

**“IT WAS BITTERSWEET”: YOUNG PEOPLE’S EXPERIENCE OF
UNDERGOING THE REFUGEE FAMILY REUNION PROCESS IN THE UK**

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ABSTRACT

An increasing number of people are fleeing conflict and persecution in their country of nationality and seeking refuge in countries such as the UK. In fleeing from danger, refugee people often become separated from their family. The right to family unity is recognised by international human rights frameworks; once granted refugee status, refugee people can apply for close relatives from their home country to join them in the UK, through the Family Reunion process. Little is known about how young people experience this process as previous research has neglected their perspectives.

This study was developed in consultation with the British Red Cross (BRC) to explore the perspectives of 12 young people, aged 16 to 21-years-old, who were reunited with a separated parent in the UK through the Family Reunion process. Participants had left Syria, Sudan, Ethiopia, Iran and the Ivory Coast and resettled within the UK cities of Glasgow, Leeds and Birmingham. One semi-structured interview was conducted with each participant, with the support of an interpreter when necessary.

Qualitative findings based on Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis identified three broad themes: *Challenges Experienced: "Not easy at all"*, *Novelty of the UK: "You have to adapt"* and *Supportive Relationships*. These themes explore participants' experiences of the bittersweet feelings associated with reunion, navigating adult responsibilities, adjusting to cultural differences, welcoming new opportunities provided in the UK, readjusting to living with their parent and being supported by organisations, such as the BRC. These experiences are used to inform implications for BRC caseworkers, clinical professionals, policymakers and researchers.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BRC – British Red Cross

BPS – British Psychological Society

DA – Discourse Analysis

ESOL – English for Speakers of Other Languages

GT – Grounded Theory

IOM - International Organization for Migration

IPA – Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

RSRFL - Refugee Support and Restoring Family Links

TA – Thematic Analysis

TRC – Turkish Red Crescent

UEL – University of East London

UN – United Nations

UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF - United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines existing knowledge about young people and refugee family reunion, in order to contextualise the current research study. The chapter begins by distinguishing key migration terminology and exploring cross-cultural understandings of family. The chapter then synthesises existing literature on refugee and migrant people's experiences of family separation. Research outlining experiences of refugee family reunion is then presented. Refugee family reunion legislation is introduced, including the role of the British Red Cross (BRC) in facilitating reunion in the United Kingdom (UK). The chapter develops towards a specific focus on literature about young people negotiating separation and reunion within transnational families. The chapter concludes with the rationale and research question for the current study.

1.1 Terminology

Terms relating to migration, such as *refugees*, *asylum-seekers* and *migrants*¹, are often used interchangeably in public discourse. However, defining these terms is important because of distinctions within human rights frameworks, which I will summarise.

1.1.1 Defining Refugees, Asylum-Seekers and Migrants

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was founded in 1950 to protect individuals who were forcibly displaced by World War II and, in 1951, they developed the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees ('The Refugee Convention'). The Refugee Convention established international laws and obligations that receiving states must fulfil towards refugee people. The inclusion of the word *people* is a conscious effort to honour these individuals' humanity beyond a narrow focus on their immigration status (Patel, 2003). The 1951 Convention defined the term *refugee* as an individual who, displaced from their country of nationality due to persecution, seeks safety in another country where they have been

¹ Throughout this thesis, I use italics or inverted commas when introducing contested terms.

granted asylum. Individuals may have experienced persecution related to their ethnicity, sexuality, political, cultural or religious affiliations. They may also be forcibly displaced by conflict or human rights violations (UNHCR, 2016). Within the UK, *refugee* also refers to people who have been granted humanitarian protection or indefinite leave to remain. Whilst they do not have formal refugee status, people with humanitarian protection are granted five years leave to remain in the UK. People with indefinite leave to remain do not have any conditions attached to their leave within the UK.

The term *asylum-seeker* refers to an individual who has fled their country of nationality due to persecution and crossed international borders. Unlike a refugee individual, they are awaiting the host state's decision regarding their right to international protection and asylum has not yet been granted (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2011). *Internally displaced individuals* have been forcibly displaced from their usual residence due to persecution, however they have not crossed any international borders and remain within their country of nationality (IOM, 2011).

The term *migrant* refers to an individual who leaves their country of nationality. As a broad term, it does not take account of the individual's immigration status, whether departing their country of nationality was voluntary or involuntary, and whether the departure was intended to be permanent or temporary (IOM, 2011). Thus, *migrant* encompasses refugee, asylum-seeking and internally displaced people, amongst others. This paper has a particular focus on the experiences of refugee and asylum-seeking people and these two terms will be used as previously defined.

1.1.2 Constructions of Migration

Language and discourse construct ideas about the world through legitimising certain ways of being, while oppressing others (Foucault, 1980, 1982).

Therefore, language is a tool for producing and reproducing power relations which stratify society. This idea can be applied to migration. Cresswell (2006) argues that mobilities are produced by legal discourse, such that an individual's migration from A to B is not neutral but bound in social narratives and power relations. By conflating all migrant people, the individuals' reasons

for leaving their country of nationality are homogenised; this perpetuates anti-immigration discourses based on stereotyping, rather than fact (Greenslade, 2005).

There is debate within the literature regarding distinctions between voluntary and involuntary migration (Erdal & Oeppen, 2018). Economic migrants are sometimes perceived as migrating out of their own free will, whereas refugee people are often presented as being forcibly displaced due to the adversity they experience. This binary ignores the complexity of volition within migration (Erdal & Oeppen, 2018). Migration typically involves leaving a context which the individual feels offers them limited opportunities, whether this is related to persecution, unemployment, conflict, human rights violations or poverty. Most people migrate because of a belief that it will improve their quality of life, therefore structural inequalities, which can be considered an external force, interact with the individual's decision-making. As argued by Erdal & Oeppen (2018), the perceived 'voluntariness' of migration has significant implications for an individual's claim to asylum and public attitudes towards migrant people (Migration Observation Briefing, 2018).

The right-wing press often negatively portrays refugee people and depicts increasing immigration as threatening the integrity of British cultural identity (Greenslade, 2005). Asylum claims tend to be polarised as 'bogus' versus 'genuine', the former term is levelled at people with 'socioeconomic motivations' who are frequently accused of 'abusing the system' (Zimmermann, 2011). By contrast, British citizens who emigrate seem to evade similar critique (Wood & Patel, 2017). These discourses serve particular political agendas (Woolley, 2017) with increasing anti-immigration rhetoric preceding the UK referendum to leave the European Union (Heald, Vida, Farman & Bhugra, 2018) and the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States of America (USA) (Macgregor-Bowles & Bowles, 2017). The use and abuse of the term 'migrant' to dehumanise people has been noted in political discourse; in her role as United Kingdom Foreign Secretary, Theresa May pledged to create a "really hostile environment for illegal immigrants" (Kirkup & Winnett, 2012) and the Conservative politician Philip Hammond denounced "marauding" migrants

(British Broadcasting [BBC], 2015). Surveys of the British public's attitude towards migration reflect this anti-migration rhetoric; a survey of over 1500 British people found that 31% of respondents stated migration of refugee people should be reduced or not allowed at all, and 42% responded that migration for the purposes of family reunion should be reduced or not allowed at all (YouGov, 2018).

1.1.3 'The Refugee Crisis'

The term '*refugee crisis*' is used to describe the mass movement of asylum-seeking people into Europe in 2015-2016. However, the term 'crisis' has been used broadly by media across Europe to describe increasing numbers of refugee people crossing international borders (Berry, Garcia-Blanco & Moore, 2015). The current scale of global refugee movement is linked to conflict in regions such as Syria and Iraq. Figures for 2017 report that 68.5 million people globally were forcibly displaced from their home (UNHCR, 2018). Of these people, 25.4 million were granted refugee status, 3.1 million applied for asylum and the remaining 40 million were internally displaced individuals (UNHCR, 2018). Whilst these figures contextualise the magnitude of displacement, they can also obscure these individuals' life stories.

The term 'crisis' perpetuates discourses regarding the movement of refugee people expanding beyond control. In 2017, 26,350 people sought asylum in the UK; of these people, 14,767 were granted asylum, protection or resettlement (Home Office, 2018). The number of people seeking asylum within the UK decreased by 14% during 2017 (Home Office, 2018). Data indicates that the UK hosts less than 0.7% of the world's refugee people; comparatively, Turkey, the largest European host country, hosts 58% (UNHCR, 2016). These statistics suggest that the scale of the 'refugee crisis' within the UK may not be as great as reported.

1.1.4 Stages of Migration

Drachman's multistage migration framework (1992) outlines migrant peoples' experiences across the trajectory; from leaving their country of nationality (pre-migration), through travel across international borders (migration) to the

process of adjusting to a host country (resettlement). Research has long focused on how pre-migration experiences affect the wellbeing of refugee and asylum-seeking people (Knipscheer, Sleijpen, Mooren, ter Heide & van der Aa, 2015; Miller & Rasmussen, 2010; Tempny, 2009). Fewer studies explore the impact of migration and post-migration stressors (Kirmayer et al., 2011). A longitudinal trajectory is crucial as experiences of discrimination, isolation and destitution during resettlement may be more strongly predictive of distress than pre-migration or migration adversity (Pernice & Brook, 1996; Porter & Haslam, 2005). As noted by Miller, Hess, Bybee, and Goodkind (2018), the stress of family separation spans the trajectory. Rousseau, Mekki-Berrada & Moreau (2001) argue that “examination of prolonged [family] separations highlights Western administrative violence” (2001, p. 56). Thus, disregarding separation to focus solely on pre-migration may be an attempt by Western states to ignore their role in prolonging the adversities faced by refugee people.

Refugee people have often experienced torture and human rights violations (Knipscheer et al., 2015). Extensive literature details “extraordinary, stressful events, directly associated with the context of war or armed conflict in the refugee’s homeland” (Rousseau et al., 2001, p43), defining such events as ‘trauma’. Refugee peoples’ experiences of “the trauma of exile—the loss of family, friends, job, country, language, role and identity” (Tribe, 1999, p. 568) are also often explored. ‘Trauma’ has increasingly been conceptualised within Western, medicalised discourses, there is concern that this depoliticises the torture and human rights violations experienced by refugee people, positioning the problem within the individual rather than in the abuses of power they have experienced (Patel, 2011; Summerfield, 2001).

1.1.5 Defining Family

It is difficult to provide a universal definition of the term *family* because constructions of family vary across time and between cultures. Within many individualistic² cultures, family has traditionally been defined in relation to

² There is a longstanding tradition of using the term ‘individualism’ to refer to cultures, usually within the global West, which focus on primacy of the individual and value independence. By contrast ‘collectivism’ refers to cultures that prioritise socially interdependent bonds. However, there is

marriage. The family unit is usually conceptualised as a heterosexual, married, cohabiting couple and their biological children (Murdock, 1949; Parssons, 1955), commonly known as *the nuclear family*.

There is increasing recognition that the nuclear family does not reflect the diversity of cultures and sexualities across society. Traditional definitions exclude single-parent families, families without children, families with adopted children, same-sex families, divorced families and unmarried families.

Collectivistic cultures are conceptualised as having increased emphasis on emotionally and materially interdependent relationships (Kagitcibasi, 2007). Extended families comprised of at least three generations, grandparents, parents and children, may be more common within collectivist cultures (Georgas, 2003). There may be significant kinship relationships with aunts, uncles, cousins and in-laws. In addition, polygamy, one person marrying more than one spouse, may be permitted.

Nuclear and extended families are not entirely independent of one another; findings suggest that nuclear families maintain relationships with extended kin, even when they do not live together or nearby (Georgas et al., 2001). It has been argued that migrant families are “intrinsically transnational” (Bertolani, Rinaldini & Tognetti Bordogna, 2014, p. 1473), negotiating kinship relationships despite international borders (Skrbiš, 2008; Wiltshire, 1992). In addition to transnational families, individuals may self-define their family with significant others who are not related to them by genes or marriage (Georgas, Berry, Van de Vijver, Kagitcibasi & Poortinga, 2006).

These distinct definitions of family will each impact on research which uses the family construct as an empirical unit of analysis. Skolnick notes that “no one discipline can give an adequate picture of the family” (1975, p. 703) as family draws interdisciplinary interest from sociologists, anthropologists and psychologists, amongst others. The 1940s and 1950s saw increased focus on sociological and ethnological studies of kinship structures (Murdock, 1949; Parssons, 1955). Psychologists have focused their research within the family

i ncreasing recognition that this di chotomy is not s traightforward (see Oyserman, Coon & Kemmelmeier, 2002)

unit, exploring relationships through attachment (Ainsworth, 1967), life cycle development (McGoldrick & Shibusawa, 2012) and cohesion (Olson, 2000). Parke (2004) states that most empirical research focuses on parent-child, marital and sibling dyads rather than the family unit more broadly, and highlights the importance of researching the family group as a system. With regards to this current study, the unit of analysis is not family, but family reunion more specifically, however these studies provide important foundations.

However one conceptualises family, research indicates that family cohesion, defined as the emotional bonds between family members, promotes positive health and wellbeing outcomes (Olson, 2000). The significance of family is such that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserts "the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State" (The United Nations [UN], 1948, Article 16(3)). This human rights framework underlies the need to reunite separated families.

1.2 Literature Search

Having introduced pertinent concepts of migration and family, and considered the current context of refugee and asylum-seeking people within the UK, this chapter will now review literature related to these topics. Literature searches were conducted of three online databases: EBSCO (including Academic Search Complete, Child Development and Adolescent Studies, CINAHL Plus and PsycINFO), Science Direct and SCOPUS. A detailed outline of the search strategies and inclusion criteria, used to determine the literature's relevance, is presented in Appendix A.

1.3 Family Separation

Family separation within immigration settings has gained increasing attention recently, particularly in the USA where harsh immigration policies separate parents and children at the USA-Mexico border (Office of Inspector General, 2019). Within the UK similar practices occur but often receive less public scrutiny. UK Immigration Compliance and Enforcement officers have the

capacity to separate families for removal or detention purposes, if separation is deemed “lawful, necessary and appropriate” (Home Office, 2017, p. 14). However, despite these criteria, separation procedures often fail to take adequate consideration of the child’s welfare (Bail for Immigration Detainees, 2013).

In addition to formal immigration procedures for separation, refugee and asylum-seeking people may become involuntarily separated from their family during displacement from their home country (Marsden, 2018; Starr & Brilmayer, 2003). As such, experiences of conflict and flight reconfigure refugee families into new forms (McDonald-Wilmsen & Gifford, 2009).

1.3.1 Family Separation in Refugee and Asylum-Seeking Populations

Contrary to the findings that families maintain meaningful bonds even when separated (Georgas et al., 2001) and despite borders (Wiltshire, 1992), other research suggests that separation weakens the social and emotional bonds within families (UNHCR, 2018). A recent report found that 36.5% of Syrian refugee people living in Jordan had experienced family separation (UNHCR, 2018).

For many refugee people, separation is a chaotic process in which they have limited agency (Savic, Chur-Hansen, Mahmood & Moore, 2013). Involuntary family separation may result from kidnapping, usually associated with persecution (Blaauw & Lähteenmäki, 2002; Marsden, 2018). Such sudden separation has significant implications for families, including uncertainty about the disappeared relative’s whereabouts and fate. This is known as *ambiguous loss*, a loss that “defies closure” because of uncertainty about whether the disappeared relative is dead or alive (Boss, 1999, p. 6).

Ambiguous loss is considered traumatic because of the ongoing distress and inability to resolve one’s grief in such circumstances of uncertainty (Boss, 1999).

Families may decide to separate for many reasons including the expense and potential danger of the journey, relatives choosing to remain in the country of nationality, elderly relatives being unable to travel, or relatives lacking the correct documentation (UNHCR, 2018). Even when families know

the whereabouts of their separated relative, they often experience distress at the estrangement.

1.3.2 Financial Impact of Separation

Research highlights the impact of separation on refugee families' economic functioning; for example, financial pressures may arise in families where the separated relative previously occupied the role of 'breadwinner' (Savic et al., 2013). In response to this pressure, children may be forced to leave education and seek employment so that they can contribute financially (UNHCR, 2018). Women may be required to manage responsibilities that their separated male relatives previously held, and vice versa (Marsden, 2018; Savic et al., 2013).

Refugee people, who have resettled in a host country, may experience financial pressures due to both limited economic opportunities and sending remittances to separated family (Beswick, 2015; Savic et al, 2013). Johnson and Stoll (2013) argue that remittances may maintain kinship bonds for refugee people who are unable to sponsor the family reunion process. Their study of Vietnamese and Sudanese refugee people in Canada found that remitting involved personal sacrifices to benefit the wider family network; however, remitting was often associated with great pride (Johnson & Stoll, 2013).

1.3.3 Emotional Impact of Separation

The emotional toil of refugee family separation is considerable (Miller et al., 2018). Marsden (2018) stated that relatives remaining in the country of nationality commonly experience increased stress, adverse living conditions, exposure to violence and risk. These stressors, in addition to experiencing isolation and a prolonged wait for reunion, may contribute to significant mental and physical health consequences. The negative emotional effects of involuntary family separation are likely to be exacerbated when co-occurring with the torture and human rights violations experienced by refugee and asylum-seeking people (Rousseau et al., 2001; Starr & Brilmayer, 2003; UNHCR, 2018).

In a study with refugee people from Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Great Lakes Region of Africa who had resettled in the USA, researchers “were struck by the frequency, poignancy, and intensity of refugees’ discussion of their separation from family members and its deep impact on their daily lives and wellbeing” (Miller et al., 2018, p28). The dispersal of their family network means that separated refugee peoples’ emotional needs are often unmet; participants described withholding personal difficulties from separated family to avoid worrying them.

Separation is thought to prolong the distress of refugee people through reminding them of past stressors and diminishing their hope for the future (Rousseau et al., 2001). Some refugee people report experiencing guilt and depression at having gained asylum, while their relatives may remain in precarious circumstances in their country of nationality or in a transit country (Marsden, 2018; McDonald-Wilmsen & Gifford, 2009).

1.3.3.1 *Australian studies:*

Numerous studies of refugee family separation have been conducted in Australia, which after the USA and Canada, has the third biggest resettlement programme in the world (McDonald-Wilmsen & Gifford, 2009). Research with Sudanese refugee people found that concern about separated relatives was the most common cause of depression, anxiety and somatisation (Schweitzer, Melville, Steel & Lacherez, 2006). Refugee people from Afghanistan, Sudan and Burma reported experiencing sleeplessness, nightmares and poor concentration related to family separation (McDonald-Wilmsen & Gifford, 2009). Similarly, a study by Nickerson, Bryant, Steel, Silove and Brooks (2010) of Iraqi refugee people found participants with family remaining in Iraq reported greater rates of depression than those participants without family remaining in Iraq. Anxiety about the welfare of separated relatives can make it difficult for refugee people to integrate into their new community (Savic et al., 2013); they may feel ambivalent about resettling whilst yearning to be at ‘home’ with their family (Miller et al., 2018).

When noting the effects of family separation, one must consider that conceptualisations of wellbeing vary cross-culturally. As stated by Marsden

(2018), emotional and spiritual wellbeing may be closely connected to physical wellbeing for refugee people, and individual wellbeing may interconnect with family wellbeing. Thus, emotional and social effects of separation are intertwined.

1.3.4 Social Impact of Separation

Refugee people often describe difficulties in accessing social and cultural networks due to separation (Marsden, 2018; Savic et al., 2013; Schweitzer et al., 2006). A Dutch study found that isolation from people who share the same religion and language was a key post-migration concern for Iraqi asylum-seeking people (Laban, Gernaat, Komproe, van der Tweel & De Jong, 2005). Research by Schweitzer et al. (2006) suggested that fellow members of the Sudanese community provide invaluable emotional and practical support to Sudanese refugee people in Australia, which cannot be similarly provided by Australian nationals.

Refugee families often manage separation through maintaining regular communication. However, access to mobile phones and the Internet may be limited due to the expense, difficulty in negotiating time differences and issues of poor call quality (Savic et al., 2013). It might also be dangerous for separated families to contact one another as this may increase vulnerability to persecution (Marsden, 2018). For some families, regular communication increases their distress by reminding them of their powerlessness in being reunited (Rousseau et al., 2001).

For many refugee families, the length of separation is considerable. A study of parent-child separations amongst Senegalese families, when the parents had migrated to Europe, reported an average separation length of 7 years (González-Ferrer, Baizán & Beauchemin, 2012). A study of Central American and African refugee people resettled in Canada reported the average separation as 3.5 years for parent-child separation and 1.4 years for spousal separation (Rousseau et al., 2001). They argue that spousal reunion occurred more quickly than parent-child reunion because it was facilitated independently, rather than through the Canadian government's formal reunification process (Rousseau et al., 2001). Following prolonged

separations, families may struggle to adjust once reunited. Relationships, particularly between couples, may breakdown as a result (Rousseau et al., 2001). These findings highlight the importance of expedited reunion.

1.4 Family Reunion

Family reunion is a priority for many refugee people as they integrate into their host community (Marsden & Harris, 2015). The “principle of unity of the family” states that once refugee status is granted, the rights accorded to the refugee person should be extended to their family (UN, 1951, p. 10).

Research suggests that strong family and community bonds improve the mental health of refugee people (Arnetz, Rofa, Ametz, Ventimiglia & Jamil, 2013), acting as a protective factor during resettlement (Busch Nsonwu, Busch-Armendariz, Cook Heffron, Mahapatra & Fong, 2013) and reducing distress (Rousseau et al., 2001).

It is also reported that reunion facilitates integration of refugee people into their host communities, in countries such as the UK (Cheung & Phillimore, 2013) and Australia (McDonald-Wilsmen & Gifford, 2009). It is purported that reunion promotes integration through increasing refugee people’s motivation “to secure employment and contribute to UK society” (BRC, 2013, p.4). An economic argument supporting family reunion is that, by sharing their financial resources, families become more self-sufficient and less reliant on the state (UNHCR, 2002).

McCleary (2017) highlighted the absence of literature exploring refugee families’ experiences of resettlement and the relational struggles that they negotiate. Her research suggests that refugee families experience resettlement as stressful. Families reported communication difficulties in both spousal and child-parent relationships, generational gaps in acculturation and changing roles (2017). This finding of interfamilial conflict due to differing rates of acculturation has been identified elsewhere (Hirani, Payne, Mutch & Cherian, 2016; Marsden, 2018). McCleary’s research (2017) with Karen refugee families, who resettled in the USA, reported that continued links with the wider Karen community promoted families’ problem-solving abilities

during resettlement. Thus, McCleary's work emphasises the protective function of family reunion for refugee and asylum-seeking populations. With regards to the limitations of this study, McCleary (2017) acknowledges that participation was limited to adults and that children and adolescents may have distinct perspectives; thus, further research is needed to understand how young people experience the relational challenges of refugee resettlement.

Despite the benefits of family reunion to the individual, family and society, prolonged separations continue (Rousseau et al., 2001). As argued by Starr and Brilmayer (2003), involuntary and prolonged family separation is an international human rights issue and expedient family reunion processes are essential to ensure "the principle of unity of the family" is upheld (UN, 1951, p. 10). Whilst separated families strive to reunite, processes for family reunion are complex with restrictive legislation creating further separation due to limitations regarding which relatives can apply.

1.4.1 Family Reunion Legislation

"The principle of unity of the family" informs family reunion criteria, whereby UNHCR's Executive Committee emphasise the importance of family unity and advocate for facilitated reunification on the basis of liberal definitions of "family" for refugee people. The UK family reunion criteria forms part of Home Office Asylum policy informing caseworkers who are deciding whether or not to grant entry to a refugee person's relatives, when they apply for a family reunion visa. Within the UK, family reunion is an immigration process in which refugee people, aged 18-years-old or over, sponsor relatives' application to join them (Home Office, 2016). Immigration criteria limit reunion to the sponsor's immediate pre-flight relatives, namely their spouse or partner, and biological children, aged 17-years-old or below (Home Office, 2016). Refugee people are unable to sponsor their children if there are aged 18-years-old or over, or other relatives such as their own siblings and parents.

These specifications raise issues because, as aforementioned, conceptualisations of family vary cross-culturally and refugee people might

have significant kinship relationships beyond the nuclear family notion that is dominant within the UK (Marsden, 2018; UNHCR, 2001). Consequently, extended family members such as grandparents are often left behind. The arbitrary distinction between 17-year-old dependents being applicable for family reunion, whilst those aged 18 and above are ineligible, is a concern for many families (Marsden, 2018). Occasionally, young adult children (aged 18 or above) and grandparents are granted discretionary visas through an appeals process. However, this is rare with only 65 successful appeals between 2013 and 2015 (House of Commons, 2016). Currently immigration policy does not allow unaccompanied refugee children to sponsor reunion application from their family members.

Family reunion applications can be made from outside the UK through an entry clearance application, applicants must prove their identity and relationship to the sponsor. The application requires children applying for family reunion to prove that they are not “leading an independent life” (Home Office, 2019, p. 17) and that they require support from their parent or parents, who have been granted refugee status in the UK. Therefore, they must not be married or in a civil partnership. The application process is complicated and young people applying outside the UK, often do so with little support. This presents a dilemma whereby young applicants must be sufficiently independent to manage the application process, but must also present as dependents needing parental support.

Applicants, who are deemed to meet the above criteria, are granted leave in line with their sponsor. Successful applicants receive a 30-day entry visa stating that they must arrive in the UK within this time period. However, the visa notification is sometimes delayed and there are anecdotal reports of notifications arriving just two or three days before the 30-day period expires. At such short notice, many families struggle to raise the funds for travel to the UK, particularly given the expense of last-minute flights.

White and Hendry (2011) compared family reunion criteria in the UK, Austria, Canada, Finland, Norway and Sweden. They argued that UK family reunion criteria is more lenient because there is no time period for the application,

there are procedures for reunion on compassionate grounds and an appeals process. Of the six countries, Austria and the UK do not offer any governmental financial assistance for family reunion, support is instead provided by the RC. Canada has the highest age of dependency allowing refugee people to sponsor children aged under 22 years-old, whilst the other five countries use 18 as their cut-off. However, beyond the UK, other countries' legislation regarding family reunion is also experienced as restrictive. Sadoway outlines the "shameless inadequacy" (2001, p. 348) of Canadian legislation in reuniting refugee families; refugee people in Canada cannot apply for family reunion without the necessary identification documents, which are often delayed or not provided. Murdock (2008) argues that French protocol, which includes a voluntary DNA test to ensure a genetic relationship between reuniting families, violates the right to family life (Article 8, European Convention of Human Rights [ECHR], 1950). Murdock highlights a double standard whereby refugee people must prove a genetic relationship, whereas social ties suffice for French citizens who can recognise a child "as one's own" without genetic proof (2008, p. 1511). McDonald-Wilmsen and Gifford (2009) state that Australian family reunion policy does not adequately consider refugee family configurations, cultures or traditions, which leads to frustration and lack of agency for those applying to reunite in Australia.

1.4.2 Challenges Associated with the UK Refugee Family Reunion Process

In 2013, legal aid for refugee family reunion was discontinued in England and Wales and the process is now considered an immigration matter, rather than asylum policy (Ministry of Justice, 2011). This decision occurred despite recognition that family reunion "is clearly a highly emotive process and one that applicants often need a great deal of practical and emotional support to get through" (House of Commons, 2013, p. 134). The removal of legal aid increased the financial burden upon sponsors completing family reunion applications, prolonging the separation of many families (Beswick, 2015; Marsden, 2018).

In addition to the expense, the administrative processes are challenging as the application form is written in English, which means sponsors and applicants often require interpreters to translate information. Beswick's report

(2015) details that further difficulties arise in locating the necessary paperwork to evidence family relationships, such as marriage and birth certificates or photographs. This requirement fails to consider that the countries from which refugee and asylum-seeking people are displaced may not have the same formal processes of certifying births and marriages as the UK. Also, given that displacement is often sudden, people may not have time to collect documentation.

Family reunion is necessary to ensure the safety of the refugee person's relatives who, as a result of their relationship to the individual, may themselves become a target for persecution (Beswick, 2015; Marsden, 2018). The complex, protracted process means that separated relatives may resort to attempting reunion through alternative methods, such as smugglers, which are associated with significant risk (UNHCR, 2016). Children and women, who are the groups most likely to apply for family reunion, risk exploitation through trafficking and require well-organised processes so they can safely reunite (Beswick, 2015).

1.4.3 The Role of the BRC in UK Refugee Family Reunion

The BRC is a UK humanitarian organisation that supports people in crisis, including refugee and asylum-seeking people. Refugee Support and Restoring Family Links [RSRFL] is a BRC service that aims to prevent destitution, facilitate family reunion and promote inclusion for refugee people (Marsden, 2018). RSRFL is divided into International Family Tracing and Family Reunion. International Family Tracing supports refugee people to locate and contact separated relatives. Family Reunion Travel Assistance funds the travel costs of individuals with family reunion visas. The Family Reunion service offers programmes for newly arrived families resettling in the UK (Marsden, 2018).

The BRC commissioned research about refugee family reunion including a 2011 report (White & Hendry) investigating whether the needs of refugee people are being met regarding family reunion. A key finding was that 90% of respondents required support to complete the family reunion application due to its complexity. The report highlights that current support for the application

is inadequate and recommends the following; establishing a stable budget for travel assistance, further developing the RSRFL programme, more collaboration between BRC and other agencies including legal advisors, increased advocacy on family reunion, and conducting further research about the integration needs of reunited families.

A 2015 BRC report (Marsden & Harris) detailed the integration challenges of people who had recently arrived in Glasgow through family reunion. The challenges experienced immediately after reunion included destitution, homelessness, isolation and difficulty navigating systems for housing, benefits, education and health. In response to these challenges, the BRC piloted the Family Integration Service which offered English for Speaker of Other Languages (ESOL) classes, Life Skills groups and social opportunities. The report concluded that refugee sponsors often lack sufficient knowledge of Scottish systems to support their relatives' integration, thus support from external agencies is required.

Marsden and Harris (2015) found that reunion strengthened relationships for some families, while for others the prolonged separation made re-negotiating bonds challenging; the latter has been supported by subsequent researchers (Hirani et al., 2016; Marsden, 2018; McCleary, 2017). Relationships were particularly strained in the instance of teenagers who had not lived with their parents for a long time. They experienced separation from their interim caregivers, who they lived with whilst separated from their parents, as difficult. They also missed relatives who remained in their country of nationality, such as older siblings and grandparents.

Marsden and Harris (2015) found that young people often experienced disrupted education prior to arrival in Glasgow, and this disruption continued with an average two months delay before they were enrolled into school. This delay highlights the lack of clarity regarding education pathways for young people arriving in the UK through family reunion. In Scotland, there is no legal requirement for 16 to 18-year-olds to enrol in formal education, therefore young people in this age group enrol in college, rather than school. This means that young people who have recently arrived in Glasgow through

refugee family reunion miss crucial academic and social opportunities, which could facilitate integration.

Marsden's *Voices of Strength and Pain* report (2018), built upon the aforementioned research and explored how refugee people experience resettlement. She identified supportive relationships and religious faith as fundamental protective factors, which supports Laban et al. (2005) and Schweitzer et al. (2006). The report also advocates for psychosocial interventions to support refugee families resettling in the UK.

These reports are useful in understanding post-migration experiences of refugee people and their families within the UK, as other research tended to occur in the USA, Canada and Australia. Marsden and Harris' (2015) report identified the integration needs of young people, defined as 25-year-olds and under, as requiring further consideration. The neglect of the youth perspective is not specific to research with refugee people, but a widely observed issue (Fraser, Lewis, Ding, Kellett & Robinson, 2004). Existing refugee studies often invite the whole family to participate and, subsequently, the experiences of young people arriving in the UK through refugee family reunion are not well understood (Marsden & Harris, 2015).

Given these recommendations for further research (White & Hendry, 2011) and the gap in understanding young people's experiences of integration (Marsden & Harris, 2015), this chapter will now review existing literature on young people's experience of separation and reunion within transnational families.

1.5 Young Refugee People

The UN recognises that definitions of *youth* are fluid and vary cross-culturally; therefore, rather than using the age of 18 as a binary demarcation between childhood and adulthood, they define young people as individuals aged 15 to 24-years-old (UN, 2001). Neuropsychological theories use a similar definition given evidence that the human brain continues maturing into one's twenties (Johnson, Blum & Giedd, 2009). The life stages, roles and expectations associated with this 15 to 24 age range, vary according to the

young person's cultural contexts (Centre for Multicultural Youth, 2013; Patton & Viner, 2007). In Western cultures, such as the UK and USA, this age range is associated with the construct of *adolescence*, a period of biological, psychological, cognitive, emotional and social changes. During adolescence, young people negotiate boundaries of independence thus developing their sense of self (Arnett, 2000; Erikson, 1968; Havighurst, 1952). The universality (Mead, 1928) and temporality (Fox, 1977) of adolescence have been disputed, with scholars critiquing the underlying Eurocentrism (Bame Nsamenang, 2002). In addition, traditional models of adolescence focus on the experience of young men, which ignores the role of gender. Bradford Brown and Larson (2002) promote the idea of multiple global *adolescences* to ensure the consideration of cultural differences in how young people negotiate autonomy and identity during their teenage years.

The Arabic term *murahaqa* is used in academic contexts to refer to puberty with a particular focus on sexual maturity; related Arabic terms include *fata* which refers to a young person aged 14 to 17-years-old preparing for adulthood, whilst *shabb* describes the growth occurring in one's mid-teens to mid-twenties (Booth, 2002). This growth is contextualised within values of connectedness and family ties, emphasising that, in many Arab societies, family responsibility is prioritised over personal autonomy.

Hughes and Rees (2016) acknowledge that Western constructions of adolescence might differ from the experiences of unaccompanied asylum-seeking youth, who may have grown up in countries where children are expected to transition directly to adulthood without an interim stage. Unaccompanied asylum-seeking youth resettling in the UK may therefore experience tensions between British cultural expectations and those of their country of nationality (Chambon, 1989; Tobin & Friedman, 1984). This tension is one example of how the experience of refugee youth is distinct from their non-refugee peers. Other unique challenges faced by refugee youth, which distinguish them from their peers, include anxiety about immigration status, separation from family, disrupted education, experiences of detention and previous adversities (Hek, 2005). As noted by Gibson (2002), young refugee people encompass both the 'normalness' of

adolescence and unique perspectives related to their experiences of surviving war.

Literature also identifies similarities between refugee and non-refugee youth. Both refugee and non-refugee youth are negotiating a development period, which involves developing their independence, an increase in the significance of peer relationships and exploring one's identity (Hughes & Rees, 2016). Gibson interviewed Bosnian refugee adolescents, who resettled in the USA, to explore how they construct their identity (2002). One young person stated, "I mean, there is a difference in culture, but like, especially like teenagers, we're all the same" (2002, p. 42). Gibson noted that the participants, whose settlement in America ranged from two to four years, had similar vernacular, idols and career aspirations to American peers.

1.5.1 Ethnic and Cultural Identity in Refugee Youth

Ethnic identity is used to refer to an individual's sense of belonging to a particular ethnic group (Phinney, 1990). Cultural identity is a broader term related to a sense of belonging to a group based on shared categories, such as nationality, ethnicity, race, gender, and religion (Chen & Lin, 2016).

Participants in Gibson's research described fluctuations regarding whether they identified as Bosnian, American or both (2002). On one hand, changing identity is normative for teenagers (Erikson, 1968). However, participants' fluctuating cultural identity might relate to the socio-political contexts of the Bosnian war, which they had fled, during which people were killed because of their ethnicity and religion.

Hughes and Rees (2016) discuss how unaccompanied asylum-seeking youth in the UK negotiate their ethnic identities. Upon resettling in the UK, these youth may find themselves perceived as part of a 'minority' ethnic group, perhaps for the first time. This is in addition to the racism that they may experience. Immigration legislation implemented by the UK Home Office, as the state body implementing laws and policies which affect refugee and asylum-seeking people, can perpetuate racist discrimination through their suspicion towards unaccompanied asylum-seeking youth (Chase, 2013). Gower (2011) details the culture of disbelief and age disputes, which result in

unaccompanied youth being polarised as either 'villains' or 'victims'. Hughes and Rees note that "these dominant social narratives become internalised, and can grow into identities which limit opportunities for future action" (2016, p.119). Other researchers suggest that when services focus solely on the immigration status of refugee youth or their otherness as 'foreigners', it becomes easy for their rights, as children and young people, to be ignored (Derluyn & Broekaert, 2008; Hek, 2005). Hughes and Rees (2016) argue that one way of countering discriminatory discourses is to develop alternative, empowering narratives, which may previously have been subjugated.

1.5.2 Attachment

Processes of identity development begin long before adolescence and thus, it is important to consider how early childhood affects the experiences of refugee youth. Attachment theory offers one way of connecting childhood and adolescence. Attachment theorists argue that early relationships provide the foundation for a child's sense of self, which influences their interactions with others across the lifespan. Theories usually focus on the development of a secure attachment between infant and caregiver, typically the infant's mother (Ainsworth, 1967). Attachment is assumed to be universal, linked to ideas about infants' innate need to bond with caregivers for survival (Bowlby, 1958). However, it is important to question whether attachment theory is applicable beyond Western constructs, such as the nuclear family and infant-caregiver dyad, to the extended family structures which are common for many migrant families.

Infants raised in cultures where the extended family is normative, may have multiple attachment relationships with relatives beyond their main caregiver. One hypothesis is that separation from one's primary caregiver, in such instances, may be experienced as less significant because other caregivers fulfil the child's needs. Research supporting this hypothesis indicates that children develop "attachment to community" thus the infant-mother dyad becomes less significant (Weisner, 1984, p. 347). By contrast, other researchers suggest that even in multi-caregiver communities, the infant-mother dyad is required for secure attachment (Ainsworth, 1967; Mesman, van Ijzendoorn & Sagi-Schwartz, 2016). These contradictory findings indicate

a need for further cross-cultural research to avoid the imposition of Western-centric ideas of attachment in contexts where these concepts may not be valid (Suárez-Orozco, Bang & Kim, 2010).

1.5.3 Transnational Families

There is limited literature exploring young refugee people's experiences of family separation and reunion. However, within the broader field of migration, there is increasing literature about transnational families, defined as families negotiating relationships across international borders (Skrbiš, 2008).

Transnational families are often formed through serial migration, which refers to relatives migrating at different times. Typically, one or both parents migrate first, leaving their children with extended relatives, such as grandparents (Smith, Lalonde & Johnson, 2004). Once the parents are settled in the new country, which may take some time, the children usually travel to join them. Children within transnational families first experience separation from their parents and adjustment to living apart, followed by reunion with their parents in a new country. Researchers have studied serial migration within Caribbean families (Smith, Lalonde & Johnson, 2004) and Latin American families (Gindling & Poggio, 2010), exploring families' experiences of separation, transnational relationships and reunion. Although serial migration is distinct from the refugee experience, in the absence of substantive research about young people's experience of refugee family separation and reunion, these studies may offer useful insight into youth perspectives.

Whilst research usually highlights negative consequences of serial migration, a positive impact is that parents usually send remittance to their children, which increases financial resources and quality of life (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007). Olwig (2002) found that transnational families can also be effective in nurturing social mobility.

1.5.3.1 *Emotional impact of serial migration for young people*

A 2007 report by The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF] expressed concerns about the lack of research considering the impact of transnational migration on children and young people. The report suggests that transnational migration may increase children's risk of

abuse and exploitation because they are no longer safeguarded by their parents. The authors also argue that serial migration results in feelings of abandonment, loss and vulnerability (UNICEF, 2007).

Further research suggests that serial migration, and the associated separation, has distinct consequences for young people, in comparison to those who migrate simultaneously with their parents. Suárez-Orozco et al. (2010) reported increased rates of depression and anxiety in children who were separated from their parents, with an association between longer separation and greater distress. They also noted that the emotional pain of separation from ones' parents can be so distressing that transnational families avoid discussing it.

1.5.3.2 Impact of age on experiences of separation and reunion:

Young people will vary in terms of their developmental needs and abilities according to their age. Mann (2004) suggests that older children, defined as those aged 7 years old and above, are better able to manage the stresses of family separation than their younger peers. Research by Ellison, Ferketich and Jordan-Marsh (1985) found that individuals in their early- to mid-teens who experienced serial migration were more prone to experiencing distress, whilst older teenagers were more prone to developing behavioural problems. This age-related difference may be linked to the developmental tasks of adolescence, whereby teenagers' behaviour is often perceived as 'problematic' (Arnett, 2000; Erikson, 1968; Havighurst, 1952). Tolfree (1995) outlines that the improved ability of older children to cope with family separation is related to their advanced language and cognitive skills. Linguistics research suggests that language acquisition becomes harder after puberty, therefore teenagers may struggle more than younger children to learn the host country's language (Scovel, 2000). Smith et al. (2004) reported that age at reunion, length of separation and amount of contact during separation were all important factors in the process of serial migration. They conducted research with Caribbean children who had immigrated to Canada through serial migration, the mean age of the children was 4.94 years at separation and 14.43 years at reunion. Contrary to Mann (2004) and Tolfree (1995), Smith et al. (2004) argue that younger children adjust to reunion

more easily than older children, explaining that older children were less likely to conform to their parents' requests after reunion.

1.5.3.3 *Impact of reunion on family relationship:*

Transnational family reunion, although often experienced as positive, involves complex psychosocial processes, such as re-establishing family bonds and roles after prolonged separation (Luster, Qin, Bates, Johnson & Rana, 2008). Mexican young adult migrants reuniting with their mothers in the USA described no longer assimilating within their family following the long separation (Lovato-Hermann, 2015). This sentiment often arose when their mother had formed new romantic relationships or given birth during the separation; in these instances, reunion involved adjusting to new siblings and participants expressed resentment at sharing their mother's affection. Participants also reported missing extended family in Mexico, particularly relatives who had cared for them. Similar findings were reported by Suárez-Orozco et al. (2010); having become accustomed to life apart from their parents, the process of reunion, and subsequent separation from other caregivers, is challenging for young people. Gindling and Poggio (2010) describe initial euphoria when transnational families are reunited, however this is often quickly succeeded by strained relationships when parents attempt to discipline their newly reunited children.

1.5.3.4 *Impact of gender on experiences of reunion:*

Lovato-Hermann's research explores how gender influences young adults' resettlement experiences (2015). She notes a gender distinction whereby young women described being burdened with responsibility for domestic chores and translating for their parents. By contrast, male participants noted a lack of such responsibilities, and a sense of freedom not afforded to female peers (Lovato-Hermann, 2015). This bears similarity to the concept of "adultification" (Burton, 2007; Puig, 2002), which refers to children or adolescents assuming adult-like roles within their family. Burton identified gender as influential in adultification, with boys assuming breadwinner roles and girls undertaking caretaking responsibilities (2007). Puig's research (2002) with Cuban refugee children suggested that, due to them being more

fluent in English than their parents, they assumed responsibility for 'adult' tasks such as paying bills and liaising with professionals.

A further gender distinction was noted within social relationships. Female participants accessed peer support, which fostered a sense of belonging. By contrast, male participants reported lacking supportive relationships and conversely experienced negative influences, such as gang involvement (Lovato-Hermann, 2015).

1.5.3.5 *Impact of separation on education*

Gindling and Poggio (2010) studied educational attainment in Latin American children who arrived in the USA through serial migration. They found that individuals who migrated as teenagers experienced increased emotional problems and reduced educational attainment, in comparison to those who migrated as children. Another study detailed links between family separation, acculturation conflict and poor academic performance in immigrant youth who had resettled in the USA (Patel, Clarke, Eltareb, Macciomei & Wickham, 2016).

Mexican participants in Lovato-Hermann's research (2015) described feeling under-prepared for the American educational system, having missed prolonged periods of education due to migration. This, in combination with limited English language proficiency, resulted in many young people being asked to repeat an academic year. Participants also described struggling to access academic support from their teachers and parents. It must be considered that as participants are often recruited through academic institutions, research is likely to exclude those young people not in education, which may result in bias (Lovato-Hermann, 2015).

1.5.4 Research Specific to Young Refugee People

The experiences of transnational families are useful to consider in relation to this current study, however as aforementioned it is important not to assume these experiences are representative of refugee and asylum-seeking people. As argued by Pieloch, McCulloch and Marks (2016), refugee youth face distinct challenges and experiences, particularly because serial migration can be undertaken 'voluntarily' by families, whereas refugee people experience

involuntary displacement. As previously noted, this distinction between voluntary and involuntary migration is contentious and complex.

Hek (2005) conducted a literature review specifically relating to refugee children and young people's experiences in the UK. Hek summarises the reasons that bring refugee young people to the UK, including direct experiences of human rights violations, physical or sexual abuse, trafficking, military conflict, persecution and natural disasters. Young people may also have witnessed the abuse or death of their relatives. Such adversities are associated with significant distress (Bronstein & Montgomery, 2011, Thomas, Thomas, Nafees & Bhugra, 2004). These experiences echo those of refugee adults with literature highlighting their pre-flight experiences of war, torture, terrorism, natural disasters, famine (Knipscheer et al., 2015; Miller & Rasmussen, 2010; Tempny, 2009). Lustig et al. (2004) highlight that for refugee young people, such exposure to suffering and adversity can reduce their trust in adults to protect them and disrupt their sense of the world as a safe place. The authors state that separation from one's caregivers further increases this sense of disruption. An understanding of the circumstances underlying how and why refugee youth came to seek asylum in the UK is significant. I will go on to discuss how prolonged family separation perpetuates the adversity faced by refugee youth, whereas reunion is fundamental to the resettlement process.

Hek (2005) also highlights the social exclusion of this group and the importance of research voicing their perspectives. She outlines the, often detrimental, impact of immigration legislation on their lives. Young people's experiences of immigration were fraught with anxiety, particularly if they involved age determination or detention, highlighting the issues with systems that treat young refugees as refugees first and children second. Given the detrimental impact of separation on education, Hek emphasises the importance of schools promoting social and emotional development, structure and routine, and hope for the future. Schools and colleges are often the only agencies supporting refugee youth in the UK, yet many young people experience delayed enrolment. This results in them navigating new systems and cultures with little support.

1.5.4.1 *Family Separation*

The negative impact of family separation on the wellbeing, social functioning and economic circumstances of refugee families is well established (Savic et al., 2013). However, young refugee people within such families must also contend with specific changes and challenges associated with their developmental stage (Hirani et al., 2016; Weine et al., 2014). Refugee youth may vary in their understanding of family separation. An Eritrean boy in Marsden's study remarked "I did not know what was going on. I knew that [my father] left and then my brother wasn't there. I didn't understand much, but then after time I began to understand what happened" (2018, p. 32). This quote suggests initial uncertainty about his relatives' whereabouts and, that perhaps with increasing age and maturity, he became more aware of the circumstances of their separation.

Research by Luster et al. (2008) with the Lost Boys of Sudan, young Sudanese boys who were displaced by the civil war, highlighted their experiences of ambiguous loss. Whilst distressing, uncertainty was considered preferable to news of death as it maintained the boys' hope of reunion. The authors argue that the study is unique in considering ambiguous loss amongst refugee youth, rather than adults. Within refugee camps, these boys formed significant bonds with peers, who offered support during the separation from their relatives. One participant stated "my biological family is still my family and the group who lived with me all those years are my family too" (2008, p. 451), which indicates the importance of these peer relationships. This may be related to the boys' cultural identity; many of them were members of the Dinka tribe which encourages self-sufficiency and peer support, rather than reliance on adults (Jeppsson & Hjern, 2005). When participants successfully traced family in Sudan, they often experienced disbelief that they were truly talking to their long separated relative, and joy at reconnecting. However, reconnection highlighted how much the experiences of migration had changed these Sudanese youth; many participants described a gradual shift away from traditional Sudanese culture, as a result of their time in refugee camps in various countries, which was difficult for them and their families to reconcile.

The Lost Boys are considered “an extreme example of separation and ambiguous loss” having experienced refugee camps across Ethiopia and Kenya, before settling in the USA (Luster et al., 2008, p. 455). A longitudinal study of over 8000 asylum-seeking children in the Netherlands found a link between frequent relocations between asylum-seeker centres and increased distress; the impact was greatest for children aged 12 to 17-years-old (Goosen, Stronks & Kunst, 2014). The researchers hypothesise that this relationship is mediated by physical disruption and loss of social connections.

The Convention of Rights of the Child states that “applications by a child or his or her parents to enter or leave a State Party for the purpose of family reunification shall be dealt with by States Parties in a positive, humane and expeditious manner” (UN, Article 10, 1989). This recommendation does not always match the reality of refugee family reunion procedures. Sadoway (2001) highlights that delays often mean children remain in refugee camps, away from their families, without hope of reunion. If families do eventually reunite, children may “come with the handicap of their painful years of insecurity and needless emotional trauma due to the long separation from their parent or parents” (p. 350).

1.5.4.2 *Resettlement*

Pieloch et al. (2016) conducted a literature review of resilience, defined as capacity to withstand and recover from adversity, in refugee youth. Drawing on literature published over two decades, they identified the following factors as promoting resilience in refugee youth: establishing basic needs, such as access to housing and healthcare; being recognised as children; maintaining a positive outlook; supportive family relationships; inclusion in education and positive academic attainment; sense of belonging; social support from friends; and connection to ‘home’ culture i.e. their country of nationality.

McMichael, Gifford and Correa-Velez (2010) conducted research with refugee youth from 12 countries of nationality who had resettled in Australia. Their study identified supportive family as critical in facilitating the wellbeing of refugee youth. Refugee youth reported that resettlement in new environments led to their parents becoming more anxious and less trusting of

them. Participants noted conflict, beyond the standard adolescent-parent tensions of negotiating increased independence; this finding relates to specific refugee resettlement issues including the changing family configuration and cultural adaptation. Conflict also arose around issues such as dating and arranged marriages, thus highlighting the gendered experience of young refugee women resettling in Australia, navigating both new and traditional cultural norms.

Research by Busch Nsonwu et al. (2013), supported the finding that families adapt to customs of the host country, for example a shift may occur from patriarchal ideals towards gender equality in line with American norms. Families may become more independent within their nuclear configuration, whereas in their country of nationality, they had close bonds with extended family. Parents of teenagers face the challenges of negotiating their children's increasing independence and adjusting their disciplinary techniques accordingly, whilst trying to maintain traditional values from their country of nationality. Western ideals of children becoming adults at 18-years-old may be challenging for refugee parents, who may be more accustomed to families living together until the children are further into adulthood.

The interfamilial relationships of refugee youth have also been explored by Hynie, Guruge and Shakya (2012), who conducted a study with Afghan, Karen and Sudanese refugee youth and their families resettling in Canada. They argued that refugee youth have an important leadership role within their families, related to their rapid language acquisition and adaptation to cultural systems and norms. Hynie et al.'s finding (2012) that refugee youth have increased familial responsibilities for interpretation and system navigation, and new roles including financial support, has been supported by other research (Luster et al., 2008; Marsden & Harris, 2015; McMichael et al., 2010; Savic et al., 2013; UNHCR, 2018). An important finding was that participants did not evaluate these responsibilities as burdensome, but rather contributing to increased self-worth and personal growth. Thus, increased familial responsibility can be experienced as empowering. However, Hynie et al. (2012) call for the empowerment of refugee youth not to lapse into

exploitation, whereby they become responsible for tasks that professional services should be delivering.

The empowerment of young refugee people is important as migration may deprive them of the agency that non-refugee youth may experience. For example, they may lack agency in the decision to move to the host country; such decisions are usually made by their parents, or other relatives, or shaped by broader contextual factors such as their country of nationality being in a state of conflict (Pieloch et al., 2016). As noted by Hek (2005), young refugee people are often silenced regarding their experiences, and it is only recently that their perspectives have been sought and considered by researchers, practitioners and policymakers. Whilst experiences of oppression can make it difficult for refugee people to express their needs and opinions, it is crucial that they are encouraged to do so and that services listen to their voices.

1.6 Rationale of the Current Study

Given the number of refugee people moving to the UK, it is important to explore their experiences of forced displacement, migration and resettlement; this is with a view of supporting them with these processes and increasing the understanding of professionals who work with refugee people. During displacement, many refugee people experience involuntary family separation, which has negative psychosocial impacts (Marsden, 2018; Miller et al., 2018; Rousseau et al., 2001). There is a wealth of literature indicating the role of family cohesion in promoting wellbeing and social support (Arnetz et al., 2013; Busch Nsonwu et al., 2013). Family reunion is therefore an aim which many refugee people strive towards.

Previous research about refugee family reunion has tended to neglect the specific perspective of young people. Young people may have unique experiences of refugee family reunion; it has been argued that their developmental stage increases their vulnerability to the stressors of displacement and migration (Weine et al., 2014). Other studies suggest that adolescence increases adaptability to adversity associated with displacement

(Weine et al., 1995). A supportive and positive family network has also been found to increase resilience in refugee youth (Pieloch et al., 2016).

Empirical literature regarding family reunion tends to be conducted in the context of serial migration and transnational families, rather than specifically with refugee people. There is limited research about how family separation affects young refugee people and how they experience joining displaced relatives through refugee family reunion in the UK. In addition, existing research tends to exclude people who are not proficient in English, which is an issue when working with refugee and asylum-seeking populations for whom English is often not their first language.

The current study aims to address the aforementioned gaps in the research and to present an original contribution by interviewing young people aged 16 to 25-years-old who have experienced refugee family reunion within the UK. There will be provision for interpreters for those participants whose English is not proficient to conduct an interview. In keeping with Drachman's multistage migration framework (1992), the current study aims to explore participants' journey from separation, waiting to be reunited, arrival in the UK and adjusting to a new community.

1.6.1 Research Question

With the above rationale and aims in mind, the current study intends to explore the following question: how do young people experience refugee family reunion once they have been reunited with separated relatives?

2 METHOD

This chapter describes the methodology used to address the aforementioned research question. It begins by summarising how this collaboration with the BRC arose. It then states the epistemological position and the rationale is detailed for selecting Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as the methodology for this research. The study design and IPA process are described and the chapter concludes with my reflexive position as a researcher.

2.1 Research Collaboration with the BRC

This research occurred in collaboration with BRC staff, which reflects my belief that psychologists should conduct research with real-world relevance (Jensen, Hoagwood & Trickett, 1999). Collaborating with professionals who work at the grassroots with young refugee and asylum-seeking people was fundamental in ensuring the study was responsive to these young people's needs.

I approached BRC staff regarding areas that they felt could benefit from further research, this process led to identifying the topic of young people's experiences of family reunion. BRC staff were crucial stakeholders throughout the study thus we had to negotiate my research aims and their priorities. This was achieved through having clearly defined roles and regular communication. In the Discussion chapter, I explore implications of this study for BRC practice.

2.2 Epistemological Position

Epistemology is a branch of philosophy defined as the theory of knowledge, which focuses on what constitutes knowledge, how knowledge is produced and its limitations (Nightingale & Cromby, 1999). Epistemology is closely related to ontology, which is the philosophical study of being and reality (Nightingale & Cromby, 1999). Researchers' epistemological and ontological

assumptions influence a study's methodology, research method and research questions, which all affect what knowledge can be produced (Langdridge, 2007; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

Realism, critical realism and relativism are considered the three main epistemological positions (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Realists argue that reality exists independently of the individual observer and that there is a straightforward mirroring relationship between knowledge and reality. Thus, one objective reality can be directly accessed by experience and research. This is opposed by relativism, which posits that there are multiple 'realities' as 'reality' is constructed by the individual observer. Relativism therefore considers the subjective nature of knowledge production and the role of individual interpretation.

Between these two positions is critical realism, a position often attributed to Bhaskar (1978) which, in subsequent years, has gained popularity within psychological research (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Madill, Jordan & Shirley, 2000). Critical realists propose there is an independent reality, or a world external of the individual. One's perception of this material world depends on subjective and socially influenced factors, such as culture and history (Lyons & Coyle, 2016). Knowledge is therefore understood as context specific, with both researchers and participants integral in constructing knowledge. It is considered impossible to access objective reality as one's access to reality is always mediated by experience. Critical realist researchers engage with social factors that influence participants' experience of reality, rather than assuming reality can be taken for granted. (Pilgrim & Bentall, 1999; Willing, 2013).

A critical realist epistemology, based on these ideas, was considered appropriate for this study, which aims to understand young people's experiences of refugee family reunion. In particular, I have been influenced by Willig's interpretation of critical realist epistemology for IPA (2013). Her approach to qualitative research could be considered ontologically realist, whilst taking a relativist epistemological position (2016), which I feel reflects my own world view. A common critique of critical realism is its ontological

position (Magill, 1994), with its critics arguing that relativist and constructionist epistemology are more appropriate for qualitative research. Critical realism assumes that phenomena are driven by underlying structures, which may be social, physiological or psychological. The critical realist researcher is interested in the structures that give rise to participants' experiences (Willig, 2013). Thus, a potential critique of critical realism is that the researcher is imposing their understanding of structures which they feel underlie participants' account of their experience. Willig (2013) counteracts this critique by arguing that critical realists vary in the extent to which they claim the underlying structures they have identified, as researchers, constitute knowledge. By contrast, phenomenological approaches seek to understand participants' subjective experiential world, that is their thoughts, feelings and perception, but it does not make any claims about what underlies this subjective experience. IPA research has been associated with a phenomenological epistemology (Smith, Jarman, & Osborn, 1999; Smith & Osborn, 2003). Phenomenological epistemology lends itself particularly well to research about embodied experience (Brown, Cromby, Harper, Johnson & Reavey, 2011). Given that this research intends to explore the question of 'how do young people make sense of their experience of family reunion, once they have been reunited with separated relatives', which involves both subjective experience and material, social structures, a critical realist position was deemed most appropriate. There are realist assumptions underlying the questions, including the assumption that participants have experienced a real phenomenon called 'family reunion' and that interviewing them about this phenomenon is a valid way of invoking their experience of this. I feel that critical realism compliments the ethos of IPA in acknowledging the researcher's interpretation of participants' transcripts as exactly that - one particular researcher's interpretation - which may differ from the interpretations that other researchers or readers develop from the same transcript. A critical realist perspective acknowledges that, in the material world, migration leads to physical separation of migrant and refugee families and, in some instances, reunion later occurs. Whilst family reunion is a real phenomenon in the external world, participants' experiences of this phenomenon both influence and are influenced by social factors such as

gender, culture and language. Participants may, or may not, be aware of how such factors influence their experience, therefore it is important for the researcher to think critically about this.

2.3 Qualitative Methodology

Marshall (1996) argues that the choice between qualitative and quantitative methodology should be based on the research question. Given the limited research about young people's experience of family reunion, an exploratory research question was necessary to increase understanding. Experiential "how" and "why" questions that explore social processes through collecting and analysing non-numerical data compliment qualitative methodologies (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Lyons & Coyle, 2016). Numerous qualitative methodologies can be employed to provide in-depth explorations of how participants construct meaning and experience their subjective world (Willig, 2013). Choosing between qualitative methodologies involves consideration of their distinct aims and epistemological positions.

2.4 Introducing IPA

IPA is an experiential and qualitative methodology developed by Smith (1996; 2004; Smith & Osborn, 2003), exploring how individuals engage with, and make sense of, their personal experiences of a phenomenon. The phenomenon being explored is usually something significant and related to the individual's personal and social identities. IPA has also been used to promote perspectives from under-researched groups, including young refugee people (Groark, Sclare & Raval, 2011). IPA focuses on the individual's subjective account of their lived experience, rather than attempting to access objective reality (Smith & Eatough, 2006).

As argued by Smith et al. "your prime reason for choosing IPA over any other qualitative approach should be because it is consistent with the epistemological position of your research question" (2009, p. 46). The key

theoretical foundations of IPA are phenomenology (Husserl, 1931; Moran, 2000), hermeneutics (Ricoeur, 1978; Palmer, 1969) and idiography (Thomae, 1999); these principles compliment critical realism (Moran, 2000; Willig, 2013) as I will outline.

2.4.1 Phenomenology

Transcendental phenomenology is a philosophical movement, associated with Husserl (1931), who advocated for studying experience and consciousness from the first-person perspective. These ideas have been influential in psychology and led to an interest in individuals' lived experience of the world (Langdridge, 2007).

Descriptive phenomenology requires researchers to 'bracket' off their assumptions, remaining close to the data and not attributing additional meaning beyond what the participant describes (Willig, 2013). Interpretative phenomenology, by contrast, does not require 'bracketing' but active engagement with one's assumptions to facilitate understanding (Smith & Eatough, 2006; Willig, 2013). Interpretative phenomenological researchers consider the broader social and cultural contexts that influence participants' sense-making. In both forms of phenomenology, emphasis is on the "quality and texture" of the experience for the individual, rather than whether they are relaying an accurate, objective account of what happened (Willig, 2013, p. 16)

2.4.2 Hermeneutics

Ricoeur defined hermeneutics as understanding through interpretation of text (1978). There are different methods of interpretation and debate regarding whether an author's intentions can be fully understood through interpretation (Smith et al., 2009). Heidegger links phenomenology and hermeneutics through postulating that access to phenomena explicitly requires interpretation, because certain meanings may be visible, whilst others are hidden (1962).

IPA is informed by hermeneutics because participants' efforts to make sense of their experience requires interpretation. IPA involves double hermeneutics as the researcher is making sense of the participant making sense of their

experience (Smith et al., 2009). The IPA researcher has a dynamic and active role (Smith & Eatough, 2006). As such, IPA research is influenced by the researcher's own assumptions and it is important to recognise how these affect their interpretation of participants' experiences.

Published IPA research involves triple hermeneutics whereby the reader is making sense of the researcher's attempt to make sense of the participant making sense of their experience (Smith et al., 2009). In this study, the use of interpreters to facilitate communication between participants, for whom English was not their first language, and the researcher, a native English speaker, adds an additional hermeneutic layer; the researcher is making sense of the interpreter making sense of the individual making sense of their experience. The role of interpreters will be considered subsequently in this chapter.

2.4.3 Idiography

IPA focuses on participants' experience of a phenomenon and their related sense-making as unique to that individual. Unlike other methodologies, the aim of IPA is not to be nomothetic and draw conclusions at population level from a representative sample (Smith et al., 2009). Rather, the focus is a detailed exploration of the experience for that individual. This is reflected in the tendency of IPA researchers towards small samples, with between four to ten interviews considered sufficient for a professional doctorate (Smith et al., 2009). IPA researchers seek a homogeneous sample of participants through purposive sampling; this ensures that the research question is relevant to all participants and that they can offer in-depth insights into their experience. Analysis is detailed and interrogates each transcript individually, whilst also exploring similarities and differences between participants' accounts. It should be noted that the idiographic focus of IPA does not imply individualism, as analysis is situated within participants' relational, social and cultural contexts (Smith et al., 2009).

2.4.4 Rationale for Choosing IPA

In keeping with critical realist epistemology, the current study will use IPA to explore the research question – how do young people experience refugee

family reunion once they have been reunited with separated relatives? IPA was selected as an appropriate methodology given the focus on individuals' experiences of family reunification and how they make sense of them. The decision to choose IPA involved consideration and dismissal of alternative methodologies.

Both IPA and thematic analysis (TA) involve coding and theme development; however, TA focuses on patterns of meaning across the whole data set, whereas IPA also analyses each participant's idiosyncratic experience. This is evident in the practical steps involved in conducting IPA, as the researcher codes and develops themes for the first transcript before moving onto the second transcript and so forth, whereas TA looks at all transcripts as one data set when coding. This distinction means TA focuses only on shared experiences amongst participants, whereas IPA additionally explores the divergence. This difference affects recruitment and sampling whereby TA research studies tend to have a greater sample size than IPA studies. As previously noted, IPA is embedded in hermeneutics and this commitment to in-depth interpretation is distinct from TA (Smith, 2010). IPA has two levels of theme development - superordinate and subordinate - whilst TA has one level. Another key difference is that TA is considered an analytic method, rather than a methodology. Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that TA has more theoretical flexibility than IPA, they position IPA as being wedded to phenomenological framework whereas TA can be used with both realist and constructionist frameworks. Their similarities mean that the end result of an IPA and phenomenologically-informed TA write-up are often very similar. However, TA is best employed for larger samples, or when the research question does not focus on people's lived experience. Given the particular focus of this research question on a small sample of young people's lived experience of family reunion, I chose IPA over TA.

Grounded theory ([GT] Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was also considered, given that both IPA and GT are interested in social processes. GT focuses on the development of new theories from the data, which was not an aim of this study. Thus, IPA was chosen for its exploratory focus, whereas GT would have been more appropriate for an explanatory research question.

Another possible methodology was discourse analysis (DA), which highlights the role of language in constructing reality (Burman & Parker, 1993). This methodology is more consistent with relativist, or social constructionist, epistemology, than the critical realist position of this study. IPA analysts posit that participants are more than discursive agents (Smith & Eatough, 2006). IPA was chosen over DA because experiences of family reunion are not merely constructed by language but related to material disadvantages, such as conflict and migration.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

The avoidance of harm is essential in any research study, including IPA research; this is typically demonstrated through applying for ethical approval to ensure that the study meets the moral and ethical criteria of professional bodies, such as the British Psychological Society (BPS). However, I recognise that commitment to ethically sound research is crucial from the study's very conception and not limited to the ethics application (Smith et al., 2009).

2.5.1 Ethical Approval

Ethical approval was granted for this study by the School of Psychology's Ethics Committee at the University of East London (UEL) (Appendix B), prior to recruitment. As participants were recruited through the BRC, ethical approval was also sought and granted by them (Appendix C). National Health Service (NHS) ethical approval was not required as participants were not recruited from the NHS.

2.5.2 Consent

The current study requires careful consideration of ethical issues relating to participants who are both young and from refugee populations. The potential for harm is particularly heightened in research with refugee participants (Mackenzie, McDowell, Pittaway, 2007). It was important to consider that participants may have had traumatising experiences related to family separation and reunion, which they may find difficult to talk about within an interview. Participants may also have had negative experiences of

professionals, both in their country of nationality and in the UK, which could lead to apprehension about the study and how their data will be used. I read an information sheet (see Appendix D) to participants prior to the interview, with the support of an interpreter where necessary, so they could make an informed decision about taking part. This sheet detailed the study rationale, interview procedure, confidentiality, anonymity and dissemination, in accessible terms for participants. Prospective participants were reminded that their participation was a voluntary decision and that they did not have to give a reason for not taking part. In addition, they were informed that participation would not have any negative or positive impact on the support that they receive from the BRC. The consent form (Appendix E) was also read to participants and their signing this indicated informed consent to participate. I recognise that a limitation of this one-off consent is that participants were not given an opportunity, during or after the interview, to reflect on what they had shared with me and whether their responses felt too personal or distressing. This could have been managed by using ongoing consent (Gupta, 2013), which is the process of obtaining repeated consent throughout the research, rather than just once at the beginning of the study. This highlights consent as a dynamic process rather than a one-off event, and in this study with refugee youth, could have offered them further opportunities for empowerment.

2.5.3 Right to Withdrawal

I informed participants that should they participate in an interview, they could choose to withdraw within two weeks of the interview date. This decision was made in consideration of the argument that it is inaccurate to offer participants the right to withdraw *at any time* because it would not be possible to withdraw their data once it has been published (Smith et al., 2009). Thus, time-limited withdrawal is more accurate. The period of two weeks was chosen as, given the limited timescale to complete this research, I would commence analysis after this point. However, I recognise the issues associated with this decision given the context of these participants as potentially disempowered and vulnerable due to their experiences as refugee people. A longer withdrawal time period might have given participants further

time to reflect on the implications of their participation, particularly regarding how their interview responses would be analysed and disseminated. Additionally, rather than placing agency with participants to contact me to withdraw, an alternative method would have been for me to contact them and check their ongoing consent to participation, during and following the interview.

2.5.4 Potential for Distress

Another important ethical consideration in conducting this research was the potential of participants becoming distressed when discussing their experiences of separation and reunion. As argued by Smith et al. (2009, p. 53), researchers must consider the possibility that “simply *talking about* sensitive issues might constitute ‘harm’”. This has also been considered by Barker, Pistrang & Elliott (2002, p. 191) who highlight that psychological research may harm by “stirring up painful feelings or memories”. Participants were informed, in advance, that the interview questions had been carefully considered to avoid harm. It was emphasised that participants could choose not to answer any questions and could pause for a break or terminate the interview at any time. Participants were also informed that if I was concerned about harm to them or anyone else, then this would be raised with them where possible, then discussed with their caseworker and my research supervisor to explore how best to support them.

Trainee clinical psychologists have dual roles as clinicians and researchers. Within this study, my primary role was as a researcher and not to provide therapeutic support to participants. This was sensitively explained to the young people prior to the interview. However, I could employ basic therapeutic skills within the interview should a participant become distressed. A debrief occurred with all participants directly after the interview about how they had found the process, which gave them an opportunity to feedback any issues immediately. Participants were also given details of organisations that operate locally and nationally, following the interview, should they wish to access ongoing support (Appendix F).

In addition to considering the risk of participants potentially becoming distressed during the interview. I was also mindful of potential risks to myself, as the researcher. The interviews involved travel across the UK and meeting participants on premises that were unfamiliar to me. These issues were considered in the risk assessment that I conducted as part of the ethical application (Appendix B), prior to commencing this research. Conducting interviews on BRC premises was beneficial because this space was familiar to participants. It also prevented the risks of lone-working and meant caseworkers were available for support, if necessary.

2.6 Data Collection

Once ethical approval was granted, I began recruiting participants.

2.6.1 Criteria for Participation

The following inclusion criteria was used to identify potential participants:

- aged between 16 to 25-years-old
- moved to the UK through refugee family reunion
- either the young person or their family is known to a RSRFL team
- the young person has been living in the UK for 6-24 months. It was felt that if people moved here less than 6 months ago then the experience of reunion might be too recent and could elicit distressing memories of the separation. Conversely, if people moved to the UK over 24 months ago, they may struggle to recall and discuss their experience in the interview context.

Individuals were not excluded from the research study based on their English proficiency as professional interpreters were arranged for participants who required this support.

As interviews were conducted at the BRC offices, individuals who had moved out of the area and were no longer supported by the RSRFL were excluded. In addition, if caseworkers were concerned about ongoing complexities or risks affecting the individual then they were excluded from participation.

2.6.2 Involvement of Research Consultants

A semi-structured interview schedule (Appendix G) and information sheet (Appendix D) were developed with two young people consultants, who also met the inclusion criteria. These two young people were not subsequent research participants in this study. They were specifically recruited for the consultant role, which was made clear to them. Increasingly, the value of including young people across all stages of the research process is being recognised (Coad & Evans, 2008). The involvement of consultants in this study was based on principles of co-production and an aim to do research *with*, rather than *to* or *on* young people (Darbyshire, MacDougall & Schiller, 2005). However, I recognise that the study was not fully co-produced as some aspects of the design were predetermined, such as the research question, and not influenced by the consultants.

Flyers were distributed by caseworkers in Glasgow RSRFL to recruit young people as consultants (Appendix H). Prior to their involvement, an information sheet was provided so they could make an informed decision about participation (Appendix I).

The BRC co-production manager was consulted to design a focus group that ensured the consultants' involvement would be meaningful, rather than tokenistic. During the focus group, the study aims were explained to the consultants. The remit of their research consultant role was clearly explained, detailing what aspects of decision-making they could influence and what was predetermined. A vignette was used (Appendix J) to encourage the consultants to think about what questions would be helpful, and unhelpful, for me to ask other young people about their experience of family reunion.

The focus group was conducted in English, with one male and one female research consultant. They did not require support from an interpreter. Both consultants were given a £20 high-street voucher as a token of appreciation, and travel expenses were reimbursed. The gesture was important given the destitution that many refugee youth experience, due to limited financial support and restrictions on paid employment (Gladwell & Elwyn, 2012).

2.6.3 Recruitment

Following the focus group with the consultants, I began recruiting participants. BRC caseworkers identified participants who met the aforementioned inclusion criteria, to inform them of the research and ask if they would be interested in taking part. I felt that this process of BRC staff initially contacting potential participants was more appropriate than me contacting them for many reasons; the staff often had a pre-existing relationship and rapport with potential participants which was considered preferable to a 'cold call' from an unknown researcher, staff had access to BRC telephone interpreting services to facilitate calls with potential participants who are not proficient in English, and in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) this process ensured that personal information remained within the BRC.

Whilst I considered it preferable that information about the study was shared with young people by BRC caseworkers, I also recognise the ethical challenges of this process. It is possible that participants took part in the study because they believed it would benefit them, or their family, or due to concern that not participating would affect their support from the BRC. This is possible despite caseworkers explaining that participation would not have any positive or negative impact on the services provided to the young person. Given the power dynamic between caseworkers as service providers and the young people as service users, they may have felt unable to refuse participation. However, potential participants were only contacted once about the study, as repeated contact would likely have led to young people feeling pressured to take part.

A flyer advertising the research study (Appendix K) was circulated across RSRFL teams and caseworkers were encouraged to share this. The flyer was written in English, as there was not sufficient research budget to translate the flyer into the multiple languages used by young people who access the BRC. Therefore BRC caseworkers used telephone interpreting services to communicate the study information to potential participants, where necessary. Three BRC teams across the UK recruited participants,

Glasgow, Birmingham and Leeds. Additional information about their recruitment strategies is outlined in Appendix L.

2.6.4 Interviews

Qualitative methodologies use various methods of data collection, including one-to-one interviews, focus groups, online forums and questionnaires.

Semi-structured interviews are the main form of data collection in IPA research. Interviews which involve face-to-face contact between researcher and participant are considered best practice and preferable to telephone or email interviews (Novick, 2008). Thus, the current study uses face-to-face, individual interviews.

Interview schedules offer researchers a guide whilst also allowing flexibility in responding to participants, who may move beyond the preconceived schedule (Smith & Eatough, 2006). The semi-structured interview schedule was initially informed by existing literature on refugee family reunion, and I refined the questions with the input of BRC staff and consultants. The finalised interview schedule began with questions about participants' experience of waiting to be reunited, followed by questions about their experience of separation and finally, questions about their life in the UK following family reunion (Appendix G). This order was developed in discussion with the consultants who felt that separation would be the most emotive topic for participants therefore, this should be covered in the middle once the participant felt more comfortable. This view is shared by Smith et al. (2009), who argue that whilst it is not necessarily possible to predict what questions will be sensitive for participants, placing potentially sensitive questions later in the schedule is preferable.

IPA protocol cautions against rigidity with the interview schedule as this may prohibit the researcher from developing rapport and empathy with participants. A flexible interviewing approach allows participants to have agency in sharing their narrative and facilitates an in-depth account of their experience.

2.6.5 Participant Demographics

12 participants were interviewed for this study. Their demographics are listed in Table 1. I gave participants the option of selecting their own pseudonym, however no one chose to do so. The pseudonyms below are therefore chosen by me, I consulted websites for names which I felt embodied their cultural and religious identity.

Table 1.

Demographics of research participants

<u>Pseudonym</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Language that interview was conducted in</u>	<u>Country of Nationality</u>
Abdul	21	Male	Arabic	Syria
Bushra	20	Female	Arabic	Syria
Kaleb	17	Male	Amharic	Ethiopia
Dunya	20	Female	Arabic	Sudan
Fatimah	17	Female	Arabic	Sudan
Hiba	16	Female	English and Farsi	Iran
Ismail	19	Male	Arabic	Sudan
Mustafa	19	Male	Arabic	Sudan
Omar	20	Male	English	Syria
Sadiq	19	Male	Arabic	Syria
Emmanuella	20	Female	French	Ivory Coast
Priscilla	18	Female	French	Ivory Coast

Hurst (2008) acknowledges the power dynamic entailed in researchers renaming participants. My decision to choose pseudonyms in the

aforementioned way might be seen as essentialising participants' cultural and religious identities. This decision could be considered to be incompatible with the critical realist epistemology underpinning this study. Also, given that my interaction with each participant was limited to a one-off interview, it could be considered that I reduced the individual to particular demographics based on what I deemed to be significant, rather than making this decision in consultation with the individual who may not have wished to centre those same aspects of their identity. However, as argued by Hurst (2008), had I chosen pseudonyms that anglicised participants' actual names, this could serve to misrepresent them and their experiences.

Whilst using pseudonyms is considered standard practice within qualitative research, few studies give detailed accounts of how the participant or researcher decided on their chosen pseudonym (Lahman et al., 2015). One alternative method might have been to assign participants a number or letter, however I felt that doing so could potentially dehumanise the young person and distance their story. As another alternative to choosing a name, I could have given a summary of their demographics, for example (female, 16-years-old, reunited with mother, moved to the UK 8 months ago), but this also faces issues of reductionism. I wonder if participants may have felt overwhelmed by the request to choose their own pseudonym, with little notice, which might be why they deferred to me. Therefore, it might have been helpful to ask participants to choose their pseudonym ahead of the interview or, at the beginning of the interview, allocate more time to explain to them the importance of choosing their own name. The critical race feminist framework adopted by Lahman et al. (2015) advocates for researchers jointly constructing pseudonyms with participants, and choosing human names over numeric identifiers.

2.6.6 Resources

Interviews were recorded using a digital audio-recorder. We met in a private room in the BRC office nearest to the participant's home address.

Professional interpreters were arranged by the BRC to facilitate communication for participants whose English was not proficient enough for the interview. Interpreters were paid by UEL.

I gave each participant a £20 high-street voucher to demonstrate the value of their involvement in the study.

2.6.7 Using Interpreters

Frayne, Burns, Hardt, Rosen and Moskowitz (1996) argue that individuals who do not speak English as a first language are too often excluded from research. Resnik and Jones describe this exclusion as "unethical and illegal" (2006, p. 175), highlighting researchers' moral and legal obligation to include non-native English speakers. This has significant implications for the validity and generalisability of research to wider society, particularly in the UK, which is multicultural and multilingual. Support should therefore be given to facilitate the inclusion of individuals who do not speak English as a first language (Redwood & Gill, 2013).

It is for the above reasons that this study used interpreters to facilitate interviews, where necessary. Eleven interviews took place with the support of an interpreter. As previously stated, IPA research with interpreters involves the researcher making sense of the interpreter's interpretation of participants' accounts of their experience. Whilst it may have been preferable to use interpreters who are themselves embedded in the research study, this was not feasible. I met interpreters prior to participants' arrival to carefully explain the study aims and discuss their role within the interview process. I sought interpreters' consent for audio-recording, explaining that I would transcribe the recording myself and outlining how this transcript would be used in analysis. Interpreters were also aware of maintaining participants' confidentiality. On their arrival, I ensured that participants could understand the interpreter and vice versa. The power dynamics in the researcher-interpreter-participant triad cannot be ignored and it was important to attend

to this through considering factors such as seating arrangements and non-verbal communication.

The interpreters were arranged via the BRC and had experience of working with refugee and asylum seeking people. However, they were not vetted to ensure that they were suitably experienced in interpreting within the context of research interviews. One limitation of working with interpreters who were not specifically research trained was the challenge of communicating complex information about the study, particularly its epistemological and methodological position, to inform interpreters about the role they were expected to undertake. During my pre-interview briefing with interpreters, I explained the aims of the research, shared the interview schedule and also discussed ethical considerations around confidentiality. As discussed by Vara and Patel (2011), I found it challenging to communicate concepts like the IPA approach in straightforward terms to the interpreters. I explained that IPA is an approach that explores an individual's experience in great depth and as such, it was important to stay as close as possible to the words and descriptions as they were spoken by the participant.

The critical realist framework underlying this research assumes a focus on material reality and, unlike relativist or constructionist positions, focuses less on the discursive factors that construct reality. However, the complexity of interpretation as a process of constructing and sharing meaning, rather than ensuring verbatim report of what has been said, could challenge the ontological assumptions of critical realism. As discussed by Vara and Patel (2011) meaning does not lie solely in language, but is more broadly situated within the social, political and cultural contexts that the researcher, interpreter and participants bring to the study. An important consideration is whether having an interpreter speaking on their behalf further reinforces power inequalities for participants from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds (Temple & Young, 2004). Whilst recognising this as a concern, I feel that the use of interpreters was necessary and advantageous because they facilitated research with refugee and asylum seeking people, who would often otherwise be excluded. The role of interpreters in this study will be further explored in the Discussion chapter.

2.7 Transcription

Transcription is fundamental in preparing data for analysis. As discussed by Bailey (2008), transcription requires balancing the readability of the text and conveying the original meaning of the audio. I transcribed each interview verbatim using transcription conventions outlined by Smith et al. (2009) and Braun and Clarke (2013). Whilst sounds such as 'erm' or 'mmhm', pauses and laughter are noted, precise details such as the length of pause were not recorded. Appendix M presents a key regarding transcript formatting, based on conventions from Smith et al. (2009).

The use of interpreters in this study requires particular attention, because of the implications for transcription and later analysis. The aim of transcription is to provide verbatim written account of the interview discussion. This becomes complicated when conducting research with interpreters because it is not possible for any interpreter to provide an exact translation of a conversation, particularly when it occurs within an interview setting (Murray & Wynne 2001). An interpreter decides what meaning to convey from the researcher to the participant and vice versa, which affects the discussion and final transcript. Within IPA research, the interpreter provides a bridge between the researcher's understanding and the participant's understanding, which is constructed via their own understanding (Björk Brämberg & Dahlberg, 2013). Vara and Patel (2003) discuss the challenges of transcription when interpreters are involved in research as the transcript becomes formed of interpreters' spoken words in English, rather than the participants' original words. This can have implications whereby participants may feel that words within a quote, attributed to them, are not their own any more, as they represent the interpreter's language, rather than their own experience (Temple, 2008). Whilst this is, in part, the nature of interpretation as a complex process, it can also be a concern for researchers who want to ensure that the transcript is as true to the actual interview discussion and audio, as possible (Twinn, 1997).

2.8 Data Analysis

The following approach to analysis was adapted from Smith et al. (2009) and developed in consultation with my research supervisor. In general, IPA develops from themes in one transcript to shared themes across the whole data set, whilst acknowledging variations between and within participants' accounts. The resulting analysis integrates participants' words and researcher's interpretation (Smith et al., 2009).

2.8.1 Initial Readings of the Transcript

After transcription, I repeatedly read each transcript line-by-line, which allowed me to become immersed in the data. Listening to the audio-recording whilst reading the transcript, as advised by Smith et al. (2009) increased this immersion and my sense of the participant's 'voice'.

2.8.2 Initial Notes

I made initial notes on content, language and context in the right-hand margin of each transcript with a different colour pen for each note type, Appendix N presents an example. This allowed me to identify initial areas of interest and reflections in each transcript.

2.8.3 Developing Codes

I closely reviewed each transcript summarising my initial notes into concise codes. As discussed by Smith et al. (2009) this step aims to reduce the amount of detail from the transcript, whilst preserving the complexity. I recorded codes in the left-hand margin, see Appendix O for an example.

2.8.4 Connections Across Codes

I then transferred codes from the annotated transcript onto coloured index cards with accompanying line numbers on the reverse. Each participant was allocated a different colour to facilitate visual tracking throughout the analysis process. The cards enabled me to easily experiment with different configurations. This step collated key codes, through abstraction and developing interesting connections such that related codes are organised into subordinate themes (Smith et al., 2009). Superordinate themes refer to the

higher-level organisation of subordinate themes (see appendix P for an example).

2.8.5 Moving to the Next Case

I repeated the steps outlined in sections 2.8.1-2.8.4 for each transcript, until I had developed a theme map for each participant. Appendix Q summarises the initial subordinate themes and superordinate themes for each participant.

2.8.6 Patterns across Cases

I then explored patterns across all 12 transcripts; this involved reviewing the codes, subordinate and superordinate themes across the entire data set to identify similarities, differences and possible connections. Once again, I used the coloured index cards and experimented with different configurations of themes, until I identified a grouping that best connected the data.

2.9 The Researcher's Position

Smith et al. (2009) highlight that IPA research is co-constructed between researcher and participant. It is thus crucial for me to acknowledge my role, as the researcher, in constructing meaning whilst conducting this study. It is in recognition of this active role that I have used the first-person throughout this chapter, rather than referring to 'the researcher'.

I am aware that my identity as a Black Ghanaian-British woman has influenced my interest in exploring people's experiences of family separation and reunion. I grew up hearing my parents' experience of leaving their family, friends and home in Ghana in pursuit of 'better' opportunities in the UK. I share this not to assume similarity between my family and the young people in this study, but to acknowledge how my history influences my relationship to this research.

My personal experiences of marginalisation likely underlie my professional commitment to social justice and passion for research that promotes the perspectives of under-researched groups. Previous research studies with refugee youth often recruited all-male samples. However, as a woman and a feminist, it felt imperative that the oft-ignored perspectives of young women

from refugee populations were considered in this study. I find it troubling that people who do not speak English as a first language are frequently excluded, both implicitly and explicitly, from research and clinical practice. This fuelled my insistence to work with interpreters in this research.

My privilege, including my British citizenship, socio-economic status and role as a university-educated trainee clinical psychologist, affords me a different position to the young refugee people who I interviewed. It is important to attend to such differences between me, as the researcher, and the participants as they inevitably influence how we experience the world around us.

Reflexivity calls for researchers to be mindful of how their own perspectives influence their engagement with literature, research and analysis. I appreciate that the aforementioned factors influenced my curiosity about what it means for young people to experience refugee family reunion. Keeping a reflexive journal throughout this study, allowed me to record my reflections as they arose. It was particularly helpful for jotting my initial thoughts after interviews and an extract is presented in Appendix R.

One reflection which frequently featured in my reflexive journal and in discussions with research colleagues was a sense of feeling overwhelmed by this research and concern about making mistakes. I think this arose because my experience as a trainee clinical psychologist, and in pre-training roles, has typically been in clinical roles rather than research, leading to me feeling out of depth at times. However, it was reassuring to read others' accounts of how challenging and complex IPA is, and that "there is no clear right or wrong way of conducting this sort of analysis" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 80).

3 ANALYSIS

This chapter outlines analysis of the 12 interview transcripts collected in this study, presented as three superordinate themes and six subordinate themes.

3.1 Introducing the Themes

The following three superordinate themes describe participants' accounts of undergoing the family reunion process in the UK: *Challenges Experienced: "Not easy at all"*, *Novelty of the UK: "You have to adapt"* and *Supportive Relationships*. Table 2 below outlines these themes and their corresponding subordinate themes.

Table 2.

Superordinate and subordinate themes from across the sample.

Superordinate themes	Subordinate themes
Challenges Experienced: "Not easy at all"	Bittersweet feelings
	Responsibility
Novelty of the UK: "You have to adapt"	Culture
	Welcoming opportunities
Supportive Relationships	Living together again
	Receiving help

Appendix S shows how this final configuration of themes was developed. After introducing each theme, I will present phenomenological and interpretative accounts, which incorporate verbatim quotations from participants. Participant quotations demonstrate the pertinence of each theme and situate it within the data. Within this chapter, I feature quotations from all 12 participants to share their individual perspectives, given IPA's focus on the idiographic experience. I also highlight shared and contrasting experiences, exploring both convergence and divergence amongst participants.

3.2 Challenges Experienced: “Not easy at all”

The superordinate theme *Challenges experienced: “Not easy at all”* captures participants’ experience of the challenges associated with the family reunion process. *Bittersweet Feelings* and *Responsibility* are the corresponding subordinate themes. *Bittersweet Feelings* describes participants’ emotional responses to reunion as a bittersweet combination of happiness at seeing their separated parent again alongside pain at leaving their home country behind. *Responsibility* describes participants’ experience of navigating responsibility for the family reunion process, in the absence of their parents, and the pressures that they withstand in doing so. Other participants described the challenge of not being involved in the process and attributing this responsibility to other people.

3.2.1 Bittersweet Feelings

This subordinate theme explores participants’ accounts of the contradictory feelings they experienced regarding family reunion. Participants often contrasted the happiness of moving to the UK and reuniting with their parent, with the pain of leaving family and friends behind in their home country. This presented a challenge as these young people struggled to reconcile such contrasting feelings.

In his account, Kaleb highlights the multiple challenges of leaving Ethiopia, the place where he was “born and grew up”, where he had established friendships and “lots of things”. Leaving this behind to move to the UK was difficult for him, with Kaleb stating twice that it was “really hard” and emphasising this point. He describes that the deciding factor in his move was the need to reunite with his mother.

Kaleb (interpreter): It was really hard because I have friends, a lot of things. I was born and grew up there, everything there, it was really hard but at the end of the day, I just came here to reunite with my mum. It was bittersweet (48-50).

As a 17-year-old young man, Kaleb is at a developmental stage where friendships are usually becoming increasingly important; this may explain the

significance of him specifically mentioning the challenge of leaving his friends rather than, for example, stating how hard it was to leave his extended family or his house. The phrase “at the end of the day” implies that Kaleb took numerous factors into consideration ahead of leaving Ethiopia to reunite with his mother. The reader may wonder whether one of Kaleb’s considerations was the possibility of not coming to the UK and remaining in Ethiopia instead, perhaps with his extended family.

In describing how she felt about reuniting with her father, Emmanuella simply states that she felt simultaneously happy and stressed.

Emmanuella (interpreter): I was happy and same time stressed. (83)

It might be inferred that it was confusing for Emmanuella to feel such opposing emotions, happiness and stress, at the “same time” and the brevity of her response perhaps indicates her reluctance to discuss this further. With this quote, Emmanuella challenged my assumption of family reunion as an intrinsically positive experience. I wonder what opportunities Emmanuella has had to share the stressors of family reunion with others, who might have the same preconception of family reunion as positive and may therefore, implicitly or explicitly, discourage her from detailing the complex emotions that she feels.

Dunya described the most challenging factor of her arrival in the UK as struggling to concentrate and focus on her life here due to thoughts of her home country, Sudan. She was initially vague about the content of these thoughts, stating “my home country and something”, where “something” perhaps suggests hesitation to give further information or uncertainty. When I enquired, Dunya explained that her fiancé lives in Sudan.

Dunya (interpreter): Sometimes you know I can’t focus because sometimes I’m concentrating, I’m thinking about my home country and something. That’s why sometimes I can’t concentrate and focus.

Cassie: Okay, so what do you tend to be thinking about, about your home country?

Dunya (interpreter): It’s my fiancé’s over there. (109-113)

I was struck by Dunya's account of how reuniting with her father necessitated physical separation from her fiancé, who remains "over there", and how this was likely influenced by the restrictions on who can apply for family reunion. Like Kaleb, there is an implication that Dunya had to consider many factors before moving to the UK. The lasting effect of poor concentration suggests that this decision still affects Dunya and is something that she continues to mull over. I noted a shift in Dunya's body language as she mentioned her fiancé, she began to look at the floor and avoid eye contact. I felt that these non-verbal cues communicated how painful a topic this was for her and a wish to change the subject. Therefore, although curious to enquire further about her relationship with her fiancé and leaving him in Sudan, I decided not to. The reader is left with questions about what Dunya's resettlement in the UK means for the couple's plans towards marriage and her feelings regarding this.

In the quote below, Ismail speaks about how upset he felt on arrival in the UK because he missed his grandmother, who had raised him in Sudan after his father left. As Ismail describes his emotional response, he does so in the present tense "feel upset" and "miss grandmother" perhaps indicating how live this affect remains for him, even now. He describes feeling so upset that he wanted to return to Sudan, which led to arguments with his father. Ismail concludes by asserting "everything is changed" after making friends here.

Ismail (interpreter): And he feel upset and he miss his grandmother and he miss his part of family in Sudan and he told his father I need to go back and he start to argue with his father, "please let me go back, I feel here upset" and he was not satisfied. But after that when he met some erm friends and then everything is changed (28-31).

Ismail's account highlights how challenging it is for young people to manage reunion, particularly when it has been several years since last seeing their relative. Whilst Ismail describes happiness regarding the reunion with his father elsewhere in the interview, this cannot be separated from the pain he feels at leaving his grandmother, who had become an interim caregiver. It could be inferred that Ismail's pain is exacerbated by the knowledge that he

cannot bring his grandmother here, again related to family reunion criteria which prohibit extended family, such as grandparents, from applying. The reader has a sense of him pleading with his father (“please let me go back”), indicating that Ismail lacks control in this situation and is dependent on his father allowing him to return. In saying that “everything is changed” Ismail jumps from the challenges of leaving Sudan to what the reader might infer is a positive change after making friends in the UK. Perhaps Ismail’s connection to these new friends has helped him manage the absence of his grandmother and “his part of family in Sudan”. This connects to the previous point about the importance of peers in adolescence.

Mustafa’s account provides another example of family reunion leading to separations within the family unit. He explains that his elder twin brothers remain in Sudan because they are over 18-years-old and could not apply for the family reunion visa. This extract outlines the emotional impact of this separation, which Mustafa describes as “a bad feeling”.

Mustafa (interpreter): I've got a bad feeling because I left half of myself in Sudan. I used to depend to them and rely on them and then I miss them there. It's a very bad feeling and situation (65-67)

During a life stage when his peers may be developing a fuller, more congruent sense of self, Mustafa feels that in leaving his brothers, he has “left half of myself”. This perhaps indicates how closely interlinked he considers the individual and collective self. This stimulates powerful imagery about how, without his elder brothers, Mustafa feels incomplete; he may be physically situated in the UK but, perhaps like Dunya, his mind is with family in Sudan. There is a sense of Mustafa being torn between these two countries. I wonder if this “bad feeling” mirrors how Mustafa felt when he was in Sudan, separated from his father who was in the UK. In saying that he “used to depend to them and rely on them”, there is an inference that, in Sudan, Mustafa’s brothers took on an invaluable paternal role. However, now in the UK, as a result of immigration restrictions, Mustafa is separated from his siblings and struggling with this loss.

3.2.2 Responsibility

This subordinate theme describes participants' experience of navigating responsibilities and expectations related to the family reunion process. I first discuss those participants who were actively involved in responsibilities, such as gathering the relevant paperwork and caring for their siblings in the absence of their parents. I will then explore the experience of participants who describe family reunion as a process in which they did not have responsibility. Both subsets experienced their levels of responsibility as young people being affected by the family reunion process, which they described as challenging.

In the extract below, Emmanuella describes the difficulty of being left by her father when he moved to the UK, she emphasises this through repetition, saying twice that it was not an easy experience for her. She states that although her father told her about the family reunion process, *she* assumed responsibility for the tasks related to her and her six siblings' application. Emmanuella's mother died some years ago and her father left her and her siblings in the care of a local church, which he belonged to, prior to moving to the UK. By saying "I'm the one" Emmanuella emphasises that she alone was the sole holder of this responsibility, implying there was no support from her siblings, father or the church.

Emmanuella (interpreter): It was difficult because [our father] left us there, we were seven children. I'm the oldest, we were in a church it wasn't really easy, not easy at all. [...] Our father, he was the person who explained to me about family reunion but I'm the one who's running around gathering all the information (13-18).

Emmanuella's account highlights the influence of age on responsibility, implying that as the eldest sibling she was expected to fulfill particular responsibilities within the family. There is a powerful juxtaposition between her description of herself and her siblings as "children" and the difficulties she describes herself managing, in their father's absence. I am drawn to wonder whether in saying that her father "left us there", Emmanuella perhaps feels abandoned by her father and resents the responsibility that she subsequently assumed. The reader might infer that the gravity of the family reunion

process, in which any errors could result in the application being rejected, made this sense of responsibility even more fraught for Emmanuella. An additional challenge for Emmanuella and other young people in this study, is that they face adult responsibilities whilst physically separated from their parent by migration.

Mustafa describes being a child when his father travelled to the UK and that by the time they reunited, his father experienced him as grown up. Mustafa hesitates before saying “grow up” as though he is unsure and perhaps does not truly feel grown up.

Mustafa (interpreter): Okay well my father, when he left us in Sudan I was a child and when I joined him here in this country, he found me that I ...grow up and have to take some responsibility. (lines 180-181).

In this extract, Mustafa invites the reader to consider what it means to be conceptualised as an adult or ‘grown-up’. Thus, there are links between his experience and Emmanuella’s. It is inevitable that Mustafa will have developed physically, emotionally and socially in the years that he and his father were separated, but it is also likely that his experiences of separation and migration will have influenced this development. One might presume that Mustafa matured more quickly in response to migration. Mustafa’s status as ‘grown-up’ could have significant consequences for the father/son relationship, both for Mustafa who is now expected by his father to assume increased responsibility and for his father who last saw Mustafa as a child. Linked to responsibility are associated concepts of independence and agency, which usually increase with age. I am curious about how experiences of “grow[ing] up” might vary between Sudan, where Mustafa was raised, and the UK, where he currently lives. Mustafa does not detail the kind of responsibility that his father expects him to assume, which leaves the reader wondering.

Omar describes taking responsibility, as the eldest sibling, for his family in his father’s absence. He emphasises the challenges he experienced through repetition of key phrases “it so hard...it is hard” and exclaiming “oh my god”.

Like Emmanuella, Omar's responsibility is not just for himself but for his mother and six siblings, who he describes supporting financially.

Omar: I felt sad because my father he not with me, with my family because oh my god, if you want to look to eight people it so hard for me. Yeah it is hard.

Cassie: So you were looking after your family?

Omar: Yeah, I'm look after my family. I pay for the school buses, weekly (248-251)

In interpreting Omar's account, I considered cultural conceptualisations of masculinity and what it meant for Omar to assume financial responsibility for his siblings. Such responsibility might typically be considered a father's role, or certainly a man's role, given dominant discourses regarding men as 'breadwinners' working to provide financial support for their family. At the age of 19-years-old, when many of his British peers might still be supported financially by their parents, Omar was expected to assume sole responsibility for his siblings' bus fares without which their education would likely be disrupted.

Whilst the above three accounts discuss participants who describe themselves as actively responsible and involved in the family reunion application, other young people, such as Ismail, describe a contrasting experience. Ismail spoke about the expense related to family reunion but not having "any idea" how his extended family in Sudan funded this. He described "following" his aunt which implies that he adhered to her guidance, explaining that he lacked understanding because of his age.

Ismail (interpreter): To be honest, he has not any idea about the erm money issue, where is the money come from or something like that because he followed his aunt and she sorted out everything because he's young, he didn't understood. (180-2)

In citing his youth as the reason for not understanding the "money issue", Ismail attributes the responsibility for "sort[ing] out everything" to his aunt who, as an adult, he perhaps expects is better equipped than he is. The cost

of international flights to the UK is a commonly cited challenge of family reunion, so this may be the issue to which Ismail refers.

Ismail later says he is the youngest of his siblings and that consequently his family in Sudan treated him “really well”.

Ismail (interpreter): I think there was no, because he was youngest erm child, everybody look after him yeah. They treat him really well. (230-231)

In interpreting Ismail’s account, I was curious about the significance of birth order and how this relates to his experience of relatives “sort[ing] out everything”. In using “they” Ismail suggests to the reader that he had numerous relatives offering support, whilst his father was in the UK. It might be inferred that adults, such as his aunt and grandmother, protected Ismail from the challenges of family reunion. This contrasts Emmanuella’s experience; not only is she the eldest child but her mother is dead and she has no extended family.

Ismail’s experience of not having “any idea” about the family reunion process was shared by other participants, including Priscilla. When asked about her experience of the process, Priscilla expressed uncertainty regarding who had taken responsibility for this; her reply “I think it was my father” suggests a lack of confidence in her response.

Priscilla (interpreter): I think it was my father who was involved for that, I didn’t get involved in it erm a lot (73-74).

Priscilla’s account suggests that the intricacies of family reunion were unknown, due to her not having “a lot” of involvement in the process. For young people, such as Priscilla, this lack of responsibility may have resulted in the family reunion process feeling somewhat mysterious. I wonder whether structural factors such as Priscilla’s gender, age, ethnicity and her Muslim faith influenced her agency. These factors and the patriarchal systems which dominate society in both the Ivory Coast and the UK, may have limited how much responsibility Priscilla could assume for the family reunion process.

3.3 Novelty of the UK: “You have to adapt”

The superordinate theme *Novelty of the UK: “You have to adapt”* refers to participants’ experience of moving to the UK from their country of nationality, once the family reunion visa was successfully granted, and adjusting to lifestyle differences. *Culture* and *Welcoming Opportunities* are the two subordinate themes. *Culture* describes participants adjusting to differences that they observed in the UK related to language, employment and education. Participants describe practices which may be taken-for-granted by British people as entirely unfamiliar to them. Participants’ enthusiasm for embracing the opportunities that resettlement in the UK allowed them, especially access to education and learning English, is described within the *Welcoming Opportunities* subordinate theme.

3.3.1 Culture

Participants often described British lifestyles as incomparable to that of their country of nationality and adjusting to unfamiliar systems was something that numerous participants discussed. Their accounts tended to involve observations of cultural differences, as well as reflections on how they adjusted to them and the subsequent impact.

Hiba recalls the novelty of the UK during her first two months here, citing the culture, people and language as things she experienced as “difficult” and “different”. She concludes by stating that this unfamiliarity resulted in her avoiding going out because she “didn’t want to speak with people” in this language that felt so unusual to her.

Hiba: Well first when I came here it was so difficult because I didn't know any English, it was new culture and new people and everything was different with what I knew and so first about two months, it was so difficult and I didn't go out because I didn't want to speak with people because it was different language (15-18).

In saying “everything was different” Hiba uses hyperbole to emphasise her sense that the UK and Iran share no observable commonalities. This gives the reader a sense of how overwhelming this experience of resettlement in a

new country was for her. The ability to communicate with other people through a common language is fundamental in accessing social networks. However, when Hiba first arrived in the UK, she experienced a language barrier that left her isolated and reluctant to meet new people. In the early stages of learning a new language, the learner may feel embarrassed about potentially making mistakes or not being understood by others, which may relate to Hiba's experience of not wanting to speak to people. In my interpretation of Hiba's account, I noted a distinction between Hiba describing herself as not wanting to speak with others in those first two months compared to our interview together in which she was eager to speak to me directly in English, rather than use an interpreter. This indicates how much progress she has made in adjusting to the language that was once so "different" for her.

Priscilla observed differences between education in the UK and the Ivory Coast, explaining that she found British students to be more attentive and teachers to be more caring. She stated the significance of these differences as giving her "courage" and encouragement to learn.

Priscilla (interpreter): I think I found the people, the students here very patient, they pay attention. Teachers as well they tend to care about the children so that gives the courage even though you don't want to, the teacher will always there, encourage you to learn (134-136)

In interpreting Priscilla's narrative, it may be helpful to consider that the UK is underpinned by state and local authority policies that safeguard British children's right to education. In the Ivory Coast, formal education was not made mandatory for all children until 2016. Priscilla's description suggests that she is not accustomed to classrooms with attentive students and caring teachers. It may be relevant that gender inequality in the Ivory Coast stratifies access to education, such that girls experience lower rates of school enrolment than their male peers (Oyeniran, 2017). This perhaps affected Priscilla's experience of schooling, this may explain her comment "even though you don't want to" which suggests that she does not always seek encouragement to learn. The significance of knowing that a caring adult,

such as a teacher, “will always [be] there” cannot be overstated, particularly for young people from refugee populations who frequently experience disrupted relationships throughout migration. Priscilla hints that she has greater educational opportunities in the UK, which will be considered within the next subordinate theme.

Dunya described the British working pattern as the most significant cultural difference she observed. She explained that Sudanese men usually spend long hours out at work during the day, whereas in the UK her father is often at home and she spends more time with him. She emphasises the latter point through repetition saying twice “we can see him more now”.

Dunya (interpreter): In my home country, I mean usually the men are out of home, you know, from morning up to sometimes night time just to work you know so. But here most of the time, he is home so we can see him like more now. Yeah so we can see him more now. (140-142)

In her account, Dunya highlights how the normative working pattern for British employment contrasts with the Sudanese system. Thus, differences in employment laws are another novelty that young people must adjust to when they move to the UK through the process of family reunion, particularly as there can be restrictions on employment related to one’s immigration status. From Dunya’s description, the reader might assume that her father working fewer hours is a welcome adjustment for her and her family. Alternatively, in the initial period of their reunion, spending so much time together could be overwhelming, particularly if they were not accustomed to seeing so much of each other in Sudan. Of note, Dunya states the traditional working pattern of Sudanese men but she does not mention Sudanese women. In comparison to Sudan, British culture and laws offer women increased gender equality and, although she does not discuss this, this may be another difference that Dunya is adjusting to.

Ismail describes adjusting to cultural differences when first meeting British people. He explained that in Sudan it is customary to greet “everybody, even if you didn’t know him” and that this process leads to feeling “comfortable”. By contrast, he finds that British people do not greet one another in this way,

and he experiences this as “different and strange”. Unlike Priscilla who describes experiencing British people as caring, Ismail has concluded that they are “not very welcom[ing]”.

Ismail (interpreter): Erm he talk about people, the difference between people here and Sudan, he think people here are a little bit different and strange because they are not very welcome. They are not greeting you when they met you the street when you meet some people. But in Sudan, everybody if you didn't know him, you can mention “salaam alaikum, alaikum salaam” and you just greet him and then you can feel like comfortable like in Sudan (246-50)

In contextualising “salaam alaikum” as an Arabic salutation meaning ‘peace be upon you’, which is typically used within Islamic communities, Ismail’s account can be read as him adjusting to the shift from an Islamic country to a more secular one. In my interpretation I wondered how broader influences of religion and ethnicity might affect Ismail’s sense of British people as “unwelcoming”. I was curious about Ismail’s experiences as a young, Muslim, Sudanese man from a refugee family resettling in a new country where his religious and ethnic identities position him as a marginalised individual. Whilst saying “salaam alaikum” in Sudan nurtures comfort and community, saying this within the UK may be vastly different for Ismail given the contexts of Islamophobia, structural racism and anti-immigration rhetoric (Macgregor-Bowles & Bowles, (2017). These discourses may influence both how Ismail is perceived and how he perceives others.

The need to adapt and adjust in response to differences was frequently spoken about by participants and the following quotation from Emmanuella highlights her awareness of this.

Emmanuella (interpreter): At the start it was difficult but we just had to adapt

Cassie: What has adaption meant for you?

Emmanuella (interpreter): When you change your country I think you have to adapt wherever you are...I think it's a bit like that. (52-55)

Resilient is a term often used to describe young refugee and asylum-seeking people, reflecting their ability to withstand numerous adversities associated with migration. In Emmanuella's account, I was struck by her resilience as she explains matter-of-factly that adapting to a new life in the UK is something that she "had to" do despite the difficulties she initially encountered. She does not explicitly state how she has adapted, which perhaps indicates that the process occurred unconsciously. In addition, I wonder whether Emmanuella considers adjusting to a new country somewhat insignificant, in comparison to the challenges she experienced whilst living in the Ivory Coast.

3.3.2 Welcoming Opportunities

Within this subordinate theme, participants described the opportunities to which they have gained access since arriving in the UK through family reunion. Participants expressed their sense of the UK as offering resources, which tended to facilitate their resettlement here. Most participants described perceiving the British education system as superior to that of their home country and expressed determination to welcome new educational opportunities. They also usually framed the significance of these opportunities in the context of their career ambitions and hopes for the future.

Kaleb shared that prior to arriving in the UK he had watched British films which influenced his expectations of the resources here.

Kaleb (interpreter): I'm watching movies and I was thinking like a movie, there's free food, there's river milk and honey everywhere flowing (laughs) just like that. (111-112)

His expectation of "milk and honey" draws on biblical metaphor and relates to promises of prosperity. A theological reading of this extract might interpret Kaleb as likening his own suffering to that of the Israelites and comparing the UK to the Promised Land. Kaleb laughs as he shares this metaphor, which perhaps indicates the lightheartedness of his comment; he is not literally expecting free resources to flow through the streets. However, as a young adult who had never flown outside his home country of Ethiopia and whose main sources of information about the UK were conversations with his

mother and cinematic portrayals, it makes sense that Kaleb might have grand expectations. In addition, his expectations may have been influenced by discourses around 'developed' and 'developing' countries, which can perpetuate notions of 'Third World poverty' polarised against wealth and opportunity in the 'developed' Western world.

The prospect of better opportunities in the UK was shared by Sadiq who explained that he and his siblings initially wanted to remain in Turkey because they had become accustomed to living there after fleeing Syria. However, after some time, they came to consider that resettling in the UK would be "better for the education and the future".

Sadiq (interpreter): All my siblings say that Turkey is better because they get used to it but my, later on we realise that the UK is better for the education and the future. (95-96)

In interpreting this account, I was aware that given discourses regarding refugee and asylum-seeking people as 'scroungers', readers might judge Kaleb and Sadiq's motivations for moving to the UK. Whilst people frequently make economically motivated decisions to migrate both to and from the UK, when refugee and asylum-seeking people do so they often face vilification. Yet, this ignores the global rights of young people to access education. The reader is thus reminded through Sadiq's account that he and his siblings are children and young people, and that their focus on pursuing education and opportunity should be understood within this context.

Earlier in the interview, Sadiq spoke about how his education in Syria was disrupted by the war and how he was also unable to access schooling during transit in Turkey.

Sadiq (interpreter): In Istanbul it's very difficult, it's nice place but we cannot continue education erm because we missed a lot of education in Syria, seven years of missing the education (26-28)

This extract contextualises Sadiq's motivation to access educational opportunities in the UK, having missed many years of school due to the upheaval of migration. The reader is encouraged to consider how, in the

context of the Syrian war and other global conflicts, young people like Sadiq miss out on various opportunities. Sadiq also implies that living in a “nice place” is less of a priority for him than continuing his education.

Bushra describes herself taking an active role in welcoming opportunities. Due to the time of year that she arrived in the UK, she was too late to join her local college and had to wait until the next enrollment period. During that period of waiting, she collected the college materials and, by the time she came to start the course, she had read them and “knew it for herself”.

Bushra (interpreter): She said like we came there to the college, she was late and she got the materials and she read it for herself and that when she got to the other building, she knew it for herself (165-167)

Bushra’s account invites the reader to consider her resourcefulness; in a situation where she could have passively waited for her college course to start, she instead took independent steps to engage with the course materials that were available to her.

As a further indicator of her motivation to embrace opportunities, Bushra explained that she is completing an ESOL course with the hope that she can “strengthen her language” and access other courses in future.

Bushra (interpreter): She has been studying language because she would like to strengthen her language then she can get involved in courses and subjects (132-133)

Thus, like Hiba previously mentioned in relation to social opportunities, Bushra highlights the significance of young people who have resettled in the UK learning English as this enables access to educational opportunities.

Like most other participants, Fatimah is attending college and she explains that she has visited the BRC for support to find a school she can attend.

Fatimah (interpreter): At the moment I’m in the college, a few times I was here [at her local Red Cross office] just to please help me to find the school but I didn’t (104-105)

As a 17-year-old living in Scotland, where the school leaving age is 16, Fatimah has been enrolled in college as there is no legal obligation for her to be in full-time education. Fatimah expresses a hope that she will find a school and the reader has a sense of Fatimah pleading (“please”) on multiple visits (“a few times”) with her BRC caseworker for support. For students like Fatimah, for whom English is not their first language, their main college course is usually an ESOL programme. Her preference for enrolling in school instead is likely related to the increased opportunities that this would offer for a varied curriculum and qualifications. In addition, school may also offer increased pastoral support, which, as aforementioned by Priscilla, was fundamental in encouraging her to continue her studies.

Fatimah goes on to state that she loves education and learning.

Fatimah (interpreter): I love the education and I love to learn here, just, you know, the school issue. (130)

Here Fatimah seems to present “the school issue”, that is the fact that she has been enrolled in college rather than school, as a barrier to her learning opportunities. In saying “just”, Fatimah appears to imply that it is the only barrier and if she could overcome it, things would be different for her.

Hiba is 16-years-old and therefore the only participant attending school. She spoke throughout the interview about her ambition of becoming a neurologist. She is determined not to think about losing this dream, instead focusing on trying to achieve it. She distinguishes her motivations from “everyone” else, saying she is not motivated because she “want[s] to get more money” but because she likes this job.

Hiba: I want to be a neurologist because it's my aim, it's my dream. I don't want to think about one day I will lose it erm just I have to try to get it. And everyone say, everyone want, not everyone, it has get more money but I want to do it not because I want to get more money just because I like it. (284-287)

There is a sense of Hiba justifying her career ambitions and I wonder if this relates to the aforementioned point about economic motivations being

discouraged. Perhaps unconsciously, Hiba is framing herself as the 'good' immigrant, one who is hard-working and not financially motivated. The specificity of Hiba's career "dream", in that she already knows what branch of medicine she plans to specialise in, implies focus and determination. Whilst stating that she is not motivated by money, Hiba's career choice may be influenced by discourses of medicine as a prestigious caring profession, which necessitates hard work due to the rigorous training. In describing this goal as "my dream", Hiba perhaps recognises the unfortunate possibility that her ambition might not be fulfilled, although this prospect is not something she can bear thinking about.

Further ambition was detailed by Mustafa who outlines his career plan. He stated that upon graduating, he plans to launch a company with multiple branches including one in Sudan. Like Hiba, he emphasises his focus on this particular "priority" and there is a sense of certainty and self-belief implicit in Mustafa asserting "I'm going to".

Mustafa (interpreter): So my priority is entering university and completing university and after university [...] I'm going to build like a company and have branches in different places, in my country, Sudan and expand its activity. (193-195)

The aim of setting up "branches in different places" might suggest values around multinationalism, particularly given his hope to establish a branch in his home country. This ambition made me consider the concept of remittances amongst refugee people; I wonder if Mustafa perhaps has an underlying hope that his business will benefit not just him personally, but that it could also "expand" the Sudanese economy. Establishing a business which benefits Sudanese people could provide a sustainable means of supporting his family who remain there.

Abdul shared his hopes to complete his ESOL course and gain the certificate, after which he intends to apply for a driving license, live independently and "carry on with life".

Abdul (interpreter): I'm looking forward to getting this [ESOL] certificate and erm, you know maybe I will apply for the erm travel

license so that I can have car, and then want to have my own house, get married and carry on with life. (173-175).

At 21-years-old, Abdul is the eldest participant and this may provide useful context for his goals. His desire to learn to drive, find a home of his own and meet a partner are all standard expectations for his stage in the life cycle. The reader might wonder the extent to which his hopes have been influenced by societal expectations, both in Syria and the UK, to live a culturally normative life. In the UK, learning to drive and moving out of the parental home, often to attend university, are standard milestones undertaken in adolescence. The reader may also consider that Abdul is likely to have fled adverse situations in Syria, therefore it makes sense that he would now seek 'normality' and welcome opportunities to "carry on with life".

3.4 Supportive Relationships

This superordinate theme summarises participants' accounts of the fundamental role of supportive relationships in their resettlement. *Living Together Again* outlines participants' descriptions of reuniting with their parent in the UK. Most participants reported that their relationship with their parent was similar to how it had been in their country of nationality, prior to separation. However, some differences were reported. In the *Receiving Help* subordinate theme, participants shared experiences of support from the BRC and the Job Centre. There are positive accounts of receiving financial support and help enrolling in school, but participants also outline experiences which left them feeling unsupported.

3.4.1 Living Together Again

Within this subordinate theme, participants described their current relationship with the parent who they had been separated from and reunited with in the UK. Most participants reflected that their relationship was unaffected by the period of separation, and that they have a positive relationship with their parent. However, some participants described a period of readjustment to one another, given the length of time they were separated.

Abdul states that he was “used to” living with his father in Syria but then pauses after this remark. He then continues by saying that now they live together again in the UK and that he is happy to be reunited and for their relationship to continue.

Abdul (interpreter): I'm used to live with my father you know erm... But when we came here in the UK, we live together and I'm happy for us to go forward (151-152)

There are many interpretations that the reader could make about what Abdul leaves unsaid by pausing and tailing off, rather than finishing his sentence. One possibility is that he is addressing me directly (“you know”) as the researcher, implying that I know the reason his father left, and therefore he does not need to state this. In the interviews, participants were not asked about why they had become separated from their parents, in recognition that this could elicit distress. The earlier literature review outlines reasons for separation related to conflict and persecution, which in the context of the Syrian war, are likely to have contributed to Abdul’s father fleeing to the UK. Explicitly stating the reasons for their separation may be too painful for Abdul and therefore tailing off and providing a sanitised account perhaps serves a protective function for him. What Abdul does provide the reader with is a sense that reunion and living with his father again have been positive experiences. Perhaps in saying he is “happy for us to go forward”, Abdul communicates a desire to focus on their future together, rather than the past, or a hope that this living arrangement will continue without threat of further separation.

When asked about his experience of living together with his father in the UK, Omar responded briefly, saying that this has been “good”.

Omar: It's good, it's still fine yeah (386)

In saying that it is “still fine”, it is implied that Omar is comparing his experience of living with his father in the UK, to their previous experience of living together in Syria. Thus, Omar suggests that living together before was “fine” and that this is no different in the UK. Omar’s account assumes that

reunion with his father has been smooth, with no issues for either Omar or his father to overcome.

Earlier in the interview, Omar described maintaining regular contact with his father during the separation. He states that they spoke to one another every day, emphasising this point by stating it three times.

Cassie: And how much communication, how much contact did you have with your father?

Omar: Oh, every day, every day, every day about three hours (268-269)

I wonder whether this contextualises the ease with which Omar adjusted to reunion with his father. It is likely that these long, daily phone calls eased the separation for both Omar and his father, meaning that when they did eventually reunite it was easier for them to reestablish their relationship.

When asked about her relationship with her father, now that they are reunited in the UK, Priscilla hesitates slightly before responding that they get “along quite well” and that her and her siblings “respect him” because he is their father.

Priscilla (interpreter): Yes we got along, erm got along quite well, remember end of the day he is our father. We respect him, we all respect him (142-143)

On first reading, it appears that Priscilla has a positive relationship with her father, however her hesitation and restarting her sentence suggests that she is perhaps trying to find the right words to describe their relationship. Also, in saying “quite well”, there is a sense that she is qualifying the statement and that they may not actually get on very well. It is perhaps significant that she remarks “remember [at the] end of the day he is our father”. In interpreting this, I was drawn to thinking about religious and cultural discourses around honouring one’s parents. These contexts may be influencing Priscilla as a young, Muslim woman. Is Priscilla perhaps reminding herself, and the reader, of the need to honour her father? Perhaps she believes describing her father, and their relationship, in anything other than positive terms, would be

disrespectful. I am drawn to ponder whether there is an element of social desirability in Priscilla's response, with her presenting herself and their relationship in a manner that she feels is socially acceptable. I wonder if she feels motivated to do this so as not to threaten the reunion; given that the fundamental purpose of the family reunion visa is to promote family cohesion, she may feel unable to acknowledge that their bond does not feel cohesive. This might explain participants' tendency to give rose-tinted accounts of reunion that focus on the similarities between life in the UK and their home country, and positive aspects of their relationship.

Kaleb recalls finding it "really hard" when he first reunited with his mother. He was initially shy and struggled to talk to her until she "give him some love", which helped him eventually open up to her.

Kaleb (interpreter): When I came here it was really hard, I didn't talk too much. He was shy. Mum approached him and just give him some love and stuff like that. And through time, he start to talk and stuff, now he's okay. (136-138)

Kaleb's shyness on reunion with his mother suggests unfamiliarity with her, which makes sense given that they had been separated for eight years so are likely to have both changed substantially in this time. Kaleb's narrative addresses the impact of time. All participants were reunited with their parent at least six months before the interview; it is likely that how they experience their relationship at the time of interview will differ from their experience when they first arrived in the UK. I would assume that Kaleb was not the only participant to experience a process of readjustment during the initial reunion, which they and their parent had to negotiate. However, as the only participant to be separated from his mother, perhaps Kaleb's experience of reunion was distinct from the other 11 participants who reunited with their fathers, given that he implies his mother's "love" facilitated their reunion.

3.4.2 Receiving Help

In this subordinate theme, participants spoke about the support that they received from organisations such as the BRC. Participants reflected on how invaluable this support was in facilitating their resettlement. However, some

participants shared their sense that more support could have been provided to them, both in the UK and prior to their arrival here.

Hiba spoke about the BRC helping her to find a school that she could attend near her home in the UK. She also explained that she attended a 7-week group for 16 to 25-year-olds, which the BRC arranged.

Hiba: Well erm, for going to Red Cross, for my first school, Red Cross helped me and they found erm, a school for me near our house [...] The Red Cross made a class for young people ages 16 to 25, over 7 weeks in holiday, summer (258-260)

In this extract, Hiba indicates that the BRC were instrumental in finding her school; the reader might infer that she would not have found a school close to her home without their support or perhaps that the process would have been more complicated. This narrative highlights the fundamental role that the BRC has in supporting refugee people and their families to navigate unfamiliar systems on their arrival to the UK. She also mentions the summer classes and I wonder if these were significant because they offered Hiba an opportunity to meet other young people, who like her, were being supported by the BRC. The opportunity for this social support particularly during the long, summer holidays would likely be welcomed.

Like Hiba, Bushra cites support from the BRC as helpful, and also mentions the Job Centre.

Bushra (interpreter): She said the only thing that she knew about from her husband is just the Red Cross and the Job Centre. (171-172)

Bushra (interpreter): She said they are helping the family to live sustainable in here Glasgow. So yeah they are so helpful. (177-178)

In talking about receiving help to live “sustainable”, Bushra may be referring to the financial support that she received from the Job Centre. Sustainability is typically used to describe individuals and societies reducing their impact on their environment. Its usage within this extract can perhaps be understood as meaning that financial support from the BRC and Job Centre allowed the family to maintain their quality of life, reducing their reliance on others.

Without these organisations, life in the UK would likely be unsustainable for Bushra and her family, given the high cost of living and the restrictions on employment of asylum-seeking and refugee people, which often contribute to destitution.

Omar also mentioned receiving support from these two organisations, however he described a different experience from Bushra. Omar's first mention of the Red Cross is in relation to his transit in Turkey. His experience at that time was that "nobody help[ed]" him and he attributes this to the vast number of people in Turkey who require support, making it impossible for the Red Cross to help everyone.

Omar: No, no, nobody help me. In Turkey, you got too many people, if you wanna help this man or this one, you got about two or three million in Turkey, Syrian people. Yeah, the Red Cross cannot help everyone (275-277)

Omar's account highlights that as a global organisation, people's experience of the Red Cross and Red Crescent³ societies will vary. He juxtaposes his plight as one young man seeking help versus the "two or three million" other Syrian people in Turkey who also need support from the Turkish Red Crescent (TRC). Thus, he perhaps recognises the context of Turkey as the country that receives the greatest number of refugee and asylum-seeking people each year. Rather than expressing anger at the lack of help he received, Omar presents an impartial perspective, reflecting that due to the number of refugee people, the TRC "cannot help everyone".

Omar contrasts his initial experience of the TRC with that of the BRC. He states that when he first arrived in the UK, the Job Centre did not help him for two months whereas the BRC provided financial support, which he is grateful for.

Omar: The Job Centre first they help me. No first when I came, the Job Centre he no help me about two month. When I came, I came to

³ 'Red Crescent' is used in place of 'Red Cross' within predominately Muslim countries, such as Turkey

the Red Cross, he give me every week £10 and I will say “thank you so much”.

In this extract, Omar’s sense of gratitude to the BRC is apparent in his concluding remarks “thank you so much”. To the reader, the extent of his gratitude for the sum of £10 a week, which might not be considered a large amount, sheds perspective on Omar’s financial situation when he first arrived in the UK. One might infer that he did not have much money, if receiving this amount was so significant to him. This compliments Bushra’s account of how crucial it is for organisations to provide young people, who have just arrived in the UK through family reunion, with financial support.

Abdul also compares his experience of receiving support from organisations in the UK with previous experiences in Lebanon. He explains that in Lebanon he had “one or a few...appointments with organisations”, whereas here in the UK he describes being “inundated with appointments”.

Abdul (interpreter): Well here is completely different. When I was in Lebanon, I only had one or a few... appointments with organisations that is helping us. But here you get lots of appointments, we’re inundated with appointments, you know, every day you get one (159-161).

In saying that he is “inundated”, I wonder whether Abdul feels overwhelmed by the number of appointments he is expected to attend here. He states that “every day you get one” using hyperbole to exaggerate how frequently appointments are offered; this gives the reader a sense that too much support can be experienced as a nuisance. Perhaps in comparing Lebanon and the UK, what Abdul leaves unstated is that he could have benefited from daily appointments when he was in Lebanon, living without his father, whereas now that they have been reunited such frequent support feels excessive.

4 DISCUSSION

This chapter situates the study's findings in the context of the research question, existing literature and theory. A critical evaluation of the study is then presented, concluding with reflections and implications.

4.1 Contextualising the Themes

A literature search identified that the perspectives of young people who have experienced refugee family reunion are notably absent from existing research. Therefore, this study explored the following research question - how do young people experience refugee family reunion once they have been reunited with separated relatives? My analysis of interviews with 12 participants led to the development of three superordinate themes related to this question: *Challenges Experienced: "Not easy at all"*, *Novelty of the UK: "You have to adapt"* and *Supportive Relationships*. I will contextualise each theme within existing literature.

4.1.1 Challenges Experienced: "Not easy at all"

Participants described experiencing both happiness regarding reunion with their parent and concern about family members who remained in their country of nationality; the latter resulting in poor concentration and stress, which supports previous research regarding the effects of refugee family separation (Marsden, 2018; McDonald-Wilmsen & Gifford, 2009; Miller et al., 2018; Rousseau et al., 2001). The significance of separation is discussed by Tribe (1999) as one of the many losses experienced by refugee people. Participants were particularly affected by separation from older siblings and grandparents who were not eligible for UK family reunion visas (Marsden & Harris, 2015). Leaving these relatives was sometimes so painful that young people wanted to return home, rather than resettle in the UK, indicating their strong attachment to these relatives (Weisner, 1984). Participants also left behind friends and romantic partners, which is significant given the importance of peer relationships at their developmental stage (Arnett, 2000; Erikson, 1968). The positive psychosocial effects of family reunion are well-

established (Olson, 2000), and reflected through participants' reports of happiness and joy at seeing their parent and living together with them in the UK. Crucially, the *Bittersweet Feelings* subordinate theme emphasises that concern and happiness are not discrete but occurred simultaneously for participants upon arrival in the UK. Analysis of this theme suggested that reunion is not always experienced as positive or straightforward, which may be difficult for participants to acknowledge to themselves, let alone admit to a researcher.

This study explored the adult responsibilities that participants assumed when applying for family reunion. The concept of adultification (Burton, 2007) has been related to young refugee and asylum-seeking people (Lovato-Hermann, 2015; Puig, 2002). Adultification particularly affected participants who were the eldest of their siblings, and those without familial support during separation. Administrative responsibilities for the family reunion application (Beswick, 2015) were often combined with caring responsibilities for younger siblings. As identified by Burton (2007), gender seemed to influence responsibility with young women assuming a myriad of responsibilities, whilst male participants tended to occupy breadwinner roles. As previously reported, participants were expected to contribute financially and young women assumed responsibility previously held by male relatives (Savic et al., 2013).

Other participants described themselves as not having responsibility in the family reunion process and knowing very little about this. Whilst having limited information may have protected these participants from 'adult' responsibilities, it is also possible that it limited their agency. Young people's agency regarding migration has been considered by Moskal and Tyrell (2016), who reported that lack of agency and uncertainty hinder young people's resettlement. The UK family reunion process is characterised by uncertainty and perhaps parents withhold information to avoid raising their children's hopes, until reunion is confirmed. Children's agency regarding migration is also influenced by structural factors including cross-cultural conceptualisations of childhood, division of labour and childrearing practices (Orellana, Thorne, Chee & Lam, 2001). As young people, participants in this

study depend on adult protection whilst developing autonomy as independent agents themselves; understanding this unique developmental stage is useful in exploring participants' distinct experiences of negotiating adult responsibilities versus being protected from decision-making. It also supports the rejection of binary age distinctions, such as the 18-year-old age cut-off for family reunion visas, through highlighting that numerous factors influence the level of responsibility an individual can manage, beyond age alone.

4.1.2 Novelty of the UK: "You have to adapt

Leaving one's home and adapting to a new country is one of the many disruptions experienced by refugee youth, with extensive literature published about acculturation processes (Berry, 1997). This study identified various cultural differences which participants had to adjust to in the UK (Chambon, 1989; Tobin & Friedman, 1984). In keeping with previous studies, participants reported that their family structure adapted to cultural differences (McMichael et al., 2010); participants described more family time because of UK working patterns, which differed from their home culture where male relatives were usually out working all day. A further shift was noted from predominately Islamic cultures to more secular British society, raising questions regarding how young people negotiate their Muslim faith in Britain post-reunion. The challenge of not having a support system which shares your language and religion has previously been identified by Laban et al. (2005). This possibly contributed to some participants' experience of British people as unwelcoming, which may also be shaped by anti-immigration and Islamophobic sentiments (Heald et al., 2018).

All participants migrated from non-EU countries, which might increase their sense of the UK as distinct from their country of nationality. As identified by Hughes and Rees (2016), resettling in the UK affects the cultural identities of refugee youth, particularly if they find themselves assuming minoritised identities for the first time. As found by Berry, Phinney, Sam and Vedder (2006), participants maintained links to their culture of origin, through continued communication with family, and adjusted to their host culture, through learning English. Participants are influenced by both cultures (Weine et al., 2001), and negotiating these two frames of reference influences how

refugee youth 'remake' their identities (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001).

Participants' ability to adapt to the UK compliments extensive research about young refugee and asylum-seeking people's resilience (Pieloch et al., 2016; Weine et al., 1995). Resilience is related to numerous factors (Masten, Best & Garmezy, 1991), which can hinder or facilitate one's capacity to adapt to the adverse circumstances of migration. Like the young people in Pieloch et al.'s study (2016), participants cited connection to extended family, maintaining a positive outlook, supportive relationships and inclusion as facilitating adaptation. Related to resilience is adversity-activated development (Papadopoulos, 2007), which refers to refugee people being strengthened by the challenges they endure. That positive developments arise from adverse experiences has also been explored by Rousseau and Drapeau (2003, p. 78) who advocate for refugee people as "active survivors" rather than "passive victims". The prevalence with which participants spoke about welcoming opportunities supports adversity-activated development and demonstrates determination to flourish.

Betancourt and Khan highlight that resilience is socioecological and involves interactions between individual, family, community and culture (2008). Education is a significant form of community for most young people and often underpins the acculturation of young refugees, providing them with "a key to a better future" (Sleijpen, Mooren, Kleber & Boeije, 2017, p. 355). Most participants compared education in Britain to their country of nationality. Migration often disrupted their education (De Haene, Grietens, & Verschueren, 2007; Marsden & Harris, 2015; Rutter and Stanton, 2001), thus, on arrival in the UK, participants were eager to start school. However, due to their age, most participants were enrolled in college instead. Previous research suggests that school attendance improves the problem-solving abilities, self-esteem and career opportunities of refugee children (Kanji & Cameron, 2010). School attendance is also purported to facilitate acculturation (Summerfield, 2000). It is not known whether enrollment in college also affords these benefits. All participants expressed plans related to education and career development, which supports research about the

continued aspirations of refugee youth, despite past adversities (Deveci, 2012).

In addition to welcoming educational opportunities, participants also described opportunities regarding greater resources in the UK and their hopes for the futures. This highlights that, once the immediate tasks of resettlement have been negotiated, young refugee people are keen to focus on their future (Kohli, 2006). Participants' hopes of pursuing marriage and living independently perhaps indicate a wish to integrate with British cultural norms (Berry, 1999) and engage with normative tasks of their age group (Arnett, 2000; Erikson, 1968).

4.1.3 Supportive Relationships

Previous research indicates that family reunion is complicated by differing rates of acculturation and changing familial roles (Hirani et al., 2016; Marsden, 2018; McCleary, 2017, Rousseau et al., 2001). Such studies suggest that whilst reunion has numerous benefits, adjusting to one's relatives after prolonged separation also incurs challenges. However, most participants in this study reported that their relationship with their parent was unaffected by the separation and subsequent reunion. I wonder if this disparity relates to these participants' distinct migratory trajectory of refugee family reunion. Previous research tends to explore the experience of children whose parents migrated primarily for economic reasons; they often feel abandoned following separation and struggle with reunion (Smith et al., 2004, Suárez-Orozco et al., 2010; UNICEF, 2007). By contrast, refugee families usually conceptualise separation as forced displacement and this perspective may reduce feelings of abandonment, thus changing how they respond to reunion. Similarly to *Bittersweet Findings*, this theme might have been difficult for participants to discuss for many reasons. Participants' struggle to talk openly about the challenges of reunion perhaps relates to the finding that the emotional pain of separation can be so distressing that families avoid discussing it (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2010).

Participants in this study were older than those in most previous research; another hypothesis is that older children are better equipped to understand

their parents' reasons for leaving, therefore they are less likely to feel abandoned (Connell, Mulvey, Brady & Christie, 2010). Participants also reported having regular communication with their parent, via telephone calls and messaging apps, whilst separated. This supports the finding that distance does not always impair kinship bonds between young people and their transnational relatives (Georgas et al., 2001; Moskal & Tyrell, 2016; Wiltshire, 1992). Regular communication can give separated refugee people a "sense of being together" (Robertson, Wilding & Gifford, 2016, p. 223) which may have facilitated the ease of reunion for participants in this study.

For teenagers in Western cultures, adolescence is often signified by reduced dependence on one's parents (Phinney, Ong & Madden, 2000). Participants in this study described positive relationships with their recently reunited parent and highlighted the importance of respecting them. This supports research that children from immigrant families place greater value on family obligations than non-immigrant children (Phinney et al., 2000). The family reunion visa stipulates that the young person and their parents must live together in the UK. Therefore, at a time when their British peers may be preparing to live independently, these participants face restrictions on who they live with. This may influence participants' accounts of the relationship; even if they are experiencing tensions in the relationship with their parent, they may avoid communicating this to protect their bond and right to remain in the UK. In addition, it is likely to be difficult for participants to admit in a research context that reunion with their parent is challenging, particularly when they have aspired to this for so long.

Family reunion is known to be challenging with studies indicating the need for organisations to support both applicants and sponsors (Beswick, 2015; Marsden, 2018; White & Hendry, 2011). Participants described that arrival in the UK conferred access to support from organisations, such as the BRC and the Job Centre. During resettlement, support from BRC caseworkers was instrumental in navigating unfamiliar British systems, particularly when participants experienced delays in education enrolment (Marsden & Harris, 2015). Financial support was also necessary given the destitution that many families experience on arrival (Gladwell & Elwyn, 2012) and delays in

benefits from the Job Centre. Having come from countries of nationality where provisions for support do not always match the scale of need (UNHCR, 2019), being positioned as 'service-users' and engaging with organisations may be an adjustment for participants. Findings within *Supportive Relationships* suggest a need to provide sufficient support without overwhelming young people with appointments

4.2 Critical Evaluation

Typically, the quality of quantitative research is assessed through its reliability and validity. However, these concepts are less relevant for qualitative methodologies (Smith et al., 2009). Yardley's framework (2000) - sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence, and impact and importance – is more useful for evaluating qualitative research. I will use these criteria in evaluating the current study.

4.2.1 Sensitivity to Context

Sensitivity to context involves the researcher attending to social and cultural frameworks, which affect both participants and researcher. The study's Ethical Considerations section highlights some considerations regarding research with young people from refugee backgrounds. Participants may have previously experienced distressing interactions within interviews, for example with immigration officials, which I did not want to replicate. Awareness of these contexts was fundamental to the study design, as I aimed to make participants feel comfortable and empowered. Sensitivity to context also spanned the analysis as my interpretations sought to consider young people's accounts within their specific social and cultural contexts, including gender, ethnicity, religion and age.

4.2.2 Commitment and Rigour

I demonstrated commitment and rigour through my dedication to employing IPA skills. It was important to dedicate time to conducting this study with care and rigour. In addition to following guidance on conducting IPA research, I used regular supervision to ensure that I followed the principles of phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography. During the analysis,

supervision encouraged the development of interpretative, rather than purely descriptive, claims.

4.2.3 Transparency and Coherence

Transparency and coherence involve clearly detailing the stages of IPA research undertaken, as I have done in the Method chapter. I included further detail in the appendices so that the reader can observe my working processes. According to Yardley (2000), coherence in an IPA write up involves ensuring consistency between the study and its theoretical and epistemological underpinnings. I demonstrate my understanding of phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography in the Method, outlining how these principles informed my analysis as I developed interpretative claims from participants' accounts. My interpretations were presented from a critical realist stance, which is interested in subjective realities and how they are influenced by social and material factors. Contextualising the study's findings within this Discussion chapter further demonstrates coherence regarding how this research fits with existing literature.

4.2.4 Impact and Importance

Research is evaluated on its impact and importance, such that it communicates something significant to society. This study is significant in addressing a research question that has previously been neglected, it was developed in consultation with two young people and enabled the experiences of refugee youth to be shared in their own words. As mentioned in the Method chapter, this collaboration with the BRC aims to promote real-life relevance. I have already shared initial impressions of this research with BRC staff, our discussions focused on how these findings will influence their practice, which I will further detail in the forthcoming Implications section. This research is also important to the participants who shared their experiences, and I plan to share summaries of the study with them.

4.2.5 Epistemological Limitations

Whilst the phenomenological approach has traditionally been associated with IPA, this study employs critical realist epistemology in keeping with Willig's (2003) position. Critical realism faces critique because of its ontological

claims (Magill, 1994), whereas a benefit of phenomenology is that it does not make claims about the nature of reality. The research question of this study involves exploration of participants' experiences of family reunion through IPA. A critical realist stance was considered appropriate as the research question refers to a particular phenomenon (family reunion) that exists in the social and material world independently of participants' account. However, the study is epistemologically relativist in recognising that it is not possible to access an objective account of family reunion because experience will always be mediated and situated. A consequence of not choosing an alternative epistemology, such as phenomenology or social constructionism, is that the research then attends less to discursive factors, which a relativist approach may have prioritised.

4.2.6 Methodological Limitations

In conducting research with young people from refugee populations, there were some challenges which I will now discuss.

4.2.6.1 *Working with interpreters*

The Method chapter introduces the role of interpreters within this study and, whilst working with interpreters enabled inclusion of young people who would otherwise be excluded from research due to not being native English speakers, there are also limitations related to this. With regards to methodological limitations of this research, I feel that I could have more fully considered the role of the interpreters as active agents in this research. Had time and budget been permitting, I would have specified the involvement of research-trained interpreters. Earlier collaboration with research-trained interpreters from the study's conception could have contributed valuable insights to the development of the interview schedule. I would also have allocated more time for this discussion in advance of the interview day, to better prepare myself and the interpreter for the interview. This would also enable further thought about the social, political context of the interpreter and how this may have contributed to their experience of the research. The ethical considerations of power cannot be ignored given that this research involved interpreters negotiating complex concepts, such as informed consent, as the consent form was in English, which some participants may

have been unable to read. Whilst the aim of the study was to explore participants' experiences of refugee family reunion, the transcripts produced were formed of interpreters' words rather than participants'. This could be considered a limitation but may present less of an issue for IPA research, than say DA given the latter's particular focus on language.

This study involved working with seven interpreters across 11 interviews. Whilst it would have been preferable to work with just one interpreter, this was not possible due to participants speaking four different languages and being situated across three UK cities. Interpreters varied in experience and proficiency with some interpreters using the third-person despite the pre-interview briefing, in which I outlined the importance of speaking in the first-person so that the participant's voice could be heard directly. When interpreters spoke in the third-person, I contemplated reminding them to use the participant's words verbatim. However, I did not want to interrupt or challenge their expertise, as I recognise that, within live interviews, interpreters must decide what information to present and how. Thus, interpretation is a hermeneutic act and inevitably influenced by the interpreter's assumptions regarding what information is pertinent. The interpreter is not neutral but they, like the researcher, are making sense of the participants' lived experience within particular social, cultural and political contexts.

It might be argued that hermeneutics is incompatible with critical realism, because of its assumption of ontological realism. However, as Willig (2016) argues ontological realism and epistemological relativism are compatible and this informs the current study. Furthermore, Price and Martin argue that hermeneutic methodologies "are the starting point of critical realist research" (2018, p.92). They link this to Bhaskar's position (2016) that language and interpretation provide inside access to social life. Within my analysis, I drew on hermeneutics in making interpretations based on the interpreter's interpretations of the participant's interpretations of their experience. Thus, understanding how the participant made sense of their experience was dynamic, rather than a linear process, navigating different layers of meaning and my own assumptions. Understanding the transcript as "people's

translated words that they did not use themselves constantly reminds readers that the text is the researcher's view of what the translator has produced rather than any attempt to show that she knows their 'actual' meaning" (Temple & Young, 2004, p. 171). In addition, I was influenced by Ricoeur's (1978) two hermeneutic positions - hermeneutics of empathy and suspicion; the former involved being able to empathise with the participants' position and their experience, whilst the latter necessitated stepping beyond their experience to consider further layers of meaning which might not be immediately apparent.

Omar stated in advance that he did not require an interpreter and confirmed this again at interview, thus his interview took place entirely in English. An interpreter was present during Amira's interview, however she responded in English to my questions and sought clarification from the interpreter just twice. Whilst both participants had proficient English, there were times when we could have benefited from an interpreter. I was aware of the potential impact of me appearing to dictate that their English is not 'good enough'. Therefore, I chose to continue these interviews as they wished, despite wondering whether an interpreter would have improved communication.

4.2.6.2 *Short answers*

One critique of IPA is that participants may not be accustomed to discussing their accounts in the 'rich' detail required for analysis. This limitation has particularly been noted with children and young people and when interviews are not conducted in the participants' first language. I noticed that participants sometimes gave brief responses and required prompting. This left me pondering whether the interpreters, and subsequently participants, had difficulty comprehending the questions. Alternatively, the brevity of participants' responses may indicate discomfort with particular questions. I noticed that participants seemed more forthcoming in discussing the family reunion application, but responses became briefer when asked about the experience of reuniting with their parents. This may be because participants did not want to share what they perceived as private family matters with a researcher they had just met.

As noted by Smith et al. (2009), researchers have an ethical responsibility to attend to verbal and non-verbal indications that the participant may be uncomfortable and respond accordingly. This involved me assessing whether the participant appeared confused about the question, in which case I would continue offering prompts, whereas if they appeared uncomfortable, I would not pursue that line of questioning.

4.2.6.3 *Relationship to the BRC*

Collaborating with the BRC helped ensure the real-life relevance of this study and facilitate recruitment of participants. My relationship to the BRC may however have been confusing for participants; whilst I was not employed by the BRC, interviews took place on their premises and were coordinated by BRC staff. This collaboration may have hindered participants from sharing honest experiences of BRC support, particularly given power differentials between them, as young refugee people, and me, as a researcher.

There is potential of bias in recruitment as the inclusion criterion around risk and complexity likely entailed BRC staff making decisions about young people's 'appropriateness' as potential participants; staff may have approached young people who they perceived as having a positive experience of family reunion or BRC support. In addition, young people who then agreed to participate may be more amenable or talkative, given their willingness to engage in research.

4.2.6.4 *Homogeneity*

IPA samples aim to be homogenous but as Smith et al. (2009) state, homogeneity is defined by the study. Based on early conversations with BRC caseworkers about the demographics of young people they support, I decided not to restrict recruitment to one country of nationality or to too narrow an age range. I consider the sample homogenous because all participants were aged 16 to 21-years-old, had moved to the UK within the last two years through refugee family reunion, and received support from the BRC. However, participants were from five countries of nationality and had resettled in three UK cities. Of note, the six participants from Glasgow could access a group for young people who had experienced family reunion,

supporting them with orientation and establishing new friendships. At the time of this research, Glasgow is currently the only BRC office offering this programme; this may result in differences between Glaswegian participants and those from Birmingham or Leeds. Despite the differences in country of nationality and city of resettlement, the 12 participants shared many similarities, which are reflected in the identification of common themes across the data set.

4.3 Reflexive Review

As noted in the Method chapter, I have engaged in reflexivity regarding how my assumptions influenced interactions with participants and engagement with analysis. Keeping a research journal allowed me to explore how this research is not a neutral product, but intrinsically shaped by the contexts I occupy both personally and professionally.

4.3.1 Recognising Participants as Experts

The relational nature of IPA and the “experiential power-play where research expert may meet experiential expert” must be recognised (Smith et al., 2009, p. 180). This is important for any qualitative researcher, but particularly pertinent in research with young people from refugee backgrounds, for reasons outlined in the Ethical Considerations section. Understanding participants as “experiential experts” required me to be flexible in the interview schedule, allowing participants to negotiate the pace and direction. I found that some participants initially gave limited details about the family reunion process, the phenomenon at the very focus of this study, and that their accounts focused more generally on migration. However, empowering participants to discuss their experience in their own way, rather than pushing my agenda, led to the development of rich and meaningful accounts.

As an outsider to the refugee community, there was perhaps a sense of me “parachuting into peoples’ lives” (Gerrard, 1995, p. 62) and I wonder how this research might have been different if conducted by someone who was from this community, or had resources been available to draw on participants’

expertise more fully. Therefore, in the implications for further research, I have considered forms of research which nurture participants' expertise through coproduction.

In recognition of participants' expertise, I plan to share summaries of the study's findings with them and will encourage their feedback. I am aware that the participant-researcher power differential may limit their confidence in expressing disagreement with the themes I developed, therefore this requires careful consideration.

4.3.2 Participants' Curiosity

One observation from my research journal was that participants used periods when the audio-recorder was switched off to express their curiosity about me. For example, prior to starting the interview, one participant asked about my experience of training as a psychologist. Another participant expressed curiosity about my heritage and my "mother tongue" (see Appendix R). I felt that these interactions were attempts to redress the power imbalance and 'interview' me, perhaps participants wanted to assess how much I understood of their experience. When asked these questions, I chose to share something of myself, given participants' openness in sharing their experiences. Openness is important to me personally and in my therapeutic work as a trainee clinical psychologist, therefore acting otherwise would have felt incongruent.

4.3.3 Making Interpretations

Whilst making interpretations of participants' accounts, I often wondered "is that what the participant meant by this statement, or am I imposing these ideas?" Underlying this question was a determination not to further silence a group of young people who, because of their age, immigration status, ethnicity, religion and gender, had experienced marginalisation all too often. I had to remind myself that interpretation underpins IPA and it is not 'imposed' if it is grounded in data. However, interpretations are invariably shaped by my lens, which is influenced by contexts that are distinct from participants' perspectives. My determination to honour the participants, consultants and BRC caseworkers who contributed to this study, increased the pressure

about making 'good enough' interpretations. Discussing these concerns with my supervisor and peers allowed to reduce the pressure I had placed on myself, whilst the reflexive journal offered space to step back.

4.3.4 Reflecting on Power

Power has been salient throughout this research even from the initial consultation with BRC staff to develop the research question. Both UEL and the BRC are established institutions and, as such, the individuals working within them have power through their identity as professionals. This may have influenced the decision-making of young people when they were contacted with information about the research, particularly as they were contacted by BRC staff which might have led to confusion about whether the interview was part of the RSRFL service or difficulty in declining participation. A power differential existed between myself and participants, who may have been disempowered because of being from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds, and additionally related to their age. Conducting this study enables me access to the professional qualification of doctorate of clinical psychology, whereas the benefits for participants were limited to the opportunity to share their experience and a £20 voucher. This could be considered a further inequality. Efforts were made to minimise this differential, ranging from my decision not to dress too formally during interviews, to clearly explaining that I was not employed by the BRC and thus could not support their care in this way. On reflection, I wonder whether my position as a Black woman in my twenties minimised my perceived power, given the number of participants who were themselves young Black people. This possibly facilitated rapport with participants in ways that might not have been possible if this research was conducted by an older, white researcher. Power differentials also arose within the researcher-interpreter-participant triad. Temple and Young state "if you cannot give voice to your needs you become dependent on those who can speak the relevant language to speak for you" (2004, p. 164). This speaks to the disempowerment that participants in this study may have experienced as people who do not speak English, and required an interpreter to communicate during the interview.

4.4 Implications

4.4.1 Implications for BRC

As a research collaboration, this study presents specific implications for the BRC, which can hopefully be usefully employed by managers and caseworkers within national RSRFL teams. Whilst BRC staff are well informed regarding the complexities around reunion and its psychosocial consequences, this study might bring further issues and new ideas to their attention.

The study highlights the value of BRC support for young refugee people arriving in the UK through family reunion; support was described as crucial particularly regarding school enrolment and financial provisions. The Glasgow group for young people who have arrived via family reunion was described as a helpful way of meeting new people in the summer holidays. A key implication of this feedback is that the group should be enrolled nationwide so that it can benefit more young people, and support them in adjusting to the cultural difference they experience on arrival.

Findings suggest that it may be difficult for young people to talk honestly about their experience of reunion with their separated parent. Having managed adult responsibilities in their country of nationality, with limited support, the experience of being a 'service-user' may be unfamiliar, and at times uncomfortable, for young people. Caseworkers may need to ask young people more than once before they feel comfortable sharing the challenges of reunion. Honest conversations might also be facilitated by ensuring that young people have space to talk independently of their siblings and parents. In addition, caseworkers may want to normalise relational challenges during family reunion, by highlighting to the young people they support how commonly this occurs.

This study's findings also emphasise the need for support prior to the young person's arrival, given the challenges of assuming adult responsibilities or having limited agency regarding reunion, which participants cited. In order to

prepare young people for arrival in the UK, BRC staff could develop an information booklet in collaboration with other young people who have previously undergone the family reunion process; this could outline common experiences of resettlement and reunion, contributing to a welcome pack for young people who have received family reunion visas. These packs could be produced in different languages.

Given the age and developmental stage of these young people, there is increased need for interagency collaboration between BRC staff, immigration officers, education providers, social workers, psychologists and other clinical professionals. Being mindful of the other agencies involved in the young person's network can lead to coordinated efforts and reduce the sense of being inundated with appointments.

4.4.2 Implications for Clinical Professionals

As increasing numbers of young people arrive in the UK through refugee family reunion, it is crucial that clinical professionals, such as psychologists and social workers, are aware of the impact of separation, the complexities of reunion and immigration procedures. Given my own professional background as a trainee clinical psychologist, I will focus this section on the contributions that clinical psychologists can make; however, many of these implications are applicable to other clinical professions.

As outlined by the BPS (2018) clinical psychologists must appreciate that separation and reunion affect individuals in various ways. This study reinforces existing ideas about the complexity of family reunion processes (Beswick, 2015). Whilst widely recognised that applicants and sponsors require practical support regarding reunion, less is publicised about the need for emotional support. Clinical psychologists have a valuable role in supporting young people who are adjusting to reunion. This is not to say that I advocate for 'psychologising' how these young people respond to the disruption they experience, as I recognise the issues of proliferating Western discourses of mental health and applying these to refugee and asylum-seeking people (Patel, 2011; Summerfield, 2001). However, appropriate

provisions should be available for young people who do want to access psychology.

As identified by the BPS, sensitively developing rapport is particularly important when working with this client group so that they feel empowered to share their experiences (2018). It is important to develop formulations which span the migratory trajectory rather than focusing on pre-migration stressors (Drachman, 1992). Research suggests that refugee youth's approach to resettlement is to prioritise "the present first, the future next and the past last" (Kohli, 2006, p. 5), which is important to consider when deciding the focus of an intervention. In formulating, clinicians should also consider that these young people are influenced by their development stage, whilst remaining aware that conceptualisations of adolescence vary cross-culturally.

Narrative therapy (White & Epston, 1990) aims to centre people as experts in their own lives through encouraging the individual to explore all aspects of their story and identities. This is pertinent for young refugee people who often experience stories *about* them, without their input. Even narratives developed with their input, for example in immigration interviews, tend to be thin and fragmented (Kohli, 2006). The opportunities of refugee youth are often limited by dominant problem-saturated discourses (Hughes & Rees, 2016). The Tree of Life (Ncube, 2006) uses the tree as a metaphor for exploring one's roots, strengths, hopes and preferred narratives. The approach encourages creativity and incorporates non-verbal materials.

Collective narrative practices support "groups and communities who have experienced significant social suffering in contexts in which 'therapy' may not be culturally resonant" (Denborough, 2012, p. 40). These practices could enable young people to meet others who have had similar experiences and facilitate development of their preferred narratives. Young people could create projects together, such as a film about family reunion (Clayton & Hughes, 2016) which could be shared with their family, professionals or local community, thus communicating the young people's preferred narratives to a wider audience in a process known as outsider witnessing (White, 1995).

Clinical psychologists must honour human rights frameworks in their work with refugee and asylum-seeking people (BPS, 2018). These frameworks have sought to protect refugee people since the Refugee Convention was published in 1951 (UNHCR); however, due to increasingly hostile immigration policies, refugee people cannot always access the protections they are legally entitled to. Given their power and professional privilege, clinical psychologists can advocate for the right to family unity (ECHR, 1950) to be upheld and facilitated by clear, expedient processes.

Indirect working is fundamental to the clinical psychology role. Thus, clinical psychologists should use their leadership and consultancy skills to support other professionals, like social workers, immigration officers and teachers, who work with young people during the reunion process.

4.4.3 Implications for Policy

Beyond the therapy room, psychologists' advocacy at a broader level could influence family reunion policies and change public attitudes towards refugee people. Participants' accounts of the challenges associated with family reunion applications suggests that legal aid should be reinstated to support applicants and sponsors. The finding that family reunion leads to further separation from extended family, who remain in the young person's country of nationality, suggests that changes are required to reform policy. Current restrictions mean that children aged 18-years-old and over are denied visas. Given the UN definition of youth extends to 24-years-old (2001), family reunion criteria should also reflect this, in recognition that, at 18-years-old many young people struggle to live independently and should not be separated from their family. Current policy does not adequately consider the cross-cultural significance of extended family. The bittersweet feelings that participants experienced on arrival in the UK might be reduced if more relatives could apply for family reunion, such as their grandparents who cared for them during the separation.

Given the importance of education in acculturation, education providers must cater to the needs of young people who arrive in the UK through family reunion; this point has been highlighted previously by Arnot and Pinson

(2005) who advocate for holistic programmes nurturing the young person's academic, emotional, social and physical needs. This should be incorporated into UK education policies so that the pathways for young people who come to the UK through reunion are clearly identified, reducing delays to enrolment on arrival. Currently, young people over 16-years-old are enrolled in college where their learning is often limited to ESOL. Whilst learning English is crucial to resettlement, refugee youth, like their British peers, deserve access to a rich curriculum, which facilitates development towards their career goals.

4.4.4 Implications for Future Research

This study highlighted the experiences of young people who had undergone UK refugee family reunion, in recognition that this group is often excluded from research. I hope that this study provides impetus to develop further research with a broader range of participants. This study includes young women whereas previous studies tend to recruit all-male samples; further research could explore gendered experiences of family reunion for young people. Having conducted this study with 16 to 21-year-olds, it would be interesting to explore the experiences of UK participants from a younger age range, particularly regarding themes of navigating responsibility and welcoming opportunities. I also recommend that research is conducted with young people from UK sites without access to BRC support, in recognition that they are likely to have distinct experiences of family reunion from participants in this study.

Further research could use different methodologies or epistemological positions, for example a social-constructionist DA might explore the effect on immigration discourses on young people's sense of identity. This could be particularly interesting around cultural and religious identity, which were alluded to by participants in their accounts and are increasingly topical in the context of Brexit.

Gerrard (1995, p. 62) critiques "the practice of researchers parachuting into peoples' lives, interfering, raising painful old feelings, and then vanishing, leaving the participants to deal with unresolved feelings alone and isolated". This critique raises questions about how this study might have been different

if resources were available to co-produce research with participants from inception to dissemination. Participatory action research (PAR) aims to achieve this through encouraging participation from marginalised communities, such as refugee youth, acknowledging their skills to explore pertinent issues through research. This is also in-keeping with the premise of community narrative practices. Within PAR, relationships between researchers and community members are equal with decision-making and responsibility shared. Knowledge attainment, shared power and social change have been identified as fundamental factors that initiate and maintain members' interest in PAR (van der Velde, Williamson & Oglivie, 2009). Pittaway, Bartolomei and Hugman (2010) insist on reciprocity such that communities maintain ownership of their stories and they advocate for integration of PAR with human rights frameworks. This tenet of reciprocity is further explored by researchers who highlight that PAR should make a "positive contribution to the local community while informing academic knowledge construction" (Collie, Liu, Podsiadlowski & Lindon, 2010, p. 142).

PAR can empower young people from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds to actively shape research (Rogers, Carr & Hickman, 2018). It is reported to generate more effective material and more meaningful outcomes (Hugman, Pittaway & Bartolomei, 2011). PAR with community members could facilitate direct sharing of experiences with other native speakers, without need for external interpreters. Tools such as Photovoice (Wang & Burris, 1997) use photography to empower members in sharing stories of their community, influencing research and policymakers. Given that many of the participants in this study expressed career aspirations, a possible reciprocal benefit for community members might be the development of skills towards their academic and professional goals. Although in keeping with the ethos of PAR, members should be empowered to identify benefits that are salient for them, rather than having these imposed.

4.5 Concluding Thoughts

Existing literature highlights the negative effects of prolonged family separation and the importance of straightforward, expedited processes for

refugee family reunion. This study supports these findings through 12 participants' accounts of experiencing reunion with their parent in the UK. Findings of this IPA study highlight the increased responsibilities, limited agency, contrasting emotions and cultural differences that young people experience related to family reunion. Though the process is challenging, participants also report positive experiences such as the happiness of reuniting with their parent and welcoming increased opportunities in the UK.

Psychologists have a responsibility to advocate for the rights of refugee people arriving in the UK. This is crucial to ensure that the adversities they have endured throughout migration are not perpetuated in the UK through prolonged family separation. As a human right, family unity should be extended to all, yet current reunion policies do not take account of this.

I conclude this research with a quote from Emmanuella, which she shared at the end of our interview when asked if she had any closing remarks:

Emmanuella (Interpreter): There are maybe other families as well who might come over here, they don't know anybody, they don't know where to go. It's difficult for them. So it's not just about coming and then just stay, stay like this, that's what I wanted to say (242-246).

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6 APPENDICES

Appendix A: Literature Search Terms and Databases

Appendix B: Ethical Approval from the School of Psychology's Ethics Committee at the University of East London

Appendix C: Ethical Approval from the BRC

Appendix D: Participant Information Sheet

Appendix E: Participant Consent Form

Appendix F: List of Organisations Signposting Participants for Ongoing Support

Appendix G: Semi-structured Interview Schedule

Appendix H: Flyers to Recruit Young People as Consultants

Appendix I: Young Person Consultants Information Sheet

Appendix J: Vignette for Focus Group

Appendix K: Flyers to Recruit Young People as Participants

Appendix L: BRC Recruitment Strategies

Appendix M: Key explaining Transcription Notes

Appendix N: Example of Initial Notes for Content, Language and Context

Appendix O: Example of Initial Codes in Left-hand Margin

Appendix P: Example Subordinate Themes and Superordinate Themes from Abdul

Appendix Q: Initial Themes across the Data Set

Appendix R: Reflexive Journal Extract

Appendix S: Developing the Final Configuration of Themes

6.1 Appendix A: Literature Search Terms and Databases

As detailed in Table 3 below, the literature search terms were related to migration ("asylum seekers" OR "refugees" OR "migrants"), age (youth OR teen* OR adolescen* OR "young adults" OR "young people") and the experience of family reunion ("family reunion" OR "family reunification"). These terms were adjusted to the search protocol of each database, for example an asterisk was used to truncate the term *adolescen** to enable searching for variants such as *adolescent*, *adolescents* and *adolescence*. The AND Boolean operator was used to combine search terms. Terms were searched only within the titles, abstracts and keywords. This search strategy was developed in consultation with a university psychology librarian and a researcher, who was reviewing similar literature. The searches were conducted on 12th November 2018 and were limited to English language literature published this date.

Table 3.

Search Strategy used to Identify Literature

Databases	Search strategy	No. References Found	Limiters	No. Ref.
Academic Search Complete (1887 – present) Child Development & Adolescent Studies (-) CINAHL Plus (1982 – Present) PsycINFO (1800s - present) Provider: EBSCO	("asylum seekers" OR "refugees" OR "migrants") AND ("family reunion" OR "family reunification") AND (youth OR teen* OR adolescen* OR "young adults" OR "young people")	26 (21 once duplicates removed)	Language – English	21
ScienceDirect	Title, abstract or keywords ("asylum seekers" OR "refugees" OR "migrants") AND ("family reunion" OR "family reunification") AND (youth OR teen OR adolescent OR "young adults" OR "young people") NB. Asterisks removed as SciDi doesn't support wildcards	2 (both duplicates of EBSCO search)		2

Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY (("asylum seekers" OR "refugees" OR "migrants") AND ("family reunion" OR "family reunification") AND (youth OR teen* OR adolescen* OR "young adults" OR "young people"))	36	AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English"))	36
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Once literature was identified using the aforementioned search strategy, the titles and abstracts were screened using the inclusion criteria presented in Table 4, in order to determine their relevance. 33 original references were identified, after 5 duplicates were removed.

Table 4.

Inclusion Criteria used to Determine Relevance of Literature

Inclusion Criteria

-
1. Included refugee, asylum-seeking or migrant people
 2. Included young people between 16 to 25-years-old
 3. Focused on family reunion in a broad (reunification of separated relatives) or narrow sense (legal immigration process)
 4. Empirical research (i.e., published journal articles or dissertations)
 5. Qualitative or mixed methods research (that had qualitative data reported as themes)
-

These literature search strategies focused on the family reunion experiences of young people specifically. In order to gain broader understandings of family reunion experiences across the lifespan, further relevant studies were identified by reviewing the reference lists and hand searching grey literature through Google Scholar. This latter stage also identified literature outside the psychology disciplines.

6.2 Appendix B: Ethical Approval from the School of Psychology's Ethics Committee at the University of East London

Ethics Application

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

School of Psychology

APPLICATION FOR RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL

FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

FOR BSc RESEARCH

FOR MSc/MA RESEARCH

FOR PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE RESEARCH IN CLINICAL, COUNSELLING & EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

If you need to apply to have ethical clearance from another Research Ethics Committee (e.g. NRES, HRA through IRIS) you DO NOT need to apply to the School of Psychology for ethical clearance also. Please see details on

<https://uelac.sharepoint.com/ResearchInnovationandEnterprise/Pages/NHS-Research-Ethics-Committees.aspx>

Among other things this site will tell you about UEL sponsorship

Note that you do not need NHS ethics approval if collecting data from NHS staff except where the confidentiality of NHS patients could be compromised. You do need NHS approval if collecting data on NHS premises.

Before completing this application please familiarise yourself with:

The *Code of Ethics and Conduct (2009)* published by the British Psychological Society (BPS). This can be found in the Ethics folder in the Psychology Noticeboard (Moodle) and also on the BPS website

http://www.bps.org.uk/system/files/Public%20files/aa%20Standard%20Docs/inf94_code_web_ethics_conduct.pdf

And please also see the UEL Code of Practice for Research Ethics (2015-16)

<https://uelac.sharepoint.com/ResearchInnovationandEnterprise/Documents/Ethics%20forms/UEL-Code-of-Practice-for-Research-Ethics-2015-16.pdf>

HOW TO COMPLETE & SUBMIT THIS APPLICATION

Complete this application form electronically, fully and accurately.

Type your name in the 'student's signature' section (5.1).

Include copies of all necessary attachments in the ONE DOCUMENT SAVED AS .doc

Email your supervisor the completed application and all attachments as ONE DOCUMENT. Your supervisor will then look over your application.

When your application demonstrates sound ethical protocol your supervisor will type in his/her name in the 'supervisor's signature' (section 5) and submit your application for review (psychology.ethics@uel.ac.uk). You should be copied into this email so that you know your application has been submitted. It is the responsibility of students to check this.

Your supervisor should let you know the outcome of your application. Recruitment and data collection are NOT to commence until your ethics application has been approved, along with other research ethics approvals that may be necessary (See section 4)

ATTACHMENTS YOU MUST ATTACH TO THIS APPLICATION

A copy of the participant invitation letter that you intend giving to potential participants.

A copy of the consent form that you intend giving to participants.

A copy of the debrief letter you intend to give participants.

OTHER ATTACHMENTS (AS APPROPRIATE)

A copy of original and/or pre-existing questionnaire(s) and test(s) you intend to use.

Example of the kinds of interview questions you intend to ask participants.

Copies of the visual material(s) you intend showing participants.

A copy of ethical clearance or permission from an external institution or organisation if you need it (e.g. a charity, school, local authority, workplace etc.). Permissions must be attached to this application. If you require ethical clearance from an external organisation your ethics application can be submitted to the School of Psychology before ethical approval is obtained from another organisation (see Section 5).

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificates:

FOR BSc/MSc/MA STUDENTS WHOSE RESEARCH INVOLVES VULNERABLE PARTICIPANTS: A scanned copy of a current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate. A current certificate is one that is not older than six months. This is necessary if your research involves young people (anyone 16 years of age or under) or vulnerable adults (see Section 4 for a broad definition of this). A DBS certificate that you have obtained through an organisation you work for is acceptable as long as it is current. If you do not have a current DBS certificate, but need one for your research, you can apply for one through the HUB and the School will pay the cost.

If you need to attach a copy of a DBS certificate to your ethics application but would like to keep it confidential please email a scanned copy of the certificate directly to Dr Mary Spiller (Chair of the School Research Ethics Committee) at m.j.spiller@uel.ac.uk

FOR PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE STUDENTS WHOSE RESEARCH INVOLVES VULNERABLE PARTICIPANTS: DBS clearance is necessary if your research involves young people (anyone

under 16 years of age) or vulnerable adults (see Section 4 for a broad definition of this). The DBS check that was done, or verified, when you registered for your programme is sufficient and you will not have to apply for another in order to conduct research with vulnerable populations.

SECTION 1. Your details

Your name: Cassandra Addai

Your supervisor's name: Dr Neil Rees (first supervisor) and Dr Paula Magee (second supervisor)

Title of your programme: Professional Doctorate in Clinical Psychology

Submission date for your BSc/MSc/MA research: May 2019

Please tick if your application includes a copy of a DBS certificate

Please tick if you need to submit a DBS certificate with this application but have emailed a copy to Dr Mary Spiller for confidentiality reasons

(Chair of the School Research Ethics Committee) (m.j.spiller@uel.ac.uk)

Please tick to confirm that you have read and understood the British Psychological Society Code of Ethics and Conduct (2009) and the UEL Code of Practice for Research Ethics ([links on page 1](#))

SECTION 2. About your research

What your proposed research is about:

Please be clear and detailed in outlining what your proposed research is about. Include the research question (i.e. what is your proposed research investigating?)

The proposed study aims to explore the ways in which young people make sense of being reunited with relatives, who have successfully applied for refugee family reunion. Recent global wars and crises have led to increasing numbers of individuals fleeing from their home country and entering the UK as asylum seekers. In the process of fleeing from persecution, many individuals become separated from their relatives. However, once refugee status is gained, refugees can sponsor family reunion. The proposed study will focus on the experience of young refugees, historically an under researched group, in order to explore how they make sense of the family reunion process and their experience of reuniting with separated relatives. The study hopes to explore the following research question: "how do young people experience refugee family reunion once reunited with separated relatives?"

Design of the research:

Type of experimental design, variables, questionnaire, survey etc., as relevant to your research. If the research is qualitative what approach will be used and what will the data be?

The proposed study will use a qualitative method to explore the way that young refugees make sense of the family reunion process and reunification with separated family members.

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted, audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) will be used given the study's focus on individuals' experience of family reunification and how they make sense of it, specifically their perceptions and views about the process. As the proposed research question is open and exploratory, rather than closed and explanatory, it is appropriate to apply IPA. The study will follow Smith and Osborn's protocol (2003) to ensure quality of data analysis.

10. Recruitment and participants (Your sample):

Proposed number of participants, method of recruitment, specific characteristics of the sample such as age range, gender and ethnicity - whatever is relevant to your research.

The proposed sample size is 10-12 based on the criteria of data saturation used in qualitative research (Guest, Bunce & Johnson, 2006). Participants will be recruited from young people known to the staff at the BRC, as this organisation supports refugees experiencing family reunion. Participants will be young people in the UK, aged 16-25 years old who have been reunited with relatives through the family reunion process. The researcher will aim to recruit participants from the same cultural group to increase homogeneity; the specific cultural group will be selected in discussion with the BRC. The researcher will also take their guidance regarding how recently the young refugees should have been reunited with separated relatives. Participants are not required to speak English as interpreters will be provided for those participants whose English proficiency is not sufficient for the interview.

11. Measures, materials or equipment:

Give details about what will be used during the course of the research. For example, equipment, a questionnaire, a particular psychological test or tests, an interview schedule or other stimuli such as visual material. See note on page 2 about attaching copies of questionnaires and tests to this application. If you are using an interview schedule for qualitative research attach example questions that you plan to ask your participants to this application.

An interview schedule of potential questions is attached to this application (appendix A). The researcher intends to further develop these questions through discussion with young people consultants (who are themselves refugees) from the BRC. This group will not be invited to participate in the proposed study, however their engagement will help ensure that the questions are appropriate and can be understood by young refugees. Whilst the schedule will be useful to guide discussion, the researcher will employ a flexible approach in conducting the interviews.

The interviews will be audio-recorded using the researcher's own digital recording device and data will then be transferred to a password-protected folder on the researcher's private computer.

12. If you are using copyrighted/pre-validated questionnaires, tests or other stimuli that you have not written or made yourself, are these questionnaires and tests suitable for the age group of your participants?

~~YES~~ / ~~NO~~ / NA

13. Outline the data collection procedure involved in your research:

Describe what will be involved in data collection. For example, what will participants be asked to do, where, and for how long? If using online surveys what survey software will be used, e.g. Qualtrics?

Potential participants will be given an information sheet (see appendix B) that outlines the research aims and their rights as participants. This sheet will be further developed with the young people consultants. The information sheet will provide the researcher's contact details so that they can address any queries or concerns they may have.

After participant consent has been obtained, participants will be invited to attend one semi-structured interview with the researcher. The interview will take place on BRC premises, at a time of mutual convenience, as this location is likely to be familiar to participants. The room should be comfortable, free from interruption and relatively quiet to maximise the participant's comfort and sound quality of the interview for audio recording. The interview will last for about 60-90 minutes and will be audio recorded by the researcher. If necessary, the participant and researcher will be joined by an interpreter - this may extend the length of the interview and participants will be informed of the adapted interview time. The same interpreter will be used for all interviews to ensure consistency. A recording of the first interview will be checked by an independent interpreter to check the accuracy. Following each interview, the audio recording will be transcribed by the researcher. Recordings (and subsequent transcripts) will be saved in a password-protected folder on a computer only accessible to the researcher.

Should it not be possible to conduct the study with young people from a homogenous background as aforementioned, the project will be opened up to participants from different backgrounds. If there are issues recruiting young people, the researcher will increase the upper age limit and recruit participants aged 26 years old and over. If there are issues in recruiting from the BRC then the researcher will approach alternative organisations, based on recommendation from the BRC.

SECTION 3. Ethical considerations

14. Fully informing participants about the research (and parents/guardians if necessary):

How will you fully inform your participants when inviting them to participate? Would the participant invitation letter be written in a style appropriate for children and young people, if necessary?

The information sheet (appendix B) sent to participants will be developed in discussion with young people consultants (who are themselves refugees) from the BRC. This group will not be invited to participate in the proposed study, however their engagement will help ensure that the document is accessible to young people, particularly young refugees who may not have English as a first language.

Whilst the sheet will be produced in English only, interpreters would be used to read the sheet to participants who do not have sufficient English.

15. Obtaining fully informed consent from participants (and from parents/guardians if necessary):

Is the consent form written in a style appropriate for children and young people, if necessary? Do you need a consent form for both young people and their parents/guardians? How will you gain consent if your research is collecting data online?

The consent form (see appendix C) sent to participants will be developed in discussion with young people consultants from the British Red Cross to ensure that the document is accessible to young people, particularly young refugees who may not have English as a first language. Participants aged 16-17 will be encouraged to discuss participation in the study with a responsible adult, such as a relative or their BRC caseworker.

Whilst the consent form will be produced in English only, interpreters would be used to read the sheet to participants who do not have sufficient English.

16. Engaging in deception, if relevant:

What will participants be told about the nature of the research? The amount of any information withheld and the delay in disclosing the withheld information should be kept to an absolute minimum.

The study does not involve deception.

17. Right of withdrawal:

In this section, and in your participant invitation letter, make it clear to participants that 'withdrawal' will involve participants being able to decide to not continue with participation in your research and the right to have the data they have supplied destroyed on request. It is advised that you tell participants on your participant invitation letter that you as the researcher reserve the right to keep and use all data after the point at which you begin your analysis of data. Speak to your supervisor for clarification if necessary.

Participants will be able to terminate the interview and their information will be withdrawn. In addition, if they complete the interview, they have the right to withdraw from the study within two weeks of the interview taking place without disadvantage to themselves and without needing to give any reason. Should a participant withdraw before this date, then data from their interview will not be used by the researcher. However, two weeks after the interview the researcher will begin the process of transcribing and analysing data and therefore the researcher will reserve the right to keep and use the data.

18. Will the data be gathered anonymously?

This is where you will not know the names and contact details of your participants? In qualitative research that involves interviews, data is usually not collected anonymously because you will know the names and contact details of your participants.

YES / NO

19. If NO what steps will be taken to ensure confidentiality and protect the identity of participants?

How will the names and contact details of participants be stored and who will have access? Will real names and identifying references be omitted from the reporting of data and transcripts etc? What will happen to the data after the study is over? Usually names and contact details will be destroyed after data collection but if there is a possibility of you developing your research (for publication, for example) you may not want to destroy all data at the end of the study. If not destroying your data at the end of the study, what will be kept, how, and for how long?

Signed participant consent forms will be scanned and stored securely in a password-protected folder on the researcher's private computer, which no one else has access to. This folder will be kept separate from other data such as audio-recordings and transcripts. Any e-mails to participants regarding the study will be sent from the researcher's UEL email account. Identifying references to participants will be removed from any material used in the write-up of the study. Participants' real names will be omitted when the interview is transcribed and written up, this will be explained to participants and they will be asked to choose a pseudonym. Once the study is complete, interview audio recordings will be deleted, however anonymised transcripts will be kept for one year to allow the researcher to prepare the study for publication to an academic journal.

20. Will participants be paid or reimbursed?

This is not necessary but payment/reimbursement must be in the form of redeemable vouchers and not cash. Please note that the School cannot fund participant payment?

YES / ~~NO~~

If YES, why is payment/reimbursement necessary and how much will the vouchers be worth?

The study will involve young refugees as participants, a group which often experiences destitution. £20 high-street vouchers will be offered as a payment to demonstrate the participant's value in this study.

SECTION 4. Other permissions and ethical clearances

21. Is permission required from an external institution/organisation (e.g. a school, charity, workplace, local authority, care home etc.)?

You need to have written permission from external institutions/organisations/workplaces if they are helping you with recruitment and/or data collection, if you are collecting data on their premises, or if you are using any material owned by the institution/organisation.

NHS ethical approval is NOT required for research involving staff. However, approval IS required if recruitment and/or data collection takes place on NHS premises.

Is permission from an external institution/organisation/workplace required? YES / ~~NO~~

If YES please give the name and address of the institution/organisation/workplace: British Red Cross, 44 Moorfields, London, EC2Y 9AL

COPIES OF PERMISSESIONS (LETTER OR EMAIL) MUST BE ATTACHED TO THIS APPLICATION –

Please see Appendix E

Will your research be taking place on NHS Premises? ~~YES~~ / NO

In some cases you may be required to have formal ethical clearance from the external institution or organisation or workplace too.

22. Is ethical clearance required from any other ethics committee?

~~YES~~ / NO

If YES please give the name and address of the organisation:

Has such ethical clearance been obtained yet? YES / NO

If NO why not?

If YES, please attach a scanned copy of the ethical approval letter. A copy of an email from the organisation confirming its ethical clearance is acceptable.

Ethical approval from the School of Psychology can be gained before approval from another research ethics committee is obtained. However, recruitment and data collection are NOT to commence until your research has been approved by the School and other ethics committee/s as may be necessary.

SECTION 5. Risk Assessment

If you have serious concerns about the safety of a participant, or others, during the course of your research please see your supervisor as soon as possible.

If there is any unexpected occurrence while you are collecting your data (e.g. a participant or the researcher injures themselves), please report this to your supervisor as soon as possible.

23. Protection of participants:

Are there any potential hazards to participants or any risk of accident or injury to them? What is the nature of these hazards or risks? How will the safety and well-being of participants be ensured? What contact details of an appropriate support organisation or agency will be made available to participants in your debrief sheet, particularly if the research is of a sensitive nature or potentially distressing?

Although participants will not directly be asked about distressing experiences, it is likely they may have found the family reunion process challenging and they may disclose traumatic memories voluntarily in the interview. If a participant does become distressed

during the interview, then the researcher will offer reassurance and suggest that the interview is paused for a break. The researcher has clinical experience of working with distressed young people and can use these skills to support participants through the interview process. Participants will be offered a debrief after the interview (appendix D). The information sheet about the study will provide details of relevant organisations that participants can contact for support. As recruitment will take place through the BRC, the researcher will liaise with the participant's case worker in instances where a participant is distressed and might benefit from further support.

The support organisation or agency that you refer participants to in your debrief letter should be appropriate. That is, is there a more appropriate support organisation than the Samaritans, for example (i.e. anxiety, mental health, young people telephone support help-lines)?

24. Protection of the researcher:

Will you be knowingly exposed to any health and safety risks? If equipment is being used is there any risk of accident or injury to you and how will you mitigate this? If interviewing participants in their homes will a third party be told of place and time and when you have left a participant's house?

The researcher will not knowingly be exposed to any risks. The interviews will take place on BRC premises and the researcher will adhere to lone working policies by conducting the interviews within working hours and ensuring that members of staff know that the interview is taking place.

25. Debriefing participants:

How will participants be de-briefed? Will participants be informed about the true nature of the research if they are not told beforehand? Will contact details of a support organisation be made available to participants via the debrief letter.

The study's true nature will not be withheld from participants at any point. The debrief (appendix D) will provide details of relevant organisations that participants can contact for support. As recruitment will take place through the BRC, the researcher will liaise with the participant's case worker in instances where a participant is distressed and might benefit from further support.

26. Other: Is there anything else the reviewer of this application needs to know to make a properly informed assessment?

27. Will your research involve working with children or vulnerable adults?*

YES/ ~~NO~~

If YES have you obtained and attached a DBS certificate? YES/ ~~NO~~

If your research involves young people under 16 years of age and young people of limited competence will parental/guardian consent be obtained.

YES / NO

If NO please give reasons. (Note that parental consent is always required for participants who are 16 years of age and younger)

* You are required to have DBS clearance if your participant group involves (1) children and young people who are 16 years of age or under, and (2) ‘vulnerable’ people aged 16 and over with psychiatric illnesses, people who receive domestic care, elderly people (particularly those in nursing homes), people in palliative care, and people living in institutions and sheltered accommodation, for example. Vulnerable people are understood to be persons who are not necessarily able to freely consent to participating in your research, or who may find it difficult to withhold consent. If in doubt about the extent of the vulnerability of your intended participant group, speak to your supervisor. Methods that maximise the understanding and ability of vulnerable people to give consent should be used whenever possible. For more information about ethical research involving children see <https://uelac.sharepoint.com/ResearchInnovationandEnterprise/Pages/Research-involving-children.aspx>

28. Will you be collecting data overseas? ~~YES~~/ NO

This includes collecting data while you are away from the UK on holiday or visiting your country of origin, and distance learning students who will be collecting data in their overseas country of residence.

If YES in what country or countries (and province if appropriate) will you be collecting data?

Please click on this link <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice> and note in the space below what the UK Government is recommending about travel to that country/province (Please note that you MUST NOT travel to a country/province/area that is deemed to be high risk or where essential travel only is recommended by the UK Government. If you are unsure it is essential that you speak to your supervisor or the UEL Travel Office – travel@uel.ac.uk / (0)20 8223 6801).

SECTION 6. Declarations

Declaration by student:

I confirm that I have discussed the ethics and feasibility of this research proposal with my supervisor.

Student's name: *Cassandra Addai*

Student's number: u1622761

Date: 11/2/18

Declaration by supervisor:

I confirm that, in my opinion, the proposed study constitutes an ethical investigation of the research question. Declaration of supervisory support of an application is confirmed once an application is submitted via the supervisor's UEL email account.

School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee

NOTICE OF ETHICS REVIEW DECISION

For research involving human participants
BSc/MSc/MA/Professional Doctorates in Clinical, Counselling and Educational
Psychology

REVIEWER: Matthew Jones Chesters

SUPERVISOR: Neil Rees

STUDENT: Cassandra Addai

Course: Professional Doctorate in Clinical Psychology

Title of proposed study: how do young people experience refugee family reunion once reunited with separated relatives?

DECISION ON THE ABOVE-NAMED PROPOSED RESEARCH STUDY

(Please indicate the decision according to one of the 3 options above)

APPROVED

ASSESSMENT OF RISK TO RESEACHER *(for reviewer)*

Has an adequate risk assessment been offered in the application form?

YES

If the proposed research could expose the researcher to any of kind of emotional, physical or health and safety hazard? Please rate the degree of risk:

LOW

Reviewer *(Typed name to act as signature):* Matthew Jones Chesters

Date: 12th March 2018

This reviewer has assessed the ethics application for the named research study on behalf of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee

RESEARCHER PLEASE NOTE:

For the researcher and participants involved in the above named study to be covered by UEL's Insurance, prior ethics approval from the School of Psychology (acting on behalf of the UEL Research Ethics Committee), and confirmation from students where minor amendments were required, must be obtained before any research takes place. For a copy of UELs Personal Accident & Travel

Change project title - Mrs Cassandra Addai

The Psychology Research Degrees Sub-Committee on behalf of the Impact and Innovation Committee has considered your request. The decision is:

Approved

Your new thesis title is confirmed as follows:

Old thesis title: Young people's experience of having undergone the refugee family reunion process in the UK

New thesis title: 'It was bittersweet': Young people's experience of having undergone the refugee family reunion process in the UK

Your registration period remains unchanged.

6.3 Appendix C: Ethical Approval from the BRC

Application Form

Name of principal researcher: Cassie Addai

Position and organisation of principle researcher: Trainee Clinical Psychologist, University of East London

Title of proposed research: Young people's experience of having undergone the refugee family reunion process in the UK

Name and role of British Red Cross key contact: [removed for anonymity]

Date submitted: 28/5/18

Submitted by (name, job title): Cassie Addai, Trainee Clinical Psychologist

Who is funding or commissioning the research?

British Red Cross

Government department (please provide name _____)

Research institute (please provide name _____)

A university (please provide name _____)

Student research project

Other (please provide name _____)

External applicants only:

Please name the British Red Cross service(s) contact point (or for international research, National Society and regional team) that have been informed of your research:

Myself and my thesis supervisor (Dr Neil Rees, Clinical Programme Director and Consultant Clinical Psychologist) have liaised with the following contacts within the British Red Cross -

[names removed for anonymity]

Has a contact within the service(s (or for international research – National Society and regional team)) seen your proposal? If yes, please provide their name(s).

The above contacts have seen a copy of the research proposal.

PURPOSE AND VALUE OF RESEARCH

1.1 Aims and objectives

The proposed study aims to explore the ways in which young people make sense of being reunited with relatives, who have successfully applied for refugee family reunion.

1.2 Research questions

How do young refugees experience family reunion once the family has been reunited?

1.3 Value of research

The importance of this study has been highlighted by previous research reports such as We Started Life Again (British Red Cross, 2015) which described family reunion as a complex legal, social and emotional process of re-establishing bonds between relatives who have separated, usually when one or more family member flees their home due to violence or persecution. Family reunification is understood as an important factor for promoting mental, physical wellbeing and integration of refugees. The report also highlights the challenges faced by newly reunited families such as destitution, inappropriate housing, and language difficulties.

One of the recommendations from this report is for future research with young people, aged under 25, to find out their experiences and this is the basis of the proposed study.

The young people who participate in the proposed study will have the opportunity to share their experiences with the researcher who intends to disseminate the findings of the study so that it can inform services and policy.

1.4 Dissemination of findings

The published thesis will be publicly available online via the University of East London's thesis repository. I intend to produce a summary of key points to feed back to involved BRC staff and/or contribute to a research report for the BRC. I will also feedback to the young people consultants who help shape the study and the participants, through a summary will be tailored to young people. I intend to write a journal article for submission, the audience of which is likely to be academics, policy makers and other psychology practitioners.

Publication of findings is unlikely to have negative consequences for the BRC or participants, as the aim of the research is to increase understanding of young people who have experienced family reunion. Potential participants will be informed in the initial research information sheet that their anonymised interview data may be used in publication.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Sample and recruitment

The criteria for selecting participants is: 10-12 young people aged between 16-25 year old from a homogenous cultural/ethnic group (this will be decided based on BRC data about the demographics of young people accessing the service in the last year), who

have refugee status in the UK and have recently been successful applicants in the family reunion process and subsequently reunited with family.

In addition to the 10-12 participants, I will also be recruiting 2/3 young people, who meet the above criteria, to act as young people research consultants. I will collaborate with them during a one-off focus group and gain their feedback on the study design and development.

Participants will be recruited via BRC staff who know them. I will also provide an information sheet about the proposed study, this will be developed in collaboration with the young people research consultants.

The proposed study will not be limited to young people who speak English as interpreters can be provided.

The proposed study will exclude participants who are outside this age range and who are not from the selected cultural/ethnic group. This decision has been made in keeping with the research methodology of Interpretative Phenomenology Analysis, which aims to select as homogenous a participant sample as possible, in order to find a shared perspective.

2.2 Data collection and fieldwork

Semi structured interviews have been selected as the most appropriate method for the proposed study. This is because I can prepare an interview schedule of open-ended questions, in consultation with the young people research consultants, which allows for new ways of understanding participants' experiences of family reunion. During the interview, it is important to also be flexible and the interview schedule may need to be adjusted according to the participant's responses. I will make an audio-recording of the interview so that it can later be transcribed verbatim. Interpreters will be provided for participants, where necessary. The interview is expected to take approximately one hour, although it is likely to be longer if an interpreter is required.

2.3 Interpretation of data

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) will be used given the study's focus on individuals' experience of family reunification and how they make sense of it, specifically their perceptions and views about the process. As the proposed research question is open and exploratory, rather than closed and explanatory, it is appropriate to apply IPA. The study will follow Smith and Osborn's protocol (2003) to ensure quality of data analysis and reduce bias.

RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARDS PARTICIPANTS

3.1 Competency of researcher(s)

The researcher is Cassie Addai (Trainee Clinical Psychologist), I will have contact with the participants. As a second year trainee clinical psychologist, I have experience of working clinically with vulnerable young people, which will allow me to conduct the proposed study sensitively and professionally. I have completed a module in Research Methods as part of my doctoral training. I have an up to date DBS certificate.

The proposed study has been peer-reviewed by academics at University of East London. It has also received ethical approval from University of East London.

3.2 Voluntary, informed consent of participants

Potential participants will be informed of the research study by BRC staff who work with them, they will be given an information sheet. The information sheet and other paperwork will be created in collaboration with 2/3 young people research consultants to ensure that the language is appropriate for the age group. The information sheet explains that participants can choose not to be involved in the study. Participants who give their informed consent are able to withdraw their information, without adverse consequences, up until two weeks after their interview. This time limit is in place because transcription is likely to start after this time. Information about the period of withdrawal will also be reiterated in the interview and in a debrief letter.

Participants will be offered an interpreter, if necessary, to support them to understand the information sheet and interview. I will give participants my contact details so that they have an opportunity to ask any questions about the study. Potential participants will be asked to sign a consent form to demonstrate informed consent.

3.3. Consent of parents/carers

Participants are not required to seek parental consent as they are aged 16-25 years old. However, I will encourage them to talk to a parent/guardian/responsible adult about their involvement in the study.

3.4 Participant comfort

The interview will take place at BRC premises as this will be familiar to participants and may help them to feel more comfortable.

The interview schedule and study topic will ask participants to talk about their personal experiences, however this will be done sensitively to avoid distressing participants. Participant will be informed in advance, via the information sheet, about the study topic and will be able to choose whether or not they consent to taking part. If a participant does become distressed during the interview, then I will offer reassurance and suggest that the interview is paused for a break. I have clinical experience of working with vulnerable and distressed young people and can use these skills to support participants through the interview process. Participants will be offered a debrief after the interview.

3.5 Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults

I will obtain a copy of BRC safeguarding procedures and adhere to these during the research. If I am concerned about risk of harm to a participant then I will contact my thesis supervisor (Dr Neil Rees) and the participant's BRC caseworker.

3.6 Confidentiality

Confidentiality will be broken if there is concern about risk of harm to the individual participant or someone else. This is explained to participants in the information sheet. Participants will be interviewed individually and no information will be posted to them.

3.7 Recoding and storing data, in line with the Data Protection Act

Anonymous data about participants will be stored securely in a private, password-protected folder, which only the researcher has access to. Their real name will not be used, instead a pseudonym will be given. After the thesis is submitted, I will delete the audio-recordings. Anonymised written transcripts will be kept securely, in a password-protected folder on a private computer, for one year to allow time to disseminate the study.

3.8 Anonymity of findings

Participants' anonymity will be ensured by using pseudonyms. Information about their cultural/ethnic group will be kept general to also ensure anonymity.

3.9 Concluding relationship with participants

Participants will be asked to attend one interview with me, this is explained in the information sheet. They will be provided with resources to access further support if they do become distressed immediately after the interview, or in future. I will liaise with their BRC caseworker, if necessary and appropriate.

3.10 Recognition of participants' time and effort

£20 high-street vouchers will be offered as a payment to demonstrate the participant's value in this study.

3.11 Additional risks

n/a

3.11 Complaints procedures

Complaints can be directed to the researcher (Cassie Addai), the research supervisor (Dr Neil Rees) or the Chair of the UEL ethics committee (Dr Mark Finn).

4. RESEARCHER'S WELFARE**4.1 Researcher's physical welfare**

Interviews will take place on BRC premises and I will adhere to lone working policies by conducting the interviews within working hours and ensuring that members of

BRC staff know that the interview is taking place. I will also inform my research partner (xxx) and supervisor (Dr Neil Rees) of when interviews are taking place.

4.2 Researcher's emotional welfare

Interviews may bring up emotive topics, I can discuss this in supervision with my research partner (xxx) and supervisor (Dr Neil Rees).

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Agreement with Gatekeepers (if applicable)

n/a

5.2 Agreement with British Red Cross service(s) (if applicable)

Written agreement has been provided in an email from (name removed for confidentiality) dated 04/03/18.

5.3 Agreement/contract with sponsors/funders (if applicable)

n/a

PLEASE LIST THE OUTPUT(S) YOU PLAN TO PRODUCE, AND THE ESTIMATED DATE(S) YOU PLAN TO PRODUCE THEM

Expected outputs and dates:

The proposed study will be written up as a thesis, maximum 28,000 word count, in order to fulfil the Doctorate of Clinical Psychology (DClinPsy) qualification. It is hoped that interviews will be conducted during summer 2018 so that the thesis can be written in late 2018/early 2019 ahead of the May 2019 submission date. Following thesis submission, I intend to disseminate the findings more widely through a journal article. I will also feedback to BRC.

PLEASE ATTACH ANY SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS TO YOUR APPLICATION, INCLUDING:

Research proposal

Recruitment materials, posters, recruitment emails, letters etc.

Research instruments, consent forms, interview schedules etc.

Any other ethics applications to other ethics committees – and please explain the current outcome or status of these

Contracts or agreements with gatekeepers, services, funders.

Please return this application form to xxxx@redcross.org.uk

6.4 Appendix D: Participant Information Sheet

University of East London

School of Psychology

Stratford Campus

Water Lane

London

E15 4LZ



PARTICIPANT INVITATION LETTER

You are being invited to participate in a research study. Before you agree it is important that you understand what your participation would involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

Who am I?

I am a postgraduate student in the School of Psychology at the University of East London and am studying for the Professional Doctorate in Clinical Psychology. As part of my studies I am conducting the research you are being invited to participate in.

Project Title

Young people's experience of having undergone the refugee family reunion process in the UK.

What is the research?

Lots of people are fleeing from danger in their home country and seeking safety in the UK. This sometimes means leaving their friends and family behind. Psychologists know that families are important to us, and that when people are separated from their family this can affect their wellbeing.

As you may know, the British Red Cross supports many people to come to the UK every year to be reunited with their families. Lots of these people are young people like you. The Red Cross wants to understand how these young people feel about being reunited with their family in the UK and how they are finding life here. Some people might be happy about being here, other people might sad.

To learn more about how young people feel about their family reunion and living in the UK, I will interview 10 -12 young people who have arrived in the UK to be reunited with their families. I am interested in finding out more about what it is like for young people to be reunited with relatives in this way.

Why have you been asked to participate?

I am interested in meeting with young people like you so that I can ask a few questions about your experience of refugee family reunion.

What will you be asked to do?

We will meet together for one interview, which will take about one hour. During the interview, I will make a recording of our discussion on my audio-recorder, this is so that do not forget anything when I later type it up into a transcript. If it would help you during the interview, I can also arrange for an interpreter to be present. Your name and any details, which could personally identify you, will not be included when I type up the interview.

What are the benefits of taking part?

The interview will be an opportunity for you to share your experience of the family reunion process, this will be used to build current knowledge about refugees and family reunion.

Are there any risks involved?

Although the study is not designed to involve any risk, it is important to consider that talking about your experiences of family reunion might be difficult, perhaps due to experiences that you have had or seen. Some people may become upset during the interview, if this happens then we can take a break or stop the interview. You do not have to continue with the interview and you can choose not to answer any question/s. Some people may become upset after the interview, either immediately after or sometime later. If this happens, I have thought about how who could offer you support so if you do feel upset or distressed, please let me know. Although I cannot offer you direct support myself, we can think together about what is upsetting and I will contact your British Red Cross caseworker so that they can also support you. If I am concerned about your safety then I would speak to my supervisor with your permission and we might think about who else could help you. I have also provided a list of local services that might be helpful to you, following the interview.

Keeping information safe

Each interview will be carried out with me and will take about an hour. We might also be joined by an interpreter, if you would benefit from this. If we are joined by an interpreter then the interview will take slightly longer. I will record the interview on my audio-recorder, this is so that I do not forget any detail from our discussion together. I will type up the recording myself into a written transcript. I will remove any information which could be used to identify you, such as your name, and you can decide what you would like to be called instead. As this study is part of a University assignment, sections of the typed transcript may be read by my supervisor at the University of East London. My final research will include some short quotes from the interviews, this will be shared with my supervisor, the examiners who test me on my final research and the British Red Cross. However, as I will change the names, they will not be able to identify you from the quotes. The audio file and transcript will be saved in a password-protected folder on my private computer, so that no-one else has access. After I have submitted my research, I will delete the audio-recordings. The written transcript will be kept securely for one year so that I can write a psychology article about this study.

Although information shared in the interview will be kept safe, I also have a responsibility to share information if I am concerned about the safety or well-being of yourself or others. If I am concerned then I will discuss this with you first, where possible. However, I may also discuss my concerns with my supervisor to ensure that you and others are safe.

Where will interviews take place?

Interviews will take place at the British Red Cross Office.

Will any payment be given?

You will receive a £20 shopping voucher to thank you for your time.

Important

You do not have to take part in this study, it is your choice to participate. If decide to meet me for an interview and wish to stop at time, please let me know. Also, if you change your mind after the interview, please let me know within two weeks of the interview taking place; after this time, I will have started to study in detail what you have said to me during the interview.

Contact Details

If you would like further information about my research or have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Cassie Addai

Trainee Clinical Psychologist at University of East London

u1622761@uel.ac.uk

If you have any questions or concerns about how the research has been conducted please contact the research supervisor, Dr Neil Rees, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ, Email:n.rees@uel.ac.uk

or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee: Dr Mark Finn, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ. Email:
m.finn@uel.ac.uk

6.5 Appendix E: Participant Consent Form

Consent to participate in the following research

study- Young people's experience of having undergone the refugee family reunion process in the UK



Informed consent: Giving permission for something to happen or agreeing to do something. This form will also allow us to use the information you share with us today.

Please tick the box if you are happy for this:

1.	I have read/ heard and understood the information about the research study. I have been given a copy to keep	<input type="radio"/>
2.	The reason that this research is being carried out has been explained to me. I have been given the time to ask questions about the research study and how I will be involved.	<input type="radio"/>
3.	I choose and agree to take part in the research study	<input type="radio"/>
4.	I understand I can stop the interview at any time. I don't have to explain or give a reason why. I will not be at a disadvantage if I leave the interview.	<input type="radio"/>
5.	If I do complete the interview, I have can choose to withdraw my information within two weeks of my interview date. I will not be at a disadvantage if I withdraw. I don't have to explain or give a reason why.	<input type="radio"/>
6.	I have read/ heard and understood the procedures regarding confidentiality (what we will do with information that we have which is about you). This could be about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What information we have about you - Where we will keep that information - Why we have that information - How long we will keep that information 	<input type="radio"/>
7.	The use of the information from this interview in research, publications, sharing and archiving has been explained to me. I understand that my information will be anonymised (this means that all details which could personally identify me, like my name, will be removed or changed)	<input type="radio"/>
8.	I agree to sign and date this form.	<input type="radio"/>

Participant: _____
Name of Participant Signature Date

Researcher: _____
Name of Researcher Signature Date

6.6 Appendix F: List of Organisations Signposting Participants For Ongoing Support

Debrief letter



Young people's experience of having undergone the refugee family reunion process in the UK

Thank you for taking part in my study, I truly appreciate the time you took to meet with me and tell me about your experiences of being reunited with separated relatives.

As we discussed, I will now be writing up the recording of our interview and analysing this to find key themes across all the interviews I conducted. If you decide that you no longer wish for the recording of your interview to be used in the above ways, please contact me on u1622761@uel.ac.uk by Friday 19th October 2018.

If you found the interview upsetting or distressing in any way and would like to discuss this, please let me know so that I can think about what support might be available to you and how I manage other interviews in future. Alternatively, you can contact the following organisations who are trained to support young people and refugees.

Support Lines In the UK

Organisation	Information	Contact Details
Childline	Free, confidential helpline for young people in trouble or danger, which provides support and counselling and can put you in touch with an appropriate organisation for your needs.	0800 11 11 24 hour helpline www.childline.org.uk
Get Connected	Free, confidential helpline for young people which helps you find the most appropriate organisation for your needs	0808 808 4994 help@getconnected.org.uk Interpreting is available
NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children)	there4me.com gives advice for teenagers through confidential online counselling with an NSPCC adviser.	there4me.com Free Telephone: 0808 800 5000 Interpreting is available

National

Red Cross (www.redcross.org.uk)- work with young asylum seekers and refugees, aged 15 up to 25 years offering a variety of services both one-to-one and group-based.

Refugee Council (www.refugeecouncil.org.uk) – offer a range of services including advice, support and therapy for both children and adults.

London

Asylum AID (www.asylumaid.org.uk/)- provide free legal advice, support, and representation for asylum seekers and refugees. They also provide assistance in presenting asylum applications. (Westminster, London).

Baobab Survivors (www.baobabsurvivors.org) - offer non-residential therapeutic community for child, adolescent and young adult asylum seekers and refugees who have experienced humiliation, violence, trafficking and violation in their home countries and/or on their often prolonged journeys into exile in the UK. (North London)

Room to Heal (www.roomtoheal.org)- supports refugees and asylum seekers who have experienced torture and human rights abuses. Alongside therapeutic support, they offer practical casework assistance and a range of creative and social activities, enabling people to rebuild meaningful lives in exile. (Newington Green, London).

The Refugee Therapy Centre (www.refugeetherapy.org.uk/)- aims to help refugees and asylum seekers by offering psychotherapy and counselling. (Based in Finsbury Park, North London).

Young Roots (www.youngroots.org.uk) – offer a casework service which provides 1-to-1 support with immigration and housing issues, accessing benefits, finding solicitors, registering with GPs and making referrals to other services. They also have youth activities including a drama group and football. (Brent and Croydon)

Glasgow

Scottish Refugee Council (www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk) – support for including a telephone advice service for people looking for advice and information on refugee and asylum issues. They also offer advice on housing, education, work, health and how to get involved in Scottish life.

Refugee Survival Trust (www.rst.org.uk) - charity that provides grants and integrated support services to asylum seekers and refugees living in Scotland. These grants and services reduce poverty helping refugees and asylum seekers to access education and employment, and to integrate.

Central and West Integration Network (www.cwin.org.uk) - network that brings together refugees, asylum seekers, migrant workers and BME communities across Glasgow and Central Scotland. Services include Mothers and children group, Emergency Food Aid, and Drop in service.

Glasgow ESOL Forum (<http://www.glasgowesol.org>) - provides ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) learning opportunities for adults, supporting integration, employability and personal development.

The Bridges Programmes (www.bridgesprogrammes.org.uk/) - specialist agency, supporting integration into the workplace for refugees, asylum seekers, migrants, and anyone for whom English is a second language, living in Glasgow.

Refugee Integration Service (call the advice line on 0141 223 7979 or call reception on 0141 248 9799) – This service is for people who have recently received Refugee Status, Humanitarian Protection, or Discretionary Leave to Remain. They offer support with

accessing benefit payments and/or a Crisis Grant, accessing accommodation as well as signposting to other useful services.

Birmingham

Refugee Action (www.refugee-action.org.uk/refugee-action-birmingham/)

The Asylum Crisis Birmingham project supports asylum seekers in Birmingham whose claim for asylum or refugee status has been refused. There is also a team helping Syrian refugee families that are going to be living in Birmingham to settle into their new lives and make connections with their new community so they can rebuild their lives in safety and peace.

Refuge and Migrant Centre (www.rmcentre.org.uk/) They help refugees and migrants through crisis and disadvantage, by removing barriers to their integration and enabling them to become equal citizens.

Meena Centre (www.meenacentre.org/) The Meena Centre supports women and child refugees and asylum seekers as they get settled in the UK. They provide practical, emotional, psychological support and connect people to legal advice and local support networks.

The Children's Society (www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/helping-children/birmingham-and-coventry) A range of services are available for young refugees and migrants across Birmingham and Coventry, covering a broad range of issues which impact on their lives. This includes befriending for young unaccompanied asylum seekers and refugees in Birmingham and Coventry - through youth groups, giving them a place to meet and group work to help develop their life skills.

Thank you again for your help in my research,

Cassie Addai (u1622761@uel.ac.uk)

Trainee Clinical Psychologist at University of East London

6.7 Appendix G: Semi-structured Interview Schedule

Icebreaker –What’s the best thing about living in (city name)?

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview today. I'll be asking you questions about three things - waiting to be reunited with your relative, being separated from them and the experience of being reunited in the UK.

Waiting to be reunited

1. Which relative/s were you reunited with in the UK?
2. What was your experience of being told that your [relative] was applying for family reunion?
 - How much were you told about the FR application/ what did your [relative] tell you about the FR application? How much did you understand of what was involved?
 - How did you feel about the process?
 - How much choice were you given about moving to the UK?
3. How did it feel preparing to leave your country of origin?
 - Did all of your family come to the UK? If not, how did it feel leaving them?
 - What support did you receive ahead of the reunion? From family, friends, religious groups, community, organisations?
4. What was your experience of travelling to the UK? How did you travel here?
 - Did you travel directly from your country of origin? Was it your first flight?
 - Who were you travelling with?
5. How did you feel when you were preparing to be reunited?
 - Happiness, excitement, worry, uncertainty, sadness?
6. Did you experience any challenges with the reunion?
 - During- Length of time taken? Issues with paperwork?
 - After – housing, education, missing friends/family/home country, making new friends, learning English?

During separation

7. How did it feel to be separated from your [relative]? What was your life like during the separation?
 - How long had you been separated?
 - Who were you living with during the period of separation?
 - What aspects of the separation were the most challenging for you? And why?
 - What support did you receive during the separation? From family, friends, religious groups, community, organisations?

Reunited in the UK

8. What was your expectation of life in the UK before you arrived?
 - Did you have any expectations about housing, education system, weather, culture, people?
9. What is your relationship with your relative/s like since your reunion?
 - How does it feel living with them after the separation?

What changes have you noticed? What has remained the same?

10. How has life in the UK been since you have arrived?

How was the experience of enrolling into school / college / looking for work / hobbies/leisure/ learning English/ making new friends?

11. Is there any person or organisation helping you with your new life in the UK?

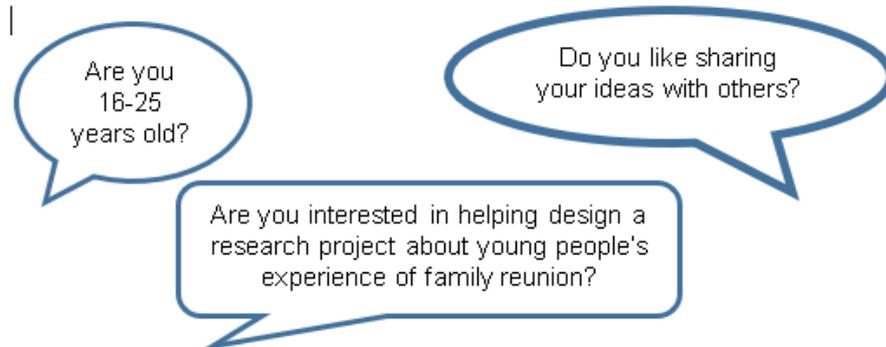
12. What are your hopes for your future in (city name)?

I have now come to the end of my questions. Is there anything about family reunion that I've not asked you about today, which you would like to share with me? Are there any questions that I didn't ask, that you wish I had?

6.8 Appendix H: Flyer to Recruit Young People as Consultants



Focus Group - Young people's experience of having undergone the refugee family reunion process in the UK



If you answered "yes" to all these questions, I would like to hear from you.

Who am I? I am Cassie Addai, a trainee clinical psychologist at the University of East London. I am carrying out a research project as part of my studies. The project aims to explore what it is like for young people to be reunited with relatives through the refugee family reunion process.	
What does taking part involve? I will meet with you and 2-3 other young people. We will meet together once. I will share my ideas about the research project and ask you for your comments and suggestions. The group is likely to take place in August 2018 at [location, BRC office?], and will last around two hours.	
What are the benefits of taking part? Your travel expenses will be covered. You will receive a certificate and £20 voucher to thank you for your time, after taking part. Your ideas are very important in helping me to design a study about young people's experience of family reunion in the UK. This will help professionals to understand more about what family reunion is like for young people so that they can think about how best to support young people in this situation.	
What next? If you are interested in taking part, please contact me – Cassie Addai u1622761@uel.ac.uk	

6.9 Appendix I: Young Person Consultants Information Sheet



University of East London

School of Psychology

Stratford Campus

Water Lane

London, E15 4LZ

CONSULTANT INVITATION LETTER

You are being invited to contribute to a research study. Before you agree it is important that you understand what your participation would involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

Who am I?

I am a postgraduate student in the School of Psychology at the University of East London and am studying for the Professional Doctorate in Clinical Psychology. As part of my studies I am conducting the research you are being invited to discuss.

Project Title

Young people's experience of having undergone the refugee family reunion process in the UK

What is the research?

An increasing number of people are fleeing from war and persecution in their home country and seeking safety in the UK. In fleeing from danger, refugees leave behind their home and their families. Psychologists know that families are important to us, and that when people are separated from their relatives this can affect their wellbeing. Therefore it is important to try and reunite relatives, where possible. Once granted refugee status, refugees can apply for close relatives from their home country to join them in the UK, through a process called family reunion. The British Red Cross supports many people to come to the UK every year to be reunited with their families. I am interested in finding out more about what it is like for young people to be reunited with relatives in this way. Previously, research has focused on adults' experience of the family reunion process but less is known specifically about the experience of young people.

Why have you been asked to participate?

I am interested in meeting with young people like you so that you can help me shape this research about refugee family reunion, by sharing your ideas.

What will you be asked to do?

I will meet with you and 2-3 other young people. We will meet together once. I will share my ideas about the research project, described above, and ask you for your comments and suggestions. This group will last around two hours. I will make a recording of our discussion on my audio-recorder, this is so that do not forget anything later. If it would help you during the discussion, I can also arrange for an interpreter to be present.

What are the benefits of taking part?

The group will be an opportunity for you to shape research about the family reunion process, this will be used to build current knowledge about refugees and family reunion.

Are there any risks involved?

Although the study is not designed to involve any risk, it is important to consider that talking about your experiences of family reunion might be difficult, perhaps due to experiences that you have had or witnessed. Some people may become upset during the group, if this happens then we can take a break or stop the group. You do not have to continue with the group and you can choose not to answer any question/s. Some people may become upset after the group, either immediately after or sometime later. If this happens, I have thought about how who could offer you support so if you do feel upset or distressed, please let me know. Although I cannot offer you direct support myself, we can think together about what is upsetting and I will contact your British Red Cross caseworker so that they can also support you. If I am concerned about your safety then I would speak to my supervisor with your permission and we might think about who else could help you. I have also provided a list of local services that might be helpful to you, following the group.

Keeping information safe

The discussion will be carried out with me and will take about two hours. We might also be joined by an interpreter, if you would benefit from this. If we are joined by an interpreter then the group will take slightly longer. I will record the group on my audio-recorder, this is so that I do not forget any detail from our discussion together. I will remove any information which could be used to identify you, such as your name, and you can decide what you would like to be called instead. The audio file will be saved in a password-protected folder on my private computer, so that no-one else has access. After I have submitted my research, I will delete the audio-recordings.

Although information shared in the group will be kept safe, I also have a responsibility to share information if I am concerned about the safety or well-being of

yourself or others. If I am concerned then I will discuss this with you first, where possible. However, I may also discuss my concerns with my supervisor to ensure that you and others are safe.

Where will our meeting take place?

The focus group will take place at the British Red Cross Office, Glasgow

Will any payment be given?

You will receive a £20 shopping voucher to thank you for your time.

Important

You do not have to take part in this study, it is your choice to participate. If decide to meet me for the group and wish to stop at time, please let me know.

Contact Details

If you would like further information about my research or have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Cassie Addai

Trainee Clinical Psychologist at University of East London

u1622761@uel.ac.uk

If you have any questions or concerns about how the research has been conducted please contact the research supervisor, Dr Neil Rees, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ,

Email:n.rees@uel.ac.uk

or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee: Dr Mark Finn, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ.

(Email: m.finn@uel.ac.uk)

6.10 Appendix J: Vignette for Focus Group

To start off the focus group, I have prepared a fictional story about a boy from Syria. Please listen as I read as we will be discussing some questions afterwards.

Mohammed is a 16 year old boy from Syria. He lived there with his mother, father and two younger sisters. When he was younger, Mohammed and his family had a happy life. This changed when the war started. They became very worried and did not feel safe anymore.

His father left Syria in 2014, and travelled to the UK. Mohammed and his sisters do not know very much about why their father left, and they miss him a lot.

Last year, his father applied for a family reunion visa. His father was supported by the Red Cross with the application. Mohammed and his family left behind their home, possessions and friends in Syria. He arrived with his mother and sisters in Glasgow six months ago. They have now been reunited with their father.

Questions

- What questions should I ask Mohammed in an interview to understand how he feels? If you were Mohammed, what things would you be like to be asked in an interview? What are the most urgent things I should be asking about?
- If you were Mohammed, what things would you not want to be asked about in an interview?
- What could I do to make Mohammed comfortable during the interview? How would you set up the room? (seats, tables, refreshments)
- What do you think about the three areas I want to ask Mohammed about; the period of separation, during application and after reunion?

6.11 Appendix K: Flyer to Recruit Young People as Participants

- Are you 16–25 years old?
- Did you arrive in the UK through family reunion?
- Did you arrive in the UK between 6–24 months ago?
- Would you like to talk about your experience of family reunion?

If you answered "yes" to all these questions, I would like to hear from you.

Who am I?

I am Cassie Addai, a trainee clinical psychologist at the University of East London. I am carrying out a research project as part of my studies. The project aims to explore what it is like for young people to be reunited with relatives through the refugee family reunion process.



What does the research involve?

I will meet you for one interview. I will ask you some questions about your experience of family reunion. This will take about one hour. The interview is likely to take place in September 2018 at [location, BRC office?].

If it would help you during the interview, I can also arrange for an interpreter to be present.



What are the benefits of taking part?

You will be able to share your experience of the family reunion process. This will help professionals to understand more about what family reunion is like for young people so that they can think about how best to support young people in this situation.

You will receive a certificate and £20 voucher to thank you for your time, after taking part.



What next?

If you are interested in taking part, please contact me – **Cassie Addai** u1622761@uel.ac.uk I can give you more information about the research and arrange a time for the interview.

6.12 Appendix L: BRC Recruitment Strategies

BRC Recruitment in Glasgow

Potential participants were identified from a BRC internal database of 26 young people who were accessing RSRFL services and had previously agreed to being contacted for research. A RSRFL caseworker reviewed the database and discussed the young people listed with their caseworkers to ensure there were no reasons that they should not be considered for the study.

This RSRFL caseworker then phoned 12 individuals who met the inclusion criteria, informing them about the research study and inviting them to participate. These calls took place with the support of a telephone interpreter, where necessary. Four individuals agreed to take part and face-to-face interviews were arranged. Two of these participants arrived for their interview with a sibling, who was also interested in the study; these two siblings were recruited as additional participants and interviewed separately.

BRC Recruitment in Birmingham and Leeds

Prospective participants were identified by caseworkers, they were then telephoned by another member of staff with further information about the research study and inviting them to participate. As above, these calls were facilitated by a telephone interpreter, where necessary. Six participants were identified in this way and an interview time was agreed with them.

6.13 Appendix M: Key Explaining Transcription Notes

I made some minor changes to participants' accounts when selecting transcript extracts to use as quotations, this was to improve readability and ensure participants' anonymity.

Table 5 below explains the conventions I used in transcription and analysis.

Table 5.

Key explaining conventions used in transcribing and analysis

Symbol	Meaning
...	significant pause
[text]	Text added by the researcher by clarity
[...]	Text removed for clarity or confidentiality
(numbers)	Corresponding line numbers

Participants were allocated the following 12 colours as index cards or typed ink, this provided useful visual cues throughout the analysis process.

Participant
Abdul
Bushra
Kaleb
Dunya
Fatimah
Hiba
Ismail
Mustafa
Omar
Sadiq
Emmanuella
Priscilla

6.14 Appendix N: Example of Initial Notes for Content, Language and Context

Table 6 below explains how the three different colours of pen correspond with different types of notes. This system was adapted from suggestions by Smith et al. (2009) and my research supervisor.

Table 6.

Key explaining the three types of initial notes used in stage 2.8.2. of analysis

Ink Colour	Note Type	Explanation of notes
Black	Content	These notes are descriptive and summarise key events in the participant's account
Blue	Language	These notes comment on linguistic features of the participant's account, for example pauses, hesitation, repetition and metaphor
Red	Context	These notes are more interpretative, Smith et al. (2009) describe these notes as interrogative and conceptual, as they draw on the researcher's personal reflections.

The following extract is taken from Abdul's transcript to demonstrate these initial notes:

34	A: When we were in Lebanon, Lebanon is just a...we have been treated in a racist manner actually and you can hardly	hesitation - trying to find the right words	racism
35	get you know something to eat and if you have to you know get...if you have to you know make things meet. You		financial impact
36	have to have two persons to work, because the rent is 450 and what you get as a salary is 400, 400 you know so how		of separation
37	can you make things work? But when we make it here, we feel completely comfortable and you know happy		happiness at
38	Cassie: You're from Syria but you were living in Lebanon before you came to the UK?	again rhetorical question impossible	reunion
39	Abdul: Four years in Lebanon yes		
40	Cassie: Okay so erm...when you left Lebanon...who... did you come with other people to the UK? Or how did it feel		impact of being the only male/constructing masculinity
41	leaving any friends and family in Lebanon?		lack of support from organisations
42	Abdul (interpreter): I came here with my mum and my sisters		corruption racism?
43	Cassie: Okay, okay. And did you receive any support in Lebanon before you came to the UK? Any organisations or		anti-immigration rhet
44	religious groups?		
45	Abdul (interpreter): There are some organisations which help but those organisations and services, they don't give		happiness brief
46	real the help for those people, they themselves you know they steal, they don't treat us like the organisations here.		... hesitation
47	Those organisations they have, when they're given the money to help the refugees and people like ourselves in		emphasising the happiness
48	Lebanon. But those organisations, people who are there actually you find them driving luxury cars and very		happiness emphasis
49	expensive restaurants but we are only given very, very little money. The people working in those organisations		father's health
50	supposedly helping us take four times... of the money that should be given to us, small portion.		implied that father's health improved post-reunion
51	Cassie: So how...what was your experience of travelling from Lebanon to the UK, what was that like?		language as a barrier for the spouse too
52	Abdul (interpreter): I was so happy when I... that was announced		families globally proud
53	Cassie: Happy to be reunited with your father		leaving family behind
54	Abdul: With my dad, very, very happy yes		racism anti-immigration rhetoric in other in Lebanon 2
55	Cassie: Did you feel any other emotions; excited, worried, sad?		
56	Abdul (interpreter): We were really extremely happy when we came here to see our father because he was you		
57	know, he was alone here and really very, very happy. He wasn't eating very well but when we came here and		
58	reunited with each other so, the situation is completely different.		
59	Cassie: You mentioned issues with paperwork, were there any other challenges with the application that your father		
60	had to do?		
61	Abdul (interpreter): My father when he came here only speaks little English and he was asking everyone how to do		
62	the application and he has been trying to do the application for us to join us.		
63	Cassie: Were there any challenges that you found?		
64	Abdul (interpreter): Well I have lots of families who are left behind like in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and er, Germany.		
65	Especially in Lebanon, there lots of oppression and racism and we have been you know treated very badly actually.		
66	But when we made it here, we feel good.		

6.15 Appendix O: Example of Initial Codes in Left-Hand Margin

The following image is the same extract as previously shown, from Abdul's transcript, with the initial codes in the left-hand margin.

Reunited with his father, following 4 year separation

34 racism
35
36 financial impact
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46 lack of support
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52 happy to be reunited
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65
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A: When we were in Lebanon, Lebanon is just a...we have been treated in a racist manner actually and you can hardly get you know something to eat and if you have to you know get...if you have to you know make things meet. You have to have two persons to work, because the rent is 450 and what you get as a salary is 400, 400 you know so how can you make things work? But when we make it here, we feel completely comfortable and you know happy.
Cassie: You're from Syria but you were living in Lebanon before you came to the UK?
Abdul: Four years in Lebanon yes
Cassie: Okay so erm...when you left Lebanon...who... did you come with other people to the UK? Or how did it feel leaving any friends and family in Lebanon?
Abdul (interpreter): I came here with my mum and my sisters
Cassie: Okay, okay. And did you receive any support in Lebanon before you came to the UK? Any organisations or religious groups?
Abdul (interpreter): There are some organisations which help but those organisations and services, they don't give real the help for those people, they themselves you know they steal, they don't treat us like the organisations here. Those organisations they have, when they're given the money to help the refugees and people like ourselves in Lebanon. But those organisations, people who are there actually you find them driving luxury cars and very expensive restaurants but we are only given very, very little money. The people working in those organisations supposedly helping us take four times... of the money that should be given to us, small portion.
Cassie: So how...what was your experience of travelling from Lebanon to the UK, what was that like?
Abdul (interpreter): I was so happy when I...that was announced
Cassie: Happy to be reunited with your father
Abdul: With my dad, very...very happy yes
Cassie: Did you feel any other emotions; excited, worried, sad?
Abdul (interpreter): We were really extremely happy when we came here to see our father because he was you know, he was alone here and really very, very happy. He wasn't eating very well but when we came here and reunited with each other so, the situation is completely different.
Cassie: You mentioned issues with paperwork, were there any other challenges with the application that your father had to do?
Abdul (interpreter): My father when he came here only speaks little English and he was asking everyone how to do the application and he has been trying to do the application for us to join us.
Cassie: Were there any challenges that you found?
Abdul (interpreter): Well I have lots of families who are left behind like in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and er, Germany. Especially in Lebanon, there lots of oppression and racism and we have been you know treated very badly actually. But when we made it here, we feel good.

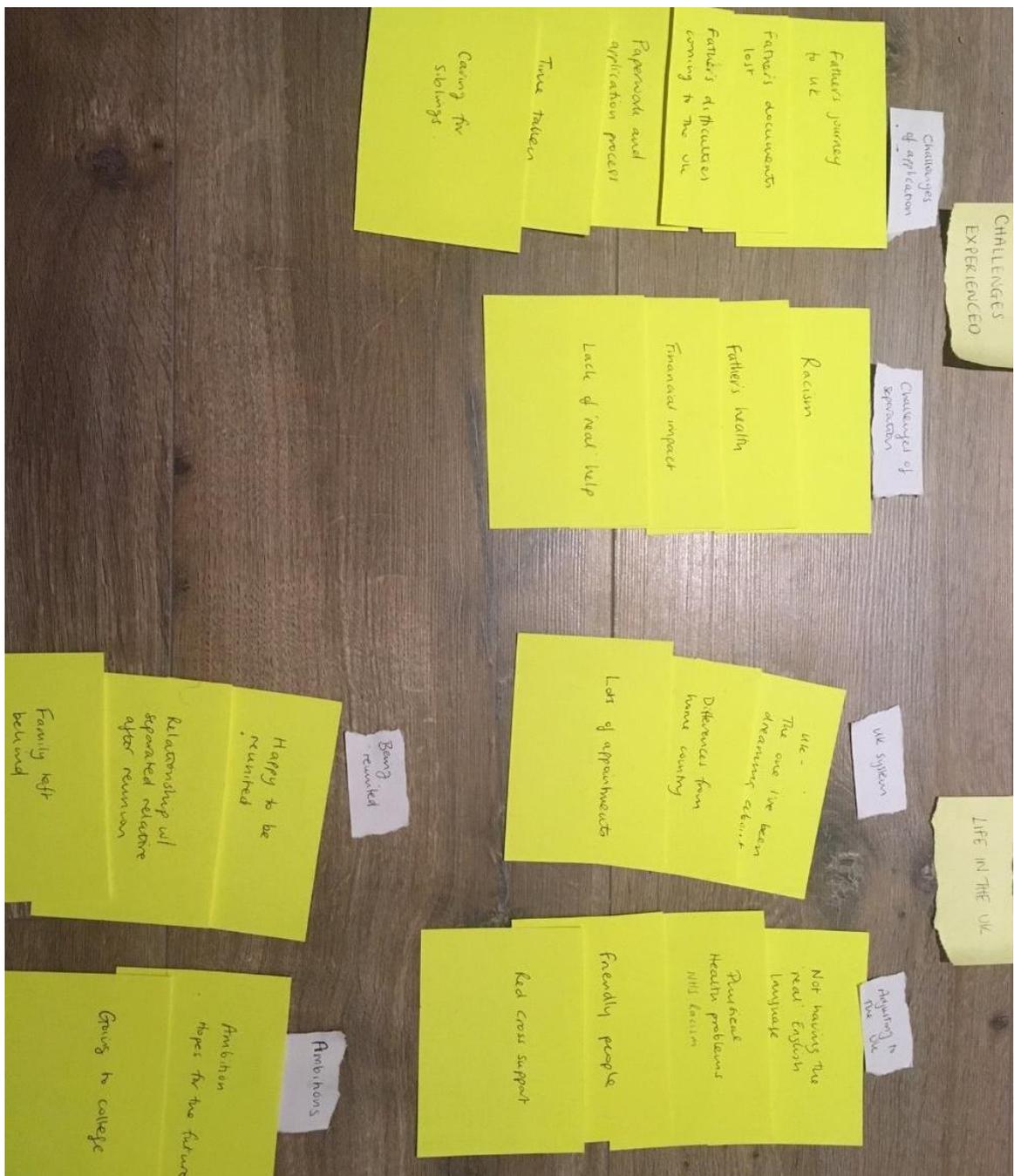
hesitation: trying to find the right words

racism
financial impact
reunion
impact of being the only male constructing masculinity
lack of support from organisations
racism? corruption
anti-immigration rhetoric
happiest brief emphasising the happiness
happiness emphasis father's health implied that father's health improved
post-reunion
I was not on a band for the sponsor too family globally spread (Levin) family reunion
racism anti-immigration rhetoric in Lebanon 2

6.16 Appendix P: Example Subordinate Themes and Superordinate Themes from Abdul

Having recorded the initial notes and developed codes for each transcript, I then transferred the codes and accompanying line numbers to a coloured index card.

The following image displays a theme map with the codes from Abdul's transcript organised into two superordinate themes: Challenges Experienced and Life in the UK, and six subordinate themes: Challenges of Application, Challenges of Separation, UK System, Adjusting to the UK, Being Reunited and Ambitions.



Once I had developed a theme map using the coloured index cards, I created a theme table to summarise key quotations, codes, subordinate and superordinate themes. Below is an extract from Abdul's theme table.

Quotes from interview 1 with Abdul		Line nos.	Codes	Subordinate themes	Superordinate themes
Abdul (interpreter): Just the one that I have been... dreaming about. Abdul: I have look at the system here before for my... aunt was here and I get to think how I understand anything here. I come here, I have a system here, Okay. Just this one here, very good, very nice. The system in the UK.		96-99	The one I have been dreaming about	UK system	Life in the UK
Abdul (interpreter): There's been some changes. Yeah the living here and the way of life is different from back home.		155-156	Differences from home country		
Abdul (interpreter): Well here is completely different. When I was in Lebanon, I only had one or a few... appointments with organisations that is helping us. But here you get lots of appointments, we're inundated with appointments, you know, every day you get one		159-161	Lots of appointments		
Abdul (interpreter): There is a wee, a wee racism here actually. One time when I was at the dentist you know, and they not get you the best quality of ... and you know, and all in all this is covered by NHS and I have been you know having lots of pain with my teeth and you know here especially (Abdul points to mouth). I have broken teeth and I have told her many times to remove them yeah, but she refused and it's been coming off for four times actually. I told her but she didn't do any good job. I was really suffering for this.		182-186	Physical health problems/ NHS Racism	Adjusting to the UK	
Abdul (interpreter): I don't have the real you know...real language to communicate with people.		111-112	Not having the real English		
Abdul (interpreter): When you have speak to me on special occasions I can understand you but if you divert to something I don't think I can go deeper with you in a real English language.		121-123			

6.17 Appendix Q: Initial Themes Across the Data Set

The following table summarises the initial subordinate and superordinate themes from across all 12 transcripts.

Abdul	Badr	Khalid	Durga	Fahim	Hiba	Imad	Musab	Omar	Sadiq	Emmonville	Priella															
Subordinate: Father's experience	Superordinate: The FR application	Subordinate: Uncertainty about outcome	Superordinate: Family reunion application	Subordinate: Uncertainty about process	Superordinate: Role of gender	Subordinate: Mixed emotions	Superordinate: Emotional responses	Subordinate: Happiness at reunion	Superordinate: Happiness period	Subordinate: Difficulties system	Superordinate: Support application	Subordinate: Lack of distance	Superordinate: Coping strategies	Subordinate: Preparing to leave	Superordinate: Travelling process	Subordinate: Different processes	Superordinate: Family logistics	Subordinate: Waiting with father	Superordinate: Agency making	Subordinate: Decision making	Superordinate: Challenging relationships	Subordinate: Supportive relationships	Superordinate: Difficulties	Subordinate: Not actively involved	Superordinate: Not actively involved	
Stressors	Life in the UK	Contemplating marriage	Arriving in the UK	Missing his mum in the UK	Enjoying UK country	Loss of relationships	Emotional impact	Adjusting to UK life	Support	Support	Support	Support	Support	Support	Support	Support	Support	Support	Support	Support	Support	Support	Support	Support	Support	Support
Limited support	Relationships in the UK	Men as providers	Men as providers	Men as providers	Men as providers	Men as providers	Men as providers	Men as providers	Men as providers	Men as providers	Men as providers	Men as providers	Men as providers	Men as providers	Men as providers	Men as providers	Men as providers	Men as providers	Men as providers	Men as providers	Men as providers	Men as providers	Men as providers	Men as providers	Men as providers	Men as providers
UK system	Adjusting to the UK	The feeling of reunion	The feeling of reunion	The feeling of reunion	The feeling of reunion	The feeling of reunion	The feeling of reunion	The feeling of reunion	The feeling of reunion	The feeling of reunion	The feeling of reunion	The feeling of reunion	The feeling of reunion	The feeling of reunion	The feeling of reunion	The feeling of reunion	The feeling of reunion	The feeling of reunion	The feeling of reunion	The feeling of reunion	The feeling of reunion	The feeling of reunion	The feeling of reunion	The feeling of reunion	The feeling of reunion	The feeling of reunion
Ambitions	Being reunited	Opportunity for learning & English	Supportive Relationships	Supportive Relationships	Supportive Relationships	Supportive Relationships	Supportive Relationships	Supportive Relationships	Supportive Relationships	Supportive Relationships	Supportive Relationships	Supportive Relationships	Supportive Relationships	Supportive Relationships	Supportive Relationships	Supportive Relationships	Supportive Relationships	Supportive Relationships	Supportive Relationships	Supportive Relationships	Supportive Relationships	Supportive Relationships	Supportive Relationships	Supportive Relationships	Supportive Relationships	Supportive Relationships
Gratitude/dependence	Gratitude/dependence	Gratitude/dependence	Gratitude/dependence	Gratitude/dependence	Gratitude/dependence	Gratitude/dependence	Gratitude/dependence	Gratitude/dependence	Gratitude/dependence	Gratitude/dependence	Gratitude/dependence	Gratitude/dependence	Gratitude/dependence	Gratitude/dependence	Gratitude/dependence	Gratitude/dependence	Gratitude/dependence	Gratitude/dependence	Gratitude/dependence	Gratitude/dependence	Gratitude/dependence	Gratitude/dependence	Gratitude/dependence	Gratitude/dependence	Gratitude/dependence	Gratitude/dependence
Friendly people	Friendly people	Friendly people	Friendly people	Friendly people	Friendly people	Friendly people	Friendly people	Friendly people	Friendly people	Friendly people	Friendly people	Friendly people	Friendly people	Friendly people	Friendly people	Friendly people	Friendly people	Friendly people	Friendly people	Friendly people	Friendly people	Friendly people	Friendly people	Friendly people	Friendly people	Friendly people

6.18 Appendix R: Reflexive Journal Extract

6/9/18 Interview 1

So my first interview came about more quickly than anticipated – a young person, Abdul, that I had been expecting to see tomorrow morning came in for his interview today due to a mix-up with timings. Luckily we were able to arrange for an interpreter to attend and I was able to see him for the interview. Another unexpected thing is that he brought his sister along and that she is also interested in taking part in an interview, later today.

I was mindful that there was a lot of information to read through with Abdul in order to ensure informed consent. I think he was quite keen to get started with the interview and the lengthy information about consent and confidentiality made him concerned that the interview would be an unpleasant experience. He made a comment to the effect of, “can we just get started with the interview?” and I wonder if the preliminary paperwork brought up difficult memories, perhaps of immigration interviews.

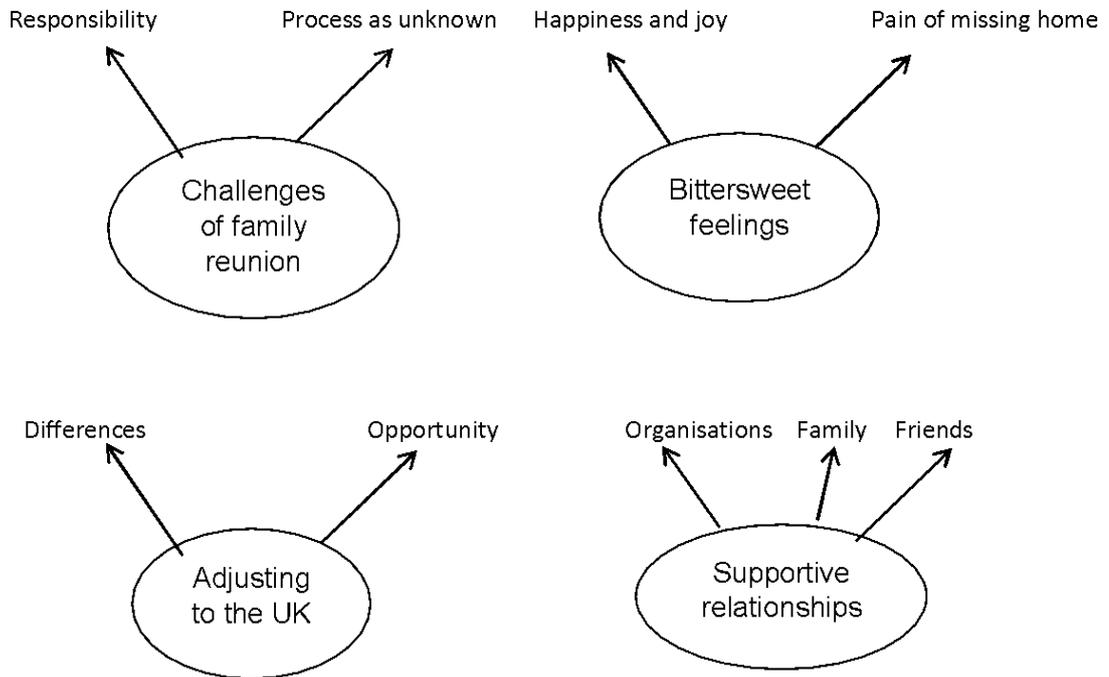
During the interview, I wondered if my questions were not easily understood by the interpreter or Abdul; in particular when I asked about his experience of being separated from his father, Abdul responded that he had not been separated but that his father was in Glasgow when he lived in Lebanon. However, he seemed to understand what I meant when I asked what it was like to be living in his home country when his father was living in the UK. This made me aware that some of my questions may not be very accessible to people with English as a second language, and that they may need clarifying or simplifying. At times, it felt that the interpreter and Abdul were talking a lot between themselves, but only a small section was subsequently translated to me in English. Perhaps I should have been more assertive in ensuring that the interpreter was translating verbatim. Although it may also just have been my own impatience, in waiting to hear Abdul’s response, making it feel like they were talking for a long time.

In this interview, I think the blurring of role between therapist and researcher felt very apparent; there were some occasions where I felt I would have explored Abdul’s responses more had it been a therapeutic session, however, as it was a research interview, I felt more confined. This is hopefully a balancing act that I will become more comfortable with during the course of the next few interviews.

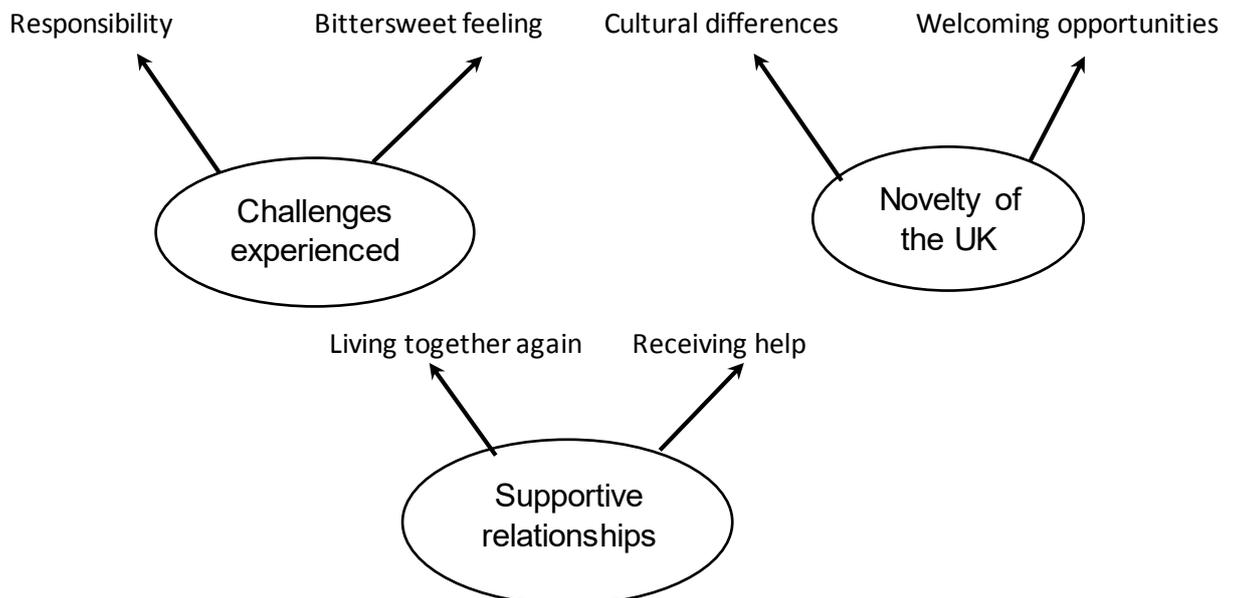
Interestingly, almost as soon as the audio-recorder was switched off, Abdul asked “where is your mother country?” and also asked about my “mother tongue”. I admit I was initially a bit thrown by this, even though it is something I am often asked. I assume that he would not have asked a white interviewer these questions and that it was motivated by him observing my visible difference as a black woman in the UK. Within this context, I was assuming the role of interviewer and Abdul asking me these questions changed this interaction.

6.19 Appendix S: Developing the Final Configuration of Themes

The first image displays the initial superordinate and subordinate themes developed from the data.



The image below displays the final configuration of themes after discussion with my research supervisor, peer supervision with a colleague and dissemination of initial findings to the BRC. The aim of this was not to gain 'inter-rater reliability' but to discuss the themes with others who have experience of working with young people from refugee populations and gain greater insight. Following these discussions, some of the initial themes have been collapsed and combined to create the final three superordinate themes, each with two accompanying subordinate themes.



The table below shows prevalence and distribution of overall superordinate and subordinate themes across the whole participant group.

Superordinate themes	Subordinate themes	Abdul	Bushra	Kaleb	Dunya	Fatimah	Hiba	Ismail	Mustafa	Omar	Sadiq	Emmanuel	Priscilla
Challenges experienced: "It wasn't really easy"	Responsibility	X					X		X	X	X	X	X
	Bittersweet feelings	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Novelty of the UK: "You have to adjust"	Culture	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
	Welcoming opportunities	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Supportive relationships	Living together again	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Receiving support	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	