependence of the behaviours of social actors within it. Within this theory, 'identity' and 'society' are described as 'sites' of production and reproduction and as forms of historical products that are both intimate and public (Holland et al., 1998, p. 270). Scholars have applied the theory in different ways in their research (Barron, 2014; Chang, 2018; Hatt, 2007; Thorius, 2016) to create an avenue of figured worlds of possibilities. While critics argue that it has not been 'operationalised for empirical research' and 'is not defined in concise and concrete ways' (Urrieta, 2007, p. 112), these 'weaknesses' make the theory useful for complex sociocultural research. For this study, the theory enabled me to articulate the complexities within the context without reducing them to measurable indicators, and evoked different nuances, notions and dimensions both conceptually and analytically. A figured world is maintained by the activities of its actors and Holland et al. (1998) differentiate between mundane and dramatic activities that are singled out to contribute to the continuum of figured worlds. To highlight a dramatic activity is to focus on activities or behaviours that prompt shifts or instances of change. As for the importance of mundane activities, they become the illustration of what is being retained within a given

figured world. Figured worlds rely on the concepts of 'positional identity', 'self-authoring' and 'improvisation' to categorise the mundane and dramatic activities in order to collectively figure identities within the social cultural world. At the same time, 'figured worlds rely on artefacts' (ibid, p.60) which gain, lose, or change power as they connect to the social cultural context and the discourses within their figured worlds. These artefacts can be tangible or semiotic, they are drawn from the cultural, the educational and the legal worlds of refugees, and they are situated within the figured worlds for the youths' identity production. The artefacts are explored through the lens of 'ordinariness' (Kohli, 2014). For Kohli, the resubmission of ordinary life is the core necessity for refugees and asylum seekers, and to be ordinary, one ought to feel 'safety', 'belonging' and 'success'. The figure 6 below summarises the key elements and connections among the theories utilised in this study:

Figure 6: Visual representation of theoretical framework



The figure above is simply a visual illustration highlighting the main concepts forming the theoretical underpinning of this research, and it does not account for the complexities of these concepts and how they are interconnected.

4.3 A mobility approach to theorising 'the migrant'

Conceptualising resettled young people through 'the figure of the migrant' (Nail, 2015) comes from an aspiration to highlight the journey and to redefine the labels associated with forced migrants. As discussed in Chapter 3, the complexity of contemporary migration goes beyond the push-pull factors, forced/voluntary dichotomy, or the common economical discourse. The current figure of the migrant is strongly associated with the history of movement and exclusion, as emphasised by the reference 'no one's movement is guaranteed to be safe from some degree of social expulsion' (Nail, 2015, p. 17). The condition of social expulsion associated with migrants is enhanced through a history of movements that conceptualised individuals on the move through the experiences of the nomad, the barbarian, the vagabond, and the proletariat in the history of humanity (Nail, 2015). Notably, the notion of statehood is strongly associated with the figure of the migrant today. The creation of modern states and the desire to maintain the state system plays a considerable role in conceptualising migration. Historically, in the interest of 'the state', the negative connotations related to individuals on the move contributed to the figure of the migrant and continue to do so today (Chapter 3). Additionally, according to Zygmunt Bauman, in an era of modernity and consumerism, migrants are conceptualised as 'the strangers' (Bauman, 2005) and refugees as 'human waste' (Bauman, 2004). The generation of human waste, as Bauman argues, is a direct result of our modern ways of life which include, but are not limited to, consumerism, fast-paced living and capitalism. Nail (2015) states 'without the expulsion of people, there is no expansion of private property and thus no capitalism' (Nail, 2015, p. 22). Accordingly, migration will remain a role player in the foreseeable future as capitalism acts as a catalyst for migration. The question is, then, how can education enable/disable individuals amid migration?

The theory of kinopolitics, or the politics of movement, evokes instances of expulsion, oscillation, and economic and legal power (from and within the state), which is portrayed in 'the figure of the migrant' (Nail, 2015). For forced migrants, 'expulsion' is central to their lived experiences with, for example, resettled refugees being expelled from their home state due to fear of persecution, expelled from states in transit due to legal and economic constraints, and expelled again in their state of resettlement on account of a lack of

citizenship and language, cultural and religious differences, and sometimes simply through physical appearance. In 'oscillation', movement from one state to other, individuals find themselves moving back and forth with the same status, but these are reinvented, legal statues that are defined by the policy of the state in which they find themselves. This reflects on their basic human rights such as food, shelter, health, and education. For forced migrants, 'mobility' or being on the move is often associated with the concept of 'waithood', a suspended period between childhood and adulthood (Honwana, 2014). The 'waithood', 'oscillation' and 'expulsion' periods make the lives of young people particularly challenging, as they find themselves often in what I call a 'state of waiting'. This state of waiting encompasses all the dramatic and mundane activities of waiting. It may begin by waiting for a decision from the adults in the family to leave the country or being expelled from the home state. Then there is waiting at the border, waiting to be let in, waiting for aid in camps, waiting to know how home will look in transit, waiting for transit to end, waiting for resettlement and waiting to access education. The power of 'the state of waiting' almost never ceases before one becomes a citizen. 'Economic power' is also omnipresent within the discourse of migration, however there are different kinds of relationships between the economy and migration. To recap briefly (Chapters 2 and 3), economy is a driver of migration (Dustmann, 2015) and migrants are the fuel of the economy in different ways (Dustmann & Frattini, 2014; Hansen, 2017; Takahashi et al., 2018). 'Legal power' is another prominent variable in academic migration research concerning the citizen and the non-citizen. Some would argue that the criminalisation of forced migrants through the states' legal systems made these individuals particularly vulnerable (Chang, 2018; Desiderio, 2016), and legal issues have repeatedly emerged when discussing barriers and obstacles for migrants trying to access basic human rights, especially education. This array of experiences – 'expulsion', 'oscillation', 'the state of waiting' – when powered by the economy and legal systems, contributes to what I can only describe as 'burdened mobility', which will be explored further in Chapter 7.

Mobility has always been a part of the human experience and, increasingly, it is becoming the human experience itself. Nevertheless, how did we get to this point, where the 'migrant' is imagined as 'vulnerable' or 'undesirable'? How do countries in the Global North, in which

migrants are not only historic societal contributors, but increasingly needed to fill the gap in the economy, come to create and preserve a 'negative' view of migrants?

In this research, I explore the migration journeys of the young people using Nail's (2015) conceptual framework and the concept of 'burdened mobility' to reveal how 'expulsion', 'oscillation', 'economy', and 'legal power' as well as 'state of waiting' are intrinsic to the lived experiences of resettled young refugees. These tools are useful for understanding the challenges of the young people in the context of forced migration. My analysis proceeds by entering the figured worlds of mobility to explore the lived experiences of those within it, to understand the different dimensions that form the stage on which actors can perform their personas. The figured worlds (Holland et al., 1998) is a sociocultural theory of the self that positions the development of personhood as essential in all human experience. Figured worlds are made by history. Not only the contextual history, but also the personal histories of its actors. This will be explored in Chapter 7. Figured worlds are also made by the social and cultural dynamics within communities which will be discussed in Chapters 6, 7 and 8. Additionally, figured worlds are a collection of projections from material and emotional artefacts, configured within a set of governing structures that are of a cultural, political and educational nature. This will be examined in Chapter 8.

4.4 A sociocultural analytical approach to identity

The identities of refugee youths in education are contested when exposed to state politics, cultural traditions, and social 'norms'. As they move from 'home country' to 'transit country' then to 'new home country', these young people are continuously subjected to change and uncertainty. Mobility is the only constant in both physical and social forms. Identities are not static; they are not contained within individuals but are negotiated within social and cultural interactions (Nasir & Saxe, 2003). The process of making sense of realities through social interactions, inter-personal communication and self-reflection creates the 'self' (Mead, 2015) or, in other words, identities. As they navigate multiple contexts, young refugees construct their identities through their interactions and exchanges with and the attitudes and projections of others:

> ‘Identity is a concept that figuratively combines the intimate or personal world with the collective space of cultural forms and social relations.’ (Holland et al., 1998, p. 4)

The narratives of the young people in this research enable us to explore how their positional identities, empowered and disempowered by space and influenced by the social world, contribute to their figured worlds (Holland et al., 1998). Figured worlds summon the imagined self, lived experiences, both contextual and personal histories, along with social and political structures, to form a process of continuous dialogue in creating identities. Nail’s (2015) concept of the figure of the migrant is therefore important in aiding the exploration of the historical dimensions of migration and calls for the array of experiences described earlier under ‘burdened mobility’. It is challenging to be in an established yet ever-changing culture and constantly engaged in learning and re-learning (Bernstein, 1971). Hasse (2015) argues that, in a world of mobility, the experience of being a newcomer is becoming an increasingly conventional phenomenon. Newcomers are not only forced migrants but also tourists or people who move cities, homes or businesses to a different region. Newcomer as an experience is ‘a condition for grown up humans’ (Hasse, 2015, p.15). Young people in the context of forced migration arrive at the habitats of other humans to learn the unspoken culture processes and engage with artefacts. In this instance, it is important to mention the spectrum which is mobility. At each end of the spectrum, we find privilege or burdened. As for privileged mobility, it is for citizens from developed nations and or former colonisers, gaining and moving with all the privilege accumulated throughout history. The burdened mobility, at the opposite end, is where forced migrants are. If in today’s world mobility is the human experience itself, then the newcomer experience can become an important tool to boost social capital. Nevertheless, the nature of that newcomer experience is again governed by privilege or burden.

Drawing on concepts of social production and reproduction(Bourdieu, 1977) and critical race theory (E. Taylor, 2009), the theory of figured worlds illustrates how positional identities are negotiated in relation to social and cultural capital and the dynamics of power and privilege in community, society and education. For some sates, its foundation comes from people who share genealogy, language, culture and religion. Nevertheless, Ibn Khaldun

(1958) engaged in theorising the concepts of society and cultures, with emphasis on relating societies to social connections and 'belonging' from his research with the Bedouins (the mobile/nomadic population in the Arab desert). Among the many functions of society, Ibn Khaldun stressed the notion of cooperation, in that humans cannot exist individually, and a social organisation is needed for 'self-preservation'. Durkheim (2009) agrees that society will not exist if there is no solidarity among its members. The sustainability of a society is driven by a sense belonging (Ibn Khaldun, 1958). These notions are important in discussing Kohli's resumption of ordinary life concepts in the final section of this chapter.

For Ibn Khaldun, society is not arbitrary, but it is interdependent on the politics, economy, religion, and cultures of the human beings engaged in it. 'Man is a child of the customs and the things he has become used to. He is not the product of his natural disposition and temperament.' (Ibn Khaldun, 1958). This latter notion came from Khaldun's work with the 'Bedouins'. This mobile population has solidarity or a sense of belonging as the only condition for its formation into social organisation. For their social belonging, a fixed geographical location or genealogy is not a prerequisite, but mobility is. In this way, Holland et al. (1998) reiterate the perspective of Ibn Khaldun on human activities and habits: 'even everyday behaviour has an ideology, a cultural world' (Holland et al., 1998, p. 141).

4.4.1 The figured world of mobility

Figured worlds are made up of the contextual and personal histories of its figures, their social and cultural dynamics within their communities, and a collection of artefacts manifested through their lived experiences and personal journeys. The conceptual importance of figured worlds stems from an emphasis on self-projection and existence in relation to the social cultural norms, thus Holland et al. (1998) highlight how 'cultural models are stereotypical distillates, generalizations from past experiences that people make' (p.55), and these 'cultural models' allow for a comprehensive perception of lived worlds. For example, Bal (2014)'s research argues that the cultural model that influences the education of newly arrived refugees and 'others' in the US education system is the deficit cultural model which depicts them as disabled based on English language incompetence. Behaviour is interpreted and negotiated within 'frames of meaning' (271), and these frames of meaning cultivate practiced identity. Boonstra (2021) demonstrates how 'behavioural problems' are co-constructed within the figured world of kindergarten.

Behavioural problem children were not identified as such by only breaking the rules of classrooms, but also through their interactions with educators whose perception of children's behaviour is mediated through inherited racialised artefacts. The author explains how we frame minor misbehaviour as 'intentional and malicious' (Boonstra, 2021, p. 387), which triggers disciplinary practices that further alienate these children. To examine how these cultural models and frames of meaning shape identities within figured worlds, I focus on the concepts of *positional identity*, *self-authoring,* and *improvisation* (Holland et al., 1998).

4.4.1.1 Positional identity:

> Positional identities 'have to do with the day-to-day and on-the-ground relations of power, deference and entitlement, social affiliation and distance—with the social-interactional, social-relational structures of the lived world.' (Holland et al., 1998, p. 127)

Understanding and identifying with the social position that relates to one's legal status is highlighted in 'the figure of the migrant' (Nail, 2015). The history of people on the move impacts migrants in general and forced migrants in particular as they are in a lower social position. The burden of the legal status of forced migrants is not the only one that matters when young people engage with a refugee position. There are several positions the social world imposes on migrants today. Being a 'good immigrant' (Shukla, 2016), being asked to be 'reduced to relatable' (Manzoor-khan, 2017), being 'the super-refugee', and the Olympian swimmer (El Hosaini, 2022) or, the most desirable of all, being a 'victim'. Throughout the journeys of individuals, their identities are constantly changing as they move from one social structure to another. Positional identities are figured by oneself. It is a continuous process of self-discovery dependent on the others present (Holland et al., 1998). Furthermore:

> 'The development of social position into a positional identity – into dispositions to voice opinions or to silence oneself, to enter into activities or to refrain and self-sensor, depending on the social situation – comers over the long term, in the course of social interactions.' (Holland et al., 1998, pp. 137–138)

In addition to the positions extended to young people from their migration journey, there are cultural models that contribute to the production and reproduction of a given figured world. Young people inhabit more than one figured world: the figured worlds of difference, of religion, of family, of education, and many more. In nominating the figured world of mobility in this research, I attempt to incorporate these worlds on the grounds of engaging with the lives of the young people participating in this research. The figured world of mobility encompasses the cultural models that sustain an influence on the move, and these models sustain recognition and sometimes adherence to them beyond their relevance. In the figured world of mobility, such cultural models are observed in manifestations of positions acquired through the young people's conception of the world.

4.4.1.2 Self-authoring:

In this research, it was important to understand how, through the social constructs of gender, religion, language and the law, the young people figured and re-figured themselves within their social worlds. It is from and in these social worlds that their actions are born.

> 'The author works within, or at least against, a set of constraints that are also a set of possibilities for utterance.' (Holland et al., 1998, p.171)(Holland et al., 1998, p. 171)

Young people are not passive actors in their worlds: they engage with their worlds as they move from one country to another. The constant change of place and political space is central to their self-authoring. Empowered through belonging, adversity and opportunity, individuals are continuously evolving and ever-forming. This space of authoring (Holland et al., 1998) represents empowerment or disempowerment as it is bound by structures and hegemonic norms.

> 'If, to be predictable by others, we cast ourselves in terms of the other, then we do that by seeing ourselves from outside.' (Holland et al., 1998, p. 171)

Thus, self-authoring is abiding by the frames of meaning, being and behaving in relation to how these frames are interpreted by us. We think, act and live accepting or rejecting these frames.

4.4.1.3 Improvisation

It is the dialogic and dialectical process which serve as the primary source of identity production for young people as they perceive themselves within the social structure. Holland et al. (1998) state that improvisation is a means to connect the dialogues and behaviours produced through interactions within the social world, which allows for the continuous formation of identity and subjectivity. Therefore, through improvisation comes human agency (Holland et al., 1998) and the possibility for a mediated self through self-direction.

> 'Improvisation responses to social and cultural openings and impositions elaborate identities on intimate terrain, even as these identities are worked and reworked on the social landscape.' (Holland et al., 1998, p. 270)

Holland et al. (1998) argue for two rationales for paying attention to acts of improvisation. The first is adopting a critical perspective. The second is emphasising the significance of excluded acts as they occur unconstrained by the nexus of cultural models and frames of meaning.

4.4.2 Figured worlds and education

> 'Figured worlds rest upon people's abilities to form and be formed in collectively realized "as if" realms. People's identities and agency are formed dialectically and dialogically in these "as if" worlds.' (Holland et al., 1998, p. 49)

Exploration of identity and agency enables understanding of the figured worlds of education in the lives of resettled refugee youths in England. These figured worlds contribute to their sense of academic achievement and 'integration' in the education system and wider society. Urrieta (2007) explains figured worlds based on four characteristics. First, figured worlds are cultural phenomena that people join and that develop through the actions of their participants. Second, they function as 'contexts of meaning within which social encounters have significance and people's positions matter' (Urrieta, 2007, p. 108). Third, in figured worlds, people learn to socially categorise themselves in relation to others and this structure is reproduced. Fourth, figured worlds relate people to a collection of actions, which in turn

create familiar social types linked to these activities. The figured worlds of education that the young people in this study joined are therefore pre-formed and socially organised. They are dependent on the cultural backgrounds of the young people and the changing communities in which they find themselves on their journeys. The significance of figured worlds is that they are dependent on the continuity of people's interactions, thus, like social roles, identities and cultures, these figured worlds are not static. The historical elements in storytelling and narratives emphasise that figured worlds happen as 'social processes in historical time' (Holland et al., 1998). The longitudinal nature of this study invites us to engage with different versions of the individual. The 'migrant', the 'refugee', the 'son', the 'daughter', the 'newcomer', the 'resettled', the 'student' and the 'worker', the 'graduate' and much more. The endless possibilities within each young learner are indeed what makes entering their figured worlds a necessity when answering questions about their education.

4.4.3 Artefacts and conceptual understandings of resettled youths as learners

As young people move between cultural worlds, there are several artefacts that hold meaning to them and their families in relation to education and their life journeys. Identities are mediated through such artefacts. Artefacts are cultural items that collectively 'evoke' figured worlds and make them socially powerful (Holland et al., 1998). Artefacts are vital in their different forms, be that conceptual form, material, or social (Vågan, 2011). For example, grades, diplomas, labels of honour and standardised test scores could be described as artefacts of intelligence (Hatt, 2007). The culture of schooling maintains artefacts such as homework, gold stars for a job well done, assignments and certification (Chang, 2018). Symbolic artefacts such as a recognised science project highlight the expertise of a student who consequently decides to run for student congress (Calabrese Barton et al., 2013). When medical students graduate, they join their colleagues in wearing the 'white coat' (doctors wear white coats in North America and many other countries), which is a powerful cultural artefact that allows them to feel like doctors and be motivated to act (Bennett et al., 2017). However, artefacts are not always in physical form. They can also be language or patterns of conversation describing a particular group (Thorius, 2016). Artefacts are not only important for making sense of figured worlds, but they can also be a compass to a world of possibilities. For example, identity artefacts can be semiotic, such as

'opt out for doing work for extra credit' (Calabrese Barton et al., 2013, p. 54), which signifies a student's commitment to attainments within educational institutions.

Schools are a representation of educational sites in relation to young people. Schools have different functions, and within they hold means of empowerment, struggle, and sustainability through continuity.

> 'After periods of uncertainty, schools are places which represent continuity and where hope can be restored, contributing to psychological aspects of safety for refugee children.' (McIntyre & Neuhaus, 2021, p. 802)

Discourses extend status to these artefacts. Education artefacts are often universal, but engagement with these artefacts is mediated by their identities as the 'foreigner'. The possibility of entering a figured world, of change and of becoming, aids our understanding of the figured world and allows for meaningful interventions.

The relationship of artefacts to 'ordinariness'

Building on the earlier arguments on positions extended to refugees and asylum seekers by the social cultural world around them, this research highlights the importance of 'being ordinary' as a key position. The 'resumption of ordinary life' (Kohli, 2014) is essential to instigating the rise from the forced migration position which marks the 'death of everyday life' (Kohli, 2014, p.86). According to McIntyre et al. (2018), education is central to 'being ordinary' for children and young people. The artefacts within the figured world of forced migration gain value in relation to 'safety, belonging and success' (Kohli, 2011), which are the elements of being ordinary in a new home country. These concepts – safety, belonging and success – are volatile[1], especially to those on the move, and particularly to the forced migrant. There is often a gap between the newcomers and those who are stable in the physical sense. This gap holds the different values as well as attitude, ideology, religion, physical appearance, and even mundane daily habits. The newcomers are then faced with an abundance of unfamiliar situations and incidents that are merely a result of difference. That difference is not on equal grounds. Both the newcomer and the stable person hold their values in the same way, but the validity extended to these values by the social and

[1] Is likely to change suddenly and unexpectedly

political world is not the same. Being ordinary is then reconceived as people change space and their willingness to narrow the gap between themselves and those who are stable. Indeed, those who are stable, and the newcomers are interlocked, the latter be willing to acquire part of the others' 'way of life', but it is necessary for the former to validate this acquisition. This imbalance suggests that the construction of the artefact of safety, belonging and success, is a joint venture for both the mobile and the stable (or stasis). It is a venture because it involves risk for all: to narrow the difference gap requires sacrifice or compromise, and these may contribute to improving some people's values and devaluing others.

The relevance of artefacts to the figured world of mobility on the lived experiences of the resettled, young, forced migrants, is not only in relation to these elements, but also in relation to the opposite, this is feeling unsafe, disconnected, and unsuccessful.

> 'For adolescent refugees in resettlement context, the playing field is not level; they are always having to work harder.' (McIntyre & Neuhaus, 2021, p. 43)

The quote above highlights the imbalance in education between the mobile and non-mobile. The Artefacts provided the means to explore resettled refugee youths' identities as forced migrants, learners, community members and, above all, ordinary human beings. In their new homes after resettlement, cultural artefacts from their homeland filled the space. Wall art, seating arrangements and food bring a sense of safety and belonging into their new homes. Each home was different yet had cultural artefacts that connected the family to their home country. By virtue of being migrants, they are foreigners, hence different. How much of that difference then becomes public? How much is held at home privately? As refugees, particular artefacts scaffold a hegemonic identity which reproduces within figured worlds. As ordinary, their struggles are the struggles of the young people as 'newcomers', 'students' and of the new home, and for that their issues dissolve into the struggles of the many.

4.5 Conclusion

Young people's identities are dependent on the social support governed by cultural norms, yet still they are fragile to change or movement. Young people are active agents, they

author themselves by mediating their position, and through this mediation lies possibilities for change. This change is not to the state of mobility, but to the static culture of education that renders mobility a disadvantage.

The journeys of resettled young Syrian refugees in England are filled with experiences and artefacts that impact their identity and hold the power of altering the figured world for future youngsters resettling in similar contexts. In this research project, artefacts provided the means to explore resettled refugee youths' identities as learners. Many education artefacts explored are internationally recognised, for example, schools, grades, standardised tests, recognition medals and certificates of attendance. In education many found success, be that academic or in sports, and some found safety, sometimes with a sense belonging. In education, some struggled to achieve, or felt unsafe and excluded. However, engaging appropriately with the artefacts of 'ordinariness' in the three dimensions of safety, belonging and success, minimised the impact of the 'foreigner' identity. At the same time, it was important to understand how cultural artefacts from the subjects' homelands contributed to their identities and to what extent these identities contributed to their figured worlds. For artefacts are not enigmatic or natural: they are cultural and political products that maintain their status through popular discourses, and they can contribute to the reproduction of stereotypes or help to diminish them. In principle, a conscious engagement with artefacts enables change.

5 Chapter 5: Methodology and research design

5.1 Introduction:

Entering the figured world of mobility through the lives of resettled young Syrian refugees, uniquely positioned this research to provide nuanced understandings of their lived experiences. As they narrated their stories, engaged with others, and experienced education, I sought to capture these mindfully and comprehensively and to offer insights into the ways the migration journey impacts the production of the identities of young, resettled refugees. As well as this, I sought to capture how the subjects navigate educational spaces and to query what the role of education in the figured world of mobility. In the literature review, I explored the understood dynamics of the migratory transitions, education trajectories and identity formations of resettled refugee youth. The review discussed the complex factors that shape their lives and how their pre-resettlement experiences and post-resettlement experiences are inciting their 'new not-yet identity combination' (Fine & Sirin, 2007) which influence the figured world of mobility.

This qualitative research therefore adopted a social constructivist approach in order to analyse the young people's narratives. Instances were observed and experienced while being part of their lives, and this is accompanied by reflections from field notes and data analysis. With a concern for reciprocity and a desire to build authentic relationships with the families and young people involved in this research, I embarked on this research journey.

In this chapter, I will discuss my epistemology and ontology, justify my methodological approach, describe the research design, elaborate on my chosen method and process, and reflect on the methodological and ethical complexities and challenges encountered during this study.

Research Questions

Understanding the education of resettled young Syrian refugees in England within the figured world of mobility demanded an exploration of the young people's personal histories and a conscious analysis of the meaningful artefacts in their worlds for the purpose of answering the research questions:

1. In what ways does the migration journey impact the development of identity for resettled young Syrian refugees?

2. How do resettled young Syrian refugees navigate educational spaces?

3. How can education enable/disable young people in the context of forced migration?

The migration journey influenced and continues to influence the lives of young, resettled people, hence, it impacts their identity production in different ways. The first question aims to understand these ways through an exploration of the migration journey of those resettled via the VPRS. On this journey, the young people involved in this study began in Syria, their 'home country', waited in a 'transit country' such as Lebanon, Jordan, the Kurdish region Iraq, or Egypt, and resettled in England, their 'new home country'. Young people navigate educational spaces with 'virtual school bags', as suggested by Thompson (2002), inside which are different experiences, knowledge and dispositions. How young, resettled refugees are navigating pre- and post-resettlement education is a crucial component of these virtual school bags. Mitigating against the precarious nature of the education of refugees requires a broader understanding of refugee education and its purpose, as suggested by Dryden-Peterson et al. (2019). In this study, the configuration of artefacts (Chapter 8) and the awareness of identity production (Chapter 9) allows us to enter the figured world of mobility through the lived experiences of the young people involved in this study, even if only fleetingly. There, we can unpack, question and interpret instances and experiences that made and maintain the figured world of mobility. The overarching aim of grappling with these three questions is to offer an alternative consideration for mobility in education.

5.2 Epistemology and ontology

The sociocultural approach to the figured world social theory demands a certain ontology to address issues arising from conceptualising a cultural world.

> 'But no ontology is simply a system of knowledge; it is equally, as the term itself implies, an account of a way of being in the world and a definition through practice (and not only through cognition) of what that world is and how it is constituted. If ontologies are basic to the construction of culture, then it is reasonable to assume that differing conceptions of being-in-the-world necessarily enter into conflicts between systems (societies or cultures) based on different ontological premises. How one

> figures one's own world greatly determines how one will relate to other possible and perhaps conflicting configurations that one might encounter.' (Clammer et al., 2004, p. 4)

It is the postcolonial shift in the academic world that paves the way for the ontological conceptions of Holland et al. (1998)'s theoretical framework of the figured worlds. The ontological premise in knowledge production that deems that traditional social inquiry is based solely on outsiders' knowledge, is of colonial heritage. Thus, an alternative ontological conception is then essential to resist the pressure to conform to those colonial roots. Much of the research on migration confines itself to inequality, gender and ethnicity, with little consideration to the underlying ontologies of these concepts. Understanding the lived experiences of the young people within the figured worlds framework unveils concepts, ideas and notions of and about their worlds, framing this knowledge within its own ontology to an extent.

The ontological debates in social science and the postcolonial shifts are perhaps the grounds on which this research is conceived. Insider research, which is explained further in the next section, is not inherently superior to the outsider research. Belonging to the mobile population and other personal characteristics such as my background and gender (Preface) – which are deemed to be irrelevant to traditional social research – are indeed relevant here. The research journey was not unchallenging, and building on the knowledge of others in the field was not unproblematic. A large body of academic research published through history sits in an ontology that underestimates the ontological assumption of this work. Outsider, large sampling and the positivist approach to research rejects the underpinnings of this research, which is qualitative, longitudinal, and based on a small sample. This recent postcolonial shift, though superficial, in many instances allows this work to prevail in its current form and essence as it paves the way for ontological and epistemological inclusion.

This interpretive research is therefore informed by social constructivism as an ontology and epistemology. For constructivists, 'meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage in the world they are interpreting' (Crotty, 1998, p. 43). Thus, in my research, the subjective realities of the education of the young people are co-constructed with me through their willingness to share stories of their journey. However, it is important to

emphasise that each story is a narrative of their *perceived* reality, shared with me after resettlement in England. In gathering and sharing these stories, I make no claims that they are the only 'truth', nor that they are their unmediated voices. Rather, 'the knower and the known are taken to be inseparable' (Hatch, 2002, p. 10) and the role of my researcher lens in rendering social realities (Yin, 2014) is acknowledged to be 'critically subjective' (Maxwell, 2013) and attained through continuous reflective practices throughout this research.

5.2.1 An insider approach to methodology

Drawing on my own experiences (see Preface), of the UK education system, however, I acknowledge that it is almost 'unethical' (Sikes, 2010) to provide a *version* of truth without disclosing the lens being brought to bear upon it. In this research, I adopted an explicit 'insider' methodology which lends itself broadly to the ethical fundamentals of indigenous methodologies, which in Kovach's (2018) words require 'an exploration of identity, an ability to be vulnerable' (Kovach, 2018, p. 388), and a negotiation of what she calls 'relational capital' which, in terms of the relationship with community, means 'forming a relationship that is not opportunistic, exploitive, or taxing for the community' (Kovach, 2018, p. 398). Unlike an outsider, whose research and identity boundaries are much clearer, the work of an insider is complicated, both practically and theoretically as a result of the heterogeneity of the social groups, communities, and cultures in which he or she participates. Consequently, I needed to ask myself: in what way was I truly defined as an 'insider'?

This approach conflicts with positivism, where being an 'objective' outsider is considered key for rigorous research, even though true 'objectivity' is difficult, even for natural scientists (Chalmers, 2013). Building on Dewey's theory of knowledge, Biesta (2020) states 'our intervention, our action, is a crucial, necessary and constitute part of knowledge. In this sense we can say that knowledge is always a human construction just as objects of knowledge are' (Biesta, 2020, p. 127). However, from a critical point of view, the call for objectivism in social science lends itself to colonisation and discriminatory practices. Driven by the coloniser's needs to understand the colonised community's culture, traditional anthropology studies have set out with the notion that only outsiders are capable of producing noteworthy knowledge. As Lewis (1973) argues: 'it was an important methodological assumption that the study of 'primitive' or non-Western worlds could take place only from the vantage point of the Westerner or outsider' (p.582). This is not to argue

for all knowledge to be produced by insiders, but for acceptance of the contribution of insider studies. Acknowledging that 'truth' is multi-faced and multi-layered, knowledge is best created in a sphere of openness to all those engaged with it. It is about adopting the epistemology of ignorance in pursuit of epistemic justice. Knowledge is possibilities, not certainty (Biesta, 2020).

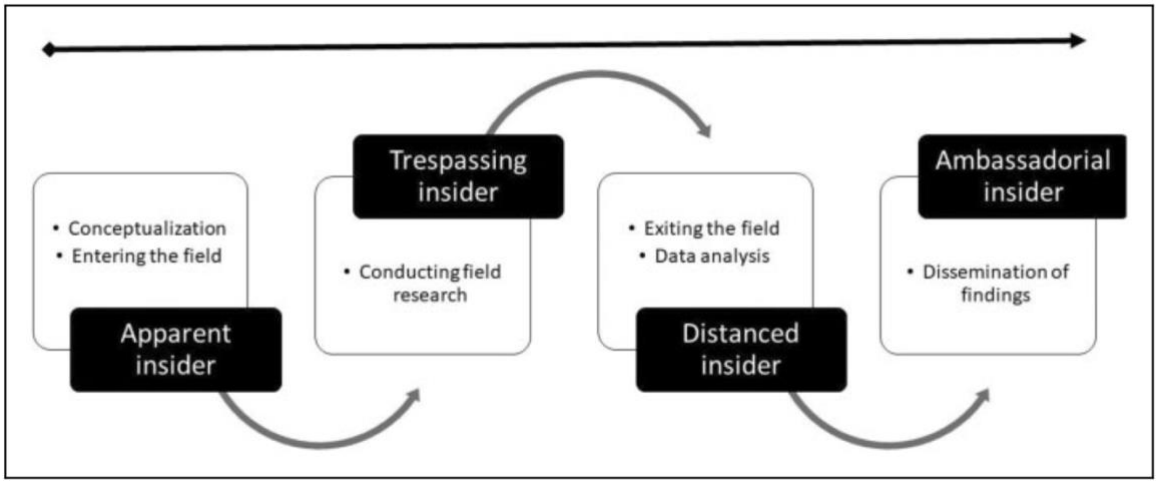
A particular methodological approach to research is, however, not a condition in itself for intellectual superiority. Scholars have argued that insider research is often undertaken by a member of the group (Fleming, 2018) or, in a broader sense, someone with a priori intimate knowledge of the community (Merton, 1972). Nevertheless, insider and outsider research cannot be dichotomised for they are two ends of a continuum: the presence of both stances and everything in between contributes to guiding knowledge production in different dimensions, ensuring an inclusive epistemology. Being an insider does not grant researchers special 'access to valid knowledge that is not available to an outside researcher' (Hammersley, 1993, p. 219). It is the construct of realities from different perspectives that contributes to the 'truth'. One such perspective is that of my researcher reflexivity. When planning the research design, I therefore turned to scholars that celebrate the validity – or trustworthiness – of qualitative research through reflexive practice (for example, (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Hammersley, 2013; Holstein & Gubrium, 2003; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

5.2.2 Constructing my insiderness

The insider/outsider divide, however, could be considered a reductive view of the complex entity that is our identity. In my own research field, this divide often assumes a specific form, that is, insiders are members of the migrant group and outsiders are members of host population (Carling et al., 2014). This does not reflect my own experience. While I shared many commonalities with the participants, I felt that I was an 'outsider within' (Flores, 2016). This led to a number of methodological challenges, as I was forced to navigate aspects of my 'privilege'. For example, my English language ability and education enables me to navigate life more independently compared with the young people and families involved in this study. This means I am an outsider to the experience of the inability to understand and communicate with locals who can only speak English.

Several scholars have questioned the 'insider' position in migration research, exploring the advantages and challenges held within the position, and argued for reflexive strategies to examine positionality (Carling et al., 2014; Flores, 2016; Kusow, 2003; Pustulka et al., 2019). While Carling et al. (2014) stress the fluidity of positionality, they offer the possibility of a 'third position', which includes five different groups: explicit third party; honorary insider; insider by proxy; hybrid insider-outsider; and apparent insider. Although their argument may hold at this moment in time, these groups might not be sustainable as constructs for individuals within our ever-moving diasporic global population (Baily et al., 2016). Instead, I drew on Pustulka et al. (2019)'s approach to identities as temporal, which emphasises the importance of making explicit the shifts in my researcher identity. Their perspective is shown in the figure below:

Figure 7: Perspective on insiderness



Source: Pustulka et al., 2019, p.247

In the Preface, I undertook the task of conceptualising my positionality on entering the field, underlining the *apparent insider* stage as most relevant to my work. I am in the community but, in many ways, I am different. My upbringing has granted me the privilege of knowledge of the English language, culture and society and an international university education. Although in Western culture, childlessness at my age is common, in Syrian culture, I am expected to be a mother. In fact, many mothers of the young people in my research asked me: 'How many children do you have?'. Even my physical appearance, and the fact that I was not wearing a headscarf, was different to those of the mothers and young women I

engaged with in this study. At the same time, my gender was an advantage to participant access as children and young people are generally the responsibility of mothers. My education, age and gender were associated with my 'insider' position as a researcher of migrant education, yet were still relevant to participants' perceptions of my position and identity.

In many ways, the differences I experienced between myself, and the research participants prepared me for the second stage of insiderness: *trespassing insider*. As I entered the field, my association with the university granted me special treatment and a certain level of credibility. However, cultivating a trusting relationship with participants was not effortless by virtue of being an 'insider' (Kusow, 2003; Pustulka et al., 2019). I had to be mindful of participants' availability and respond positively to changes in visit times. Above all, it was important that I respected the house rituals and, therefore, accepted their hospitality by joining in on meals and allowing our relationship to hold some shared cultural traditions. For instance, in Syria, we believe it is rude not to feed our guests, and refusing offered food can be perceived as socially undesirable. In this way, my research methodology drew on culturally responsive research techniques informed by feminism and critical race theory, which place an emphasis on the co-construction of knowledge with, not on, people and communities, and highlight the sharing of food as particularly significant to identity (as noted by Rodriguez et al., 2011).

The stage *distanced insider* hinges on the two earlier stages. The different dimensions to my identity enabled me to draw the professional line more easily as I left the research field. However, some women and young people continued to contact me to ask me questions in regard to their children's education, to ask me to translate official letters and, sometimes, to invite me to big community gatherings. Despite this, my assumption was that they had not viewed me as their peer. Our trusting relationship may have begun based on our shared histories, but this was later shaped by who we are as people in the present. My professional identity (that is, my education and training) as well as the reflexive practice I began at the start of my field work, have held me in a place where my work can be scrutinised based on the detailed exploration of my positionality. At times during my data collection, my emotions brought me to tears and, at other times, to laughter. I believe that my investment in this work is mainly drawn from my humanity, rather than my nationality. In addition to

the reflection notes made during data gathering (my fieldnotes), I have also continued to reflect on my data analysis process (my notes of reflection on data analysis). At times it was important to recognise my cultural knowledge and acknowledge its role in analysing the data. Both my fieldnotes and reflection on data analysis extracts will emerge in the findings and discussion chapters to contribute to the transparency of data gathering and handling.

A key issue with *ambassadorial insider* and the dissemination of findings stage is representation. It is of critical concern to me that my aim was and is to represent the participants' lives in way that would honour their stories. Inspired by narrative inquiry and re-storying (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990), pen-portraits of the young people's stories are presented in Chapter 7, connecting the dots from different field work interaction points over time. Nevertheless, while the 'truth' is constructed and represented, tensions and contradictions are part of human nature, and while the researcher's responsibility is to explore the 'truth', the 'truth' is merely sustainable and relational to the social cultural context in which it is found.

5.3 Following the trails of resettled young Syrian refugees

Taking inspiration from these theories on the multiplicity of perspectives and 'truths', this research employed a longitudinal research design using a variety of data collection tools. There were two phases comprising the field work of this research. Phase one: Life-grid qualitative interviews with 18 young people, including a pilot study. Phase two: Longitudinal study inspired by collective case study methodology, focusing on five focal youths as a unit of analysis, including examples of similar research (Park, 2021). The two-phase design enabled me to represent each young person more vividly and produce a more holistic understanding of their individual, personal and pedagogical experiences, and the implications of these for their educational journeys and development of their identities. Emphasising some of the complex issues of forced migration, this research explores stories of young people overcoming the challenges of stigma and the stereotypes associated with the refugee label (Block et al., 2013; Pinson & Arnot, 2007). For every journey there is a trail and, in an attempt to understand their journeys, my research followed these individual trails. Those trails were in no way identical, which means that as case studies, the data sources for each young person varies based on their age, personality, gender, and their individual circumstances. Also, I am aware that I too accompanied them on this journey.

These young people were guided as much by my entry into their lives and homes as a researcher as by them requesting my assistance in a school meeting, my guidance in choosing GCSE subjects or my help with writing a personal statement for a university application.

To explore these journeys, it was intrinsic to the research aims that the data collection methods were not technical or extractive, but rather organic and co-produced. The families needed to be valued and respected on their own terms and needed to shape their own involvement in this research. For this reason, the life-grids interview method was adopted as my initial interview method. The use of the life-grids during the first phase has been examined through a pilot study which I will later present at length.

5.3.1 Access to the field

Before beginning the PhD, I was approached by a city council official whom I had met when I contacted her for support when I first arrived in the city. She informed me that the first cohort of families resettled via the VPRS were arriving in the city, and the council was welcoming them at the local church. The council was seeking volunteers to act as interpreters. A student at that time, I informed other Syrian students I knew in the city, and we went to the church together to welcome the families. We were all allocated different families and we accompanied them to their accommodation to interpret messages from the council about the job centre, utility bills, transport, education, and grocery shopping.
A few months later, when attending an art exhibition on the journeys of Syrian refugees, I was approached by a young woman telling me that she remembered me from that earlier date. She remembered that I was a university student and wanted my advice on how she could go to university. This young girl, whose name was Nour[2], later became my first participant in my research and her mother introduced me to other women in the community. She initially gave me their telephone numbers and I sent them messages to ask if I could visit them to tell them about my research and check if they were happy for their children to be involved. I met all but five of my participants through Nour's mother: three were found through my other volunteering activities mentioned above and two through the community group leader. Although not everyone I approached agreed to participate, most

[2] Pseudonym

of my interactions were positive. Sometimes, the mothers were welcoming but their children were not interested and, other times, the mothers were not interested at all. It is also important to note that recommendations from their peers (Nour's mother also resettled with them) was instrumental in helping me gain access and trust.

5.3.2 Phase one: Life grid interviews

The focus of this phase is collecting biographical data and examining the influence of the migration journey on different aspects of the young people's lives. Data gathering from this phase contributes to the three research questions. In relation to the first question, it was beneficial to collect details of instances in their lives pre- and post-resettlement, and I was able to capture these instances chronologically to define the special dimension of their journey from home country, transit country and new home country. This phase of the research introduced the understanding of 'social position'(Holland et al., 1998, p.137) and 'frames of meanings' (Holland et al., 1998, p. 271) which mediate the interpretation of actions and behaviour within the figured world of mobility. As for the second and third questions, this phase allowed me to gather data from young people's narratives about their educational experiences pre- and post-resettlement in a way that allowed them to compare and contrast educational opportunities, artefacts and engagements with teachers and peers. Therefore, the life-grid represents an effective tool in aiding the data gathering during this phase.

What is a life grid?

The life grid is a biographical data collection tool (Abbas et al., 2013) which is effective for collecting retrospective data (Parry et al., 1999). The qualitative interview takes place around the life grid and participants narrate their story while drawing in certain sections of the grid the most important instances to them. Participants and researcher can also write on it together, creating a collegial, transparent note-making interview process. As Wilson et al. (2007) explain, the life grid 'essentially allows for the construction of a visual temporal framework' (Wilson et al., 2007). Wilson et al. (2007) have warned of participants' perceptions of 'educationally privileged researchers' (Wilson et al., 2007, p. 141) and believe that this tool is able to mitigate against it. Moreover, the empowering characteristic of narrative storytelling (Elliott, 2005; Hatch, 2002) and the use of the 'life grid' as a response

to power dynamic concerns (Wilson et al., 2007) have proved to be practically useful when conducting the interviews. Young people were able to identify the topics of conversation in advance, compared to waiting for questions to be asked. The process also allowed them to monitor the note-taking process, and gave them the opportunity to check, change or elaborate on any point taken. Such inclusive task-based activities are important for research with young people (Eder & Fingerson, 2003).

To design the life grid for my own research, I first conducted a literature review to establish the common frameworks for this method. The resulting life grid (see appendix 2) consists of a table on A3 paper that comprises different columns headed with different themes such as age, country of residence, and education. Vertically, the grid has a time span by year, comprising ten years up to the year 2018. As the interview was conducted around the grid and it proved to be a transparent note-taking method, the participants were able to track the note taking and were aware of the recorded information. Additionally, the intention was that all participants would be writing and contributing to the grid. However, some young people preferred not to write at all, for various reasons. One of those reasons is an example from my pilot study of Ibrahim, who is visually impaired (see below). Others wanted to participate occasionally or take full control of writing on the life grid.

The interview type employed to collect data on the life grid can be described as semi-structured, as the grid acts as a 'visual anchor' (Abbas et al., 2013) for participants in the same way that an interview schedule does. The life grid does not aim to fully structure the interview and it grants participants autonomy within the interview context. As in Parry et al. (1999), the use of this method in my own research increased the respondents' degree of control. Similar to the participants' experiences in Wilson et al. (2007), my own participants decided on when and where to begin and whether they wanted to avoid discussion of any particular time in their journey or issues that went beyond the grid.

5.3.3 Pilot study: The co-production of the life grid as a qualitative data collection method

To develop the life grid as a tool for qualitative research that enhances the inclusivity of research with forcibly displaced young people, I felt it was necessary to pilot the life grid. In these initial life grid narrative interviews, I sought to gather information on the scattered educational experiences of the youngsters involved in this study and bring their migration

journey into their social and educational worlds. This pilot study included five life grid interviews. My aim was to answer the following methodological questions:

1. What are the challenges of interviewing forcibly displaced young people?
2. What are the strengths of using the life grid in the context of education and forced migration?
3. Could life grid interviews be an effective data collection tool for my Ph.D. research?

5.3.3.1 Designing the life grid with participants

The table below summarises the characteristics of the participants who contributed to the final design of the life grid. Following recommendations from Abbas et al. (2013), I tried to complete the life grid myself before using it with any of the young people. In this study, this practice proved to be important due to the shared experiences in relation to my own identity. In the table below, I am 'Participant 0'. I refer to myself as 0 because, although my practice impacted the design of the life grid, the data collected through this is not included in the discussion of findings.

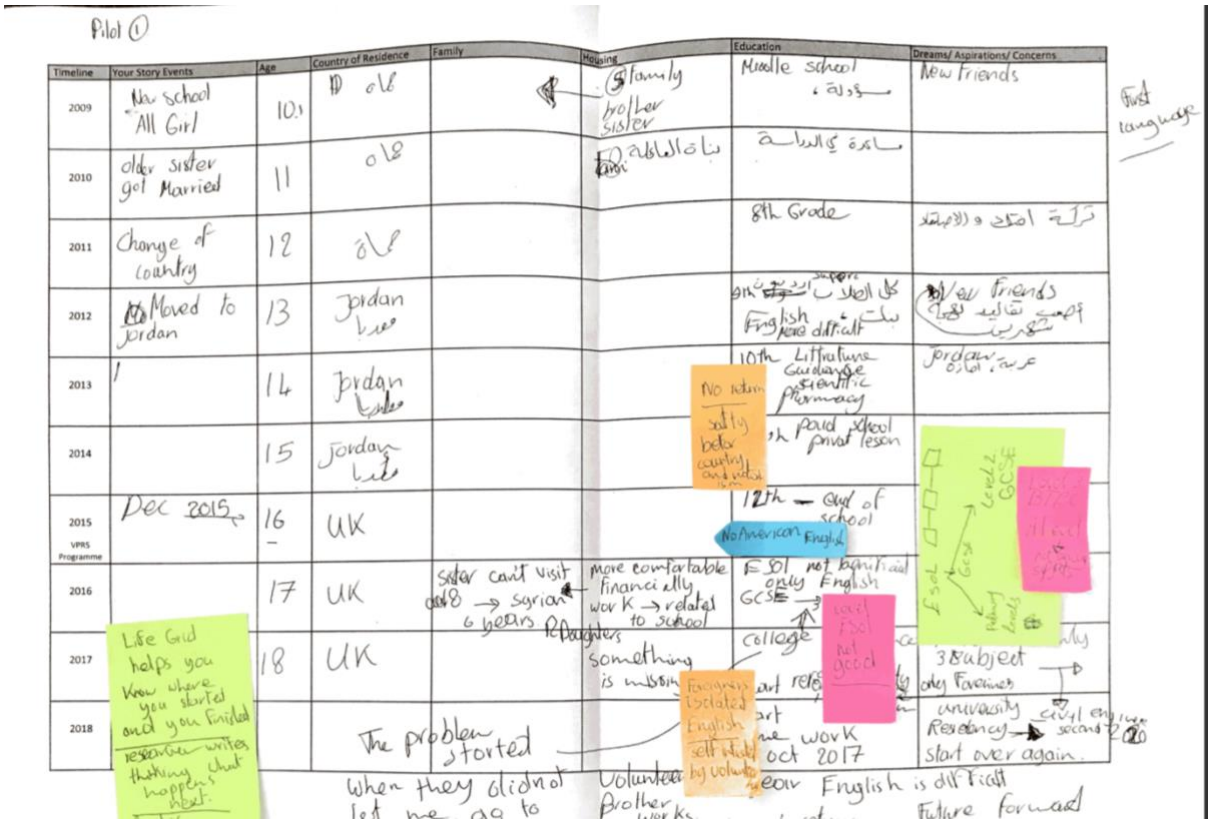
*Table 1: Pilot study participants**

Participant 0	Haya, female, arrived in the UK aged 18 as an international student.
Participant 1	Nour, female, arrived in the UK aged 16 with her family as part of the VPRS programme.
Participant 2	Anouar, male, arrived in the UK aged 13 with his family as part of the VPRS programme.
Participant 3	Yousef, male, arrived in the UK aged 11 with his family as part of the VPRS programme.
Participant 4	Rahaf, female, arrived in the UK aged 12 with her family as part of the VPRS programme.
Participant 5	Ibrahim, male, arrived in the UK aged 11 with his family as part of the VPRS programme.

*Participants' names in the table above are pseudonyms chosen by them at the beginning of the interview process

After every interview, changes were made to the design of the life grid. My own participation resulted in me adding a further column titled ‘dreams, concerns and aspirations', as the original design did not trigger my thinking on this at the time. The column was added to initiate a discussion about participants’ personal emotions when certain events occurred in their journeys.

Figure 8: Example life grid of Nour



After the first two interviews, the design did not change drastically, but minor amendments were made to merge some columns and widen others. Another addition to the grid was the column labelled ‘work’ because it was discussed by a few participants.

5.3.3.2 Data collection via the life grid

The grid as a tool facilitated the interviews in different ways depending on the age of the participant. The grid was mainly used as a visual navigator in all the interviews, a ‘compass’ for both the interviewer and interviewee. Although the young people did not show interest in writing a lot, it proved helpful when they described specific events, for example in

discussing the living spaces throughout the journey, thinking about specific events in different years, and reflecting on dreams and aspirations at different points of their journeys. The grid was also beneficial in breaking the physical barrier of a traditional interview where the interviewer sits on opposite side to the interviewee. Eder & Fingerson (2003) have recommended that researchers do not treat interviews with young people as formal interviews and have emphasised that the informality of the life grid approach and setting creates a more natural context. During the interviews, it was necessary for me to sit next to the participants so that we were able to read or write together. Additionally, an unexpected benefit of the grid was the impact it had on my identity as a researcher when I met the families and young people. From my own perspective, it helped give the interview process credibility and distinguish it from a casual conversation.

Lessons learned

The pilot study was important in that it not only helped inform the research design, but also enhanced my interview technique and taught me pivotal lessons about qualitative field work with young people.

Breaking the ice: This issue occurred in all five pilot interviews. At first, the young people were very hesitant to start talking. However, I used the dates on life grid to facilitate a conversation through basic questions about their age, their birthday and other cultural events and holidays. Moving forward from the pilot study, I began the rest of my interviews with similar simple questions about participants' birthdays, favourite foods or hobbies. The following opening statement was particularly helpful in encouraging the storytelling element in the interviews and was extremely beneficial with the two youngest participants:

Imagine you are listening to a story about your life.

How does it start, where and when?

It is important to note that while the above challenge was common in all five interviews, I learned that every interview is unique and, by being flexible and responsive as a

researcher, I could create a positive and safe environment for young people to narrate their stories.

The open-ended nature of the life grid: This element made it easy to listen to and write about the different topics that the youngsters raised as they spoke about their lives. Although Abbas et al. (2013) recommend that researchers fill in parts of the life grid prior to the interview, in my own research, an empty grid contributed to the flexibility of the tool. It was also more suited to the overarching inclusive aims of the study.

Children at work: An example of the open-endedness of the life grid – and therefore openness of the interview structure – is that two of the young people decided to discuss their work experiences in Jordan. Work had not been mentioned on the grid as an area of investigation, even though child labour had emerged in the literature review. My lack of inclusion of this topic demonstrates how my academic privileged background had obscured my view on what was significant in the participants' educational journeys (Wilson et al., 2007).

Dealing with traumatic experiences: Statements about violence and losing family members during the war emerged in the participants' stories. Despite the fact that I had expected and written about this possibility in my ethics form, listening to these stories while the storytellers sat physically next to me feeling upset, brought a different dimension to my researcher identity and the interview process. My own sadness came to the forefront and merged with a recognition of their suffering at such a young age, and this often made me speechless for a few minutes. In these moments, I realised that this silence was exactly what was needed to give them the space to disclose. While the older participant was able to move more easily on to another event and story, it was my ethical responsibility not to circle to back to this event as I was aware that it brought her discomfort. When young Yousef stopped speaking for a longer period than normal, however, I felt the need to bring his good memories back to the fore.

Reciprocity via the cathartic element of the narrative interview: Both Yousef and Rahaf elaborated on how they felt about participating in this pilot study and made it known that the experience was cathartic for the two of them at least. Yousef laughed nostalgically when narrating specific events in his story. He had pride in all of his

achievements, from being chosen for the football team first, to making new friends and, most importantly for him, being appreciated at work. 'You made me remember the good things,' Yousef stated. Rahaf, meanwhile, felt shy about recognising her resilience and academic achievements in her new school where teachers praised her constantly. Her parents proudly shouted this as we were talking in the corner of their living room. 'This made me go back to good times and things,' Rahaf remarked.

One research tool does not fit all: My fifth and final interview with Ibrahim amplified the essence of qualitative social inquiry. It demonstrated that one research tool is not inherently superior to another. While the life grid mitigated against certain challenges, it created obstacles for one particular participant. Ibrahim has a visual impairment which makes a visual tool one of the most unsuitable research tools possible. Admittedly, I did not directly ask on my participant information sheet whether the child required any specific arrangements for reading or writing. Despite this unforeseen challenge, the research aims, my knowledge of the topic and the flexibility of qualitative research made it easy for me to discard the life grid and conduct a more traditional qualitative interview with Ibrahim. Indeed, if I had known, I would have prepared other activities to make the interview more suitable for his age and additional needs, as recommended by Eder and Fingerson (2003). As a result of this, the consent form for the main study was updated to ask parents to disclose their children's special needs, where relevant.

5.3.4 Contextual setting

The context of forced migration is complex and versatile. Even though this research is situated within this context, the snowballing sampling criteria, which focused on young people with a shared nationality and similar resettlement experiences, has simplified some of those complexities. Most of my participants were approached through snowball sampling as it was easier for them to trust me and host me in their homes knowing that I also visited their friends. For two of my cases, I adopted a purposive sampling approach as 'it increases the scope or range of data exposed, as well as the likelihood that the full array of multiple realities will be uncovered' (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 40). It is worth noting that those two participants lived in different transit countries (see table of participants below, noting most of the young people were in transit in Lebanon and Jordan). I also sought the participation of young people of different ages and genders. The target group of young people from

which I drew this sample, had been resettled via the VPRS programme described in Chapter 2. The VPRS had five years to resettle a targeted number of Syrian refugees. Families arrived in UK cities in cohorts at different times, starting in 2015. With these circumstances in mind, and considering the longitudinal nature of this research, I concluded that the arrival age would be the most appropriate selection method. All my research participants arrived in the UK between the ages of 11 and 18. Their unique journeys meant they all developed an understanding of the impact of 'the figure of the migrant' (Nail, 2015) on their identities and social worlds.

To add depth to my context in Chapter 2 with regards to the VPRS policy analysis, I interviewed one of the resettlement officers at the refugee forum who was a case officer for families resettling via the VPRS. The interview was carried out online due to COVID-19 restrictions. I emailed him with my research information sheet and consent form further to a previous encounter at the refugee forum where I introduced myself and my research. We scheduled a Zoom interview, and it was recorded. The interview schedule was planned around the indicators of integration as published by the Home Office (Home Office, 2019). The interview data was presented in Chapter 2 as part of the VPRS policy analysis section.

The following table contains descriptive information about the young people involved in this study, phase one.

Table 2: Phase one life grid interview youth participants

	Age*	Gender	Left Syria	Resettlement Year	Transit Country	Interviewed
Nour	18	F	2012	2016	Jordan	May 2018
Anouar	14	M	2012	2016	Jordan	May 2018
Yousef	12	M	2012	2016	Jordan	May 2018
Rahaf	14	F	2013	2016	Jordan	July 2018
Ibrahim	12	M	2013	2016	Jordan	July 2018
Pela	13	F	2015	2018	Kurdish region of Iraq	Apr 2019
Jano	15	M	2015	2018	Kurdish region of Iraq	Apr 2019
Jouri	14	F	2013	2016	Lebanon	Aug 2019

Jimmy	12	M	2013	2016	Lebanon	Aug 2019
Carrie	11	F	2013	2016	Jordan	Sep 2019
Bilal	15	M	2013	2016	Jordan	Sep 2019
Omar	15	M	2013	2016	Lebanon	Sep 2019
Killwa	13	M	2013	2016	Lebanon	Sep 2019
Sandi	18	F	2013	2016	Lebanon	Oct 2019
Jack	11	M	2013	2016	Jordan	Oct 2019
Jewel	18	F	2013	2019	Egypt	Mar 2020

*Age when interviewed

In this phase, I conducted 16 interviews, of which five were the pilot study interviews. The duration of these interviews varied between 20 to 50 minutes. Most of my interviews were at the participants' family homes, apart from two which took place in a quiet area of a public space. Young people were offered the choice of speaking in English or Arabic, and most opted for Arabic with the exception of Jouri, Jimmy, and Carrie. Interviews were recorded and fieldnotes included personal reflections, observations and occasionally notes from interactions with parents.

5.3.5 Phase two: Collective case studies

The data in the phase two came from the lived experiences of five focal youths who agreed to be involved beyond phase one. All five youngsters continued to engage with me for different durations, on multiple occasions and in different communication styles. With all five, I conducted the life grid interview in phase one, visited their homes, communicated with their parents, and conducted semi-structured follow-up interviews (see appendix 4). I decided not to record my conversation with parents to preserve the organic nature of my home visit. I did however take notes, when possible, with their permission. The table below offers a description of the focal youths in phase two of the research.

Table 3: Phase two collective case studies of five participants

	Age*	Gender	Transit Country	Description of involvement in the research
Nour	18	F	Jordan	May 2018 Life grid interview June 2019 Home visit Aug 2019 Women's gathering celebrating her university place Jun 2020 Semi-structured interview – online **Nour and I continue to meet to discuss her progress at university, work etc…*
Yousef	12	M	Jordan	May 2018 Life grid interview Feb 2020 Home Visit Jun 2020 Semi-structured interview -online **Yousef's mother continues to contact me for details on school matters and if her children need any help with school work*
Jano	15	M	Kurdish region of Iraq	Apr 2019 Jan 2020 Home Visit Jun 2020 Semi-structured interview – phone
Jimmy	12	M	Lebanon	Aug 2019 Dec 2019 Home visit Mar 2020 Two school meetings Jun 2020 Semi-structured interview – online
Jewel	18	F	Egypt	Mar 2020 Life grid interview April 2020 Home visit Jun 2020 Semi-structured interview – online July 2020 University application support August 2020 University interview preparation

Jewel and I continue to communicate; she updates me about her progress at university and often sends me warm wishes on public occasions such as Eid

*Age when first interviewed

In this phase, in addition to the semi-structured interviews, fieldnotes from phase two included reflections, observations, notes from conversations during interactions (see table above regarding home visits, community gatherings, school meetings). Along with fieldnotes from observations from home visits, this phase involved engagement in informal conversations and messages with mothers. I also recorded my personal reflections during the data collection period as well as notes from engaging in activities within the Syrian community and volunteering activities with refugees and migrants in the city. This has been helpful in allowing me to be more critical of my own biases and personal assumptions. The narrative, longitudinal, fluid, and organic characteristics of this qualitative data granted the participants flexibility and adaptability over the inevitable changes of the social world. A longitudinal study approach was employed to vividly examine the lives of the young people over time.

5.4 Ethical consideration

This research followed the BERA guidelines, and the work was approved by the School of Education Ethics Committee at the University of Nottingham. All my participants and their families gave their informed consent (see project information sheet and consent form in (appendix 1). The ethical consideration of this work is bound by the epistemological and methodological understandings that underpin this research. According to Sikes (2010) 'it is almost unethical to offer a version of someone's life, without making clear the nature of the gaze that is being brought to bear upon it' (ibid, p.13). In addition to the former paragraph and the Preface, I acknowledge that my migration journey is instrumental to this work and my identity facilitated my involvement within the community, which made negotiating access and obtaining informed consent less challenging. The nature of the background of the refugees raises ethical concerns represented by the issues related to refugees as described in the literature, namely, the possibility of the young people discussing issues

related to mental health, deprivation, violence and disrupted social networks. The latter increases the emphasis on the 'vulnerability', which was intended to be mitigated against through the research methodology, design and conduct. The design and research tools discussed will help the respondents avoid certain periods of time or phases of their lives which may be sensitive in their perspective. Being mindful to the power dynamic of research on marginalised vulnerable people is central to the ethical conduct of the researcher. The co-production of the 'Life-Grid' reduces the disparity of power as it is an approach to data generation that empowers participants (Wilson et al., 2007). The longitudinal case study allows for the social relationships to be built on trust. Hopefully through the multiple visits and interviews, pupils and parents begin to feel more comfortable and develop a deeper understanding of the research process and the work created through their narratives, stories, and migration journeys.

Unfamiliarity with the concept of research and informed consent have been acknowledged and addressed during the process of obtaining ethical approval for my field work. Both concepts are products of Western values, so further explanations and culturally relevant definitions were to be provided for participants. The consent was established through negotiation and explanation with the participants and their parents in a face-to-face meeting prior to scheduling the interview to complete the life grid with the young participants.

The risk of 'Advocacy Research' is connected to both the topic and my identity as a Syrian forcibly displaced. The awareness of such risk will mitigate against it. Additionally, reflexivity is imbedded in each phase of research, to help me recognise my identity and act responsibly with willingness to identify my authority, the imbalance of power by contesting inherited values and personal knowledge. Collecting data from refugees raises other ethical issues in relation to the content of the information disclosed, which may include experiences of trauma. The participants were given a choice between English and Arabic, and they were encouraged to speak in their native language, which helped them feel at ease. The narrative and storytelling approach was adopted in the hope that the young people would benefit from being listened to and find comfort in speaking about the obstacles they faced and overcame.

5.4.1 Ethical responsibility via reciprocity

Researching in the context of forced migration particularly, researchers often find themselves feeling the 'guilt' (Wu, 2019) over being funded to conduct the research with participants who are volunteering their time or sometimes being paid much less compared to researchers. In this research, accepting the imbalance of resources, I decided that I had to give back, thus, reciprocity is embedded within this research. I recognise the importance of financial incentives to encourage participation in the research, especially for refugees residing in transit camps and transit countries where the welfare system is non-existent and humanitarian aid agencies' support is often limited to emergency assistance. It is important to broaden the concept of reciprocity in forced migration related research. The value of monetary contribution to the young people involved in research, especially those in pre-resettlement conditions, has its merits. However, wider reciprocity practices in the post-resettlement context go beyond the immediate needs and even the individuals themselves. I adopted the volunteering approach for reciprocity, volunteering in charities serving asylum seekers and refugees. This is an approach that was appropriate when individual incentives and rewards were not deemed appropriate for many reasons, for example given the age of participants. This hopes to raise consciousness about the responsibility of researchers towards the communities they are researching, proposing that reciprocity does not have to be only limited to the participants' themselves. The issues discussed in this work go beyond the participants or Syrians. It is important that we accept responsibility for the global issue, especially to fill in gaps recognised by the research itself, such as teaching language (Phillimore, 2011) and guidance. Commitment to a few hours weekly is a steppingstone towards a collegial effort to address the gaps in researcher skills. My aim is to urge others to establish methods of reciprocity at the core of their research to narrow the wide gap between the researched and researcher.

In addition to the above, volunteering in the field allowed me to record reflections and observations directly related to this research and allowed me to be more critical of my assumptions and biases by expanding my lens, engaging with young, forced migrants from different parts of the world. This reciprocity strand of this research allowed me to overcome the 'guilt and resource imbalances' (Wu, 2019), as well as the hopelessness I sometimes experienced knowing that I am limited in how much I can support in a world of unequal

opportunities, especially for the Global South and forced migrants. The table below illustrates my volunteering activities during this research:

Table 4: Table illustrating reciprocity activities

Reciprocity activities	Duration	Details
ESOL teacher Refugee Forum	8 weeks	1.5 hours weekly Teaching English to a newly arrived Syrian family
Arabic GCSE teacher Local education provision for new arrivals	Ongoing	1 hour weekly Year 2019: 3 students passed Arabic GCSE Year 2020: 4 students had exams cancelled due to Covid-19 Year 2021: 5 students passed teacher assessment due to Covid-19 Year 2022: 4 students passed Arabic GCSE Year 2023: 6 students (pending exams)
Homework support	6 weeks	2 hours weekly Supporting the younger sister of one of my participants in reading and English homework
Guidance/University application support	Ad-hoc	Supported 5 students. 4 secured a place at university (2 participants, older brother of one of the participants, friend of a participant)

I recorded the reflections related to this research from my interactions with young people with forced migration backgrounds. The diverse ways in which I immersed myself in these reciprocity activities within the figured world of mobility allowed a more conscious reflective practice. Sometimes I recorded incidents that challenged my assumptions or that of empirical research. For example, the rationale for teaching newly arrived young people a language they have been previously taught stems from an asset-based approach that allows young people to achieve some form of recognition of their previously acquired knowledge or skills. More specifically, during the years I taught Arabic GCSE, I noticed that giving young

people the opportunity to learn Arabic and sit their Arabic GCSE exam has brought most of the young people I taught a sense of achievement and confidence. However, one student refused to join the class. He was not interested in being part of the Arabic class group, nor interested in gaining the GCSE in Arabic. In this case, it was important to pay attention to the past and present conditions in which the language 'Arabic' has been perceived by the young person. This demands an in-depth analysis of the personal history of this young person in relation to why, how and when he learned Arabic, to better understand in this instance why the student did not join the class.

5.4.2 Translation and language implication

Language has many influences on this work. English is not the first language of the participants; therefore all data collection materials were translated into Arabic. Most interviews were conducted in Arabic as well, apart from those with a few younger children who were proud of their English skills and opted for English. The level of literacy of some young people was low, even in their first language, due to their disrupted educational experiences. Therefore, I decided not to translate the life grid table, but interpreted it in Arabic during our conversations, referring to both English and Arabic titles. This visual aid helped respondents narrate their life experiences and it gave them an outline of the full interview. Temple and Edwards (2002) argue that interpreting and translation are not neutral. I have chosen a transcription process that will involve listening in Arabic and transcribing in English to cut down on the different layers of translation and allow the story to hold a priority over the individual words.

This research is shaped by the lived experiences of the young people, unveiled through their narrative of stories and incidents, which signifies the empowerment of children's voices that are often dismissed. This focus requires a special attention to the critical issues of representation. According to Spyrou (2011), accessing children's voices is not itself an act to destabilise the power given to adults by children, it is the reflexive practice on the processes that produces the 'authentic' voices. The author adds that it is important to acknowledge that the situated character of children's voices can promote new productive ways of representing children. In the same vein, James (2007) states 'authenticity must be interrogated, not assumed' (James, 2007, p. 265). She also problematises the simple use of quotes from children to illustrate an argument, as these are specifically chosen by the

researcher, and it is important for all researchers to attend to the culture of children's voices. The figured world theoretical framework and methods used to gather and present the data, such as the narrative pen portraits in Chapter 7, allow for the young people's culture to be presented not only to aid the researcher in situating the character of the young people involved to reflect on their practice, but also to situate their voice for the readers.

I created data files for each young person, and these files included descriptive information about the young person, life grid interview notes and transcripts (phases one and two). Most of my interviews were conducted in Arabic. As a native Syrian and Arabic speaker, this research benefited from my familiarity of the language and the related cultural terms, and this in turn aided me in building rapport and trust (Due et al., 2014, p. 213). For those Arabic interviews, I listened to the audio file and translated it into English as I was transcribing. I then verified one transcribed interview with the young person to make sure I was able to capture the narrative in English. While this practice was useful for this participant and ensured that meaning had not been lost by my translation, I was not able to verify the rest due to their modest English language abilities. As for the English interviews, I transcribed those instantly. Although I fully transcribed and translated six interviews, the translating and transcribing of all my data was a lengthy process with little value. I used my life grid data to map out extracts from the recordings onto the different dimensions such as housing and education (the headings of the life grid). I also transcribed and translated the 'utterances', which are statements made by the young people that reflect their beliefs, values, and assumptions about the world (Holland et al., 1998). Throughout the data analysis process, I returned to the original Arabic recordings to maintain a connection with the data in its original form.

5.5 Engaging with the theoretical framework

This longitudinal study drew on data from young people at different points in time and using multiple methods to enhance the credibility of the findings. The reflective journal and reciprocity activities have also allowed for a more transparent interpretive process. Furthermore, understanding how the figured world of mobility for resettled refugees prevails and how it influences and is influenced by the identities of the young people

involved in this research, it is necessary to understand the elements that are instrumental in the theory which influenced the data analysis process.

Table 5: Description of data linked to the theoretical framework

The life grid interviews data	Description of data linked to the theoretical framework
Age Country of residences Story event	▪ general descriptive information
Social relationships Family Friendships	▪ utterances on frames of meaning that influence lived experiences ▪ cultural models from present and past experiences that produce [stenotypes] ▪ artefacts of resumption of ordinary life, both physical and emotional (safety, belonging, succeeding) ▪ taking up a social position ▪ instances of self-authoring within the frames of meaning ▪ acts of improvisation responding to constraints (cultural, social, legal) ▪ burdened mobility experiences ▪ 'inverted instances', describing experiences where what was expected was contradictory to what was experienced
Housing Living spaces pre-resettlement Living spaces post-resettlement	
Education Educational experiences pre-resettlement Educational experiences post-resettlement	
Dreams Aspiration Concerns	
Focal youth case studies	
Yousef	▪ recognition while working – child labour ▪ gendered roles
Jano	▪ disability and exclusion
Nour	▪ the intersection of gender and education
Jimmy	▪ recognition in school – (artefact: football medals) ▪ exclusion
Jewel	▪ access to higher education – (artefact: formal certifications)

5.6 Analysing the data

From the earliest stages of this research, a pattern had been identified through the participants' journey trails. They began in Syria, 'home country'. They moved to a 'transit country', and as mentioned in Chapter 2, the aim of the VPRS programme is to resettle refugees from neighbouring countries to Syria, as they have endured a large influx of refugees. Then, the participants were resettled in the UK with the intention that it will be a 'new home country'. The trails into these three different spaces represent much more than physical places and locations. These spaces are relational to set conditions, political, social and cultural. By naming these spaces, it was possible to illustrate the imposed challenges, particularly pre- and post-resettlement. It was also possible to identify theoretical elements such as cultural models, frames of meaning, and artefacts in the young people's narratives, bringing their lived experiences to the forefront of this research. Recursive interaction with the data guided the data analysis process.

Table 6: Evidence source summary

Evidence source summary		
Phase 1	Phase 2	Reciprocity activities
18 life grid notes	5 focal youths' lived experiences	Personal reflections
Recorded interviews	Personal reflections Observation notes	Notes from interactions and incidents with young people from forced migration backgrounds
Personal reflection	Semi-structured interviews Notes from conversations with mothers	

5.6.1 Thematic analysis

Thematic coding has been implemented through an interpretive process of data examination, reflexive practice, and cross-referencing with the theoretical framework. The initial steps of this coding involved extracting themes from the life grids collected during the

first phase of the research, as well as examples of theoretical concepts found in the data such as Nail's (2015) expulsion, oscillation and economic and legal powers, and from Holland et al. (1998)'s cultural models, utterances, frames of meaning and artefacts. Coding themes acted as indicators to guide my endeavour to answer the three questions.

For analysing the data (table 6), I first examined the life grid data themes. This involved: first, collating the coded lived experiences under each theme, for example, the theme educational experiences pre-resettlement includes exclusion from education, safety concerns for girls and child labour for boys; second, identifying artefacts for the resumption of ordinary life (Kohli, 2014), such as the home as an artefact for hospitality; third, recorded utterances, cultural models and fames of meaning under the conceptual themes of positional identity, self-authoring and improvisation, for example, recognising the negativity of corporal punishment even though it is common as an act of improvisation (rejecting the oppression).

Then, I examined the longitudinal data from the lived experiences of five focal youths. Drawing on prior cultural knowledge, I identified cultural models such as: the mentality that marriage is more important than education for girls; that male teachers are better than female teachers because female teachers are less able to control the class (this interpretation by one of the young people is negotiated through the frame of meaning of patriarchy); social positioning in relation to nationality and accent; and being identified as a Syrian in school while in a transit country.

From analysing the data in this way, I explored the different aspects of their lives in their home countries, transit countries and new home countries, offering an extensive examination of their lived experiences and reflecting the prevalent experiences within the figured world of mobility. I discovered that the youths positioned themselves in relation to society, culture, gender, and discourses within the figured world. These positions have been sustained or rejected through self-authoring acts and improvisational responses to the imposed constraints.

I have also used the table below after two of my findings chapters (Chapter 6 and 7) to summarise the data from phase one and two. The tables (8 and 9) demonstrate the key points discussed in the chapters and highlight how the themes emerged and how these contribute to the configuration of artefacts in Chapter 8.

Table 7: Theoretical concepts to demonstrate the key findings

	Positional Identity	Instances of self-authoring	Acts of Improvisation	The artefacts of being 'ordinary'
Yousef				
Jano				
Jewel				
Jimmy				
Nour				

5.7 Conclusion

The findings will be presented in three different chapters: Chapters 6, 7 and 8. Chapter 6 will present the gathered data in phase one, living spaces pre- and post-resettlement, education pre- and post-resettlement, social relationships (family and friendships), and future aspirations. Chapter 7 offers five pen portraits of each of the focal youths who were involved in the research beyond phase one. Chapter 8 will discuss the artefacts of ordinary life which represent feeling safe, having a sense of belonging, and succeeding.

The following chapters aim to engage with the lives of young migrant people in different ways. The longitudinal data makes it possible for these chapters to explore their lives in depth, presenting the findings in multiple ways, as pen portraits, extracts from interviews, information on the life grid, observations, and occasionally statements by family members. In some instances, I draw on fieldnotes and personal reflections of being and engaging with young people in the world of mobility to illustrate the depth to which positionality is relevant. Using the figured worlds theoretical framework (Holland et al., 1998), these chapters unpack the ways the social and cultural worlds are bound to influence their identities, and seek to answer the research questions:

1. In what ways does the migration journey impact the production of identity for resettled young Syrian refugees?

2. How do resettled young Syrian refugees navigate educational spaces?

3. How can education enable/disable young people in the context of forced migration?

To do this, I present the findings across three chapters:

Chapter 6: The lived experience of young people within the figured world of mobility

Chapter 7: The figured world of mobility and histories

Chapter 8: The interpretation of artefacts in the figured world of mobility

Following the results chapters, Chapter 9 will discuss the findings through Holland et al. (1998)'s concepts of positional identity, self-authoring, and improvisation to unravel the complexity of identity production.

Chapter 9: Identity production within the figured world of mobility

This final chapter summarises the findings and discussions and addresses the research questions mentioned above.

6 Chapter 6: The lived experience of young people within the figured world of mobility

6.1 Introduction:

The concept of the figured world relies on people's lived experiences of interacting within a sociocultural world. This research explores interpretations of the participants' actions and values to evoke consideration for certain aspects of the resettled young people's lives that gain significance. This chapter focuses on statements from our conversations during the life grid interview. Each expression signifies the young people's understanding of the roles and expectations associated with housing, social relationships, education, and their future aspirations. According to Holland et al. (1998), statements are not unmediated individual expressions of thoughts or ideas, but are formed within the sociocultural figured world in which they occur.

6.2 Housing

Housing and living accommodation are an important dimension of young people's lives, and as forced migrants, the complexity of this dimension unfolds. The physicality of having a home has been established as a right, according to the universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 25, 'everyone has the right to housing' (UNHCR, 2015). Housing was an area explored as part of the life grid interviews, and the young people spoke about their housing pre- and post-resettlement and emphasised the importance of having a home. However, the emotional essence of what constitutes a home is highly cultural. There is indeed a difference between what the home represents in the culture of England, compared to that of Syria. Homes function in different ways and, to understand what a 'home' is for resettled young refugees, it is crucial to examine these functions. The young people involved in this research have resided in the towns/cities where they were born, and their grandparents, uncles and cousins were all within a short distance from this home. As the young people talked about homes, they described it as 'beitna'[3]. None of them described the home as 'my home'. There was collective sense in the description of the home.

[3] translates in English to 'our home'

> ‘Home is also a place of relocating reliable relationships and establishing reciprocity, where customs and practices from the past can be brought back to life if they bring comfort.’ (Kohli, 2011, p.312)

6.2.1 Living space pre-resettlement

Young people described the experience of leaving their homes in Syria as bitter. Following this, they described a lengthy phase in transit where most of the young people shared small living spaces, moved multiple times, and often lived in atrocious conditions. Being in close proximity to ‘extended family’ was the norm in Syria for the young people involved in this research. Overall, young people spoke fondly about their homes in Syria, recognising that being around grandparents, uncles and cousins, as well as knowing the neighbours, is central to what constitutes the ordinary home for resettled Syrian youths.

Rahaf, a girl of fourteen years old, associated freedom with a familiar environment; for Rahaf, the unknown was restraining.

> *Rahaf: In your country you have your freedom, your uncles, aunts, cousins and grandparents are nearby. Your home is bigger, more space, you can go out on the street freely without feeling like a foreigner.*

She constructed the meaning of freedom based on her ability to move in a community and a physical space where she felt safe by the virtue of being part of a big family. Without familiarity of the physical space, young people’s perception of safety is threatened. They are forced out of their home countries and everything that is familiar to them, seeking safety in the unknown and unfamiliar. In Rahaf’s case, she moved from her war-torn city Daraa to Jordan, and three years later she was resettled in England. By losing the familiar, she highlighted the freedom within being un-mobile or, in other words, the sense of freedom experienced by the non-migrant. Everything in the space was familiar, she was recognised. Safety is a prerequisite for the resumption of ordinary life (Kohli, 2011), and it is through familiarity that young people can become accustomed to new spaces and feel connected. Rahaf’s description of freedom tied to the familiarity of place brings an important dimension to the concept of ‘freedom’, a dimension which is often taken for granted when familiarity and certainty are the norm. Rahaf does more than position herself in the safety of the familiarity of the place. She unpicks the concept of freedom and connects it to an achievable

goal of familiarity of place that in turn links to safety as an artefact. This freedom and safety are then figured within her world through familiarity of place. Rahaf's use of freedom is related to safety, as she refers to wandering the streets free. This account is not only about the familiarity of the physical space, but also related to the social dimension of figured worlds to be understood from the perspective of stasis. Free movement in a given physical space is conditional to recognising and being recognised by the surroundings. This unpacks belonging and allows us to understand that to belong is to know and to be known, therefore, it could only happen over time.

Omar connected living in his home country with privilege. For Omar, you are un-privileged when you leave your home country. His experience unpacks the concept I described as 'burdened mobility':

> *Omar: In our home in Syria, we were good, privileged. And we are good here, as in Syria. In Syria, everything was fine, I went to school, our family and all relatives lived in the same neighbourhood, all uncles lived nearby, we were close in a way you cannot imagine. It was an extremely joyous feeling. Then, when we moved to Lebanon, we did not enjoy it at all, faced lots of difficulties, joblessness, discrimination. For five years we had to live in unfinished houses. Once we rented a finished place, but again had to leave it due to high cost.*

This privilege goes beyond the home as a physical space: it is also a social and emotional space, and in the heart of this community are relatives. Omar described the houses as unfinished houses, indicating how housing in transit is unfit for living. The economic pressure on families in transit countries does not allow them to find appropriate living spaces, which puts strain on the mobility journey.

Killwa, a name he chose based on his favourite video game character, spoke about their house in Syria, remembering instances that made him smile and others that made him annoyed.

> Do you have any memories of Syria?
>
> *Killwa: Yes, I remember our street, the house, the balcony door, which was broken. We put a notebook to cover it (giggling).*
>
> Do you remember how it got broken?
>
> *Killwa: No.*

What else do you remember about the house?

Killwa: My room, our room. I had a small bed, my parents never bought me a bigger one.

I remember we had three rooms, and a living room, kitchen, bathroom.

So, you remember the house well. What other memories do you have of your time in Syria?

Killwa: We had a farm, I used to go there with my cousins. There was blackberry trees we used to eat from. Sometimes we were playing with horses, riding the horses with sticks together.

You moved to Lebanon, right? What do you remember about the house there?

Killwa: We changed more than six houses there. But the first one had two bedrooms, a living room, a kitchen. It was too expensive; we didn't last two months in it.

Moving from one house to another was common for the young people involved in this research, especially in transit. Studies (Dryden-Peterson, 2015; Pritchard et al., 2019) recognise the challenges linked to multiple housing moves experienced by forced migrants and acknowledge the pressures it creates for families and the ripple effect it then has on education, mental health, social relationships and their overall livelihood opportunities.

6.2.2 Living space post-resettlement: an unrealised social space

In England, young people's homes have been physically practical, however, they lacked the emotional comfort of being in proximity to family members. Also, the limited space of their homes in England hindered establishing new relationships and connections in their new communities.

How do you find the house here in England?

Killwa: It frustrates me. It's small. When my friend comes, there is no space for us to hang out. Rooms are small, kitchen is cold...

The social dimensions of the living spaces are fundamental for youths to gain the capacity for connecting with others, building relationships, and 'establishing reciprocity' (Kohli, 2011). For young people and their families, the home is the space to be shared with others.

When I visited their homes, the living room was fitted with as many seating places as possible, signifying the importance to hospitality and reciprocity for them.

6.3 Social relationships

Young people valued social relationships when discussing living spaces and education. As mentioned earlier, living amongst uncles, grandparents and cousins was the norm. Family for the youths involved in this research, is what Western anthropologists describe as an 'extended family', the words signifying that members of the extended family are somehow more distant than a family which includes parents and siblings.

6.3.1 The fallacy of extended family

Resettlement schemes often overlook the entanglements within families and assume that the parents of children are their sole carers. Turner (2020) raises an important question about who gets to be family in Britain in a sense which accords them rights and the state recognition of being family. The notion of family for resettled young Syrian refugees goes beyond the nuclear family. Significantly, the conversations with the young people unveiled the great loss they experienced being away from their grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins. Jouri, who lived with her grandparents when in Syria, stated:

> Tell me about your time in Syria.
>
> *Jouri: I loved Syria because the thing is I didn't live with parents. I lived with my grandparents. My mom had my brother soon after having me. So, she couldn't take care of both of us, so she sent me to her parents. I loved it there; I was the only child. So, I was very special and popular.*
>
> When you moved to Lebanon your grandparents moved with your parents?
>
> *Jouri: No, they stayed in Syria. If I had a choice between my parents and my grandparents, I would choose my grandparents.*

Jouri's extract shows the extent to which her grandparents were part of her life, and leaving Syria meant she lost her primary carers. The responsibility of raising children is not solely the parents' responsibility, and for both resettled parents and young people, this highlights how much their daily lives have changed by not having their whole family around them.

6.3.2 The importance of friendships

Friendships emerged in almost all our conversation about schooling. The social relationships with the participants' peers have been used as an indicator of their adjustment to school, which will be illustrated in detail in Chapter 7. The section on education illustrates how, for young people, making friends is central to their educational experiences. However, while making friends is almost always important for young people throughout their journeys, according to Killwa, friendship as a social relationship is complex because it is highly cultural.

> Tell me about your school here (England)?
> *Killwa: It is a good one, nothing special. But friends are a bit different here, not like those I used to have in Syria. One day we are together and fine, the next day they act like we don't know each other. I don't like it here. In Syria, once I got to know someone, it cannot be undone. I have friends here, but I don't consider them my real friends.*

Killwa explained an evident difference in the way boys and girls approach each other in English schools compared to his previous schooling experience. Killwa spoke of his identity as a 'mysterious' boy whose engagement with friends at school is based on his privacy. His light hair and fair skin granted him invisibility with pupils at school who made fun of Islam and Muslims (his religion).

> *Killwa: Because I look like them, it never occurred to them to ask me; they think all white people are the same.*

He loves his religion but understands that he has the privilege of not being identified as 'Muslim', and he is taking advantage of the inclusion granted to him by his appearance.

6.4 Education

The ways young people spoke about their educational experiences varied. Some were interested in talking about their education post-resettlement more than pre-resettlement, for they could only either vaguely remember their schooling in Syria, or they had not attended school for long/at all before the conflict. As for the pre-resettlement, in-transit experiences, they were more complex, not only in terms of different provisions of schooling, but also the common lack of education.

> ‘Education is associated with economic growth for a country, alleviation of and moving out of conditions of poverty for families, establishment of personal stability and economic empowerment and the creation of better developed and more advanced communities.’(Maadad, 2020, p.6)

6.4.1 Educational experiences pre-resettlement

Omar spoke about education in Syria at length, and he formed his own judgement not only on his experiences of education but also on the system overall.

What do you remember about Syrian schools before war?

Omar: Honestly, I have many objections against Syrian schools. I think our country had lots of potentials, so much to act on, but the education was a total failure.

Where were you living in Syria, Damascus?

Omar: Yes, in Damascus of course. I think, in general, all Syrian schools had the same system as in Damascus. When I’ve got to live here, how students are treated, how they don’t get pressured by study and don’t have to worry about it, while in Syria the student has to study eight subjects. Here, we have to study five subjects to pass, no need to pass in all eighth grade. The point is, here the school gives more opportunities to succeed, then students can achieve more. While in Syria, more and more students failed due to the pressure, for example, a student in seventh grade has to pass all subjects, physics, chemistry, music, art, history, and geography. All that creates enormous pressure that pushes students to drop out of school and seek work opportunities.

Could you tell me more about school in Syria?

Omar: Beating, if we can talk about it …?

Yes, sure we can.

Omar: Beating made a lot of students drop out of school and seek jobs instead. Some of my friends, like one of them in third grade had told me that sixth grade would be his final stage, and his father would let him work afterwards, forcing him to stay in school just so he would not be illiterate. You see, all the beating and pressure was so discouraging. I swear, we were humiliated in school. You cannot imagine how it feels

to see the teacher, who is supposed to be teaching you, hit you in front of 30 other students, it is difficult. For a boy, to endure so much anxiety and pressure every single day is too much, every day is like a big exam, bearing volunteering into secret intelligence of pressure.*

**The secret intelligence is the MI5 or CIA equivalent in Syria.*

In this extract, Omar recognises the negativities of corporal punishment at school and analyses the consequences that this had on his well-being and the retention of his peers at school. He also focused on his expectation of teachers as figures of learning, and how their assault on students is damaging. Incidents of violence in schools in both home and neighbouring transit countries have been mentioned by the young people involved in this research and beyond (Human Rights Watch, 2016). Even though beating is very common in both Syria's state schools and in transit countries, they often asked my permission before talking about it. The young people were conscious, when it came to the corporal punishment of children in schools, that it is inappropriate. They recognised the controversy of violence against children.

Omar managed to deconstruct an issue such as school dropout and link it to the experience of humiliation of children at school. Even though corporal punishment was common, Omar does not normalise it. His identity was produced through a collection of actions of engagement within the figured world. His consciousness was raised through personal experiences and reflections from multiple educational spaces in the settings of home, transit, and new home countries. He rejects violence in education by explaining its association with young people dropping out of school. When I asked him about working whilst he was in Lebanon (his transit country), he answered:

Omar: I don't know, I didn't think of it as a thing to enjoy or not at that time, just work to be done. I had an accident there, got injured at work: my fingers got cut by the chopper I was working on. Despite that, we didn't dare to complain. Worst days of our life.

When did it happen?

Omar: In 2016 probably. But still I don't complain... you just imagine how many people die, so I look around and say 'Thank God' anyway.

Child labour is common for boys in transit countries (Salem, 2018). This experience was distressing for Omar. He was aware that many young people lost their lives working and was grateful to survive this period of his life. Despite the adversity, 'we didn't dare to complain' and 'I don't complain' Omar said. In the figured world of mobility, voices are silenced and practices such as child labour, which are deemed morally unacceptable and illegal in many countries, become visibly acceptable.

Bilal, aged 16 when we spoke, had been in England for more than three years when we met. He was shy and, although his answers were brief, he talked about the different versions of schooling in transit.

Do you remember school in Syria?

Bilal: Yes, I studied to fifth grade, until 2013. Then, we moved to Jordan.

Tell me more about it?

Bilal: It was ordinary. Nothing much to tell.

How was school in Jordan? Did you go to school there?

Bilal: In what sense you mean?

I mean was it good or bad, how different?

Bilal: It was ordinary, similar to Syrian schools

Were you in class with Jordanian students or only Syrians?

Bilal: Mixed class. There were schools for only Syrian students, and others mixed, like mine. I first started in Syrian-only school, then moved to a school with Jordanians.

Was your school a morning shift or evening?

Bilal: The first school was in the morning then, when I moved to a mixed (Syrian and Jordanian students) school, it was in the evening.

Did you have friends there?

Bilal: Yes, I had friends.

What subjects did you study?

Bilal: All of them.

Sandy, a young woman of 17, almost 18, left school in Syria because schooling for young women was viewed as risky. Even after moving to Lebanon, her family would not allow her to go to school, which meant she had limited literacy skills. She spoke freely about it.

> *Sandy: I left school in Syria when I was in third grad., I could not read and write properly. I was 'nothing' in Lebanon, not being able to read and write. My parents forbade me from going to school in Lebanon.*
>
> I asked, why?
>
> *Sandy: It was unsafe, and you know the mentality. It is through my phone (internet) and the three months I spent in the course before coming here (England), I learned to read and write in Arabic.*

The mother interrupted, saying she intended to enrol her daughter at school, but there were incidents of kidnapping and rape of young girls, and she could not let her daughter go to school. Sandy spent the three years before resettling in England at home in Lebanon with no access to any schooling. Later on, according to her mother:

> *Sandy's mother: I felt bad for her and enrolled her in literacy courses in Lebanon.*

It was nearer to the end of her time in transit when she said she learned to read and write in Arabic. In her statement '*you know the mentality*,' meant she identified with me as a female from the same background. My identity is present, my gender and nationality a part of the conversation. Internally, I know of the mentality, 'she is a girl, how much education does she really need?' The 'mentality' in this instance gains meaning by understanding it in a world where gender matters in the access of education. It is a cultural model.

Even though she was not able to access formal schooling, Sandy identified reading and writing as necessary artefacts for education and found ways to teach herself using technology (her phone and the internet). This demonstrates her ability to actively engage in undoing the feeling of 'nothingness,' by identifying the reasons behind these feelings and acting upon them with the few resources she had at the time. In her account, the perceived the safety risk as young girl prevented her from obtaining an education. The lack of safety is still one of the major reasons why many girls are unable to access education in transit countries (Human Rights Watch, 2016). The relationship between safety and literacy goes

beyond access. To understand how literacy link to well-being, it was important to interrogate well-being as a concept and understand its roots and how the concept developed historically, as well as how it is defined and constructed.

Bared of all the connotations, literacy is not being illiterate. Irradicating illiteracy was once the highest priority in education for all nations, and it is still high on the development agenda of the United Nations. According to UNESCO 2017, global literacy trends show that literacy continues to rise, reaching 86% for adults and 91% for young people (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2017). Nevertheless, disparity between countries tells a different story. In ten countries, the literacy rates are 43% or less, with the lowest literacy rate country scored at just 19.1%. These countries are also among the countries of forced migration. In Syria, at the primary level, the attendance rate stands at an impressive 98%, while literacy rates for both men and women are close to 90% (QADDOUR & SALMAN HUSAIN, 2022). Overall literacy and access to schooling were not major educational issues for the country. Primary schooling was compulsory, and the compulsory schooling age was extended to 14 in 2010.

Literacy statistics are only part of the story, however, as being illiterate not only limits the functionality of humans, but also impacts well-being. Conceptually, this study does not seek to analyse well-being nor literacy, however, Sandy's story highlights the connection between the two constructs. The ability to read and write is essential to carrying out basic responsibilities, and today basic literacy extends to digital and technological literacy. Understanding signs, public transport navigation, and a city's urban layout is important to promote feelings of safety as people navigate physical spaces. Basic needs such as access to health care or engagement in public sector matters in England requires not only English literacy, but also technological competence. Families resettled through the VPRS found themselves heavily dependent on case workers, charity volunteers, neighbours and others to decipher even basic communications from the Home Office, school, college, NHS and the job centre.

6.4.2 Educational experiences post-resettlement

Continuing our conversation about education, Bilal spoke about how school in England was different to the previous schools he had attended.

How long did it take you to start school here (England)?

Bilal: I started after Christmas break, a week later or so.

When did you arrive to UK?

Bilal: Last week of 2015.

So, in less than a month you started school.

Do you remember your first impression about the school on your first day?

Bilal: Of course, it is so different from Jordan, everything is different. The teachers, the building. It's clean here, unlike in Jordanian schools! It's much better here.

Did you start school in class with local students directly or had you been separated?

Bilal: No, first we went to school X for three weeks, only Syrians, around 10-15 people. Then after that, we got allocated each to our school Y.

How was your new school?

Bilal: Yes, good.

If you want to compare the two schools, what would you say?

Bilal: No, now it's better. In School X we didn't go for full time to school, only couple of hours, we didn't know the language so they taught us English for two/three hours.

Do you think you benefited from that time?

Bilal: So and so, caught few sentences.

Well, when you joined school Y, did you go into regular class directly?

Bilal: No, in the beginning, I went for couple of hours a day to one-on-one class, to learn language for a period of around five weeks. After that, they started to add an hour until I got full programme like other students.

So you went to attend English class and back. Any other subject? PE? Art?

Bilal: Right, only English.

For how long did this phase last?

Bilal: Five weeks.

When did you start to learn the full curriculum?

Bilal: In eighth grade, 2017. I started in grade seven, it took me around six months to reach full timetable.

What brings joy after arriving in the UK, and what is your biggest fear here?

Bilal: The best thing is that I am able to complete my education. Therefore, I am afraid to fail in my GCSE.

Bilal clearly prefers English schools to what he described earlier as 'ordinary schools' in both Syria and Jordan. This phased return approach to education is mentioned by all the young people in this research. Academic research on the education of new arrivals in the UK does not highlight this phenomenon or examine the rationale behind this approach. Bilal also highlighted the pressure he felt in relation to GCSEs. The pitfall of standardised testing is not only the high stakes attached to passing these English language-based assessments in all areas of knowledge but also, according to Park (2021):

> 'The standardised assessments not only upheld dominant indicators of success but shaped teachers' beliefs about their responsibility to immigrant youth.' (Park, 2021, p.262).

Rahaf has also spoken about the introductory classes she attended before joining school full time.

Rahaf: The school is very welcoming. They gave us an introductory period to learn about the school. But they were treating us like as we don't know anything, they started teaching us letters… we knew them… but they thought we knew nothing… but we did know the basics of English. Yes, we were taught differently because in Syria and Jordan they focus on grammar.

Her frustration stems from the approach of educating newly arrived young people. The focus of these classes on English language implied a deficit, and this approach to learning activated and sustained a sense of inferiority. In a study on refugees' education in the figured world of difference, the author explains how learners were assigned the English Language Learner (ELL) label that constructed a cultural model that configured difference to deficit (Bal, 2009, p.279). Despite Rahaf's negative positioning, she narrated her academic identity. The introductory classes did not challenge her academically, rather she expressed her academic ability by recognising that these classes were

not at an appropriate level academically, nor in her understanding of the teaching practices of her home and transit countries.

Another practice in English schools welcoming new students is 'the student buddy'. Young people praised the practice of assigning them another pupil to show them around the school in their first week.

> *Anouar: I feel the school helped me a lot. They gave me a laptop to use in class to translate and a support teacher to help me. And when I started school, I was lost; my friend Michel took me everywhere.*

It is evident from the extract above that Anouar felt welcomed at school and that he appreciated another student's help. He felt less self-conscious about needing help from a peer, compared to adult support, due to age and interest similarities.

Ibrahim explained how the school in England gave him opportunities, even though he is visually impaired, which in Syria prevented him from accessing a school. He spoke fondly of the school and mentioned that the it celebrated his achievement in mastering the English language quickly. He also felt especially proud of his ability to learn to read.

> *Ibrahim: Since I can't see, in this school, I learned how to read. I have a special teacher who helped me read braille. I touch to read.*

It is important to acknowledge the great opportunities to achieve that children can be given if they find themselves in a positive, supportive environment that recognises their needs.

The young people drew upon their struggles with language as they arrived in England, and most acquired the language relatively well over a short period of time. However, in the period between struggling with the language and its acquisition, young people spoke of bullying incidents. Although bullying is part of the schooling culture in most countries, where young people are in mono-culture settings, they are increasingly subjected to bullying based on language, appearance, and race. In a study about recently arrived migrants in the United States, Park (2020) explains how in the figured world of reception, the context of English as a second language (ESL) in classrooms is disempowering, 'because this discourse privileges English as the only language of value and power, and the only

language of schooling the category English Language Learner comes to signify a deficit,' (p.262).

> *Jack: They push me sometimes, they try to fight with me, I avoid it and tell the teachers… I do not know but some kids like trouble and they get attention for it, teachers give them more attention than the rest of us… I tell the teachers, they speak to them, but they do nothing to them as if nothing has happened to me… anyway, they stopped now.*
>
> Where these kids bothering anyone else?
>
> *Jack: They bothered me because my English is not good. When I talked, they said my English accent is not good, they tell me go and learn better English.*

According to Torrente and colleagues (2017) 'peer victimization, or being the target of aggressive behaviour from other children, has immediate and long-term effects on psychosocial maladjustment,' (Torrente, Catalina; Johnston, Brian; Starkey, Leighann; Seidman, Edward; Shivshanker, Anjuli; Weisenhorn, Nina; Annan, Jeannie; Aber, John Lawrence, 2017).

> *Omar: School is well here. Of course the first week was a bit awkward, for me and for the class. I had a strange feeling, as new student who does not speak English well, sitting in the same room, it was kind of hard. The following weeks got easier. I was approached by my classmates, they started talking to me, and I had to answer. It is then it was embarrassing, they asked me stuff, but I could not speak well to answer. At home I had to search, read, and write to be ready for the next day, until my language got better and better, and then the accent improved pretty well. I do not want to change my school, I built friendships, got used to the teachers, it took me a whole year to adapt to it.*

Omar found his footing at school. He learned English, made new friends and was able to form his own judgement on school in England in comparison to his previous experiences of school in his home country and in transit. The figured world of mobility granted him multiple points of reference in educational experience, and he puts the positive shift in his current education down to England, because his school in England made it possible for Omar to validate his values in developing his identity with higher consciousness to his experience and

to the experience of others around him. Through the validation he found courage and confidence.

6.5 Future aspirations

Young people's aspirations are not simply goals, they are desires conveying who they want to be and how they want to be perceived. Aspiring is also seeking 'the protectiveness offered by being accomplished' (Kohli, 2011, p. 320). In their aspirations, young people were seeking livelihood, economic stability, protectiveness and sometimes privileged mobility.

Omar's experiences of schooling varied greatly. He said that his parents' support and his aspirations are the reasons behind his ability to endure the challenges of school at every phase. His ability to reflect on his experiences, and on others' experiences of school, demonstrates his agency. Though Omar's future career aspiration is to be mobile, he grounds the ways we can begin to think about mobility.

> *Omar : Totally determined to obtain university degree.*
> What do you want to study in university ?
> *Omar: I don't know yet, but I'm get enthusiastic about any career that requires lots of travelling to different countries, like a pilot, though this particular occupation is pretty scary for me, it implies a lot of pressure, mistakes are fatal.*
> You shouldn't get stressed by this thought. In general, any job would require a level of responsibility on your part. The point is to do what inspires you.
> *Omar: I thought of Economics, but I am not sure it would take me places as I want. I dream of a position that will enable me to travel to 20 countries a month! That's how I want it.*

Jack, when I first met him, told me about his dreams and aspirations of being a medical doctor. He said:

> *Jack: Education in England is much better than any education I have had before, and it will help realise my dream.*

After a year, Jack still recognises that there are many and better opportunities in education in England, but his aspiration to study medicine has changed as he finds himself struggling

academically in school. This creates what I describe as an 'inverted instance', an experience where what was expected is contradictory to that which is experienced. The belief that education in England would help the youths realise their dreams is commonly expressed throughout the study. Conversely, their experiences post-resettlement varied and while Ibrahim, Jack, Omar and Bilal clearly praise schooling in England, later on in the next chapter, the stories of Nour, Jano and Jimmy show the challenges within the English education system. 'Inverted instances' are not only related to the high expectations of education post-resettlement. They also apply to other areas in the lives of the young people specifically, and forced migrants generally.

As a final note, future aspirations were not exclusively education-related. For example, Sandy wants to be married. She explained that she is engaged to be married by choice to the son of their new neighbours in England as she turns 18.

> *Sandy: My parents don't approve of my choice of marriage; my mother is making me wait until I turn 18.*

This is particularly problematic, as her desire to be married may be linked to her feeling of 'nothing' without education and her search for purpose within her figured world mobility, where gendered roles are extended to young girls and boys.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter examined the figured world of mobility in terms of how it impacts resettled young Syrian refugees' interpretations of their lived experiences. Through the life grid interviews, the young people shared their interpretations of their experiences related to housing, social relationships, education, and future aspirations. More specifically, the chapter focused on the importance of the social emotional function of the 'home' and the value of social connections with family and friends. The young people in this research emphasised the collective sense of home and spoke fondly about their homes in Syria, recognising the importance of extended family, neighbours, and community in their lives. This chapter also presented the varied educational experiences of young people pre-resettlement and post-resettlement. Overall, young, resettled refugees' experiences in schools in England are more positive compared to that of pre-resettlement, where they faced corporal punishment, discrimination, and the stress of uncertainty. The young people

had limited access to education in transit, due to concerns for safety for girls and child labour for boys. In their future aspirations, they sought economic stability, protectiveness (Kohli, 2011) and ‘privileged mobility’.

Table 8: Phase one summary of findings

Summary of findings of experiences of young refugees from Syria, related to housing, social relationships, education, and future aspirations. *Keywords, positional identity, instances of self-authoring and acts of improvisation are highlighted, together with artefacts of resubmission ordinary life.*

	Keywords	Positional Identity	Instances of self-authoring	Acts of Improvisation	The artefacts of being 'ordinary'
Housing	Familiarity Safety Economic stress Multiple moves Dreadful living conditions Extended family (grandparents, cousins, uncles, and aunties)	▪ Linking safety to familiarity	▪ To know others and to be known by others		▪ The home as an artefact for hospitality and reciprocity
Social relationships	Family support Family issues Making friends Race Gender Bullying Belonging	▪ Family expectation ▪ The extended notion of family	▪ 'Whiteness' conveying visible inclusion	▪ Improvising against the mentality	▪ Having friends is an artefact of adaptation
Education	Access Learning Gender Inclusion Exclusion Corporal punishment Language Spoken accent	▪ Lack of access to education in transit ▪ Child labour for boys ▪ Safety concerns for girls	▪ The academic authority ▪ The power of a supportive and welcoming environment ▪ Needs-based support is essential for inclusion	▪ Beyond the inferiority of language	▪ National assessments – GCSEs
Future aspirations	Career University Travelling Gender	▪ To be a wife ▪ To be a doctor	▪ Desiring privileged mobility	▪ To investigate a pathway towards the goal	▪ Higher education access

7 Chapter 7: The figured world of mobility and history

7.1 Introduction:

This chapter focuses on the historical nature of the figured worlds by exploring the migration journeys of the young people. According to Holland et al. (1998) 'figured worlds are a historical phenomenon, to which we are recruited or into which we enter, which themselves develop through the works of their participants' (Holland et al., 1998, p. 41). Histories contribute to the shaping of identities, but this does not imply that history is what drives lives and constructs identities. It does, however, signify that history contributes to the process of moulding an identity through social and cultural interactions. It is both the personal and the sociocultural histories that allow us to understand the perimeters of the figured world of mobility and how it contributes to identity production for resettled young people. Identities are then continuously changing in response to our social world and our individual experiences within it. Drawing on the mobility approach to theorising the migrant in Chapter 4, the figure of the migrant (Nail, 2015) summons the concepts of expulsion, oscillation, and economic and legal powers as relevant concepts to the lives of resettled young people. Chapter 6 presented manifestations of these concepts, for example, the unprivilege associated with expulsion from one's home country. It is important to state that the four concepts are not exclusive to the figured world of mobility, but that migration exacerbates their influence. As young people narrate their stories, they reflect on their past, present, and future aspirations. Our conversations were filled with incidents and reflections on education and migration journeys. Our interactions were prompted by my identity as a Syrian migrant (Preface) as well as my explanation of the educational nature of this research. Often, they were a natural development of a conversation or simply a coincidence. At times, the young people were constrained by loss, hard times and trauma. At other times, they were filled with hope, resilience, and self-admiration for how much they endured and how far they had come. They are both the narrator of the story and the story's main character. Speaking of their personal worlds in relation to the sociocultural world as they experience it, their mobility journeys and educational experiences, they offered the building blocks for constructing their pen portraits.

7.2 The historical nature of the figured world of mobility

The historical nature of a figured world facilitates our understanding of the perimeters of any given figured world. Urrieta (2007) emphasises 'the process of sense-making in figured worlds is always embedded in a collective past' (p.121). This collective past is a combination of the structure of the system's history and the personal histories of its participants. The history of the world of mobility offers a deeper understanding of common events and incidents. It is about examining the issues associated with mobility that are taken for granted. Let us take a newcomer's experiences as an example. There is a general vulnerability associated with newcomers, even in the simplest forms, such as being a new student in class or a new employee. The universality of helping newcomers forms the basis of the initiative to help refugees by relatability. Many advocates for refugees mobilise the personal histories of people and their experience of being newcomers to influence them to act, help or simply understand the challenges of refugees. However, it is often forgotten that as new students in class are not often helped, new families in a neighbourhood are not always welcomed and a new employee is often left out. Understanding the premise of these exclusions allows for a deeper understanding of both the contextual history of mobility and the personal histories of those within the figured world of mobility, either as mobile people or people in the state of stasis. In many instances, historical events are embedded in the figured world. Thus, the figure of the migrant political theory by Thomas Nail (2015) paved its way into the theoretical framework of this research to complement the figured worlds of sociocultural theory, by offering a landscape of the histories that forms the world of mobility as we know it today. As discussed in Chapter 4, different concepts emerged in the mobility approach to theorising the migrant. These are evoked again as we engage in the stories of the young people involved in this research.

7.2.1 The contextual history of the figured worlds of mobility

Understanding mobility through the lens of stasis distorts the conceptualisation of migrants and the histories of migration, and Nail (2015) prompts a nuanced approach to migration through mobility. What if, as humans, we cease to pursue the perfect routine and stability? Why does the familiarity of physical and emotional spaces convey safety? Are we conditioned to be in stasis? These questions cast a shadow on this research, especially on the analysis of its findings. This research does not aim to answer these questions. Rather, it

aims to provoke the assumptions taken for granted in social science research in general and migration studies in particular. The historical element in figured worlds then encompasses this inherited stasis approach to migration. To capture some of the personal histories of the young people, this chapter presents pen portraits, scaffolded from the longitudinal data gathered through a case study-inspired approach with the young people, Yousef, Jano, Jewel, Nour and Jimmy.

Historically, civilisations were formed through mobility, and expansion made countries more powerful as they gained access to land, people, and resources. Mobility then in itself is not always a disadvantage; it can also be a privilege. Today, those fleeing conflict or environmental disasters are indeed deserving of legal asylum seeking, nevertheless the sanctioned routes for resettlement fall short in responding to the increasing number of forced migrants and displaced people. Often, forced migrants resort to illegal routes to reach states in which they can seek asylum. On the other hand, citizens of certain countries take for granted their ability to move beyond their borders for pleasure and with privilege. Thus, it is 'privileged mobility' (Croucher, 2012) versus what I have defined as 'burdened mobility'. There are conditions associated with each type of mobility. If we trace back the history of certain citizenships with privileged mobility, we can link many of them to colonisation. Perhaps colonisation has become the scapegoat for all that is negative in human history, and it is hard to argue against this, as some countries maintain a superiority status over others to this day, even when it comes to the human survival needs of safety and food. Both 'privilege' and 'burden' is extended to different people by their state. Privileged empires grant themselves the ability to move beyond their borders, extract resources, move people from one land to another – a completely different place – for the sole purpose of gain, which makes it hard to downplay the role of colonisation in planting the seed for the migration crisis. Colonisation is then embedded in the historical nature of the figured worlds of resettled refugees. The thread of colonisation in the figured worlds of mobility is not simple, in the sense of accepting more refugees as a reparation act, because reparation in this way is impossible and to pursue the impossible can only distort any response to meaningful change in the lives of those amidst the crisis. Rather, it is autonomously accepting the responsibility for inherited biases and privileges no matter where we are in the equation, grandchildren of a coloniser or colonised. It is more than

random acts of returning museum artefacts; Germany returns 21 Benin bronzes to Nigeria (Oltermann, 2022), it is understanding the extent of hegemonic influence on the figured world of mobility. Thus, colonisation in the historical sense must not bear the full blame. It is necessary to acknowledge the current privileges that are continuously practiced today. In 1937, Ibn Khaldun argued that being un-mobile is not a condition of civilisation. Today, this is still part of the figured world of mobility. This historical dimension allows for a comprehensive approach to the reasons why the personal histories of the young people are what they are. Even though the young people have not directly attributed their present to colonial history, the figured worlds of mobility which they influence and are influenced by, are shaped by colonial history.

7.2.2 The personal histories of resettled young Syrian refugees

While all the families involved in this research were resettled in the same city, they were scattered in different geographical areas within this city. Some of these areas were already home to diverse communities while others were not. Where families lived often dictated their access to a school in the area and the experiences of pupils within these schools involved interacting with young people from different backgrounds and/or cities. The five pen portraits of Yousef, Jano, Jewel, Jimmy and Nour allow us to enter the figured world of mobility through the collective experiences of the young people which are constructed via their interpretation of the world. Holland et al. (1998) explain that figured worlds are a 'socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular actors are recognised, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others' (p.52). They also add that every figured world relies upon actors who interact within its perimeters in meaningful ways influenced by different forces. In the figured world of mobility, the agents are, for example, young people, their families, teachers and other members of their community; the meaningful acts are, for example, moving home, accessing/not accessing education, making friends; and examples of the forces are conflict, livelihood and states. Actors become familiar with the happenings of their figured world; it becomes intrinsic to their identity, and this can add to certain practices to reproduce the world for other participants. For example, in Chapter 6, Sandy's inability to read and write contributed to her feeling of 'nothing' which is central to her identity as she interprets the

world and also adds to the prevailing norms that perpetuate the denial of education for girls.

7.3 Pen portraits

The longitudinal data allowed this research to explore the lives of the young people over time which consequently made it possible for this chapter to present the youngsters stories as pen portraits, with special consideration to the physical space in which they resided (home, transit and new home countries) during and before the time of this research.

7.3.1 Yousef's pen portrait

Yousef, one of my first participants, an excited boy aged 12, was proud to be telling his story. He was turning 11 when he arrived in England with his family. Yousef has two brothers and three sisters. His youngest sister and brother were born in England. In Aleppo, his mother worked as a tailor and his father as a delivery driver. They left Syria for Jordan in 2012. After two years in transit at a refugee camp in Jordan, they were chosen to be resettled in England via the VPRS programme and arrived in England in December 2015. Yousef and his family were amongst the first cohort of Syrian families to arrive in England via the VPRS programme. At our last meeting, Yousef mentioned that his father had started working as a van driver after passing his driving examination.

Home:

Speaking about home in Syria meant speaking about family. They had big houses within walking distance of uncles, cousins and grandparents, and Yousef described it as the best time of his life in our first encounter. He was attached to his (extended) family and, as the conflict escalated, it denied him access to a few of his favourite people, as he described them. He then choked saying, '*I am sad. My uncle died, and my grandpa died, and my other grandpa died. I have no grandpas anymore'*. I prompted him to talk about the good memories, so he continued by saying that he has a family nickname '*Abu Salte',* as he used to eat a lot at visits at mealtimes. Yousef was only seven years old when he left Aleppo for Jordan, before being resettled in England at the age of 11, a few months before I met him. At the time, Yousef had a clear sense of belonging to his home country

(Syria), expressing his desire to go back *'I wish I could go back to play with my cousins. It is fine even if there is war still… we are able to play, we can play, it is our country.'*

In transit:

Arriving in Jordan in 2012, Yousef was seven years old. He was in year one and went to an all-Syrian school. Yousef was excited to begin school. He wanted to make friends and was very proud to show off his football skills to his school mates. After a few months in school, Yousef found it to be a challenging environment. Teachers were very strict, and he started to drift away from school. At the beginning of his second year, he gave up school to start working at a small bag-making workshop so he could help his family, as money was tight. He explained how good he was at it. He said '*Work is the best thing, my boss appreciated me. I knew how to make bags, I used to deliver clothes to other shops, and everyone used to like me on the streets. Even in Eid they all gave me 'Eidiee'* they used to love me a lo*t.'

*Money given to children on the official Muslim celebration after Ramadan.

From that point on, he never went to school again in Jordan. He continued to play football with friends from the neighbourhood and enjoyed his work and his ability to be productive making money for his family. Yousef's older brother and father worked too. It was important for him to consider himself as a provider, '*one of the men of the family',* as he said proudly.

New home:

When they arrived in England, for the 11-year-old, adjusting to a new country was challenging. In Jordan, Yousef used to be able to go out and walk around and he felt safe as places were familiar. But '*here*,' Yousef felt lost whenever he walked through the unknown roads and unfamiliar architecture of houses. It was not just the physical spaces that were disorientating. For Yousef, it was also that *'people's faces were different, everywhere you look is alien*', as he said. In Jordan he had been working and earning money, and after resettlement he felt he had lost his sense of purpose, which he connected to work. He started school only one month after his arrival. He loved the primary school where he spent the first few months of his schooling experience in England. Yousef enjoyed school trips, clubs and met many 'Muslim' friends. The teachers were kind and primary school was a joyful place. Yousef added that he, his brother, and

sisters helped his mother doing much of the house chores, as she had just given birth to her fifth child. Yousef loves his mother and talked about her kindness and supportive attitude to him, especially her encouragement to do better at school.

At secondary school, he felt less welcome. A combination of academic difficulties and bullying made school more challenging. '*At the school, there are plenty of racist kids. They talk about me and my other Syrian friend who I spend lots of time with as we are … They say we are 'gays' and those words… Also they do not like it when we speak Arabic, they say* (in) *this school you should speak English, you can speak Arabic at home… we are sat alone on the table, and he* (another boy in class) *joins us to say not to speak Arabic… I ask him why do you want to sit with us.'* Yousef continued by expressing his feelings toward his 'English' classmates*: 'English, no I do not like English… I do not like to have English friends much… Some of them are good and some of them are bad. The good ones help me, they play with me … I have a good English friend who is very short… a 'dwarf'… He is always good, no name calling and we play together all the time.'*

After two years at secondary school, Yousef changed. He became more confident academically and socially. '*I have many friends now, everyone is my friend. Because they shuffle the classes every year at school, so you get to know everyone.'* Yousef continued, saying that he really missed school during the lockdown, especially his teachers and *'the practical side of learning.'* When speaking about his teachers, Yousef associated a teacher's gender with their ability to control a classroom. According to Yousef *'Generally women teachers are less strict, and the class is more chaotic, everyone talks more. Apart from my English teacher last year, she was strict, she didn't shout but everyone behaved well in her class.'* His favourite subject 'design and technology' also happens to be taught by his favourite teacher*: 'He is great. He has 15 years' experience, he answers questions, helps and supports everyone with any issue. He is very calm even when there is an issue, he never shouts. He knows all the students by name.'*

Yousef's motivation and engagement at school is evident, as is his parents' involvement in his education. He decided which GCSE subjects he is taking to progress into industrial design. '*We decided on the GCSEs in year eight, where we went after school to the event. All classes were empty and, in each class, there is a teacher of the subject they explain it to*

everyone. My parents came with me. My mom understands most things in English but my dad not much, so I explain to him. My mom really wants me to go to sixth form, not college. My older brother helps me the most. My mom pushed me for GCSE Arabic, and she will send me to Arabic school next year (year ten)'. Yousef believes in education and schooling as a means to realising his dream, '*I like building things, education will help me find a career,*' he said. His love for England as a country grew with time. Yousef is grateful to England *'I would like to travel to other countries, but I love this country, it gave me choices in education, and it gave me opportunities.'*

Migration journeys are associated with concepts of 'expulsion,' and 'oscillation,' and are influenced by the social world, and the economic and legal powers described in Chapter 4. As Yousef left his home country, 'expulsion' became a part of his journey. He was then forced out of education by difficulties in schools in Jordan, where he felt that teachers were distant and he became aware of his family's need for money. Yousef was simply expelled from some of his rights as a child, as set by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNHCR, 2015). Regardless of the joy he found in working and claiming the 'man' role, he went through years of his childhood bouncing back from major incidents of family member loss, home loss and financial responsibilities from a young age. It is often taken for granted how space can influence our ability to feel safe just through familiarity. The journey of mobility begins with altered spaces. The physical space, the architecture, the interaction within spaces is different, even people's physical appearance influences the manifestation of space. For Yousef, greetings from people as he walked to and from work and home contributed to his sense of familiarity of space: he knows, and he is known. In this narrative, he describes a sense of safety and belonging. In considering Yousef's pen portrait, his ability to immerse himself in space and people in Jordan eased his transition into the new physical space.

Also featured in Yousef's portrait are incidents of 'racism,' 'gendered roles,' 'equality' and 'belonging', emphasising that a single point of a young person's journey often offers a fragmented view of their identity and experiences. Refugees are often identified as vulnerable and, in many contexts, an ethnic minority, which contributes to the assertion

that they are always 'racism' victims. It is indeed accurate they are far more likely to be victims of racism than the opposite, however this limited view contributes to the gap between the two parties. In this case, that is the citizen and the non-citizen. Both sides have to make meaningful efforts to mediate the differences, and making a meaningful effort means not only learning and acknowledging the difference, but accepting the difference without inferiority or superiority. 'Belonging' is key to integration (Kohli, 2014). It is a continuing process. Once we 'belong,' it does not mean we will always 'belong' and vice versa. The continuity of belonging is interdependent on inclusion, and the ability to achieve and establish connection with the social world in which we are in. On our first meeting a few months after his arrival in England, Yousef wanted nothing apart from to live among his cousins and uncles in his hometown. Fast forward one year, and he spoke of his love for England which he himself enabled via the education opportunities he found after resettlement. Yousef may have begun his journey with a strong sense of 'belonging' to Syria, driven by familiarity of space and society, but he then developed a real connection to England through his recognition of the effort made by his school and the opportunities for 'success' (McIntyre & Neuhaus, 2021). Furthermore, to belong is not confined to the one attribute (society, country, community etc.), and it is far from assimilation. Belonging is our ability to exist in the social cultural world without prejudice, regardless of our differences.

In addition, Yousef talked about how other pupils in school were bullying by referring to him and his friend as 'gays' or shaming them for using their mother tongue. Being 'gay' or speaking the 'Arabic language' are neither good nor bad. There is negativity associated with both, but the negativity is socially constructed. Also, it is interesting that the only good friend he described was also 'different' in terms of his size. Therefore, his friend probably also experienced bullying/name calling (Yousef himself calls him a dwarf). For Yousef, gendered roles were clear: being a 'man' means bringing home money. He largely associates 'chaotic classrooms' and being lenient with female teachers, even though he mentioned one female English teacher who was 'strict and kept the classroom quiet.' For Yousef, this latter teacher is an exception. Throughout history and across cultures, women have been fighting against such stereotypes. Given this, addressing these views is hardly a young migrant issue. It makes sense to start addressing such universal social inequalities by looking at history to understand how gendered roles are distributed or categorised all over the world. Presenting

Yousef's case illustrates the fluidity of the concepts of 'gender,' 'belonging,' 'racism' and 'childhood' for youths and society as whole. Undoubtedly his experiences are authentic, but they are far from being unchangeable. This perspective that host communities are often racist towards newcomers does not negate existing racial issues within the cultures of migrants. Again, 'discrimination' is a universal issue within all societies, as are gendered views. Such opinions on women or experiences of bullying are not static. They alter as identities are influenced by the social world.

7.3.2 Jano's pen portrait

As I entered Jano's home, his mother welcomed me with open arms and a big smile, and kissed me the way my distant female relatives residing in the north of Syria used to kiss me when I was 16 years old, visiting with my father for the first time. We had met before a few times, as I taught English to the whole family together at the Refugee Forum (RF) while she and her husband waited for a place at the college and her children for a place at school. Jano is a young man who has 'Wilson' disease which has impacted on his academic, communicative, and physical development. He was 15 years old when he was resettled in England with his family. He is shy but became eager to talk as soon as he learned I was interested in listening to his stories and his tales of education. His condition placed his family on the priority list for the VPRS scheme. His medical condition is challenging as his disability is not easily perceived, but Wilson disease significantly impacts his cognitive abilities which are likely to deteriorate with time. Prior to his arrival in England, he lived in a refugee camp in the Kurdish region of Iraq. His family identify as Kurdish Syrian, they speak Kurdish at home and, as they lived in the north of Syria, he and his sister can speak Arabic fluently, unlike his younger brother, who is not fluent in Arabic. The family left north Syria in 2015 to seek refuge in Erbil (Kurdish region of Iraq), so his little brother was not born in Syria which accounts for his lack of basic Arabic language skills. The father owned a shoe shop in Syria, but when in transit and for the family's first year in England, he was unemployed. Jano's mother was always a stay-at-home mom and is currently the named disability carer for Jano, claiming benefits for her caring responsibilities. By the end of my research engagement with the family, his father had started working at the local Syrian supermarket as a butcher.

Home:

Jano's medical condition has affected his academic abilities, speech and physical development and Jano has difficulties with co-ordination. To complicate matters further, these effects were not immediately evident, and the difficulties only became clear as he got older. His disability was never severe enough to exclude him from formal schooling in Syria, especially at primary school level. Yet still it created an obstacle for him to learn effectively in the instructional educational settings of Syrian state schools. His mother identified his difficulties at school and decided to pay for private tuition at home. His tutor was a neighbour's daughter who was a university student at the time. The mother spoke of the teacher's frustration, teaching Jano almost three evenings a week in addition to school. She added that she used to drag him to these lessons. He mentioned that he disliked school and education and can only remember going to school for a year or two. When asked what he can remember about school in Syria, his answer was '*beating*.' His inability to engage in class in the same ways as the other students made him subject to punishment and humiliation.

In transit:

In Irbil, Jano did not go to school. He was not allowed to, as it was difficult to prove his previous academic ability, which his mom said was due to the lack of papers. Children of his age had to prove they had attended school before they were allowed to enrol in a school in Iraq. Memories of friends and the Newroz holiday (new year celebrated by Kurds) brought smiles to his face. He spoke to his mom in Kurdish to clarify my questions or a few words he could not remember in Arabic. He suffered a lot in transit, he said. The living conditions were '*awful*.' He lived in tents with his family under the heat, with no running water or electricity. He had nothing to do all day, and spent most days on his phone or sleeping. According to Jano's mother, they were on the waiting list for resettlement for more than two years before they were resettled in England.

New home:

Soon after arriving in England, Jano was attacked and beaten by a group of young men. They stole his phone whilst he was in the park with his father. They waited until his father had cycled away from him to go to the shop. This incident marked his arrival in the UK

with a strong sense of fear. After this, it took him weeks before he felt able to go out, and he still feels he cannot leave the house alone. Even though his mother does not have a strong educational background herself, she is adamant about wanting to educate her children. On multiple occasions, she stated that Jano is '*ill*' and due to his condition, he would not be able to work in the future, a view he himself shared when asked about future work aspirations. Nevertheless, she values education in the form of schooling for all three of her children. However, she can only see his younger brother and sister as benefiting from school in terms of achieving future professional careers. Thus, she pays a tutor she met through the community a small amount of money to support the other two children with homework.

Arriving in the UK in the middle of the academic year has had an impact on access to schooling for Jano and his siblings. The Refugee Forum organised English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes for the whole family together, so the mother, father and three children could learn with a volunteer teacher. The family's commitment to the classes varied as, upon arrival, Jano had to attend many appointments to address his medical needs. His younger sister and brother were soon admitted into mainstream schools, and Jano was referred to a special education setting for 14+ year olds arriving in the UK with limited academic background and low English language skills. While most of his fellow students are from an asylum seeker/refugee backgrounds, some are from a 'gypsy' background. Jano spoke well of his time at this school, getting to know friends and learning. His mother, on the other hand, felt that this school was not full-time and believed her son needed to be in full-time education. He was often asked to leave the school early or arrive late. When asked about his favourite subject at school he said: *'My favourite thing is Math, I love it'*. He even said that he aspires to be a mathematician in the future. While Jano appreciated the opportunity of being at school, he spoke of his difficulties with one of the teachers there.

'*Because I do not really understand her, she is always very angry. When she puts a red mark next to my name, and a green check sign next to my friends' names, it frustrates me.'* He described his feeling in class, saying: *'I get bored and anxious in class because of my condition. But they think I am just a careless student, a brat.'* He says his friends in class often defend him when this teacher gets 'angry' and they try to help him with

classwork and homework. His issues with this teacher were reported to the principal via his parents and health therapist, but changes have not been made according to Jano, even though both the principal and therapist attended his class. He said, *'Teachers behave differently when the principal or my therapist attend my class, they keep asking if I need anything etc., it is simply acting.'*

Due to his age, Jano was not eligible to be in this class for another academic year. The following year, Jano did not progress to any other class and has not attended any school since. His special needs were not severe enough to make him eligible for a special needs school, and yet his exclusion soon reached another level. Jano was at home for almost six months before he was contacted to visit a local college that could cater for his needs. His mother explained that she had tried to contact her case worker and the RF to report her son's situation and explain that he had been out of school at such a 138young age with nothing to do since the beginning of the academic year, and they only arranged the visit in early March.

Soon after their visit to the college, the lockdown for Covid-19 came into force. Jano was placed on the 'shielding' list. His mother received a letter from their GP, which was explained to her by an interpreter. She understood that her son was not allowed to leave the doorstep, and that he should not mix with his siblings or anyone who went to the shops for food supplies. His mother decided to dedicate the living room to her son, as it had a television and the best internet connection. He slept, ate, and spent all his day in this room. He was not allowed to eat meals with his family or play with his siblings. The mother strongly believed that this would keep her son safe from death, as per her perception of the medical advice. Jano still desires to be at school, 'I *am at home now, but I want to go to school to learn and meet friends. Maybe I am too sick, that's why I don't have a place at school. I am not going back to the old school because it is finished. I am going to college; I was waiting the first term for a place in college.'* However, when I asked him about his future again, he said, *'I don't think about the future at all.'*

By navigating these educational spaces, young people begin to engage with the social world and shape themselves. In the case of Jano, his 'disability' has greatly disadvantaged his

continuous access to education, even after resettlement in England. This case serves as an illustration of how disability is strongly linked with exclusion, regardless of the migration status. His challenges in England are indeed worsened by the lack of societal knowledge and language skills, which are common disadvantages for the majority of forced migrants. It should be noted that his 'expulsion' experiences form a complex case. Part of the problem may be that his inclusion at school, whether in mainstream (Syria) or the alternative provision (England) was superficial. Perhaps it is related to enrolment figures or a lack of suitable options. Another part of the problem could be that everyone around him appears to accept that his developmental disability will always be the main barrier to academic achievement. It is indeed the definition of achievement which we ought to question. Young people are increasingly finding themselves on the periphery of mainstream education in terms of expectations and achievements, lost between the measurable and the attainable. How do we measure achievements for Jano? What can education mean for him? As he grows older, his condition will worsen and the inevitability of growing old in age means that his abilities will continue to become more limited with time. As time passes, the limited number of things that he can achieve within the current education system are going to reduce.

Jano's disability positioned him from an early age on the side-lines of education, and family life was defined by his inability to participate in things, rather than developing skills based on his abilities. Jano's constant disappointments within education and the social community at home, in transit and in his new home, contributed to his disconnection from peers and school. This made him over-dependent on his family, which in turn overcompensates for his vulnerability. Although the family's situation improved by being in England in terms of having a home, food, and health care, Jano has not felt safe, and the beating incident, the bullying teacher and the pandemic meant he continued to feel unsafe even in England. His inability to continuously join school or make friends made 'belonging' challenging and success even more difficult for Jano. Researchers (for example, Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019; Suárez-Orozco, 2018) often highlight their concern for the quality and usefulness of access to education in emergencies and for resettled refugees that is defined by enrolment numbers and limited to physical access. For Jano and his mother, for example, access to

school was vital, but as soon as he started going to school, he realised that being at school on its own was not a meaningful experience of education.

In Jano's pen portrait, for example, he learned to surrender through his engagement with others, whether in his family life or at school, and he became bound by how others treated him. His mother focused on his inabilities rather than capabilities, nurturing dependency though caring motherly love. Jano had minimal access to education and other social experiences, and even when he was finally granted the chance to attend school in England, he reflected on his distressing experiences with his teacher.

He voiced several different challenges: his language and comprehension difficulties; the teacher's differential treatment of him using coloured check signs; and his own frustration and anxiety, driven by his inability to understand and to fit in which were, indeed, enabled by the teacher's actions. These practices were central to the procedural production of his identity as a 'surrenderer'. His expectation of himself became defined by his engagement with others. Even though Jano expresses his refusal of the characteristics inflicted on him as a 'brat,' he was not presented with opportunities for engagement with others that could allow him to modify his developing identity to what he wishes it to be. Jano spoke of his peers with fondness, as they defended him against the teacher and helped him with certain tasks. Nevertheless, his relationship with his peers never developed into a friendship. Again, his experiences as a helpee contributed to his perception of himself as the least able. In his figured world, as a collective, the actions of the people around him shaped the development of his identity.

7.3.3 Jewel's pen portrait

Smiling at the door, Jewel and her mother welcomed me into their family home in the countryside. At 18, going on 19, years of age, Jewel arrived in England with her parents and two brothers. Jewel was attending my Arabic GCSE class at the education provision I volunteered at weekly. We also worked together on her university application. Her family left Damascus, Syria, in 2012 for Egypt, aiming for what she describes as a '*new life'*. Jewel's parents are university graduates, and although her mom likes to work and she has worked before, she explained that financial responsibilities are the father's duty. Her father joined our conversation and asked many questions about access to higher education in the UK. He strongly believed in the academic pathway of education. Post-resettlement, Jewel's father

became an Arabic teacher and an advocate of Arabic teaching for the young children in the Syrian community in the city.

Home:

'*We were together in our own home; it was big, and we were together in the same bedroom with my brothers,*' she said, describing her home in Syria. Education was '*serious*' and her parents put emphasis on achieving excellent grades. She wanted to be a teacher. Speaking of her time in Syria, she said, *'We spent time with relatives and had many friends.'* In 2011, as the conflict started, Jewel and her family had to move to a house owned by her grandfather, and they shared it with another family related to her grandfather's wife. The house had two bedrooms and a shared living space and facilities, so each family lived in one room. '*There was lots of tension and arguments 24/7,'* Jewel stated. Everything was new, the school changed, the 'war' situation made everything difficult and '*we lived in fear,'* she said. At that time, when asked about her dreams and aspirations, Jewel said: '*I did not have any. My father was angry, and mother was scared. I thought of suicide*.'

In transit:

In 2012, '*We travelled for a new life*.' Jewel spoke fondly of her time in Egypt, although at the beginning it was hard for her and her family. '*My dad was still angry and hard on himself,'* she continued, positively describing the family's new home and praising her mom for taking training courses to find a new job. People in Egypt were kind to Jewel and her family, she said, and this was emphasised by her parents when they talked about their time in Egypt. Education in Egypt was difficult. '*The school was simply a name and no real education*', so everyone compensated through private tutoring and an extra curriculum with additional books to those they held in the school. This increased the financial pressure on the family, and Jewel and her brothers had to adapt to a limited number of tutoring classes to save money. In 2016, when Jewel was 15 years old, she decided that she needed to '*forget everything and be me.'* Concurrently, her parents were both working, and tensions had eased. Proudly, Jewel mentioned her mom's career development as a trainer in health for refugees. According to her, school was difficult and long hours of studying were required for Egyptian schools. Her career aspirations

changed, and she wanted to become a psychologist. When she was 17 years old, her dad sold their house in Syria and bought a house in Egypt, and they lived in their own house again. In addition to saving on rent, Jewel and her older brother were doing some part-time work which further improved the family's financial situation. Jewel was in the final year of high school in Egypt when her teacher recommended medical school and told her that she would be a great gynaecologist. Graduating high school in Egypt was challenging for Jewel, but she said '*this stage of my life revealed my strengths and taught me a lot*.'

New home:

On the 10th of December 2019, Jewel and her family moved to England as part of the VPRS. This new beginning was '*beautiful*', Jewel said. The system in England is '*different*' from everything she had known before, and the differing schooling system meant she could not join university straight after her high school graduation. Her English was good enough to get by, but she was unable to fully understand the education system in England. Jewel was placed in an alternative education provision, created for post-16 year-old arrivals to the city where she resided with her family. Although graduated from school in Egypt, she was told that with an international secondary certificate, she could not access university in England. Her language abilities were not at the level required for university here. She was advised that she needed to study at this provision until she achieved GCSE level, then take GCSE followed by A-level examinations. '*I am going to be at least three years late for University,*' she stated with frustration. Going to university at the age of 18 years, straight after high school, is the norm in Syria and Egypt. Her parents also shared their daughter's frustration, and mentioned their older son who dropped out after his second year at university in Egypt when the family moved to England. Jewel still aspires to be a medical doctor.

Jewel and her family felt safe in England, and they commended the support they received from the UK government both financially and socially. She enjoyed attending school and learning English through new methods. She made friends and her teachers motivated her and praised her hard work. Even though Jewel's academic abilities were evident to the staff at school, the GCSE/A-level pathway was still recommended. The teachers were excited for Jewel, as they believed she was ready to start GCSEs the following year, unlike

the majority of new arrivals to the establishment at the time. She accepted the reality of a few more years of education before starting university, and believed it is a small price to pay for a 'high-quality British education.' Later on in the year, the excitement of a '*new beautiful life'* faded, and she became less convinced of spending three years at the college, especially after what she heard about post-16 colleges in England. '*Teachers do not care at the college, long waiting lists and so little choice about subjects, especially for new arrivals,'* said another college student Jewel met through community events at the Refugee Forum. I explained to Jewel at the time that universities in England have a diverse international student body and most overseas high school diplomas are recognisable at any university if submitted with the English test for international study (IELTS) or any recognised English test by the university. Jewel and I had a professional relationship (me being her Arabic teacher at the provision at which I volunteered). I visited her at her family home, she had seen me at her school where I volunteer weekly, and she sometimes sent me questions about education via phone messages. Yet still, the options I suggested (access courses, foundation courses, etc.) seemed unreal. '*But no one mentioned this before… You know I ask a lot; I asked many others, the teachers, even X (the manager of the provision). No one said there is another way,*' Jewel said.

We then resumed this conversation including the school staff, as I needed some official validation. Jewel applied through UCAS to foundation courses that offer progression onto courses aligned to health sciences, and decided to try medical school as a graduate entry after obtaining an undergraduate degree, which allows her to work and increase her chances of entering medical school. One of the universities offered her an interview after online assessments in English and maths. She was not accepted. Another university then offered her a place on the international foundation course after passing the English entrance exam which was done online due to Covid-19. Even though Jewel's first semester was online due to lockdown restrictions, she was very happy to be a university student.

Jewel' story illustrates how education can be enabled as an engagement tool for success (McIntyre et al., 2018a) in her new home country. It is important to broaden our

understanding of the impact of place-based education systems and work on closing the gap between existing programmes for refugees through creating links between the two. Additionally, student loans seem to cover certain programmes offered by private providers and operated by universities, but not other programmes offered and operated by private providers. The international pathway colleges are private corporations with high fees that could reach £16,000 per access course. These access courses are the most appropriate bridges into higher education in the UK for all international students, whether they are forced migrants or not. However, they are designed to recruit self-funding students from all over the world. Potential students are not always eligible for a student loan for these courses due to the fact that they are more expensive than other post-16 courses in England and related to the way they are set up. The 'economic power' (Nail, 2015) plays a role in such cases. If Jewel was not able to access this course by obtaining a student loan, her access to higher education would be hindered by her lack of funds regardless of her academic eligibility.

7.3.4 Jimmy' pen portrait

A little boy opens the door. Two girls follow aged 10 and 14, as well as Jimmy. He was 11 years old when I first met him. They called their mom, and she welcomed me as I entered the house. Jimmy's family are from Daraa (the city in which the conflict in Syria was initiated, located at the border with Jordan). His mother insisted that we share some food together, and I understood the hospitable nature of this offer and so offered to help. As I was the guest, she asked the boys to entertain me in the living room while she set the mat on the floor and started bringing food from the kitchen. Everything was ready, a full traditional Syrian breakfast only fit for weekends. I joined the family for breakfast; the father, the mother and the four children. The television was on loud, competing with the noise of the children pushing each other as they reached for their favourite dishes and raced to put food on my plate. After we ate, I started talking to the children, explaining what I do and the research I was undertaking. They all wanted to participate, so I interviewed all of them because I did not want anyone to feel left out. Both Jimmy and Jouri fitted the age target for my research. According to Jimmy's mother, his father never worked in Syria and relied on the generosity of friends and family, as the mother described it. She has always been a 'housewife'. Every time I visited the family home, I felt welcomed. The children were

always excited to see me, I could always hear noise and sibling banter through the main door as I knocked. My first impression was that the family were comfortable having me around.

Home:

Jimmy comes from the city in which the conflict began. Speaking of home he said '*We used to live in the house that we built next to my dad's family on the same land. We were close to my cousins too.'* Speaking of school, he said*: 'One day my mom's brother picked me up from school and on the way home I say hi and stuff to people passing. He said to my mom that your son knows more people than me.' 'No one complained about me they all liked me. Apart from when we used to sneak into some lands collecting fruits from the trees.'* When I asked him which school he preferred (home, transit, or new home), his answer was '*School in Syria was better.*' Why? I asked, and he said: '*In Syria, you can run away from school and not attend.'* Jimmy added, *'All I remember about school was that I didn't bring my homework one day and the teacher smacked me.'*

When the conflict began, Jimmy's activities expanded to working. *'At the beginning of the war in Syria, I started selling fuel with my cousin on the side of the road.'*

In transit:

In transit, Jimmy continued to work, missed school, and played football with his friends. The school in Lebanon was better, as '*We got to learn a new language. We also did lots of sports and my favourite teacher in this school (UN school), she used to always be nice to me and after I moved school, I went back to her, and she used to say oh hi and stuff. In this school we have got lots of books and this school was so far from my house, I had to carry my bag full of books,*' Jimmy said. His mother said that his schooling was interrupted as they used to go back to Syria every couple of months due to harassment in Lebanon. '*We went through a period where every time Jimmy goes out, he get beaten up. We moved from that area,*' Jimmy's mom said. In the new area, Jimmy went to state school evening classes for Syrian refugees. '*It was the worst thing. You know, I peed myself once in this school, I needed the toilet so badly, she kept saying no way, do your work. And this*

teacher, she was always on her phone. And this teacher pulled me from the top corridor to literally the end of it.' '*I only had one friend, he lived next to us*.'

*English

New home:

In England, Jimmy was fond of primary school. He showed me all his medals from winning football matches at school (see Figure 10 in Chapter 8). Jimmy shared his aspiration to become a footballer and when I asked him when he decided on that he said, '*Everywhere, I wanted to become a footballer.*' He felt the support of the teacher and his English improved quickly. It is in secondary school where his struggles began to manifest. It was never academic: Jimmy always wanted to speak to me in English, and he expressed himself well. A few weeks after my second visit, Jimmy's mother called me, asking me if I could attend a meeting at the school with his father to interpret for him, as Jimmy was being expelled again. She was not sure what had happened, but she briefly said he was fighting with bullies again. She really wanted him to change schools, saying to me '*This school is a racist school, and I don't want my child there*.'

According to the school, Jimmy was unable to control his anger towards others, and he was often violent with other students. As Jimmy and I stood at school gate waiting for his father so we could all attend the meeting, I asked him to explain the situation, and he said:

'*They bully me, I respond, it is my fault. I cannot just let them swear about mother. They can say anything but not about my mother.*' As he continues, he lifts his shirt, showing me a bruise on his stomach. '*I get bruised and I get sent to the RIC* and he just gets a notice, how can this be fair?*'

*RIC – Reintegration centre, according to the Academy's Pupil Premium Strategy (appendix 4)

In this instance, Jimmy had not started the fighting. It was the bullying he endured that pushed him to retaliate. Jimmy was sent to a specific unit where students go just before they are finally expelled from school. His father, Jimmy and I attended the meeting at school, then we were sent to the RIC to drop Jimmy off. This unit is in a different school

under the same Trust. The unit was characterised by a fenced building, silence, and classes with pupils from different age groups working independently. As we entered, we did not hear any teaching. There were students sitting at desks writing or reading. We met the supervisor at the office with Jimmy, and she could not say much about what would happen to Jimmy or how long he needed to stay in this unit, as she was not aware of why he was there. She kept referring to me as his mother, even though I clearly explained that I was there to interpret the conversation for his father, and that the mother was not able to attend because she had a medical appointment. Describing teaching at this school, Jimmy said '*They dump a pack of worksheets on the table in the morning and pick it up before lunch, and do the same in the afternoon*.' As Jimmy said, *'You just have to get on with it.'*

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Jimmy managed to complete his expulsion period at the RIC (appendix 4), but did not go back to mainstream school. During the lockdown, his family situation at home became more unstable, as Jimmy's father was removed from the family house after several incidents of domestic abuse. Neighbours and police had urged his mother to report her husband many times previously, but the Syrian community in the city had repeatedly intervened to support the marriage until the time where his mother finally agreed to report his behaviour to the police. His mother was adamant that she wanted to give her son a fresh start at a different school, away from the 'racist school', as she said, and a step out of the slide (that is, the behaviour management strategy of the school). Unfortunately, she was not able to do so. Jimmy continued to go to the same school, where significance was assigned to his 'mischievous' behaviour that was valued over everything else. He navigated the space through this mischievous identity, and the institutional exclusion was consequential for Jimmy's future lived experiences in his new home.

Jimmy's experiences of education at the institution of school, shaped by his behaviour/misbehaviour, learning and performativity, were not the only artefacts of schooling. In Syria, school was characterised by corporal punishment. In transit, humiliation filled Jimmy's experience of education and within the community. In England, while jimmy had a positive experience in primary school, his secondary school experience was far from positive.

Jimmy was fixated on the fact that 'this time' it was not his fault, but whose fault it was seemed irrelevant in this incident. Jimmy was configured into the identity of a mischief-maker: hence, he was put on a slide, that is, the disciplinary system of this school. The family/children clearly were exposed to domestic violence. There must be some evidence that if the father is physically abusive to the mother, that this is learned behaviour for the child and that if there are any arguments/bullying at school, he will express himself through violence.

7.3.5 Nour's pen portrait

I first met Nour when she arrived in the UK in 2015 whilst I was volunteering as an interpreter, assisting in welcoming the Syrian families resettled in Nottingham, as part of the VPRS programme. We got to know each other later, when we met at an art exhibition where she approached me for advice on applying to university. I met Nour in a quiet section of a public coffee shop in the city centre. To begin with, Nour felt a little tentative. She paused many times. Initially, I had to prompt her, but by the time we were halfway through, the conversation became more natural. Nour was 16 years old when she was resettled in England. At the time of our first conversation for the purpose of this research, she was 18.

Home:

Nour lived in a house near her family. She explained how her uncles, aunties and cousins lived on different floors of the building where her house in Syria was located. She remembered the first time she changed school in Syria, when she moved from primary to middle school, emphasising how it made her feel more responsible and she said: '*You are older and more responsible, you are not in a children's school anymore.'* Her first challenge with changing school was finding new friends. Then, the conflict began, '*and when the situation was really bad, we left. Because we couldn't take it anymore… Once, I was going back from school, shots were fired from every direction. How I went home, I don't know. So, we left, my mom said I can't leave my kids living in this place.'*

In transit:

Nour was almost 14 years old when her family moved to Jordan, living outside of the refugee camp as her father worked on construction sites in Amman, Jordan's capital city.

She had access to school. Nour soon realised the burden of her Syrian nationality in a school populated with a Jordanian majority of teachers and students. That amplified her identity as a foreigner.

'*I moved to Jordan .... In 2012 .... This change was really huge, new country and new accent and they didn't accept Syrians easily... so when I went to school there was no Syrian students at all, so you feel like a foreigner and they are not very welcoming.... It took a while until I found friends and got used to things and adapted to them.'* She continued by saying, *'They didn't accept me immediately ... you enter, and you don't feel like you are in a place where they accept you...'* As she developed friendships at school, she regained her sense of self: *'I adapted and got used to things',* she said. Nour's friendships or social connections are her artefact of connecting to a new space, knowing it is a transit. She found a route to belonging in transit. *'I even started to study for the final year 12 a year earlier, because, you know, in our countries you start earlier. So, grade 11 was difficult financially because I needed private lessons for the grade 12 curriculum.'*

Then, *'in the end of 2015, we got the option to travel to UK, and at first, I said to my mom we can't leave after all my hard work at school. I used to wake up at 5 am and sleep at 11 to study. All the studying went to the ground since we were coming to the UK.'*

New home:

Soon she moved to England, a different space where she did not speak the language and could not access school. Nour summarised her struggle in the English education system in her statement:

'The problem started when they did not let me go to school… ... Before we came here (England), I was thinking I would continue in school, then we came here, and they gave me ESOL for three months...' Nour said. Arriving in England post-16 years old meant she realised that she could not attend mainstream school. Exploring her options in college, she registered for GCSE exams and found an alternative path: '*So I found the B-tech in civil engineering, and I registered for it and now I am doing it... now I understand how the education system works*.'

Within the Syrian community, Nour also perceives that she is navigating another challenge. *'They think if you are unmarried by the age of 21, that's it for you as a girl,'*

Nour said. She is indeed on a quest to establish her career and financial independence, however, she is pushing against the expectation for young women in her community.

After she started university, she called me to inform me that she was offered an internship (work placement year during her second year of undergraduate studies in civil engineering). '*You know, this company has a big name; they gave me the placement even if it is in Covid times. I am a woman, Syrian with a headscarf, I tick all the diversity points*. *I know if I was not good, I will not get it, it is not only because I am a Muslim, Syrian woman. But I accept that it may have helped.'*

Resettlement is appealing due to the educational possibilities (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019), however, post-resettlement, many young people in England find themselves caught between what is expected and what is experienced, this 'inverted instance'. For example, the long waiting times to commence schooling and the rigidity of education systems highly dependent on language acquisition are amongst the most common obstacles to a meaningful access to education in the UK.

It is important to mention that the Syrian society is varied, and this mentality is more relevant In some communities than others. Being Syrian does not come with a blanket set of beliefs and traditions. Similar to any other nation, there are many differences, and these are attributed to education levels. In urban or non-urban locations, different cities develop a reputation of being more reserved, and there are different religions and sects of religions. Nevertheless, patriarchy is a global phenomenon that touches every girl's life at one point or another.

'I am happy my daughter is at university; I want her to be educated and independent. After all, we are here in this country for our children's future, nothing else. People think living here is a blessing. We are thankful we are not in Jordan or caught in the war in Syria. But it is difficult to live here. Everything is different, away from your mother and sisters and with no chance of visiting. I worry about Nour. She needs to compromise to find a man, you know men are difficult. I will not feel she is safe until she has a family. Nevertheless, I will never push her. It is against our religion to force girls to marry someone they do not want,' Nour's mother articulates her position toward her daughter's academic 'success'.

Nour expressing her contempt of the notion that girls' only role is to get married shows her desire to be different. Supported by her mother's belief in education and independence for women, she was able to celebrate her accomplishment in accessing higher education within the community. Reflecting on her mother's extract, the importance of marriage is still very relevant within her world. Nevertheless, mother and daughter opted for the education pathway at this particular moment in time. This instance of self-authoring by Nour is not independent from her mother's support, thus, it is not only the 'I' (Nour), but also the 'we' of both women pushing the boundaries of gendered positioning.

7.3.6 Summary

The five pen portraits emphasise the lived experiences of young people in relation to their migration journey, being at home, in transit and in a new home country. Being in each place imposes conditions which are different in nature. Some are external, related to power, status and privilege and others are internal, relating to character and desire. Positions were extended to and acquired by the young people. For Yousef, the financial responsibility by virtue of being a 'man,' for Jano, bound by his 'disability', and for Jewel, her desire to be an 'excellent academic.' These positions are acquired by the young people, authoring themselves in life, presenting their positions in the narrative. They voiced their positions and determined what shaped their identity and what can influence their future actions. It is a dialogical process, bringing the external and internal conditions together. One of the major learning points from the field work and the writing up of lives into pen portraits, was that young people and their families respond differently to the world around them. Bourdieu's social capital concepts aid the comprehension for this.

> 'Social capital is the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition. Acknowledging that capital can take a variety of forms is indispensable to explain the structure and dynamics of differentiated societies.' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.119)

Despite the fact the all the young people's families are of the same nationality, have been selected using the VPRS eligibility criteria, and experienced relatively similar migration

journeys, the social norms, economic status, and education within their habitats prior to the conflict and resettlement are distinct. Young people are sometimes pressured to fast track into the labour market, such as Yousef who felt incentivised by access to extra funds with limited skills. The experience of skilled work is fuelled with negativity because of the status of most vocational trades in the Middle East and the motives such young people have for seeking work, which is mainly the financial difficulties of the family, or the exclusion of the young people from schooling. The lack of support and guidance on vocational training as well as its reputation in a developing country such as Syria, makes this pathway less desirable, even though there are many potential benefits in vocational training for young people. Often, young migrants are pushed into specific professional pathways through higher education, for example engineering, medicine, and pharmacy, without consideration of other career choices in their new home country. The motivation for the choice between academic and vocational careers does not reflect the social capital of the youngsters, but rather their aspirations for the future, which is compounded by the parents' beliefs about education and their perception of the job market. As in the case of Jewel, she was able to seek help, support, and guidance, which shortened her pathway to higher education. This was through her determination and engagement with the opportunities provided for her.

The journey of migration is embedded in the participants' stories, and the mobile nature of their journeys modifies their lives physically, socially, and culturally from one landscape to another. The historical nature of the figured world is not only about the shadow of the history of migration, fuelled with expulsion, oscillation, and the legal and economic powers that impact the mobile person. It is also about young people's personal histories and how they choose to give importance to certain actions and irrelevance to others. The challenges Yousef experienced with peers at school when he first arrived in England emphasises his later attachment to a friend he can identify with and communicate with in his mother tongue, Arabic. As Yousef spoke of the incident when another student told him he was not supposed to use Arabic, he confronted him and refused to accept and conform. With time, the school in England defined the language of communication, creating new ways to navigate the social educational space. The process that began with Yousef's attachment to his mother tongue, reached a point during our final conversation where he proudly spoke English. He also spoke of his ability to make friends and, as he described it, *'Now everyone is*

my friend.' The contrast Yousef experienced between his past and his present shows how behaviours and beliefs can be influenced by the common or the tradition in any given social world. Perhaps Yousef is assimilated to what he perceives to be expected from young, forced migrants in a new country. By learning the language and customs, his migrant identity became less salient. Either way, for Yousef to know others and be known by others is what he values, and through that he found his way in his new home country.

7.4 Conclusion

The data that emerged from phase two was rich and complex. Engaging with the young people at different points of their lives meant that they had different and contradictory views at times. This phase did not only bring to light their educational experiences, but it has also uncovered how they perceived themselves and the world around them. By using pen portraits, my intention is to honour their narratives in their entirety, to acknowledge their individuality and gain a deeper understanding of who they are.

In summary, this chapter highlighted the historical dimension of figured worlds by exploring the historical aspect of migration and how the personal histories of the young people shaped their present. The historical nature of the figured worlds of the mobility defines it in this moment in time, illustrating some personal histories of its figures, but these worlds are forever open to change, not only by its figures, but by those who enter their figured worlds in pursuit of knowledge and understanding. Throughout this chapter, I intended for the five pen portraits to establish an awareness of the migration journey, including its lengthy nature for the forced migrants of the Global South. It became apparent during the field work that both the insider and longitudinal approach of the methodology and research design informed the research by deepening the relationship between the young people and myself. My entanglement with the families has not been unproblematic, but it has proven to be central to the ontology and epistemology of this research. This chapter has hopefully allowed me to inspire mindful attendance to their stories, recognising the historical constitution of the figured world of mobility that bestowed vulnerability on the mobile population. The next chapter will tend to the artefacts of the figured world of mobility to unravel some of the complexities experienced by those within this figured world.

Table 9: Phase two summary of findings

Summary of findings of experiences and journeys of young refugees from Syria, related to home, transit country and new home country. *Keywords, positional identity, instances of self-authoring, and acts of improvisation are highlighted, together with artefacts of the resubmission of ordinary life.*

	Positional Identity	Instances of self-authoring	Acts of Improvisation	The artefacts of being 'ordinary'
Yousef	▪ Being one of the family men and earning a living	▪ Positive experiences while working by being recognised and awarded	▪ Making friends	▪ Greetings on the road (being known by others)
Jano	▪ Low academic expectation bound by his 'disability'	▪ Teacher's expectation as a brat		▪ Colour coded checks signifying good vs bad student
Jewel	▪ Academic ability	▪ Adjusting to a new education system	▪ Substituting her chosen degree by opting for another degree as a potential pathway	▪ High school certificate is an education artefact ▪ Home ownership as an artefact of stability
Jimmy	▪ 'Mischief' identity	▪ To desire	▪ Replicating the violence	▪ Football medals as artefacts of recognition
Nour	▪ Being a woman ▪ Religion ▪ Nationality	▪ To investigate	▪ To defy the common expectation of young women in her community	▪ Having friends is an artefact of adaptation ▪ Legal status as a refugee

8 Chapter 8: The interpretation of artefacts in the figured world of mobility

8.1 Introduction:

Figured worlds hold artefacts that reflect the social, cultural, and political present for young people at certain moments in time (Holland et al., 1998). According to Kohli (2011), forced migrants are often 'waiting for the entitlement for ordinary life' (Kohli, 2011, p.322), and this entitlement is not only the 'revival of their ordinary lives' (The Children Society, 2006), it is also being allowed to be an ordinary human who is deserving of protection and accepted without being exceptional. In the figured world of mobility, there is a dual functioning of 'ordinary life'. The first is Kohli's, which is consequential to safety, belonging and success, as discussed earlier (Chapters 3 and 4). The second is the key to identity of character, of being ordinary and deserving this ordinary life without formulising vulnerability, relatability, or exceptionality. Within the fields of forced migration and education, studies subscribe to the notion of either vulnerability of forced migrants or the ultimate resilience by forced migrants. These limiting stances are positioning young people in the figured world of mobility in one of the migrant paradoxes, which calls for an adaptation of one of either position. This paradox is fuelled by the media, as forced migrants are often portrayed in dire situations or exceptional success stories highlighted by agency, resilience and, above all, being relatable. To begin rethinking the relationship between education, society and forced migration, we need to reconcile with the ordinary human whose life is a journey filled with successes, disappointments, trauma, and the quotidian of daily life. My intention here is to discuss how my findings evidence the value of the artefacts of 'ordinariness' within the figured world of mobility, and how these artefacts contribute to a conceptual understanding of youths as social beings and learners. This 'ordinariness' is interpreted in two ways. One is Kohli's conceptualities of deserving an ordinary life in which young people can feel safety, belonging and success (Kohli, 2011). The second is seeking safety, belonging and success without being vulnerable, exceptional or relatable. Artefacts will aid the understanding of the figured world of mobility through the lived experiences of resettled young Syrian refugees to determine how they engage with the legal status of being a refugee, their social community, and their education. Artefacts are an embodiment of phenomenon that hold

within struggles, empowerment instances, and values. Artefacts hold meanings within the figured worlds granted to them by their actors. As mentioned earlier (Chapter 4), artefacts such as 'literacy' and 'language' embody different roles. Lack of literacy evokes a sense of 'nothingness' for Sandy. For Jack, acquiring the language with the correct accent allowed him to gain confidence through hiding his difference from his peers. In this chapter, I seek an understanding of the implications of these artefacts to identify the avenues of change, particularly meaningful change, that can contribute to how young people can gain 'ordinariness' through the lens of the concepts safety, belonging, success (Kohli, 2014; McIntyre and Neuhaus, 2021) and feel they can exist unapologetically, regardless of their difference, and simply be entitled to this ordinary life as ordinary humans outside the migrant paradox in which they can either be vulnerable or exceptional.

8.2 Configuring artefacts

Artefacts have multiple purposes within the figured world because artefacts signify the importance of certain matters and highlight the underlying discourse which made them relevant. To discuss artefacts is not enough to present them; it is essential to understand how they came to be important and how they relate to other actors in the figured world. Artefacts are collectively developed and employed by people in their performances (Holland et al., 1998). In a study by Hatt (Hatt, 2007) on the figured world of 'smartness', the artefacts of school smartness were conceptualised by the young people as grades, vocabulary, and achievement in standardised tests. Educational artefacts are highly cultural and often connected to schools, and Chang (2018) reiterates that the cultural artefacts of schools are report cards, certificates of attendance and other visible gestures of admiration to the individual. Additionally, identity artefacts are material tools but can also be semiotic. In a study which set out to understand girls' interest or lack of it in science, Calabrese Barton and colleagues (2013) examined the trajectory of middle school girls and their interest in science and identified artefacts that were behavioural, for example 'opting out from taking extra credit' or 'doodling on the paper' are artefacts the girls used to position themselves as 'not caring/questioning the meaning of the task' within the figured world of class/school (Calabrese Barton et al., 2013, p.56).

I attend to the artefacts of the figured world of mobility as manifested in the stories of the young people recognising the cultural and political grounding around them. Artefacts are

produced across time in repetitive actions and practices that create habitual behaviours, and they become 'locally circulated resources' (Wortham, 2006). The young people involved in this research used artefacts such 'literacy' and 'language' to self-conceptualise themselves and identify with feelings of 'nothingness' or sources of confidence. The artefacts circulate within the figured worlds, and they become a source of stabilising or destabilising identity positions (Calabrese Barton et al., 2013). Within the figured world of mobility, artefacts are not only meaningful in the individual story, or for the specific group 'Syrian resettled refugees'. It is also the projection that these artefacts have on the figured world overall. Leander (2002) argues that artefacts can only be of significance if explored through the multimodal interpretation of interaction. Artefacts mediate identity positions and influence young people's perceptions of themselves as they provoke emotions and build on their fears and desires. In a study by Wortham (2006), undesirable characteristics in school students often landed them in positions of 'outcasts' or 'beasts'. Moreover, Bal (2014) enables us to witness how artefacts can also be cultural models, such as the production of 'racialised learners' in the figured world of difference, where the 'white' was the idealised work ethic and 'Hispanic' became the 'laid back' (Bal, 2014, p. 282). As discussed, artefacts can be physical and/or symbolic, but also, they can be a meaningful method of intervention and change. Artefacts can be a source of stabilising ordinariness or destabilising it. This chapter will show how sometimes the same artefact can stabilise safety, belonging and success, and over time become a powerful way to destabilise them.

Partly, configuring the cultural artefacts was informed by my positionality. The reflection below shows how positionality matters in different phases of the research. In this instance, it aided the analysis by understanding what is ordinary, it facilitated a trusting relationship and above all allowed a configuration of artefacts that is culturally mindful.

*To understand the element of ordinariness in costumes, positionality matters. It was fundamental, as I identified artefacts that matter for young people, that I was able to unpack their meaning by differentiating what is deemed common and what is not. The power for some artefacts is not that they are relevant to the figured world of mobility, but their function in the young people's lives. Interpreting this function has often involved reliance on cultural knowledge acquired by my personal experiences before the start of this research.

As I entered the homes of the young people's families, I was able to engage in communicative pleasantries with parents in their native language. I explained my research and I felt I was able to establish a trusting relationship with the families during my time at their homes. They felt comfortable with me talking to their children. Indeed, they left the room to cook or care for other children, and came back to check on us. One mother called me a while after my research visits working with her son had ended, asking me to speak to her younger daughter as she needed advice with choosing GCSE subjects. My relationships with the families were different. Mostly I engaged with mothers only, and being a woman has helped as I was able to visit their homes without restricting their freedom, especially in relation to clothing (if I was a man they would have to be formally dressed and often have a chaperone, which may have created a barrier to gaining access).

*reflective note on data analysis

8.3 Tracing 'ordinariness' via artefacts

This section will discuss the artefacts of ordinariness, that is 'safety,' 'belonging,' and 'success' (Kohli, 2011), through the young people's migration journeys and educational experiences. According to Kohli (2014), forced migrants' ordinary lives end as their migration journey begins. Ordinary life for Syrian refugees ended as the conflict began, even before they embarked on their migratory journeys. As Jewel explained (pen portrait Chapter 6), family arguments began with the uncertainty of the conflict. At least for Jewel, the conflict robbed her the ordinary family life before mobility did, and indeed mobility continued to worsen the situation.

This chapter dives into the figured world of mobility to explore two things: the means for the resumption of ordinary life, and the sites in which one can be different yet accepted

without being exceptional (ordinary human). The longitudinal approach employed in this research allowed for the multimodal interpretation of the artefacts (Leander, 2002), and it contributed to an appreciation of dimensions of time and space in relation to the role of artefacts in identity work (Wortham, 2006). Over time, artefacts circulating the figured world of mobility overlap and contribute to or withhold the sense of 'safety,' 'belonging,' and 'succeeding'. The change from Kohli's concept of 'success' to 'succeeding' follows McIntyre et al. (2018) in arguing the importance of challenging the notion of success being an end point, but rather a process which can be continually experienced (McIntyre et al., 2018). The exploration of artefacts through Kohli's (2011) and McIntyre's et al. (2018b) lenses contributes to an understanding of what 'ordinary life' within the figured world of mobility is. Belonging or having a sense of belonging has been identified in much of the research in the field of migration (Ager and Strang, 2004; Howland, Anderson, Smiley, and Abbott, 2006; Rueda and Genzuk, 2007; Hogarth, 2011; Kohli, 2011) as being essential for positive social engagement and well-being.

Artefacts are symbolic, physical, and non-physical manifestations of a state or feeling, and these manifestations are often individual experiences and incidents that guide us through the figured worlds. Being 'safe', 'belonging' and 'succeeding' are not permanent nor detached. The three are dependent not only on each other but also on the identity character of 'being ordinary'. These should be understood as situated in the historical and social and cultural dynamics of the figured world of mobility which contributes to the positional identity, instances of self-authoring and acts of improvisation by the young people involved in this work. These artefacts manifest within a contextual network of events and ideologies and demand a recognition of the present moment in which these artefacts became salient.

8.3.1 The legal artefacts of being a refugee

People with citizenships leave their home country unconscious that the old conception of self in relation to their right to inhabit the space is weakened by the forced migration journey, as it becomes a process of invalidating the old self and the social and cultural world that gives it meaning. The significance of 'safety' is amplified by the reason behind the mobility journey for forced migrants. The families of the young people in this study fled their home country, running away from bombing, shelling, persecution, and kidnapping. Seeking

refuge for the young people can seem like an abandonment of everything they have known, learned or experienced. Their stories revealed their struggles with being 'non-citizen' and 'the refugee' and sometimes simply being 'the Syrian.' As refugees, they stand on what Kohli describes as 'the borders of legal, practical and psychological safety' (Kohli, 2011, p.314). The struggle for safety in transit countries is greater, yet still it does not cease post-resettlement. The young people spent at least two years in transit countries before arriving in England. Having had the opportunity for resettlement in England guarantees what I can describe as hollow safety, practical physical safety, conditional limited legal safety (three-year humanitarian status which was later swapped to five-year refugee limited leave to remain, as families confirmed) and an unacclaimed psychological safety. Researchers and practitioners identify the need for psychological support for young people experiencing forced migration, however psychological safety is missing from asylum seeker and refugee policies in the UK. The limited leave to remain extends the 'temporality' (Masoumi, 2022), as does being in a 'state of waiting', which is experienced in transit to post-resettlement. This indicates that the 'settlement status' in their new home is conditional, their case is subject to approval once again in five years.

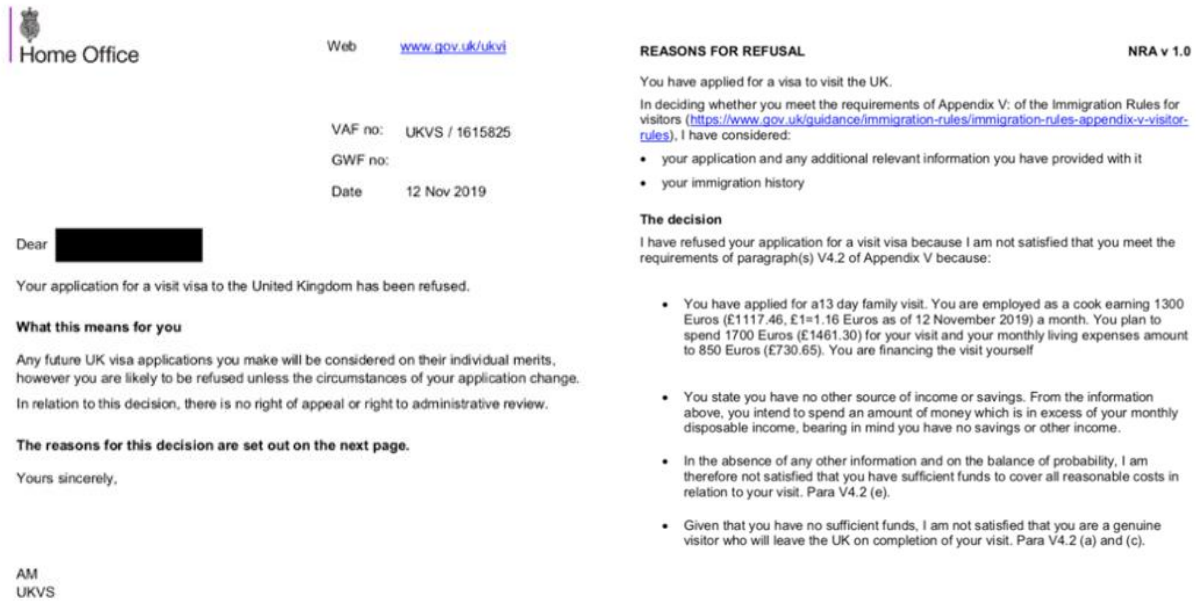
Legally inspired belonging in the overarching state of waiting is possible. The refugee status has its '*perks*', as Nour stated. Her confirmed refugee status means she is eligible for student loans. Since she received an offer from a university to study civil engineering, she was able to apply for a student loan '*as any other British student'* would*,* Nour emphasised. She found comfort in her eligibility for equality, at least in this instance. According to McIntyre and Neuhaus (2021), belonging through education is enhanced by creating meaningful opportunities for new arrivals. Although status allows for some equality in terms of the basic human needs such as education and health, it still functions as an obstacle in the social world and in identity forming. Carrie's mother spoke of the difficult economic situation coinciding with the refugee status:

> *'This country changed our financial situation a lot, my husband had a shop and we used to own our house. Now I feel the humiliation of going to the job centre to sign for the money, I even cry every time.' Carrie's Mother*

It is two sides of the same coin. The refugee status gives her the right to access the welfare system, but that access is making her feel the 'humiliation' of dependency frequently, as she

cries when visiting the job centre every two weeks. It is un-ordinary for her and her family to earn a living by the state without working. Furthermore, belonging is a concept grounded in refugee education, migration, and integration literature. As research highlights (for example, Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019; Suárez-Orozco, 2018), it is a volatile concept, which makes creating a sense of belonging through certain events, activities, or symbols, very complex and sensitive. It is essential that the post-resettlement experience is filled with spaces for trust, tolerance and equal opportunities, understanding that belonging requires time and young people engage with it differently.

Figure 9: Home Office letter



Home Office

Web www.gov.uk/ukvi

VAF no: UKVS / 1615825
GWF no:
Date 12 Nov 2019

Dear [redacted]

Your application for a visit visa to the United Kingdom has been refused.

What this means for you

Any future UK visa applications you make will be considered on their individual merits, however you are likely to be refused unless the circumstances of your application change.

In relation to this decision, there is no right of appeal or right to administrative review.

The reasons for this decision are set out on the next page.

Yours sincerely,

AM
UKVS

REASONS FOR REFUSAL **NRA v 1.0**

You have applied for a visa to visit the UK.

In deciding whether you meet the requirements of Appendix V: of the Immigration Rules for visitors (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-v-visitor-rules), I have considered:

- your application and any additional relevant information you have provided with it
- your immigration history

The decision

I have refused your application for a visit visa because I am not satisfied that you meet the requirements of paragraph(s) V4.2 of Appendix V because:

- You have applied for a13 day family visit. You are employed as a cook earning 1300 Euros (£1117.46, £1=1.16 Euros as of 12 November 2019) a month. You plan to spend 1700 Euros (£1461.30) for your visit and your monthly living expenses amount to 850 Euros (£730.65). You are financing the visit yourself
- You state you have no other source of income or savings. From the information above, you intend to spend an amount of money which is in excess of your monthly disposable income, bearing in mind you have no savings or other income.
- In the absence of any other information and on the balance of probability, I am therefore not satisfied that you have sufficient funds to cover all reasonable costs in relation to your visit. Para V4.2 (e).
- Given that you have no sufficient funds, I am not satisfied that you are a genuine visitor who will leave the UK on completion of your visit. Para V4.2 (a) and (c).

The figure above shows a letter of refusal by the Home Office as a legal artefact of exclusion. Carrie, her sister, older brother, and parents have been resettled all together as a family via the resettlement scheme (VPRS). Unfortunately, her eldest brother was left in the transit country because he was over 18 at the time of the selection for resettlement. Carrie's eldest brother made his way to Europe to finally reside in Germany, joining the millions of refugees granted asylum through the precarious journey through smugglers. It has been five years since the family last saw their eldest son. His youngest sister cannot remember ever meeting him in person. The UK visa system does not have a special family visitor visa provision. All visitor visas must be subjected to the same conditions, which often revolve around tourism and sufficient funding as well as strong roots in the country of

residence. His visitor visa was refused on the basis of funding and his inability to show proof of savings or account for the £730.65 that is deemed to be essential for his stay in England. Processing the UK visa application costs £95, and no assistance or guidance is provided. It was a disappointment for the whole family that the visa got refused. Carrie, at such a young age, learned a lot about 'the burdened mobility' of forced migrants. While many of her peers at school cannot relate to her struggle, she explained how her Libyan friend at school shared her struggle of awaiting a visa decision for family members to visit and dealing with the subsequent rejection.

The constitution of family is bound by borders and state legislation. In Turner's (2020) book Bordering Intimacy, he explores the relationship between family and immigration control in the UK as well as the role of colonialism in shaping these legislations. In the UK, the state uses a highly restrictive definition of who is family. The family visa provision available for families of refugees and holders of humanitarian protection status recognises only children under 18 and spouses (UK government). This narrow constitution of family is shared in other areas of the immigration law in the UK, and it ranks second from the bottom on the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) of family reunification that remains a major obstacle for non-EU newcomers. It is worth recognising the influence of heteronormative and racialised conceptions of family that neglect other modes of social relationships and dependencies (Turner, 2020). The legislation continues to restrict the mobilisation of the family members of many refugees and other British citizens in a definition of family that consists of nuclear families and offers no recognition of siblings or parents of adults. The young people underwent great loss in losing family connections. For them, family meant adult siblings, cousins, uncles, and grandparents. How can one feel ordinary if they are prevented from hosting their adult children? How can children be ordinarily disconnected from grandparents who were a big part of their life? There is grief from family loss not only for those who lost their lives in the conflict, but for those who were held outside the young people's lives by legislation that deems their values unordinary.

8.3.2 'Home': a family artefact

According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 25, everyone is entitled to 'adequate housing' (United Nation, 1948). The nature of that habitat is then dependent on what is deemed ordinary or satisfactory to the individual within their figured world.

According to Kohli (2011), safety begins as everyday life becomes predictable and feels familiar. The artefacts of safety then lie within young people's familiarity with the city, their house, and their school, whether in transit or after resettlement. Jewel moved 'home' multiple times before her resettlement in England. The uncertainty of the unfamiliar has taken its toll on her mental health (Jewel's pen portrait), as she found relief in living with her family in a private home. For forced migrants, often privacy is a privilege in transit, and many families are housed in overcrammed accommodation with other families (UNHCR, 2022a). The journeys of refugees are filled with uncertainty, and even after resettlement many find themselves moving from one temporary accommodation to another, impacting other areas of their lives such as schooling and social relationships. Safety is not only the absence of life-threatening situations, but also the comfort of the familiar. In other words, safety is not comfort, but comfort is safety. This connects to the earlier discussion on positional identity and place, when Rahaf explained how moving away from the familiar meant her loss of freedom (Chapter 6).

Organic belonging is fostered in the way the young people described their houses in Syria. Yousef, Nour, Rahaf, Jewel and Omar stated that their houses were located either in a building or area where most of their uncles, cousins and grandparents lived. This is indeed an emotional dimension for the habitat.

For Omar, narrating his story, he self-reflected on what he valued and what he missed from his Syrian home. It is the privilege gained through the community feeling, the family and living in proximity of those he was raised around and everything he had known. As he discussed his living space in transit, it was distinctly different from the houses in which he resided in his home country (Syria), which brought him comfort physically and emotionally. Post-resettlement in his new home country (England), he valued his home for its functionality and presentation. The multiple houses he lived in while in transit were unfinished.

During my visits to the homes of the young people, I noticed the way furniture was being laid out, and the artwork and decorations that brought about a cultural identity to the spaces. The rooms were filled with as many seats as possible, and used furniture was often donated from charities/neighbours, with extras bought from car boot sales to allow the families to host as many people as possible. For the Syrians families, mothers are home.

They made space physically, emotionally, and functionally, until they became an embodiment of it.

I also noticed the smell of cooking when I visited the young people's homes, as mothers were busy with chores and responsibilities, the pressure on which had been increased by the requirement to attend English courses and training for those interested in joining and re-joining the job market. In England, the mothers were required to continue being the home and beyond without having the family network and support in childcare from grandparents, uncles and aunts. For some, this created some difficulties, and for others an opportunity. Yousef's mother appreciated the opportunities available for women saying:

> *'I feel like I am more than a mother and a wife, I am also a person.'*
> *Yousef's mother*

Family relationships and mothers contribute to bringing a sense of safety not only through the physical safety artefact the 'home', but also by cultural and physical artefacts that amplify the feeling of comfort. The change in the culture of the home and family, influenced by what is expected from women in the UK as well as the opportunities extended to them, recreated the roles of mothers in different ways. What was ordinary for Yousef's mother to embody as a role, became extraordinary as her life in England disrupted the idea of being mother. This contributes to the notion of fluid identities in the figured world of mobility which can re-invent roles and social relationships.

8.3.3 'Food': an artefact of social connections

> 'This food, he explained, represented for him the continued connection he felt to the strong loving arms of his late mother, even living as he did more than twelve thousands kilometres away.' (Dryden-Peterson, 2022, p.26)

Hospitality activities and 'food' act as an artefact of ordinary life, and safety for migrants extends to the families' capacity for reciprocity (Kohli, 2011), their ability to recreate their recipes, their ability to experience some familiarity, even if it is momentary. As discussed earlier, rooms are arranged to fit as many seats as possible. Homes are hospitality sites and an artefact of belonging as they allow families in the figured world of mobility to establish connections with others as they host them and are hosted by them. It is ordinary for them

to have guests at home and feed them. Sitting with Carrie in the lounge while her sister played with their pet cat, we talked about her time at school, her dreams of becoming a vet and how she supports her little sister with homework. Children of migrants often find themselves taking other roles to support their families (Suárez-Orozco, 2018). As Carrie improved her English language skills (eager to show it off, speaking English in our conversations), she became more familiar with schooling artefacts such as homework. She helped her little sister who struggled at school even though she started education at reception level in an English school. '*Mom, give her from the fatayer* you are making,'* Carrie said to her mom as I was preparing myself to leave. Her mother packed some fatayer for me and Carrie gave me the bag, promoting her mom's cooking to me, saying '*they are excellent.*'

In every home it was different. For some, we had to share a meal before we got to work, as in Jano's family home. For others it was after. In every visit they offered me food, sometimes dessert, fruits, and other times full meals. Traditionally, it is rude to have people over and not feed them, and it is consequentially disrespectful not to accept the offering. Once people share what is referred to as '*khobez w meleh**', a special bond is created. Certain social expectations and obligations are then deemed appropriate to preserve this bond. These expectations include confidentiality about sensitive topics discussed or observed while at the family home, and the extension of respect if and when encountered in other places by saying hello and exchanging pleasantries. In addition, as part of the reciprocity practice initiated in the research design, specifically the ethical obligation (Chapter 5), I often offer my assistance if ever required, either through answering questions about the UK system, translating letters or occasionally help with schoolwork.

To belong is to connect with other people. It is to give others belonging through hospitality activities and food, which then connects to the multidimensional roles of artefacts like the 'home,' which 'is also a place of relocating reliable relationships and establishing reciprocity' (Kohli, 2011, p. 311). The ability to share your space and food with others is the foundation in which families were able to form their community, connections and were able to find network in their own rituals and traditions. The sense of safety and belonging is harnessed from the ability to give, and this is necessary after being in a state of dependency and in receipt of aid as refugees. As Carrie's mom stressed, her experience of needing welfare

funds was 'humiliating.' For young people and their families, safety is not physical. Safety lies in their ability to live without shame and humiliation.

*Fatayer: pies made with a special dough filled with spinach or cheese

*khobez w meleh: bread and salt

8.3.4 'Facemask': Covid-19 artefact

During my field work in January 2020, the World Health Organisation declared the Covid-19 outbreak an international health emergency and later, in March 2020, a pandemic. It is true that the pandemic has presented the world with unprecedented difficulties. Even the simplest of daily routines were disrupted. As people everywhere struggled with the new norm, the families involved in this research had their struggles exacerbated enormously. Disrupted education once again is impacting the journey of resettled young refugees in the UK. The inconsistency of schooling before resettlement has paved its way into their lives once again. As outlined in the literature, the educational gap between those who are continuously receiving education and those who are not, places the young people at a greater disadvantage in the future. It was especially challenging for parents with younger children, as the parents themselves were rarely able to understand how they could access online platforms. Additionally, many of them had one laptop or none, even though they had three or four children at school. According to Dryden-Peterson et al. (2019), 'even those resettled refugee children who have been able to access education in their countries of first asylum are likely to have skills and knowledge far below the expected grade level for their age.' (p. 10) The existing gap in education has then indeed widened, and this is something which will impact their ability to gain skills and achieve qualifications for better career prospects and financial stability. There is strong evidence to confirm that young people from already disadvantaged backgrounds have suffered the most and received very little or almost no education at all compared to those from advantaged backgrounds (Sibieta & Cottell, 2020). The government and schools then tried to address this issue by allowing children from disadvantaged backgrounds to attend school, and worked on providing laptops for young people. While both policies are important, the enactment of these policies lacked urgency. According to Yousef's mom, they only provided the laptop two months into lockdown and withdrew the laptop as the school opened again. In regard to government messaging, families were often confused and did not feel they fully understood

the messaging. For example, when schools were opened to those from challenging backgrounds to ensure the education gap was not widened further, mothers were concerned about sending their children to school, as they felt they were choosing between safety and education.

Forced migrants often develop a lack of trust in a state's messaging due to their past experiences in their own states which they had to flee, and the pattern of disadvantaged, humiliating experiences in transit and in post-resettlement new homes. Thus, with the messaging on public health policies such as the vaccination campaign, there was hesitancy from certain communities are due to a lack of faith in the government as an entity that acts in their best interests.

In various events during my PhD, my interactions in the field of education for new arrivals revealed instances where artefacts such as frameworks, guidelines and provisions were set up holding one intended purpose but were transformed as they were practiced by young people with mobility backgrounds. In Jewel's pen portrait, she was enrolled in a provision of education for new arrivals who progress onto college for ESOL or GCSE, however, she was able to register on a foundation course for a higher education degree. For Jimmy with his negative experiences at school and family circumstances (domestic violence incidents), the school which ought to provide opportunities for safety, belonging and succeeding exacerbated his challenges through multiple exclusions from school that led to expulsion and drop-out of education all together. These experiences allowed this work to capture instances that illuminate the lived experiences of the mobile and their relationship with world. Below are fieldnote reflections from a day of teaching as a volunteer at a local provision for newly arrived young people.

Reflective journal note:

One of the students approached me today after a class I voluntarily teach weekly. The student told me that he wears a facemask to cover his shame, getting red faced as teachers ask him questions. Since the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020, students are allowed to wear a face covering to limit the Covid-19 transmission. This student improvised, using this artefact in a different way that is meaningful to him.

I think he continues to struggle not because the school and teachers are not trying enough, but because his lack of experiences in educational institutions – having never been in school – is making him unable to adjust to the collaborative nature of classrooms. Currently he is finding comfort in the 'facemask', but the future of his education remains very complicated. This student speaks of education as if it is something that can happen to him. He told me of his dream to become a doctor and explained he feels 'stupid' as he attends class after class not being able to understand anything. Also, he told me of his struggles leaving his bed in the morning, simply walking, or taking the bus.

In Hasan's case I did not struggle with the 'do no harm' ethical guideline for research. I struggled ethically and personally with the 'do nothing' expectation of the researcher/volunteer. I left the class thinking about my motivation behind this research. Before leaving, I spoke to the school team and offered to teach for an extra hour every week to sit with this student and work with him one-to-one, following his learning pace.

Reflective Journal, 30.Sep.2020

This is an inverted instance, where the student wished to learn and aspired to an academic career believing that resettlement would offer him the opportunity. Post-resettlement, he was faced with frustration due to the lack of holistic support at school and his unacquaintance with learning provisions.

Reflecting on my reasons for doing this research and my ontological perspective and approach to knowledge production in this field, these notes portrayed the grievances encountered. The notes also reflect on my positionality and the ethical responsibility I experienced during my PhD. During the time I spent with this student, we worked on his class work, and I encouraged him to write a list of things he liked to do and choose one every day. I gave him a small notebook, and he reported to me every week what he did. This only lasted until the next lockdown was announced. I never saw this student again.

Additionally, I continued to struggle with appropriateness of my practices as well as the practices of others in the field. I tried many times to align my practices with others in the field, but there are differences between my comprehension of responsibility towards the young people and the expected responsibility of my role. There is a general understanding that research should be carried out by outsiders, and this contributed to increased pressures on me to adhere to certain expectations. These expectations are embedded in the practices of research that set the conditions for knowledge production in the field of social sciences. However, as was identified, reflecting on this instance allows me to maintain my personal ethical responsibility to act while accepting my duties to report and reflect.

8.3.5 'School': an education artefact

> 'Indeed, schools are among the most widespread and visible of state institutions, so exclusion from them may contribute to a group's grievances against the state.' (Burde et al., 2017)

Resettled young refugees often find themselves pushing against constraints and cultural norms that may be imagined, but they are indeed influential. In what follows, I will identify artefacts of 'ordinariness' (Kohli, 2014) based on the young people's stories about their education within the figured world of mobility. In Chapter 7, Nour explained how the expectation of women to marry deprioritises their education, and that society's pressure on her to be married means that her endeavour to be educated and financially independent does not fit within the cultural model. That is, the 'mentality' that women's education is not essential.

As outlined in the previous chapters, there are established disadvantages for mobile people and recognised tendencies of prejudiced practices toward them. These tendencies have been negotiated superficially through United Nations Conventions, activists' platforms and through a greater attention to diversity and inequalities. Listening to the young people converse about their education, it was evident that by far 'schools' were the constant artefacts of education. Neither the nature, nor their relationship to the 'school' was equivalent. They granted the 'school' power by connecting their educational experience to it. Academic literature consolidates 'school' as an artefact of education that within holds the potential for: 'learning opportunities' (Matthews, 2008); 'safety, friendships, order and

peace' (Maadad, 2020); and 'hope to be restored contributing to psychological aspects of safety for refugee children' (McIntyre & Neuhaus, 2021). As discussed in Chapter 3, the potential for schools to foster safety, social connections and well-being is well founded, however, the current state of the schooling system is creating a challenging environment for refugee children. That being said, through the experiences of the young people interacting with 'school', they shared other artefacts which signify safety, belonging and succeeding.

Can education produce artefacts for safety, belonging and success?

For Jimmy, the 'football medals' are artefacts of recognition and symbols of belonging in school that can be embodied in many educational institutions. Jimmy wore all his medals; he brought all his 'trophies' from his time at primary school to show me in during my first visit.

Figure 10: Jimmy and his little brother surrounded by all his medals and trophies



He loved primary school, but as soon as he arrived at secondary school he began to struggle. Academically he is on track, but in terms of behaviour he has received numerous warnings which resulted in him being temporarily excluded. The importance of being of valued is the opposite to the feeling of 'nothingness', as described by Sandy's feeling of shame. Indeed, it is an artefact of recognition, but recognition is also the key to fostering belonging for young people as it reflects on the self-conception of being of value as individuals. In the absence of

schooling, in Yousef's case, working at young age illustrated the importance of 'recognition' and 'appreciation', and young people find peace and a sense of self through being valued. Working environments as they are, however, are not appropriate sites for education. As Omar's experience in Chapter 6 illustrates, working while in transit was the worst experience of his life due to humiliation and an injury at the factory.

Formal schooling artefacts such GCSE grades become an essential tool to access the future of work in England. In Chapter 6, Bilal expresses his gratitude to the education opportunities in England and his concern about GCSE exams. Achieving the desired grades enables students in the English education system, and not achieving those grades is something to fear. Nothing is new in the notion of performativity in education and standardised testing to access different work pathways. There was an overarching desire for most of the young people involved in this project to access higher education. Bilal soon identified the value of his education in England as confined to his ability to pass his GCSEs. Bilal had not yet decided on his future career, but he is aiming to go to university. The UK labour system is highly dependent on GCSE for any level of training. Whether it is for vocational or professional pathways, GCSE is the first step.

Language learning is not only important to success academically, but also in making friends. For Jack (Chapter 6), it was important not only to speak and understand English, but also to master the accent, as he was often bullied when he began school due to his accent. On the other hand, Carrie was always cheerful, showing off her cat, speaking in English, and she did not struggle academically. She made friends easily and did not mention any struggles with her peers at school. Carrie explained how she helps her sister with maths and English, but she feels that her little sister cannot get good grades, and often struggles to do her homework. This is her little sister who started school in England at the age of four. She is in year 3 and she finds school challenging academically. It is important to identify the reasons behind this academic challenge, as being newly arrived is not the only reason that children may struggle academically at school. In the figured world of mobility, young people assume different roles: carers of younger siblings; or interpreters for parents at school meetings or GP appointments. Often, the young people have little or no guidance from parents when it comes to practical decisions about their careers or education.

Adaptability is complex. There is personal adaptability and perceived adaptability, as in Omar's statement from the previous chapter. The principal of the school in England '*got scared we wouldn't be able to adapt fast enough.'* Omar then explained how hard he worked to adapt at school: *'It took me a whole year to adapt to it (the school*).' Therefore, he does not want to change school.

Omar was fortunate not to have to move school. Due to his age, he started in secondary school and stayed. Others, Jimmy for example, spent a year in primary school, then had to transition into secondary school. Which school resettled young people attend is dependent on their housing arrangement, therefore the pressure on social housing and long wait for permanent accommodation for refugees will impact the stability of schooling for young people.

Constructing success in education within the figured world of mobility is not limited to formal schooling artefacts. As validation for her academic ability, Rahaf showed me a newspaper article praising her and her brother for adjusting to school. Rahaf narrating her story spoke of her previous achievements at school in Syria and Jordan.

She used the article to validate her academic ability in the UK, assuming I would only believe she is a high achieving student in schools with Arabic as mode of instruction.

*Figure 11: Nottingham Post news article online**


Syrian refugee, 15, flourishing at school after moving to Gedling just two years ago

"It is delightful seeing him smile with pride"

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The student in the article above is not one of the participants, article used as an example

There are indeed benefits to highlighting success stories in the media. It is a recognition of young people's accomplishments, and many hope to contribute to a more positive image for refugees corresponding with the 'refugees are welcome' narrative. Nevertheless, the

pressure of being successful in the sense of being a 'high achiever' or 'Olympic athlete' is a distorted version of reality, as many people lead ordinary lives without this added pressure. Promoting success stories raises funds for NGOs and charities. It improves the image of refugees, but it has simultaneously created a demand for high-performing refugees. Many refugees are being asked to be identified as refugees if they are in a desirable position, whether academically, professionally, or socially. It is an assertion that host communities are then geared towards a positive attitude towards forced migrants and refugees. While there is no objection that this can be true, it is the Tadpole Philosophy (Tawney, 1964) that can be dangerous. The tadpole philosophy:

> 'It is possible that intelligent tadpoles reconcile themselves to the inconvenience of their position that, though most of them will live and die as tadpoles and nothing more, the more fortunate of the species will one day shed their tails, distend their mouths and stomach, hop nimbly on to dry land and croak addresses to their former friends on the virtues by means of which tadpoles of character and capacity rise to be frogs.' (Tawney, 1964, p. 105).

The fact that few can achieve within the current system creates an illusion that the system works, and change is not necessary. This is relevant because it demonstrates that if the world continues to view mobility in relation to stasis, the mobile will remain undesirable. Furthermore, the figured world of mobility will continue to reproduce the cultural models and artefacts that render the refugee inferior to the citizens. Another pitfall is this idea that individuals are responsible for their fortune.

This research is indeed concerned with the notion of equality. Since the early stages its design, the social inquiry issues around equality were raised, such as in the Preface when I discussed problematising my positionality. Throughout this thesis, there has been a genuine struggle to re-imagine a world where the forced migrants are not penalised for mobility and the un-mobile people are not privileged simply for being static. While equality is mathematically achievable, the social notion of equality is problematic. Its applicability to the social world is contradictory to the notion of diversity. As we are all different, we cannot be equal. Yet still, equality as a concept is utilised, and scholars continue in their endeavour to conceptualise it. Nevertheless, this endeavour has not reached a consensus. A

defendable conceptualisation of equality would be understanding it from the perspective of equal opportunities. This notion is not without its pitfalls, and it is important that we draw attention to the nature of the welcome granted to the 'other' in the spirit of equal opportunity. As Tawny states, 'their welcome to individuals was conditional, therefore, on the latter identifying themselves with the sphere they entered, not with that which they left.' (Tawney, 1964, p. 105) In this vein, we can begin to comprehend how the young people's identities are shaped, what they need to give up, and what they are endeavouring to become amid the figured world of mobility.

8.4 Conclusion

The figured world of mobility relies on the legal artefacts relevant to refugees, the home where the family is, the shared food connecting people together, and schools as an embodiment of education. Attending to these artefacts sets the conditions in which identities are produced. Interacting with the legal artefacts of being a refugee demonstrates how mobility becomes restrictive, even when a mother is inviting her son to visit. By understanding how these artefacts intersect and influence one another, we can gain deeper insights into the figured world of mobility which young people navigate, making space for their continuous identity production. Chapter 9 will evoke the tangible and emotional artefacts within the figured world of mobility. It will demonstrate the components of these figured worlds, some inherently valuable and others that gain value in the figured world of mobility.

9 Chapter 9: Identity production in the figured world of mobility

9.1 Introduction:

In the previous three chapters, I presented my data generated from this longitudinal qualitative research. In this chapter, I analyse this data from the perspective of my principal research questions:

1. In what ways does the migration journey impact the production of identity of resettled young Syrian refugees?
2. How do resettled young Syrian refugees navigate educational spaces?
3. How can education enable/disable young people in the context of forced migration?

These research questions required me to focus on the individuality of the young people, their journeys, their experiences, and instances of identity shifts. As established in Chapter 3, migrant students' identities are developed within a social and culture arena, and as mobile people move from one space to another, the social world shifts and creates a genre of multiple community. As a result of this, I first analysed my data through Holland et al.'s (1998) construct of figured worlds and, specifically, the concepts of positional identity, self-authoring, and improvisation (Holland et al., 1998). In the figured world of mobility and the recognisable roles assumed by actors within this figured world (citizen, non-citizen, foreigner, refugee, woman, man, disabled person, academic, white person), certain activities and artefacts gained power (school, home, crossing state borders, hospitality, sports medals), cultural models emerged (the gendered mentality), and value was assigned to specific outcomes over others (such as academic authority and language inferiority). Second, I drew on Nail's (2015) mobility approach to the theorisation of the migrant. In his view:

> '…with respect to movement, displacement is not lack but a positive capacity of trajectory (even if empirical outcomes are not desirable, i.e. involuntary exile). To view migration and movement as lack is also to conceal the condition of expulsion required by social expansion. It is to

> treat migration as an “unfortunate phenomenon” rather than structural necessity of the historical condition of reproduction.’ (Nail, 2015, p. 12)

Both the figured worlds theoretical framework and the figure of the migrant in the mobility approach are intertwined in their appreciation of the historical nature of social life. It is not the quantitative nature of migration flows; it is the qualitative subjective consequence of their movement that transforms societies and influences the development of humanity. The two theories allowed this research to mindfully explore the present, respecting the historical power imbalances caused by colonisation, to adopt a lens inspired by the positive capacity of migration, and to demonstrate the avenues of change tucked into the individual lives of resettled young Syrian refugees.

9.2 The figured world of mobility

Figured worlds are ‘collectively realised’ (Holland et al., 1998) not only through people’s experiences but also through the ‘imaginary worlds’ (Caughey, 1984) that define their engagement with the world. Figured worlds as ‘collective as if’ worlds are socio-historic, contrived interpretations or imaginations that mediate behaviour and so, from the perspective of heuristic development, they inform participants’ outlooks (Holland et al., 1998, p.52). These figured worlds are what constitute gendered expectation, grant status to artefacts, influence relationships, and enable or disable people. Resettled young Syrian refugees are drawn to the figured world of mobility as if they are enlisted, involuntarily, to be formed in this world. Part of this formation is the position extended to them, but other parts of this are mediated by their agency as they engage in self-authoring and improvisation activities.

The world of mobility is figured based on the following:

Cultural models:

Cultural models ‘are so familiar and mundane that their functions and effects are frequently invisible, unnoticed’ (Gallimore & Lopez, 2002, p. 72). Cultural means/models are represented ideologies, practices and values that hold power within the social

worlds. As demonstrated in the discussion of gendered mentality, academic authority, and language inferiority emerged from the findings; these are all cultural models that young people embody or push against while experiencing the shifts of space.

Multiple imagined communities:

Caughey *(1984)* argues that reality is not objective but is instead created and maintained through social interactions and language. People use language and other cultural practices to create meaning and identity, and dominant groups often use their power to impose their own constructions of reality on others, while marginalised groups may struggle to challenge these constructions and assert their own perspectives. The young people imagine how their communities expect them to act or be and, as they move from one space to another, they are faced with different imagined communities and these are perceived through a combination of personal experiences, information gathered from word of mouth, the media, and perceived stereotypes. They are also treated and perceived by others through an imagination of their community or the one to which they are attributed. For example, as illustrated in Chapter 6, for young Syrian people, the family is not 'nuclear', but rather it extends to include grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins. As they move to England, they are expected to transform their values according to the political dimension and state policy that refuses to recognise a brother or son as he turns 18 (Chapter 8, the legal artefact, figure 8).

Burdened mobility:

This term emerged from this research to explain how mobility in itself is not a disadvantage, but rather it is the political, colonial, historical nature of our realities that weighs mobility down with a burden that many migrants must carry. Burdened mobility

exists as a counteractive influence to privileged mobility, and only when mobility ceases to be a privilege will burdened mobility be confined to the history.

Artefacts:

Artefacts provided the means to explore the resettled refugee youths' identities as forced migrants, learners, community members and, above all, ordinary human beings. In the young peoples' new homes after resettlement, cultural artefacts from their homeland filled their private space. Wall art, seating arrangements, and food brought a sense of safety and belonging into their new homes. Each home was different yet had cultural artefacts that connected the family to their home country. By virtue of being migrants, they are foreigners, hence different. How much of that difference then becomes public? How much is held at home privately? As refugees, certain artefacts scaffold a hegemonic identity which is reproduced within figured worlds. In their ordinariness, these artefacts represent the ordinary struggles of these young people as 'newcomers', as 'students' and of their settlement in the new home and, in this way, their issues are dissolved into the struggles of the many. How do we (as outsiders) strive to make them ordinary without diluting the distinctiveness of their journey that is mobility? We ought to conceptualise 'ordinary' in myriad forms. Each form exists in the intersection between the young person's personal figured world and the figured world of mobility. While it is almost impossible to fully understand their personal figured world, this research aims to uncover the figured world of mobility through the intersection of their personal figured world. It is the particular figured worlds which constitute the relevance of the artefacts rather than what is constituted as an identifiable artefact. How are these artefacts understood by these young people and how do they maintain their role in the creation of their identities? Are some artefacts particularly important compared to others? It is often the figured world that determines the status given to the artefact.

Inverted instances:

Within the figured world of mobility, people encounter many instances where they expects certain outcomes or opportunities as the move from undesirable situations to other countries but what is experienced after the leaving a one place to another falls short in delivering the desired/expected outcome. I have described these as an 'inverted instance' examples of these are when young people left their home country seeking refuge in neighbouring countries (transit countries) away from immediate violence and chaos. However, in transit countries they experience discrimination, atrocious living conditions and often they are denied basic human rights (Chapter 2). Even after resettlement which is the most desirable outcome for refugees in transit countries, young people face unexpected challenges such as Nour's inability to attend school post 16 (Chapter 7, Nour's pen portrait)

State of waiting

In the figured world of mobility, the 'state waiting' prevails multiple times, as it is experienced daily in the lives of resettled young refugees. It encompasses all waiting-related activities, both mundane and dramatic. It is driven by economic and legal systems. It is also reiterated in instances of oscillation, temporality, and waithood.

9.2.1 The complexity of identity production

Thus far, the chapters have emphasised how the figured world of mobility is collectively formed through the history of migration, social engagement with the perceived and

imagined worlds, and the social and cultural interpretation of artefacts. The concepts of positional identity, self-authoring, and improvisation unveil the relationship between identity, behaviour, and the figured world. The figured worlds theoretical framework makes an analytical distinction between dispositions that are connected to figured worlds and others that are socially deployed in relation to other people and 'one's sense of social place' (Holland et al., 1998, p.125).

The histories, cultural models and artefacts, contribute to the production of the identities of the young people. Historically, mobility gained its negative connotation as the creation of states rendered sedentary a condition of civilisation (Nail, 2015). Since then, states have created a landscape that disadvantages mobile people. Urrieta (2007) argues that, in figured worlds, people are in hierarchies based on an explicit and implicit distribution of power. In our current figured worlds, refugees need help and are often positioned as vulnerable. However, not all refugees have an equal claim for help, because some believe themselves to be more vulnerable than others, others are considered more deserving of help, and some dismiss the whole notion of vulnerability. The process of sense-making in the figured world of mobility demands attention to histories, not only as the collective history but also the personal history.

In this research, mobility is not a state that the young Syrian people involved in this research were born into. It was not out of choice that they became mobile, rather it was inflicted on them by conflict. Nevertheless, refugees exercise some form of choice as they make a decision to physically leave their home country and the chaos of the conflict, moving towards the uncertainty of the unfamiliar. This choice, however, is often the choice of the adults, not of the young people. That is not to say that anyone 'chooses' to be a refugee, rather that one chooses to leave a difficult reality in aspiring for a better one or, in other words, one chooses not to surrender. For most of the young people involved in this research, the move from transit countries to England was regarded and experienced as an 'opportunity'. The notion of choice was not articulated when the young people talked about the move from their home country. Indeed, their parents made these choices for a better future for their children. However, with the uncertainty associated with forced migration, 'better' is more of a state of hope rather than an advantage in many ways.

In most cases, a better future never comes along. Many Syrian refugee children who were born into refugee camps in Jordan have never left the camp and probably will not leave the camp in the near future (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019). Nothing about forced migration is ideal. This mobile group of people is often misled, used, and abused, continuously positioned as either the source of the problem or the charity case. The two positions are indeed two ends of a spectrum, but those positions are rooted in a view of forced migrants as 'the wretched' and 'the ostracised'. Undeniably, the positioning of refugees as the wretched did not emerge from nowhere. It is the figured world of mobility that supports this positioning through the lived experiences of forced migrants who often suffer from poverty, trauma, and desperation, and the vulnerability associated with exposure to insecurity due to a lack of safe passage out of their home countries as they flee conflict, natural disasters or dire economic situations. While refugees deservedly retain a status to seek refuge in other countries, those who are impacted by poverty and climate change are considered to be 'less deserving' due to a lack of legislation to protect people under such circumstances. Nevertheless, forced migrants, regardless of the reasons why they left their home country, find themselves in the figured world of mobility that is bound to wretchedness, which in turn makes many mobile people perpetually in a state of what I described as 'burdened mobility.'

9.2.1.1 Dispositions connected to the figured world: conceptual identity production

Young people construct their identities and their understanding of themselves within their figured worlds. The subjectivity around certain issues is conceptualised through their engagement within their figured world (Holland et al., 1998). Young people develop emotions that identify them with being perceived as a refugee through their understanding of others' perceptions of themselves and their interactions with the social world. The experiences of young people as they move across landscapes provokes shifts in conceptual identities. These shifts in identities occur as people interpret their past as they interact in the present. Eventually, they develop a new understanding of the landscape around them, upon which they engage in a process of 'self-making'. The resettled young people may share some of the conditions in these landscapes, but they do not experience them as equals, nor do they interact within them in the same way. Their personal histories are different. They are bound by different rules within the community and bound by gender, age, religion and

family expectations. Hence, young people enter the figured world of mobility in different modes and then acquire different identities in ways that are meaningful to them. Meaningful identities are formed through their lived experiences: who they were, who they are and who they aspire to be.

9.2.1.2 Socially constructed identity: procedural identity production

The process of identity production is altered through young people's actions within the figured worlds. Through their participation in group activities, and the premise on which this participation is based, young people take up a position as they conceptualise themselves through the behaviours of others, which in turn influences their behaviour.

In the following section, I will discuss the three concepts of Holland et al.'s (1998) sociocultural theory: *positional identity*; *self-authoring;* and *improvisation*. I will explore the identities of the young people through this framework. The concepts of 'positional identity', 'self-authoring' and 'improvisation' capture the process of conceptual and procedural identity production as well as the incorporation of artefacts within their lives and their subsequent negotiation of their role, which might limit or unfold new possibilities through them.

9.2.1.3 Positional identity

Identities are mediated by the social world and the social conditions within it. In taking up a position as a researcher, I was able to enter the figured worlds of these young people to understand the figured world of mobility. The incidents that were voiced out loud by the young people, along with the roles that they decided to acquire and share, serve to illustrate their 'positioning' (Vågan, 2011). In the following sections, key concepts serve as themes under which the process of positioning is examined. 'Space,' 'gender' and 'nationality' emerged as cues as the young people narrated their position at that moment of time. Through these cues, their stance is understood in relation to the social world of the young people. The socially constructed self is subject to positions shaped by state policies that often categorise individuals in opposition to others and form the foundation of new racist discourses (Holland et al., 1998). For example, 'citizen' vs 'forced migrant' (Bauman, 2004) and 'the Orient' vs 'the West' (Said, 2003).

9.2.1.4 *Self-authoring*

Acquiring a position involves the dialogical process of self-authoring. Self-authoring is not an independent activity; it is highly configured through the figured world. Holland et al. (1998) emphasise that the 'I' is by no means a 'freewheeling agent' (1998, p. 170). The self and the words of others create the 'contours' (1998, p. 172) in which identities are negotiated. These contours allow us to narrate ourselves in relation to others and the norms and structures within our figured world.

9.2.1.5 *Improvisation*

> Improvisation *'is the central mechanism connecting identity production and behaviour, allowing for the elaboration of identities despite socially imposed constraints; it is the predominant form of social agency within one's life context and position.'* (Chang, 2018, p. 55)

The youngsters' lives are shaped among the artefacts, positions, and their relational behaviour to the figured world. As they engage in the social cultural world around them, the social forms and cultural cues 'orchestrate' their voices and 'personify' their interactions (Holland et al., 1998). These will then contribute to the reproduction of some characters and the emergence of new figured worlds, positions, and identities. Improvisation is 'the sort of impromptu actions that occur when our past, brought to the present as habitus, meets with a particular combination of circumstances and conditions for which we have no set response,' (Holland et al., 1998, p. 18). The lack of set responses opens avenues for young people to find new ways to respond to a given position and not only self-author themselves within a contour of a position but go beyond to improvise and transform the patterns in the figured world of mobility.

9.2.2 Gendered positioning in the figured world of mobility

Gendered positioning is a social construct: an outcome of interactions in history and a construct bound by culture, history, traditions, and societies. In Chapter 6, Sandy told the story of her leaving school in Syria and not being able to access school in Lebanon (in transit) because schooling for young women was viewed to be risky. She spoke freely about her limited literacy skills. Her inability to read and write contributed to her feeling of 'nothingness'. Her account of her feeling of 'nothingness' is analysed through her position as a girl in a social space that raises safety concerns for girls going to school. Sandy's use of

literacy is an artefact, not only of education but also beyond, to signify existence itself. In her account, she gave status to 'mentality' as an influential social cultural tool in figured worlds. The 'mentality' is a product of cultural models, and it governs how people should interact, what behaviours are accepted and what behaviours are to be avoided. In her account, she names the invisible, that is, 'mentality', illustrating its features within figured worlds of not only mobility but also of young women with similar backgrounds to her. Nour (pen portrait, Chapter 7) also illustrated how she pushed against her gendered positioning. In facing the same 'mentality' as she pursued higher education, she acknowledged how the Syrian community expects women to marry early. Similarly, Yousef's positioning of the male as the worker (pen portrait, Chapter 7) can be interpreted as a cultural model that holds gendered roles, specifically that of the man as the breadwinner.

Self-authoring within a gendered world, and Sandy's reference to 'the mentality', has been reiterated, observed and examined in literature (Fincham, 2020). The patriarchy in Syrian society has links to cultural traditions and religion. The common view that a woman is destined purely for a life of marriage and children becomes more contested as the young women resettled in England encounter other women who have successful careers, are unmarried, or have babies in their 40s – all of which seemed impossible within their Syrian community. This is not to say these examples do not exist in Syria – they do. However, Syrian society is formed of social 'bubbles', and people do not mix with people from different backgrounds, especially in small cities. This lack of diversity in societies is universal. For example, if young girls are discouraged or unable to engage with others that are different, there is a risk of reproducing a culture model that treats girls as second-class citizens when compared to boys, and this model could be sustained unless the patterns within the figured world are changed by its actors.

To improvise is to 'investigate' beyond the positions extended to us. Positional identity brings influence to the development of young people's identities. Whether it is grave or minimal, there are avenues for change through self-authoring and improvisation. Indeed, influenced by the figured world but at points pushing the contours through self-authoring, change can find a pathway for the self to alter its future. To investigate is to not accept the norm or the common pathway of others in the figured world. By taking initiatives, inquiring, and often challenging the status quo, improvisations are the vehicles for change in figured

worlds. Returning to Nour, when I first spoke to her, she explained how she wanted to go to university to be a pharmacist and, in Jordan, she had one year left at secondary school before she would apply to university. Post-resettlement, she was only able to attend college for ESOL classes like many young people her age. However, unlike many, she had investigated the education system to navigate her way into discovering 'access courses'. In her previous educational experiences (in Syria and Jordan), young people attend school until the age of 18: '*There is no such thing as access courses*', she said. To her, the access course was an opportunity within what she described as, '*the hopeless place'*, this hopelessness was due to the fact she couldn't attend school post 16. In her view*,* and from her experience of how others in the community had engaged with it, college was a place where migrants spent years on ESOL classes only. She learned that she could only begin her access course towards a pathway to university by passing certain subjects at GCSE level, and it was not easy to register for the examinations with no proof of English. However, she sat the necessary English exams, then registered for the GCSE exams. After less than a year, she passed the GCSE courses required for an access course in civil engineering. Nour admitted she was not going to become a pharmacist as she initially intended, but she did not regard that change in professional direction as compromise. Rather, she said: *'I was younger and in different country. I don't like chemistry and I love math. So, engineering is better for me.'* As young people move from one place to another, their previous knowledge and experiences become a point of comparison. Nour learned that access to education is not limited to schooling. In her quest to access education in England, she gained a new voice and new insight into the education system in England and a future that she would never have imagined without her mobility.

9.2.3 The casting of 'race', 'nationality', and 'religion' on the figured world of mobility

Positional identity by 'nationality' is amongst the most common positions extended to us, and which we extend ourselves. The term nationality is not used in the context of citizenship because refugees are legally without citizenship, but it is used in the sense of belonging to a nation, whether by holding a country's citizenship previously, residing in a given country for a prolonged period of time, or even identifying with family heritage. Citizenships and nationalities are defined differently but are often used interchangeably because the norm is for both to be aligned. Nevertheless, contemporary global societies continuously challenge

this norm as a result of mobility, intercultural families, and the more globalised nature of work. Yet still, incidents like Killwa's visible inclusion, that hid away his nationality and religion, Jack's need to master the English accent to avoid peer victimisation, and Yousef's early experiences in school in England as he confronted his peers when they mocked the Arabic language, shows that the world's hierarchies impact the young people's lives in unique ways. As discussed before, relatability is among the most successful methods to harness the compassion of human beings (Chapter 3). Killwa exercised his agency by withholding his difference. He held an understanding that difference in 'religion' must be hidden; it was these contours within the figured world that deemed his appearance powerful. The new cultural model in which he found himself orchestrated his behaviour. Nevertheless, he self-authored himself and controlled the image he portrayed of himself in school. While Killwa used his appearance as a tool to make his difference invisible, others chose to wear a more salient religious symbol.

Nour wore her religion proudly and visibly through her headscarf. After she started university, she called me to inform me she was offered an internship (a work placement year during her second year of undergraduate studies in civil engineering). The reality of why Nour got the job is irrelevant, but the fact that she felt that her gender, race, and religion may have helped will be a part of her identity until those feelings stop. The acceptance of the casting of race or religion holds within it the power for racially influenced appointments to continue. Intelligibly, a prerequisite of eliminating racism is that no form of racial favouritism influences humans' actions. However, it is far more complex than that. In the meantime, there are many others like Nour who live in a reality where discrimination and prejudice is an active component of their present. Therefore, when an opportunity presents itself for Nour to take the route of the privileged on the discrimination spectrum, it is maybe justified. That being said, it was Nour's perception that her identity as a Muslim woman wearing a headscarf played a role in her appointment. The true reasons for her appointment are unknown, but how do we move away from the casting of race when the unknown is far greater than the known?

According to Paulo Freire, people are divided into two groups: the oppressor and the oppressed. To answer the question 'how do we move away from the casting of race?', we need to challenge the dominant powerful group who has the ability to discriminate against

the group that is vulnerable by virtue of appearance, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability etc. Nonetheless, the dominant group is only the oppressor if it decides to exercise this power and enact discrimination in its daily life. According to Freire (1996):

> *'In order for the oppressed to be able to wage the struggle for their liberation, they must perceive the reality of oppression not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform. This perception is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for liberation; it must become the motivating force for liberating action. Nor does the discovery by the oppressed that they exist in dialectical relationship to the oppressor, as his antithesis— that without them the oppressor could not exist —in itself constitute liberation. The oppressed can overcome the contradiction in which they are caught only when this perception enlists them in the struggle to free themselves.'* (Freire & Freire, 1996, p. 48)

The oppressed may try to decide not to benefit from what they believe to be their vulnerability, but that will not cease the power of the oppressor. Even if Nour's appointment was favouritism, it is not an act of liberation from the casting of race, but rather a justified choice inspired by the figured world of mobility that is discriminatory by nature with no exit in sight.

9.2.4 The inferiority of language in the figured world of mobility

The importance of language is widely recognised in migration research (Gifford et al., 2010; McBrien, 2005; Suárez-Orozco, 2018). When reflecting on his experience arriving in England, the father of one of the young people once told me: '*This country made me deaf and mute.'* His articulation of this inability to communicate in English, highlighted his view that the impairment bestowed upon him would be permanent as long as he remained in this country.

Nour mentioned that, even in Jordan, when studying and speaking Arabic, her Syrian accent made her recognisable as a Syrian. This occurred at the time of the Syrian refugee influx to Jordan, which was condemned locally by the national population (Chapter 2) and, as a result of this difference in the wider social context, she was bullied. Similarly, Jack explained how

his English had improved and how this had greatly helped his confidence. However, he still had to endure the challenge that came with an inability to speak the language 'properly'. He practiced and practiced, according to his mother. His commitment to 'getting his accent right', as Jack described it, was very important for him; he did not want his peers to recognise he is different through language. In this regard, Jack had managed to identify the source of his bullying. He had therefore invested time and effort to shift this audible and therefore 'visible' part of his identity in order to fit in. Had it helped? Yes, indeed, but could this be considered resilience on his part or simply a 'necessary' act of improvisation in order to achieve a level of social invisibility?

At the time of the interview, Jack said it had taken him a whole year to 'adapt'. It is, however, important to emphasise that we spoke at that particular moment in time. Our conversation captured him in a moment when he felt he could claim that he had reached a stage called 'adaptation.' Indeed, the young people in this research spoke of adaptation as a 'triumph'. It was not a measurable success or an achievement through grades or certification. It was a personal sense of fulfilment, perceived t by their ability to meaningfully engage with education which often included being accepted by their peers. Language is therefore not merely a communication function or a practical tool for integration; it holds within it a complex array of emotional functions, and it is highly connected to identity formation.

9.2.5 The 'academic' authority in the figured world of mobility

The young people's highly academic aspirations to achieve – or perhaps the 'protectiveness' (Kohli, 2006) of achievement – were often influenced by their social world, especially that of their families. The academic expectations placed on them by the school often reflected the educators' perceptions of migrants and refugees. However, the reality was often somewhere in between. Rahaf started her schooling experience in England in support classes learning letters. She soon managed to prove her academic ability: she is currently studying for A-levels and aspires to study pharmacy at university. Jewel's teacher in Egypt told her that she would be good doctor and, even though she had actually wanted to be a psychologist, after resettlement, she was determined to study medicine. Jewel may have not entered medical school, but she is on her own academic path that could eventually lead her to medical school if she graduates her degree with the same desire to become a doctor.

While the media focus is often on young people that realise their academic aspirations (Figure 10 in Chapter 8), many more continuously evolve, sometimes inspired by expectations and other times constrained by them. As they live the reality of a continuous change of place and social world, they begin to author themselves into a new world, new aspirations, and a different future and many time an uncertain and unfamiliar future. Throughout my engagement with these young people involved in this research, I witnessed changes in response to their positions, their desired futures, and the pathways they eventually chose or mandated to take. There seemed to be a gap in knowledge in terms of linking their education to future work (apart from for those who aspired to traditional professions such as pharmacy and medicine). Also, there was little support for their parents' language skills and knowledge. Parents play a big role in young people's lives, especially as they are often the sole stable adults in their lives. Their understanding, judgements and experiences are relevant to the young people's choices, actions, and aspirations. Parents become the guardians of cultural models, therefore any transformation requires joint.

9.3 Hybrid identity in the context of mobility

The young people's own personal histories, and those of their ancestors, alongside their culture in terms of what they hold dear and the values that guide their experience and interactions with the artefacts, are at the core of their identity-making. These young people are not only mobile themselves; the mobility also extends to artefacts, which can be essential at one moment in time and peripheral at other times. The continuous shift in landscape, legal status and social position, evokes temporality in the figured worlds of mobility. Masoumi (2022) considers temporality in the migration regulation as a means of control against migration. Carlbaum (2021) argues that temporality weighs down even highly skilled migrants and compels them to undergo processes of de-skilling and re-education inspired by the resumption of ordinary life from an ordinary (not vulnerable or exceptional) stance. Thus, mobile identity demands a subscription to temporality at a young age. Unsubscribing to this notion entails a commitment to adapt to acquire a hybrid identity.

Hybrid identity was first coined in colonial times to describe mixed-race persons that were born out of atrocious practices in times of war (Papastergiadis, 2015) but, since then, it has moved away from notions of colonial heritage to enable a better understanding of

multicultural identities and support anti-racism agendas (further details in Chapter 3). This thesis relies on an understanding of hybridity that is not limited to race but also encapsulates notions of culture (Bhabha, 2004) and mobility (Nail, 2015). Becoming 'a hybrid' thus involves the identification of personal shifts that inject mobility into a hybrid identity. In this research, this was visible in the young people's shift from refugee to citizen.

An exploration of the complexity of the latter statement is important to understanding the unequal notion of citizenship. Indeed, in this work, I investigate migrants, but inequality lies in other social conditions such as gender, class, and race. Nevertheless, the focus in this research is on *becoming* amid the figured world of mobility. This research shows that identity production is far from a process of following an established pattern. We must accept that there are some commonalities within the figured worlds of mobility, but the engagement with such commonalities is highly subjective. It is the young people themselves, with their own histories, characteristics and experiences, that define the 'good behaviour' of oneself and others towards them. For some, exclusion has been the only experience that they have known in education, regardless of their special landscape, home, transit, or new home. For others, their experiences varied entirely and their engagement with education either imposed a certain identity or exposed them to artefacts which led them to an altered identity.

The longitudinal methodology of this research enabled an understanding of identity in a more nuanced way. Following the young people at different times, and therefore during different phases of their journey, allowed for a more holistic conceptualisation of their lived experiences and the figured worlds produced and sustained through them. In this conceptual sense, hybrid identities emerged – not only one, but multiple. Hybrid identities are not necessarily a process but are better seen as 'continuous flow' (Nail, 2015). Whenever mobility is central to identity production, this production is often premised on a binary flow between the migrant and the non-migrant. However, hybridity can capture the intersections in this flow through instances of inclusion and exclusion to form a strand of hybrid identities that is based on this binary. If, perhaps, the premise shifts to an account of stasis and mobility as interdependent, hybridity can capture ordinary instances in the flow to allow for new strands of hybrid identities. The world of mobility figured by these new

hybrid identities paves the way to ordinariness for mobile people. To be hybrid is not to be always in a state of mobility, but to accept that even in a state of stasis, where a person can become a citizen and decide they no longer need to move, mobility never ceases. It becomes within the state of stasis. It is indeed at the core of hybridity.

Identities are produced within a landscape of social and cultural interactions in a world of unequal power dynamics that influence behaviour. In this world, or as we navigate this world, we respond to the power dynamic and our identities are altered by our imagined and perceived selves. It is important to look closely at inclusion, and especially that of the migrants, to examine its paradigm. Diversity and inclusion become the 'desired' goal of certain sectors of society, based on the simplified notion that these two phenomena could lead to better social dynamics, increase social skillsets, and aid the development of better solutions to tackle the complex problems of humanity. However, this idea of better social dynamics seems to be founded on the privilege of the non-migrant, along with their cultural and gendered hierarchies, and this has extended to knowledge production in the social field. Therefore, celebrating diversity and promoting inclusion does not inheritably inspire equality, nor does it mean prejudices are recognised. If it is merely opening the social landscape towards difference for the sake of the service of humanity, then this service is only possible through the values of the privileged. For this opening to be more meaningful, mobility is indispensable. The values held within the new strand of hybrid identities are fundamental to move away from a dominant Western stasis-based ontology that governs current paradigms.

9.4 Destabilising 'schools' as an artefact of education

The pivotal role of education is impacted by the young people's families, gender, age, and by their experiences of schooling, future aspirations, community and society. Schooling as a concept is far more than education in the sense of literacy, numeracy, and knowledge; it is highly dependent on behaviour. This claim does not bear the brunt of schools post-resettlement only. It does, however, raise questions about schooling as an institution. Increasingly, more young people are excluded implicitly or explicitly from mainstream schooling. Schools in their current form are relatively modern compared to the existence of

human civilisation globally. Collet-Sabé and Ball (2022) argue that 'schools are not fit for purpose' and there is 'an urgent need to re-think education without school' (Collet-Sabé & Ball, 2022, p. 3). Nevertheless, much of the debates on schooling are in regard to reform or improvement, never about the unrealistic expectations formed by these institutions. Simply put, schools are social sites for children and adolescents in which they are required to form relationships with their peers with no issues, understand and submit to the authority of the adults with little or no questioning, all while learning standardised skills and gaining knowledge that is highly dependent on national and political contexts which, for refugees, for example, are unfamiliar. Schools rarely address the personal/home condition of students or deal with their developing emotional intelligence. They do not accept that, in a globalised world, most knowledge is not universal, and skills are acquired differently. Additionally, the focus of schools is mainly on improving results and controlling behaviour, without any true engagement with other educational stakeholders such as teachers and parents. Hence, for schools to work, they must be utopias in which everyone and everything is in its perfect form, which, according to Foucault (1986), is essentially unattainable since 'in any case, utopias are fundamentally unreal spaces' (p.24). Regardless of this, every society or social site aspires for the perfection of the utopia. Foucault (1986) argues that, as these social sites translate into reality, they become the mirror reflection of utopias, which he calls heterotopias. These heterotopias can have different forms determined by different principles: heterotopias of crisis or deviation; heterotopias that function in different ways as history unfolds; heterotopias 'capable of juxtaposing'; and heterotopias that accumulate over time. The final principle is that heterotopias are not freely accessible (Foucault, 1986). As an example, schools are heterotopias that transfer from one place to another regardless of their compatibility with context. Access is often constrained by admission requirements. Schools function differently over time and, above all, are a reflection of an unrealistic perfect social site. The use of the RIC (Re-Integration Centre) to temporarily exclude pupils as an internal measure to improve behaviour (appendix 3). and steer students in the 'right' direction or towards the expected norm, makes the RIC a site of a heterotopia of deviation, constructed for mischievous pupils. For Jimmy, the RIC functioned as the last formal site of education. As Jimmy stepped in the RIC, he became an outcast. It was not the first time that this position had been extended to him by a social site. An outcast from 'home' country, outcast in 'transit' country and outcast from the 'new home' country through school, Jimmy

attempted to self-author himself armed with the artefacts of schooling: 'academic ability and grades' and 'recognition football medals'. These made little difference in secondary school, however, and in his home which had been overtaken by the cast of domestic violence. Jimmy's future can be predicted, but with no certainty. It is his ability for 'improvisation' from the predictable that makes everything possible within any figured world.

From the beginning of this project, there was a focus on in access to education through an assumption that it is access to schooling. Questions about how long they had attended school in Syria, and how long it took for young people to access school in transit and after their resettlement were at the core of the conversation speaking about education. Indeed, these questions were relevant but, in many ways, they steered the research away from fundamental questions about education and schools as heterotopias (Foucault, 1986).As exemplified by Jimmy's story, access to mainstream education, literacy, numeracy and learning skills have not ensured his inclusion. Jimmy's case reminds us that figured worlds are spaces of collective understanding of what is recognised as significant and what is deemed important. His inability to follow behavioural guidelines and expectations from students he soon became expelled.

During my conversations with the young people, I noticed the emphasis on schooling and the different models of schools that they encountered. Young people involved in this research stated that, they attended NGO-run schools; evening schools; mainstream schools; alternative provision; and each had a different curriculum. For them, in transit countries, schools had the same language of instruction as their home country, which was practical. They did, however, speak of an emphasis on the use of the English language in Jordan and in NGO schools. While some young people were able to access some provision of schooling in transit, many could not. This was due to a need to work (as in the case of Yousef) or a need for physical protection (Sandy). In responding to my questions, the young participants mainly connected education to schooling and the activities and skills in schools such as sport and learning. Young people highlighted the absence of school and, at other times, the different school models. They spoke of school as an embodiment of education. The longest standing universal institution of education is the school. However, it is important for us understand schools as an artefact of education rather than as education itself, because

schools have been contested for decades, making them an unsolved conundrum. To justify this claim, I draw on the two main questions about schooling applicable in both the public and scholarly settings. First, to quote (Goodland, 1979): What are schools for? This question encompasses the purpose of schooling and the societal value of schools, and whether they are designed to achieve this goal. The second question is: How are schools measured? This is connected to the performativity debate (Ball, 2013), national examination outcomes and global PISA outcomes. Discussing the answers to these questions at length is not the purpose of this research, however it is often taken for granted that schools are stabilised artefacts of education and these questions are at the core of destabilising these artefacts.

Schools are not bound by their service, passing knowledge to generations. John Dewey argued that the purpose of education was to integrate individuals into a democratic society (Dewey, 2004). This link of education to integration into society is important in discussing schools because it highlights an expected responsibility for schools. Yet, measuring the success of schools in this respect is not part of the performativity debate. Education and politics are connected, as Plato and Aristotle noted when they placed their educational theory under the bigger umbrella of their political theory (Jarman, 1951). Since then, education has become a service by politics for politics. Through the history of education – not only that of England, but also of Syrian education – schools are a state matter. Thus, before they were an educational artefact, schools were a political artefact. The multiple dimensions involved in the configuration of an artefact are an indicator of the contextual power contributing to the making of an artefact. The nature of artefacts is volatile. Nevertheless, destabilising an artefact that has accumulated power over history in instrumental dimensions of the political and social world is difficult. This stability is not extended to all the artefacts discussed in this chapter because not all artefacts are created equal. Some gained power from dimensions that are on the periphery of a social world governed by states. Stabilising an artefact from the figured world of mobility is complicated in this world where mobility is understood through a lens of stasis.

Despite the complexity of destabilising the school as an artefact, the measurable educational demand from schools is to teach children literacy and numeracy skills and establish them within a system of routine in the hope that they become the taxpayers of the future. School is not part of every forced migrant's journey. A few of the young people in

this research did not have any literacy skills and had not attended any school before. In the case of Syrian refugees, the number of young people who were illiterate and had had no schooling was increasing as the conflict marked it is tenth anniversary in 2022. Others were able to read and write but, as they arrived in English schools, their reading and writing skills become obsolete as they were in a different language. Based on my small sample, those with experiences at school and literacy skills in Arabic were able to cope better at school and acquire English faster once they arrived in England. The familiarity of what is expected of them in an educational institution helped them understand the unspoken rules of education and schooling. School might be taken for granted in the home country, but as soon as that country falls into conflict, the risks of sending children and young people to school become an obstacle. In transit, sending young women to school was perceived to be dangerous, as illustrated by Sandy (Chapter 6), while young boys were often sent to work, as was the case for Omar and Yousef. For those with special needs like Jano and Ibrahim, school was impossible. The precarious situation young people find themselves in as their home residences fall into the chaos of war and conflict brings a strong element of uncertainty into their lives. Education, and schools in particular, are considered a remedy for uncertainty as they bring a sense of normality into young people's lives, not only by being part of something familiar (though not all young, forced migrants have had the experience of schooling), but also because schools are institutions of habits and routine. In schools, young people are expected to find their footing through a collection of habits, traditions, and expectations. Schools are able to create a sense of 'safety' and 'belonging' as well as opportunities for 'success' (McIntyre & Neuhaus, 2021). Schools are spaces for young people to be with their peers on their own terms, independent from their families.

9.5 Conclusion

In this Chapter 9, I presented a discussion of the findings, illustrating the dynamics within the figured world of mobility and how the young people form their identities as they navigate their positions within the community, playing the roles established by the larger cultural and political script of their world. Constrained by social order and cultural models, these young people were still able to deviate from their scripted role[4] into altered figured

[4] scripted by others such as parents, and/or cultural norms of home country or resettlement country

worlds. This chapter allowed us to engage with the figured world of mobility through instances where positional identity matters, self-authoring that allows the 'I' to alter its path supported by the 'we', and finally witness instances of improvisation where shifts in identity were possible. Within the figured world of mobility, patterns of identity shift to achieve invisibility were evident, societal values and traditions were highly influential, and challenging the norm was only possible by rejecting the given and investigating alternatives.

10 Chapter 10: Conclusion:

10.1 Introduction:

This chapter concludes this thesis by presenting a summary discussion of the research questions, the implication for future research and it ends by offering some concluding remarks. The chapters (2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8) examined the notion of disparity between the mobile and the non-mobile establishing a social political world that favours the non-mobile.This favouritisim is also embedded in what we our assumption on what is deemed 'ordinary living'. The mobile having embeded the global favouritism structure which promotes the 'ordinary living' as constructed by the global north validate this conceived dogma of immobility to be superior. Destablising this dogma would require the mobile population to question what is deemed to be fundemental about not only 'safety' but also 'belonging' and 'success'. The artefacts are located within this dogma, they are preceived to be significant and indespensible for the pursuite of humanity in many people's eyes.

I have sought to trace ordinariness in the artefacts of the figured world of mobility which foregrounded 'safety', 'belonging' and 'success' (Kohli, 2011). For instance, 'success' within the legal dimension can be represented by gaining citizenship, If citizenship marks the end of the legal refugee status. Is citizenship a mean to an end or is it the end itself? If citizenship is a success, does that indicate that all citizens are successful or is this limited to those with citizenship that grant the 'privilaged mobility'. Configuring the nature of the success is important. Success is defined 'the achieving of desired results, or someone or something that achieves positive results' (Cambridge Academic Content dictionary). The complexity lies not only in understanding the process of achieving a citizenship but also in understanding the desire itself, in this case is it a desire to be British or is it a desire to cease being a refugee?

10.2 A summary discussion of research questions:

This research explored the lived experiences of young, resettled refugees over a substantial period of time (average 20 months) to honour the lived experiences of young resettled Syrian refugees at home (Syria), in transit (countries neighbouring to Syria), and within their new home (post- resettlement in England). This outlined the prolonged journey of forced mobility that is fuelled with exclusions and often placed them in a state of waiting', which I

argued that it is 'burdened mobility,' even post-resettlement, continuing to be part of the lives of forced mobile people sometimes through their own experiences owing to the temporary legal status and travel documents granted to refugees, and/or also through the experiences of their family members. This is articulated in Chapter 6 (Social relationships) and Chapter 8 (The legal artefacts of being a refugee).

The artefacts were important to envisage the power held in particular areas to inspire change. This change can alter the power dynamic within these areas to form a figured world of mobility that enables much more than it disables, includes much more than it excludes and above all a figured world of mobility that is relevant to humanity now and to continues to be for future mobile generations. The state of stasis may continue to hold privilege, but it is important for that privilege is not drawn from the mobile people.

10.2.1 In what ways does the migration journey impact the production of identity for young Syrian refugees?

Identity amid the figured world of mobility evokes the influence of the migration journey on the process of identity making. It explores instances that are unique to experiencing forced migration and others that are more universal. As discussed in Chapter 7 'the figured worlds of mobility and history', an awareness of 'burdened mobility' is important to understand how the identities of forced migrants are shaped. This is analysed in detail in Chapter 8 configuring the artefacts of the figured world of mobility in relation to the resumption of ordinary life. This ordinary life is a condition that is often prescribed by those who are non-mobile. Perhaps, mobility can transform what is deemed ordinary life. Mobility is an intrinsic element of living across human history, how is it then to live an ordinary life one is required to be non-mobile?

The physical space (house, school, street), the importance of the physical stems from accepting that familiarity holds within a sense of safety. As young people move from a familiar space to an unfamiliar space, their experiences demonstrate that they find safety through recognising not only the physical space but also through configuring the space to function in familiar ways when possible. The emotional capacity for hospitality connects to configuring the artefacts such as the house and food as means for reciprocity. The capacity for sharing food and space with others establishes the social bonds that are necessary to cultivate a sense of belonging.

The figured world of mobility relies upon the economic power especially in dictating the lived conditions of the young people involved. It was immediately evident to the young people, that mobility impacts their economic situation. As they moved into poor quality housing they were often required to work, forced out of education in transit. The power Nail (2015) held for the economy and financial resources conceptualising the figure of the migrant is reaffirmed. Forced migration also plays a role in the economy of transit countries where most refugees reside due the international aid agendas and in resettlement countries where they are the subject of political debate and othering for wider political purposes.

Nail (2015) brought to the forefront the legal power. The meaning and the boundaries of the legal power, within the figured worlds of mobility, varies. While there is an international consensus against people smuggling and the elimination of the illegal routes available for forced migrants. There options for assisted legal resettlements internationally fall short of the required response to the increasing demands for international migration consequent on climate change, conflict, and challenging economic situations.

Additionally, expulsion has always been and remains at the centre of the migrant experience (Nail, 2015). This is captured within positional identity by 'nationality' in a sense of belonging to nation, bearing the weight of being of an undesirable foreigner. Within this hybrid identity emerges as fabrics of the young people's communities are weaved through social practices deemed appropriate in one community and rejected in others. This entanglement of multiple communities encompasses hybrid identities. It is indeed understanding the conditions which young people can feel welcomed. Perhaps, it is in the acts of self-authoring and improvisation of what becomes visible and what stays hidden.

Understanding how the 'state of waiting' and 'burdened mobility' prevail in the lived experiences of the young people entailed the longitudinal methodology for this research. In Nail's (2015) concept oscillation, migrants often find themselves in similar situations repeatedly. Being in a status of waiting is among the most prevalent experiences with the figured of mobility. Forced migrants lose control over their ability to move freely, earn money and make decisions about their livelihood, they wait for one legal status after the other, they need to earn basic rights and ultimately, they wait for the resumption of an ordinary life as conditioned by the un-mobility. The 'state of waiting' as emerged in the lived experiences of young people involved in this research is particularly connected to the legal

artefacts of being a refugee (Chapter 8). It encompasses oscillation, temporality, and waithood, and this 'sate of waiting' impacts the young people's mental health greatly.

This research indicates a reciprocal relationship between identity formation and figured worlds. The figured world of mobility alters the identities of young resettled Syrian refugees and is altered by their self-authoring and improvisation acts as they choose their own paths. While the figured world of mobility will never cease to influence them, they will never cease to influence it. It is dialogue that within it holds the possibility for what we will all become as societies, education institutions and individuals whether we are mobile or not. Further, the youths are continuously challenged to forge an identity based on shifted physical, cultural, and emotional grounds, acquiring a position in the world of familiarities, caught between the citizen and the non-citizen.

10.2.2 How do young Syrian refugees navigate educational spaces?

Overall, inclusion is a perquisite to almost all positive experiences of young people within the figured world of mobility. Nevertheless, educational inclusion is not simply legal access (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019) and is indeed not limited to schooling. The pandemic contributed to the education gap in addition to that caused by migration, however this gap disproportionately affecting the mobile. Therefore, as Collet-Sabé and Ball (2022) argued that Covid-19 the climate crisis, created a need to re-think schools and 're-envisage' an education that is fit for purpose, which in their words is 'continuity'[5]. To apply 'continuity' to the figured world of mobility, it is indeed that for continuity, schools and educational policies are unable to fulfil their responsibilities toward children and young people in the figured world of mobility. Accepting that exclusion is an ever-present part of the figured world of mobility as it stands ruled by the privilege of the stasis. It is important that educational provision is re-envisaged in the context of mobility for the sake of continuity.

The role of education in the figured world of mobility draws on its potential to be deployed in multiple dimensions that promotes the resumption of ordinary life that Kohli (2011) called for. Education possesses the ability to promote a sense of safety, belonging and within education young people can uncover opportunities for succeeding (McIntyre et al., 2018b). By attending to the education artefacts (football medals, certificates) this research

[5] 'continuity' as in for sustainability for the environment and longevity of humanity

recognises their value for young, resettled refugees. This recognition reveals the function of these artefacts and calls for education artefacts to be globally relevant to advocate for a more sustainable education.

Young people found opportunities and have experienced positive experiences in the English education system, nevertheless, there are also many negative experiences. There is no panacea to the education of young, forced migrants because not only is each young person unique, but also because the education provisions as they stand today exclude many other children and young people, regardless of whether they are a migrant.

10.2.3 How can education enable/disable young people in the context of forced migration?

Access to education is interlocked with its quality, purpose and authenticity. To reiterate, for education to enable young people visible access is not only inadequate it rather masks the many instances where education disables young people. Despite the importance of education and access to formal schooling, schools can disable young people as they shape them into a desirable citizen (inclined to stasis). While their stasis may contribute to their own individual success, it can continue to make the mobile population less desirable.

Education can enable young people in any context, however in the context of forced migration it is prerequisite for young people to regain a sense of ordinariness (McIntyre & Neuhaus, 2021). Gaining a sense of ordinariness, regardless of the need to re-imagine this ordinariness from a mobility stance- is not optional. It is instrumental for young people to take control of their lives and allows them to author themselves unbound by a state of crisis and emergency.

This research highlighted how literacy influences link to wellbeing in experiencing the feeling of being nothing (Sandy in Chapter 6). The feeling of 'nothingness' stems from the inability to engage in activities requiring literacy, which nowadays encompasses most activities. Young people view their engagement in education as not solely represented in literacy knowledge or success in gaining certification, but it is their ability to form social connections to be accepted among their peers and to demonstrate that they are deserving of their place at school.

I have attempted to destabilise schools as artefacts and re-iterating Collet-Sabé and Ball (2022)'s argument to re-think schools as institutions of limits and 're-envisage an education

that is fit for purpose' and that purpose is 'continuity' which 'is relevant to our shared problems and crises in the here and now'(2022, p. 12) .They state that we need 'an education that is for the state we find ourselves in and over and against what it is that we have become.'(2022, p. 13) In this time of high uncertainty due to climate change and conflict in Europe i.e. Ukraine and beyond globally, an education that is responsive, adaptable and open is the only education that can be inclusive and sustainable.

10.3 Implication for future research

Some of the major points of learning from this research are; the mobility lens interrogating the education of refugees, schools, and ordinariness which ought to be further investigated to develop a comprehensive analysis that goes beyond the young resettled Syrian refugees and the figured world of mobility; reciprocity as a ways in which ethical concerns can be addressed; the gendered positioning that require further theoretical underpinnings from gender theorist perspective.

10.3.1 The Mobility approach

In thinking about the education of resettled refugees and the figured world of mobility, it was essential to adapt the mobility approach theorised by Nail (2015). This has challenged the taken for granted assumptions rooted in being in state of stasis rather than mobility. There is a tendency to overlook the value of mobility to individuals, this is because the economic and legal powers are held by the non-mobile. However, as we experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic; considering climate change; and the advancement of Artificial Intelligence, the uncertainty is becoming far greater than the certainty. Therefore, it is worth acknowledging that the figured world of mobility is expanding, and the mobile person is more prepared to face the challenges of tomorrow in comparison to non-mobile individuals.

10.3.2 Ethics

Concerns about the wide gap between the researcher and participants in the field of forced migration is not novel, partially because of the de-colonisation agenda for social sciences. This has led to an emergence of research exploring how researchers can ethically work with the mobile population while remaining ethically responsible. This ethical responsibility comes into question as researchers engage with young people in particularly. Researchers

such as (Block et al., 2013; Dryden-Peterson, 2022; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2020; Wu, 2019) raised concerns and addressed these concerns within the limits of their research context, positionality, and ontology. In highlighting their concerns, they brought coherence and collective comprehension to the ethics conundrum. Addressing my concerns, I discovered that indirect reciprocity (volunteering activities – Chapter 5) was rarely mentioned in research. It is practiced by other researchers, but it is not considered to be a research ethics committee requirement. My time working with forced migrants beyond my PhD has made me challenge my biases and develop a deeper analysis of the data collected. This approach allowed me to maintain my eagerness to seek knowledge beyond the surface and develop a reflective practice and a network of support. Therefore, I argue that if a network for reciprocity is developed to support researchers to work in capacities that can support the mobile community we can begin to create an artefact within the figured world of mobility that has the potential to alter the power imbalance.

10.3.3 Further theoretical underpinnings

One of key findings from this research is that gendered positions continue to hold power in the figured world of mobility. In thinking about how these gendered positions influence youths, it is necessary to draw on gender theories to give more depth into the conceptualisation of gender. In this research, the figured worlds theory (Holland et al., 1998) captured these gendered positioning exploring the positional identity, cultural models and by examining the social relationship dynamics within the community. However, future work deploying gender theorises such as a feminist lens can add rigor of thought and clarity to data analysis in relation to the experiences of young women within the figured world of mobility.

10.4 Concluding remarks

Toward a figured world of mobility beyond the state of stasis

Living demands change, no doubt, and even when a life ends, change continues beyond the lives of individuals that contributed to that change. Figured worlds represent the continuation of all lives as a collective, one lived experience matters not only to the individuals themselves but also the figured world inhabited by others. For the figured world of mobility, it is made by the lived experiences of the mobile people as well as others who

engage with the mobile population in different capacities, one of which is knowledge production in the academic field. This thesis explored not only the lived experiences of the young people involved but also how these lives continue to contribute to an altered figured world of mobility for others. In its simpler words, how can knowing more about the lived experiences of resettled Syrian refugees in England aid our understanding of their challenges and opportunities, in order to better support other young, forced migrants in the future?

To answer this question, this research project explored, the lived experiences of the young people through the figured worlds theory of Holland et al (1998) and the nature of the challenges and other contextual issues that arise from migration through the mobility approach of the figure of the migrant theory by Nail (2015). These two theories have helped formulate the nuances of knowledge from this thesis. The learning process began with figured worlds of mobility exploring three dimensions, the historical dimension of the figured worlds which formed an understanding of the lived experience that is not determined by the past or present nor by one figured world, one community, and not governed by one set of standards. Then, the social and cultural dynamics within the communities which are a result of the intersection of the worlds entered, the communities belonged and un-belonged to, and the standards that shift through space and identity changes, these are what make a lived experience.

The third, is the interpretation of artefacts in the 'resumption of ordinary life' (Kohli, 2014) highlighting the importance of being 'ordinary'. It is right to consider ordinary as a necessity, it is wrong in suggesting that ordinary is universal or one. Ordinariness in its nature is fluid but is treated as substitute to normality or typicality as composed by societies governed directly and indirectly by capitalism.

Moving on the second part, to better support the future young, forced migrants. Not only what is learned through exploration of the figured worlds of mobility through lived experiences of young Syrian resettled refugees can help formulate the answer, but also it constructs a deeper examination of the nature of the challenges that lie in understanding the migration journey through Nail's (2015) mobility approach. Mobility, whether privileged or burdened, has been more compelling than expected in understanding what underpins human necessities, which is space for all to be ordinary and for mobility itself to be ordinary.

The resubmission of ordinary life is a necessity, one can aspire for necessities only when marginalised. The marginalisation is systemic, forced migration is undesirable, the remedy is assisted or voluntary migration which are bound by states and citizenships. However, states only protect those within it, and citizenships protect those who have it, not those who don't. Therefore, allowing mobility to be ordinary affects states and societies differently, especially because states are required to control less, and societies to share more. Nationalities are indeed part of identities, until they are humbled, they are constraining to mobility. This enables minority nation states to control lives of majority states and statelessness people.

A poem to remember by Al-Imam Al-Shafi' (born in 767-Died in 820)

Al-Imam al Shafi' states in his poem*:	يقول الإمام الشافعي :
Staying in one place is not for the knowledgeable	مافي المقامِ لذي عقلٍ وذي أدبِ
Leave the comfort of the homeland and migrate	من رَاحَةٍ فَدعِ الأَوْطَانَ واغْتَرِبِ
Embark on journeys and seek solace where you've bid farewell	سافر تجد عوضاً عمَّن تفارقهُ
Persevere, the sweetness in life resides in diligent pursuit	وَانْصِبْ فَإنَّ لَذِيذَ الْعَيْش فِي النَّصَبِ
Still water stagnate, but when it flows, it nourishes	إني رأيتُ وقوفَ الماء يفسدهُ
An arrow on a bow must be released to find its mark	إنْ سَاحَ طَابَ وَإنْ لَمْ يَجْرِ لَمْ يَطِبِ
Just as the lion must venture from its den to hunt	والأسدُ لولا فراقُ الارض ما افترست
Should the sun halt its celestial course, weariness would befall	والسَّهمُ لولا فراقُ القوسِ لم يصب
For both the Arab and the foreigner, as equal	والشمس لو وقفت في الفلكِ دائمة
Gold dust settles like soil in its place,	لَمَلَّهَا النَّاسُ من عُجْمٍ وَ مِنَ عَرَبِ
And Oud in its ground is only a firewood	والتِّبْرُ كالتُّرْبِ مُلْقَىً في أَمَاكِنِهِ
The former thrives upon embarking on a journey	والعودُ في أرضه نوعٌ من الحطب
The later shines like precious gold in a kiln	فإن تغرَّب هذا عزَّ مطلبهُ
	و إن تَغَرَّبَ ذَاكَ عَزَّ كالذَّهَبِ

**This is simplified translation that provides the gist of the poem, full and accurate translation requires a specialist*

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12 Appendices

12.1 Appendix 1: Information sheet and consent forms

Project Information

My name is Haya Fakoush I am research student at the **University of Nottingham.**

My Project: The aim is to focus on the educational experience of **Syrian children in England** to help them feel more comfortable in English school.



I am writing to ask if you would like to share your experience with me so I could provide your view and experience of education in Nottingham. Together we will complete a 'life-grid' which summarises the journey from your home country to England over a timeline. I will first meet you to explain my project in detail and make sure you are happy to participate. Then we can arrange another meeting to talk about your journey and education experiences.



Due to your age, your guardian/parent must be present to consent to your participation in the project on our initial meeting. This conversation not take more than 20 min unless you or your guardian require further information.

If you and your guardian/parent consent to your participation in the project we could schedule another meeting at a place and time suitable for you. If you allow me I will record our second meeting, so I could listen to it later and write some notes. If not, I could take some notes as you speak.

You can speak in your first language (Arabic) unless you prefer to speak in English.

You can choose a name for yourself, so your identity will not be known when the research is published.



You can withdraw from the project at any time and you will be able to request for your story to be removed from the research.

It is up to you whether you take part or not.

If you would like any further information before we meet, please feel free to contact me:

Haya Fakoush, University of Nottingham
Email: ttxhf18@nottingham.ac.uk
Mobile: 07544875784

Arabic version

معلومات المشروع

اسمي هيا فاكوش أنا طالبة بحث في جامعة نوتنغهام.

الهدف من بحثي هو التركيز على التجربة التعليمية لسوريين في إنجلترا لتحسين اندماجهم في نظام التعليم الإنجليزي.



أكتب إليكم لأطلب ما إذا كنت ترغب في مشاركة خبرتك معي حتى أتمكن من تقديم وجهة نظرك وخبرتك في التعليم في نوتنغهام. معًا ، سنكمل "شبكة الحياة" التي تلخص الرحلة من بلدك الأصلي إلى إنجلترا عبر مخطط زمني. سألتقي بك أولاً لشرح مشروعي بالتفصيل وتأكد من **قبولك** بالمشاركة. ثم يمكننا ترتيب اجتماع آخر للتحدث عن رحلتك وخبراتك التعليمية.



نظرًا لعمرك ، يجب أن يكون الوصي / الوالد حاضرين للموافقة على مشاركتك في المشروع في اجتماعنا الأول. لا تستغرق هذه المحادثة أكثر من 20 دقيقة ما لم تكن أنت أو الوصي عليك بحاجة إلى مزيد من المعلومات.

إذا وافقت أنت وولي الأمر / الوالد/ الوالدة على مشاركتك في المشروع ، فيمكننا تحديد موعد اجتماع آخر في مكان ووقت مناسبين لك. إذا سمحت لي فسوف أسجل اجتماعنا الثاني ، لذا يمكنني الاستماع إليه لاحقًا وكتابة بعض الملاحظات. إذا لم يكن الأمر كذلك ، يمكنني أخذ بعض الملاحظات أثناء الكلام.

يمكنك التحدث بلغتك الأولى (العربية) إلا إذا كنت تفضل التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية.

يمكنك اختيار اسم لنفسك ، لذلك لن تكون هويتك معروفة عندما يتم نشر البحث.



يمكنك الانسحاب من المشروع في أي وقت وستتمكن من طلب إزالة قصتك من البحث.

الأمر متروك لك سواء كنت تشارك أم لا.

إذا كنت ترغب في الحصول على أي معلومات إضافية قبل أن نلتقي ، فلا تتردد في الاتصال بي:

هيا فاكوش ، جامعة نوتنجهام
البريد الإلكتروني: **ttxhf18@nottingham.ac.uk**
الجوال: 07544875784

Participants Consent form

If you are willing to participate in the project, please tick the boxes below:

PART A TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PARTICIPANT	Yes	No	Not Sure
I understand and agree to take part in the research project based on the information provided to me and explained by Haya.			
I understand that I can withdraw from the research project at any stage.			
I understand that my real name will not be used in any publications of the research.			
I understand that I will be recorded during the interview and that this will be kept on a password protected computer.			
I understand that research will not reveal any information that may identify my identity.			

PART B TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PARENT/GUARDIAN
I have read and understood the accompanying information sheet and give permission for the child (named above) to be included. Name _____ Relationship _____ Signature _____

I understand that if I want to complain about this project I can contact the supervisors of the research and the Research Ethics Coordinator of the School of Education, University of Nottingham.
Participant_____
Guardian/Parent _____

This research is supervised by:
Christine Hall, Professor
Christine.hall@nottingham.ac.uk
Jo McIntyre, Associate Professor
joanna.mcintyre@nottingham.ac.uk
The Research Ethics Coordinator of the School of Education
educationresearch@nottingham.ac.uk

استمارة موافقة للمشاركين

الأمر عائد لك إذا كنت تود المشاركة في هذا البحث، إذا كنت تود المشاركة في البحث، الرجاء ملء الجدول التالي:

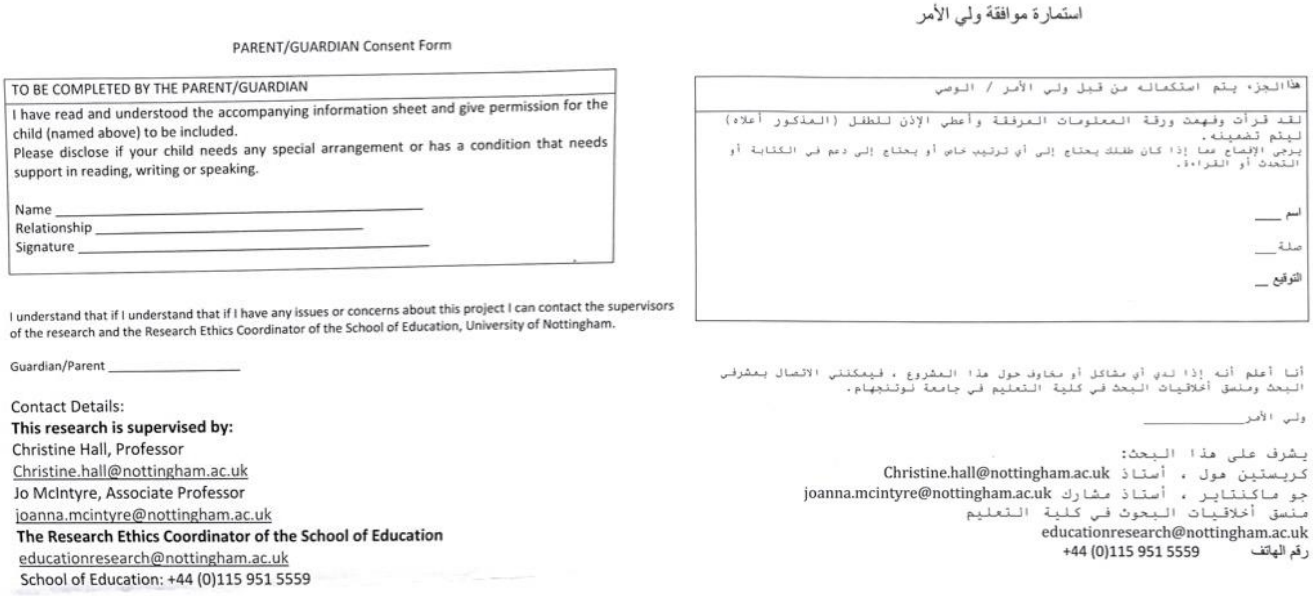
	نعم	لا	غير متأكد
قد تم شرح لي المشروع و أنا أدرك وأوافق على المشاركة			
أنا أدرك أنني قد انسحب من مشروع البحث في أي مرحلة			
أنا أعلم أن اسمي الحقيقي لن يستخدم في أي من منشورات البحث			
أنا أدرك أنه سوف يتم تسجيل المقابلة و أه سيتم الإحتفاظ بالتسجيل على جهاز كمبيوتر محمي بكلمة مرور			
أنا أعلم أن هيا لن تشارك أي معلومات يمكن أن تكشف هويتي			
أنا أعلم أنه إذا كنت أريد أن أقدم طلب شكوى على هذا المشروع يمكنني الاتصال منسق البحوث في كلية التعليم، جامعة نوتنغهام			
بناءً على ما ورد أعلاه ، وورقة المعلومات المرفقة ، أؤكد أنني فهمت المشروع وأسمح هيا فاكوش لاستخدام بياناتي.			
التوقيع			

التوقيع.....
الإسم .....
التاريخ .....

أنا أعلم أنه إذا لديك أي مشاكل أو مخاوف حول هذا المشروع ، فيمكنني الاتصال بمشرفي البحث ومنسق أخلاقيات البحث في كلية التعليم في جامعة نوتنغهام.

مشارك_____

يشرف على هذا البحث:
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PARENT/GUARDIAN Consent Form

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PARENT/GUARDIAN

I have read and understood the accompanying information sheet and give permission for the child (named above) to be included.
Please disclose if your child needs any special arrangement or has a condition that needs support in reading, writing or speaking.

Name _____
Relationship _____
Signature _____

I understand that if I understand that if I have any issues or concerns about this project I can contact the supervisors of the research and the Research Ethics Coordinator of the School of Education, University of Nottingham.

Guardian/Parent _____

Contact Details:
This research is supervised by:
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استمارة موافقة ولي الأمر

هذا الجزء يتم استكماله من قبل ولي الأمر / الوصي

لقد قرأت وفهمت ورقة المعلومات المرفقة وأعطي الإذن للطفل (المذكور أعلاه) ليتم تضمينه.
يرجى الإفصاح عما إذا كان طفلك يحتاج إلى أي ترتيب خاص أو يحتاج إلى دعم في الكتابة أو التحدث أو القراءة.

اسم ____

صلة ____

التوقيع ____

أنا أعلم أنه إذا كان لدي أي مشاكل أو مخاوف حول هذا المشروع ، فيمكنني الاتصال بمشرفي البحث ومنسق أخلاقيات البحث في كلية التعليم في جامعة نوتنجهام.

ولي الأمر_____

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12.2 Appendix 2: Phase 1 Life-grid

Timeline	Your story Event	Age	Country of residence	Family	Housing	Education/work	Dreams/Aspirations/ Concerns
2010							
2011							
2012							
2013							
2014							
2015							
2016							
2017							
2018							
2019							

2020							

12.3 Appendix 3: Extract from school quality manual on Reintegration Centre (RIC)

2018/19 Strategies	Person responsible	Intended outcomes	Rationale & evidence (previous experience & EEF toolkit)	Budgeted Cost
Use of the Trust Reintegration Centre	DWA	Support the reintegration of students. Reduce PX of PP students to below the national average.	A key priority for the Academy is to reduce the number of students who are excluded from school whilst at the same time, improve the behaviour and engagement within lessons. [redacted] allows all academies within the MAT to utilise the Reintegration Centre with the purpose being to re-engage students and parents with learning in addition to improving behaviour. The Reintegration Centre is staffed by teachers and teaching assistants; students complete structured work that links with the curriculum being delivered in the main school. Upon successful completion of a visit to the Reintegration Centre, students are readmitted back into the Academy where they receive further support to try to prevent any repeat behaviour. The EEF research shows that behavioural interventions such as this can improve student progress by up to 3 months. Behaviour interventions Moderate impact for moderate cost, based on extensive evidence. +3 Mentoring Very low or no impact for moderate cost, based on extensive evidence. 0	£8,000

12.4 Appendix 4: Phase 2 final interview schedule

Interview schedule:

Opening questions - Introduction and present situation

How are you?

How was the first weeks of Ramadan in Lockdown?

Any specific meals you enjoyed?

How is studying going at home?

Main questions - Role of education and schooling

Do you miss school?

What do you miss most about going to school?

What do you like most about learning?

Do you have a favourite teacher? Why do you like this teachers?

What do you thing the difference in other classes when kids don't behave as well?

Are you connecting with any friends from school?

Last time we spoke you mentioned you would like to work as ———- when you grow up. Are you still thinking about it?

How do you think you will achieve this?

How do your parents feel about your future plans?

Do any of your parents help you with school work or learning anything at home even before the lockdown?

Do you think school and learning is important?

Do you see yourself in a different country?

Closing questions

Would you like to say anything more about school/education?