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**NAVIGATING HOME IN REFUGEEEDOM AND NAVIGATING REFUGEEEDOM IN
ADOLESCENCE, ALONE**

Section A: What do we know about ‘home’ as an important psychological construct for our understanding of refugeedom?

Word Count: 7,900 (+213)

Section B: What sense do refugees make of how they coped with their experiences of displacement to UK from other countries as unaccompanied young people?

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Acknowledgments

To my participants, thank you for trusting me with your voices and songs.

To my experts by experience, thank you for helping me hear these songs.

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To my partner, thank you for our midnight conversations, “*Home* is that moment of a perfect balance and belonging”.

To my family and friends. In memory of my grandpa, who passed away in 2020.

Context of Covid-19 Pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the empirical part of this work (Section B). The study was originally approved in March 2020 for research conducted with unaccompanied-asylum seeking children (UASC) in the UK. The plan was for the researcher to build an interpersonal relationship with the young people through joint activities and then to invite the young people to take photographs about their experiences and partake in interviews. This interpersonal relationship-building was vital in working with young and vulnerable population and was no longer possible in light of the pandemic. Thus, the study was re-designed for the research to be conducted with young adults who have experiences of being UASC in the UK. The method was also adapted to allow selecting images from the Internet in order to accommodate for the limited opportunities to take photographs in the community and challenges of interpersonal work conducted online. A new approval was sought and received in September 2020. It is this re-designed study that is presented in Section B. The pandemic has also significantly impacted the recruitment, leading to a smaller size and representativeness of the sample than could have been otherwise possible.

Summary of the Major Research Project

Section A: This review aimed to evaluate and draw conclusions from the existing knowledge base about refugees' meaning-making of *home*. The necessity stemmed from Papadopoulos's (2021) observation that the loss of home is the only condition shared by all refugees in the world. Meta-ethnographic approach was employed to synthesise systematically searched empirical papers investigating personal meaning-making of *home* in refugeedom. The loss of home in refugeedom brought to the consciousness previously imperceptible elements of existence: 'normal' flow of life, belonging and self-identity. Reconstructing a sense of *home* in the context of exile is essential to reconstructing a sense of the self within oneself and amongst others in the world.

Section B: This study aimed to investigate what psychological understandings can be derived from the sense and meaning the six young adults made of their experiences as children fleeing home alone and reaching the shores of safety in the UK. Imagery assisted emancipatory form of interpretative phenomenological analysis suggested conflicts between negotiating the 'new life' in the UK but staying loyal to the norms and values of own culture and religion, putting down roots but experiencing external hatred, having faith but experiencing emotional distress interpreted as a loss of faith. Practical help should include support building connections and achieving educational and career goals beyond learning English. Clinicians should adopt a culture-sensitive and gender-specific approach tailored to the survivors of experiences of being an unaccompanied child refugee, including higher risks of stigmatisation.

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Section A: Literature review paper

What do we know about 'home' as an important psychological construct for our understanding of refugeedom?

Word count: 7,900 (+213)

Abstract

This review aimed to evaluate and draw conclusions from the existing knowledge base about refugees' meaning-making of *home*. The necessity stemmed from Papadopoulos's (2021) observation that the loss of home is the only condition shared by all refugees in the world. Meta-ethnographic approach was employed to synthesise systematically searched empirical papers investigating personal meaning-making of *home* in refugeedom. The synthesis conclusions were that the personal meaning-making of *home* in forced exile lied within three domains: *home* as the perceptible 'normal' flow of life, *home* as belonging and *home* as self-identity. The review concluded that the loss of home in refugeedom brought to the consciousness previously imperceptible elements of existence and identity, and that reconstructing a sense of *home* in the context of exile is essential to reconstructing a sense of the self within oneself and amongst others in the world.

Introduction

*Soon it will be thirteen years since the nightingale
fluttered out of its cage and vanished.*

...

*“A thousand-li-long road starts with the first step”, as
the proverb goes. Pity the road home does
not depend on that same step. It exceeds ten times
a thousand li, especially counting from zeros.*

*One thousand li, two thousand li –
a thousand means “Thou shall not ever see
thy native place.” And the meaninglessness, like a plague,
spreads from words onto numbers, onto zeros especially.*

Brodsky, 1977, p.143, a Russian-Jewish Soviet poet in involuntary exile in the US

This review considers the experience of losing *home* as central to the experience of being a refugee. It aims to evaluate and draw conclusions from the existing knowledge base about refugees’ meaning-making of *home*. The necessity for this review stems from Papadopoulos’s (2002) observation that the loss of home is the only condition shared by all refugees of the world and that therapeutic care addressing the restoration of the psychological processes associated with home, or *homecoming* within oneself, might promote recovery and resilience in working with refugees even when ‘the native place cannot be seen again’. There have been extensive studies of *home* in context of forced displacement in multiple disciplines (Watson, 2019, Papadopoulos, 2021), however research findings and theories are so diverse that their interconnection is challenging without a systematic approach (Papadopoulos, 2021).

There has not been a systematic literature review to date looking at what we know about *home* as an important psychological construct in our understanding of refugeedom.

The review begins by considering diverse historical, socio-political and economic contexts of *home* alongside a psychological exploration of *home* from a perspective of early attachments, belonging, culture and identity. This is followed by particularities of refugees' relationship to home and its centrality to them that could be viewed in relation to 'normal' human responses and emotional processes of powerlessness and helplessness, loss, defences against psychic pain, mourning, and resistance and resilience leading to the restoration of agency, dignity, meaning and wellbeing. Within this setting, a meta-ethnographic approach was used to systematically evaluate and interconnect empirical evidence investigating refugees' meaning-making of *home* to draw conclusions and implications of the existing evidence base.

Home as a Psychological Construct

In the excerpt above, Brodsky spoke about *home* as a native place, a birthplace, a village, a city, a country or a homeland. American and English thought about *home* in the 17th and 18th centuries was characterised by this wider meaning of *home* as a birthplace alongside a metaphorical meaning of *home* as God or a destination reached upon end of life (Moore, 2000). Moore suggested that alongside this thinking, a psychological exploration of *home* began enquiring into relationships between *home* and individual attachments to a place, *home* and culture, and *home* and self-identity and belonging.

Low and Altman (1992) described individual emotional bonds to *home* using a place attachment theory as follows. Individuals become attached to spaces due to biological, environmental, psychological and sociocultural factors. *Home*, within this framework, also gained a temporal dimension of linear life events and/or circular life cycles. Place attachment was viewed to function as a secure, predictable, base that connected individual life stages,

significant relationships, and familial, spiritual and cultural belonging. This created a link between place, life experiences, identity over time, values and beliefs that manifested in the meaning-based attachment to a place (*home*). Hidalgo and Hernández (2001) suggested that the underlying quality of the place attachment is a need of the individual to maintain closeness to the place of the attachment, which is often unconscious until a disruption occurs. Luci (2020), too, suggested that the integration of the self with *home* is an experiential medium (like water to fish) that is imperceptible until it is lost.

The development of the place attachment theory turned towards individual differences between people in the formation of the attachments, somewhat disregarding the individuality of places or the process of forming these attachments (Lewicka, 2011). Giuliani (1991) ascribed these differences between people to the individuals' mental representations that guided and mediated behavioural patterns of attachment to *home*. Giuliani conceptualised *home* attachment as a dynamic model incorporating development of self-identity over time, a recognition of the material dwelling and the social bonds as a part of self-identity, and the stability of the relationship of the self with the place. Morgan (2009) described that adult identity is highly influenced by childhood place and adult migrants can spend longer time remembering their childhood place than engaging in their immediate surroundings. Place-identity concept had been suggested in earlier thinking about place attachment (Proshansky, 1978, Proshansky et al., 1983), however the process of its occurrence was less well explored (Lewicka, 2011). Morgan (2009) tied in attachment theory to suggest how this autobiographic memory of a place might shape adult identity.

Bowlby (1979) proposed that a mental representation of the self and the caregiver occurring in early childhood creates an internal working model about how interpersonal relationships work, which is carried over into adulthood and manifested as a subjective feeling of emotional bonding. Morgan (2009) suggested that the environment forms a triad with the

caregiver and the child, whereby the child uses internally-driven motivation to leave the secure base of the caregiver to explore the environment to gain a sense of mastery and joy and then seeks proximity of the caregiver in distress. The pattern of positive experiences with the environment, Morgan suggested, creates a positive feeling of connectedness and emotional bonding of the child to the environment akin to that of the child to the caregiver, developing a place attachment. Morgan's research showed that, similarly to a human caregiver, security and familiarity of the environment served a nurturing restorative function enabling emotional regulation and a sense of reciprocity for some participants even in the absence of an available human caregiver.

Papadopoulos (2021), too, emphasised that the human experience of *home*, including experience in forced dislocation, is an active construction of a 'relational spacetime' – a self in relation to a space in time (abandoned homes, intimate spaces) and interpersonal relationships built in a specific intimate space over time. Psychological attachments remain strong after a relocation where significant people and places are lost to forced dislocation, resulting in a sense of disruption, grief and fragmentation of the spatial and group identities (Giuliani & Feldman, 1993). It is the disruption of this 'relational spacetime' which Papadopoulos (2002) and this review described as a universal experience of losing *home* in refugeedom. However, the relationship with *home* outside of this specific definition of a 'relational spacetime' may be less universal, characterised by unique internal experiences of each individual who becomes a refugee. This experience would vary and perhaps depend on the age of dislocation and what aspects of *home* accompany one into refugeedom and thus provide continuities, e.g. memories (internal home) or/and loved ones or possessions (external home). A younger child refugee fleeing with their parents might experience *home* as being rooted in and mediated by the secure attachment to their parents and therefore not describe their experiences as having lost their *home*.

Tying in these various contexts of *home*, Papadopoulos (2002) described *home* as a psychological construct combining psychological processes with early development. Using an analogy of Odysseus return to Ithaca, Papadopoulos illustrated that a return to homeland is not *homecoming* without mutual recognition and restoration of meaningful connections with others and oneself. Thus, Papadopoulos argued, *homecoming* can be described as a psychological process of reconnecting parts of oneself. Luci (2020) described such therapeutic process as creating a rootedness of the mind in the body and the new environment.

In my own experiences of involuntary life in a UK boarding school in middle teenage years and subsequently building new life as an adult in the UK (see Appendix 1 for abridged diary), I was left with a concept of *home* eluding me between my longing to return as a young person and setting roots in the UK as an adult. I felt voiceless (not in my ability to speak, but in my feeling of being heard) in the midst of childhood adversities at home and the privilege of being chosen for a safe passage by plane to the UK to attain prestigious education. *Homecoming* within myself rooted my mind to my body and shaped my identity as a Ukrainian British of Russian Jewish descent citizen of the UK. My interest in this research spans from these experiences, with a particular lens of querying what happens during the process of *homecoming*, in-between uprooting and re-rooting in the context of possibly feeling voiceless and perhaps having much less privilege than myself.

Home in Refugeedom

Refugees here are defined as any persons forcibly displaced as a result of persecution, armed conflict, humanitarian disasters or human rights violations (The UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR, 2021). This review adopts common use of the word *refugees* to include internally displaced persons (those forcibly displaced within their national borders) alongside those displaced outside their national borders living with and without legal status and those seeking

asylum, although this common definition is not a legal definition of *refugees* (UNHCR, 2021). The rationale is to encompass the totality of forced displacement experiences where possible. This research does not look at economic, social and political voluntary migration. *Refugeedom* here is understood as a system comprising of people in motion as a result of forced displacement, a set of relationships (e.g. with humanitarian relief workers) and practices (e.g. treatment by government officials and host societies) bounding these people, and the world created by the refugees (e.g. refugee experiences and response to the practices). This definition was offered by Gatrell (2016) who justified its use in academic thinking on the grounds of allowing for the systemic complexity to be recognised and discussed.

Togashi and Brothers (2021) described all human beings as refugees in a sense of our shared humanity and underlying powerlessness and helplessness in the world traumatised by armed conflicts, political and social violence, and natural disasters. Togashi and Brothers used an example of Apollo 13 astronauts to show a longing to return *home* (Earth) and a fear of not being able to, concluding that *home* is how we, as humans, know where we are among other humans. Yet, Fox O'Mahony and Sweeney (2010) state that the official discourse in the UK law and policies in relation to housing for refugees intentionally excludes experiential element from the practical provision of housing, preventing possibility of *home* attachments (preventing rootedness) in the UK to incentivise repatriation and to secure UK borders. Hobbs (2021) claims that this may still be the case for the modern-day Britain, exemplified by Napier and Penally barracks.

Such 'impossibility to set roots' might reinforce the sense of the loss of *home*, and the loss of the self, in the context of refugeedom. Togashi and Brothers (2021) considered an object relational perspective that recognises the mourning experienced in the separation-individuation process of leaving the mother country and assimilating in a new country, language, culture and human interactions. The loss of the mother-figure would be accompanied by anger, protest,

despair, detachment and grief (Bowlby, 1970). The unavailability of the mother country in exile leaves one to face a realisation of the pain of loss of an idealised object. The need to defend the self from this pain might result in a dissociation from reality (Freud, 1922). A recovery is possible after a process of mourning, the later stages of which allow to reconstruct the relationship with an image of the lost object as well as to form new connections with other objects (Bowlby, 1960). This is akin to a process of grieving in a bereavement (Worden & Winokuer, 2011).

However, Togashi and Broghers (2021) argued that the culture and place also serve as a 'selfobject', i.e. culture and place offer individuals the experiences of self-cohesion, whereby individuals can surrender to a place with trust and certainty stable throughout time. Luci (2020) also argued that the sense of *home* is a matrix between the internal and the external worlds. Togashi and Brothers suggested that the psychological trauma of immigration comes from a failure of the new place and culture to merge with the individual in the exile. This could be interpreted as what Reay (2015) described as a psychosocial understanding of habitus (Bourdieu, 1984). From this perspective, the displacement could be seen as a 'divided habitus' (Bourdieu, 1984), whereby the self might be negotiating the fear and the desire of belonging to the ethnic others (Reay, 2015).

Luci (2020) conceptualised the trauma of the loss of *home* as a displacement within an individual, whereby the exiled self becomes an external observer of the intrapersonal and interpersonal experiences of the self. Luci described multiple layers of grief due to loss of emotional bonds resulting in the fractured self and feelings of helplessness. The healing, Luci suggested, lied in a meaningful reconnection with the sensory experiences of *home* through memories with objects and subjects of 'old' life in psychotherapy, carried out in parallel to rebuilding a 'new' life through learning the new language, building interpersonal relationships and finding a meaningful occupation.

Sometimes, a different route is taken – that of resistance. Mohammad and Meryan (2019) described a sense of ‘seeing the self where one is not’ in their interpretation of postcolonial literary efforts depicting juxtaposition of Palestinian refugees returning to Haifa and the native land not recognising the Palestinians. This may be understood as a defence of dissociating the self from the reality described above (Freud, 1922). Mohammad and Meryan suggested that, upon realising the discrepancy between the utopian memory (nostalgia) and the reality, one is able to move into a state of active resistance. Mohammad and Meryan further suggested that such postcolonial writing is in itself a process of the de-territorialisation becoming re-territorialisation, re-memory, re-writing, reclaiming and rebelling against oppression and occupation.

These ideas from the field of literature echo in the field of therapy, particularly, narrative therapy. White (1990) exemplified the power of reinterpretation through the example of Native North Americans, who reclaimed their narrative from a failed assimilation with the dominant culture into an active resistance. This led to a movement confronting the dominant culture in respect of land rights. In such way, White illustrated how re-writing can restore agency, dignity, meaning and wellbeing, collectively and individually. Such approach led to a powerful and culturally-sensitive strength-based intervention with refugee children and families using a model of ‘The Tree of Life’ in the UK (Hughes, 2013).

Restoration of agency was also highlighted by Watson (2019), who argued that *home* would be experienced differently by those for whom it was a site of oppression and those for whom it was not. One of the differences is that the former also experience *home* as a site of resistance which takes place in a form of small, unnoticed, everyday acts, such as carrying on with life despite trauma. Papadopoulos (2021) argued that being a victim of adversity does not equal having a victim identity due to systemic factors involved in coping with adversity, including the role of individual (and collective) resilience and self-agency. Murrani (2019)

proposed that self-agency in re-creation of home in forced displacement lies in the uprooting home from a place and rooting it in the consciousness of the individual. Murrani suggested this process might be possible due to the neuroplasticity of the individual brain nestled within the collective agency of the displaced community.

Themes of powerlessness and helplessness when home is unreachable, oppression and resistance on home site, and self-agency and resilience in reconstruction of home illustrate that the loss of home is central to the experience of being a refugee.

Aims

1. What is the scope and the quality of the peer-reviewed evidence base accessible in English exploring understanding of the personal meaning-making of *home* in the context of forced displacement?
2. What psychosocial conclusions about personal meaning-making of *home* in the context of forced displacement can be drawn from this research?

Method

Epistemological Stance

This work employed a meta-ethnographic approach to the systematic literature review. A need to connect diverse data and interpretations (Papadopoulos, 2021) called for an approach that is analytical, productive of conceptual, higher-order interpretations with a greater explanatory power of the 'whole' (Sattar et al., 2021, Barnett-Page & Thomas, 2009). A limitation of this approach is 'objective idealism' epistemological stance that aims to produce an explanation of the 'whole' rather than allow for multiple realities to exist (Barnett-Page & Thomas, 2009).

Nobit and Hare (1988) suggested, however, that meta-ethnography allows for a complexity of the phenomenon to be preserved. Raw data collected in individual studies is viewed as participants' interpretations of phenomena and cultures (first order data). Studies' researchers then create interpretations of interpretations (second order data) following some rules of scientific research, therefore creating a comparative base for the higher order synthesis. Meta-ethnography synthesis is carried out by translating sets of interpretations (studies) into one another. All interpretations are viewed as metaphors. The importance of metaphors is that they allow to reduce form but maintain abstraction and complexity of conceptual relationships. Nobit and Hare also suggested that in order to acknowledge the subjectivity of interpretations, the meta-ethnographers need to be explicit about their personal identity, context and values, including values that formed intellectual interest in the phenomenon of the synthesis.

The translation of interpretations in meta-ethnography allowed to include reciprocal (matching like with like) and refutational (encompassing dissimilar concepts) synthesis, preserving complexity and permitting for flexibility of incorporating multiple study designs (Barnett-Page and Thomas, 2009). A thematic synthesis could be seen as similar to meta-

ethnography as it includes ‘analytical’ themes which are analogous to meta-ethnographic ‘third order interpretations’. However, thematic synthesis, similar to a grounded theory synthesis, relies on reciprocal approach which requires a greater homogeneity in the study designs (Sattar et al., 2021, Barnett-Page & Thomas, 2009).

A meta-ethnographic approach was originally described as a seven-phases process (Noblit & Hare, 1988), which Sattar et al. (2021) explained further in a step-by-step research guidance paper. These steps are presented in Figure 1 and referred to as “Step [number]” throughout the remaining of this work.

Table 1. Steps of Meta-Ethnographic Synthesis (Sattar et al., 2021).

Steps	Descriptions
1	Identifying area of interest and appropriateness of qualitative synthesis using meta-ethnographic approach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enquiry is conceptual - Synthesis would substantially contribute to the knowledge
2	Identifying what is relevant to the area of interest <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specifying the focus of the investigation - Systematic literature search - Developing inclusion and exclusion criteria - Quality appraisal
3	Reading and re-reading selected studies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating table of studies’ key characteristics and contexts - Extracting first and second order constructs
4	Mapping out possible relationships between the metaphors within each study in the context of the study’s aims, setting and participants
5	Translating the metaphors into one another whilst referring back to the studies’ key characteristics and contexts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arranging studies in order to be synthesised - Summarising the metaphors from paper 1 - Summarising the metaphors from paper 2, noting similarities and differences with paper 1 - Summarising the metaphors from paper 3, noting similarities and differences with papers 1 and 2 - Repeating the process for all studies
6	Synthesising metaphors, creating a ‘whole’ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating third order concepts by carrying out a reciprocal or/and a <u>refutational</u> synthesis - Creating higher order concepts by carrying out ‘a lines of argument’ synthesis that interprets the relationships between the third order concepts
7	Reporting the synthesis

Systematic Literature Search

A systematic literature search was conducted to find studies that looked into the personal meaning-making of *home* in the context of forced displacement. Search terms were elicited from key words in the initial Google Scholar search for “refugees’ meaning-making of home” followed by several search trials of various terms and combinations of terms on PsychInfo. The final search terms combination used for systematic literature search is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Search Terms Combination

Refugees’		Meaning-making		Of Home	
Refugee* OR asylum	AND	Concept* OR image* OR	AND	Home*	
seeker* OR displace*		perception* OR perspective*			
person*		OR belief* OR attitude*			

The background information and the initial search trials helped to create a draft of inclusion and exclusion criteria. This was modified throughout the live process of the systematic search, screening and full text reading. Such modification is in line with the meta-ethnographic approach of specifying or elaborating research interest based on the discovery of new scientific accounts at a stage prior to beginning systematic comparisons and is in line with the Step 2 (Noblit & Hare, 1988). The final criteria and rationale are presented in Table 3.

Four databases were searched from conception of the databases to March 2021 using the final search terms combination over the period of January to March 2021: PsychInfo, Web of Science, Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA) and Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL). Search through the references in the relevant papers and a ‘grey literature search’ on Google Scholar were also conducted. Search, screening and selection process is illustrated by PRISMA diagram (Moher et al., 2009) in Figure 1. Ten studies were selected for this review.

Table 3. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria
Original empirical qualitative research studies <i>Rationale: The focus is on the individuals' meaning-making.</i>
Investigation of forcibly displaced individuals' personal meaning-making of <i>home</i> was one of the study's aims or main findings <i>Rationale: Creating a particular set of studies with a specific focus (Nobit and Hare, 1988) which aims to contribute to synthesising a growing body of diverse research in a complex matter (Papadopoulos, 2021)</i>
Research participants were individuals who had experiences of forced displacement <i>Rationale: The focus is on the meaning-making of refugees.</i>
Published in peer reviewed journals in English <i>Rationale: Validity of the evidence base and accessibility for the author of this work.</i>
Exclusion Criteria
Studies indirectly investigating the meaning of <i>home</i> through professionals or host societies without direct involvement of the forcibly displaced people <i>Rationale: This would be an interpretation of interpretation (Nobit and Hare, 1988), which would remove the personal meaning-making another step away from the author of this work.</i>
Studies where participants were not a homogenous group in context of their displacement, e.g. where meaning-making of forcibly displaced individuals, voluntary migrants and members of host society were analysed together <i>Rationale: Home would be experienced differently by those for whom it was a site of oppression and those for whom it was not (Watson, 2019).</i>
Ethnographic research into established resettled communities, diasporas and repatriation that did not focus on displaced individuals' personal meaning-making of <i>home</i> <i>Rationale: The focus is on the meaning-making of refugees.</i>
Studies looking at practicalities of living arrangements and housing rather than personal meaning-making of <i>home</i> <i>Rationale: These studies focused on policies and material environmental practicalities and did not focus on the individuals' meaning making.</i>
Conceptual papers <i>Rationale: A conceptual review of the home as a concept in forced displacement, using a different method of synthesis, could have been an alternative contribution to the current scientific knowledge in this area. However, personal experiences of the author of this work led to interest in understanding personal meaning-making of others' experiences. This approach also allowed for conceptualisations and abstractions of metaphors to be more grounded in the lived human experience.</i>

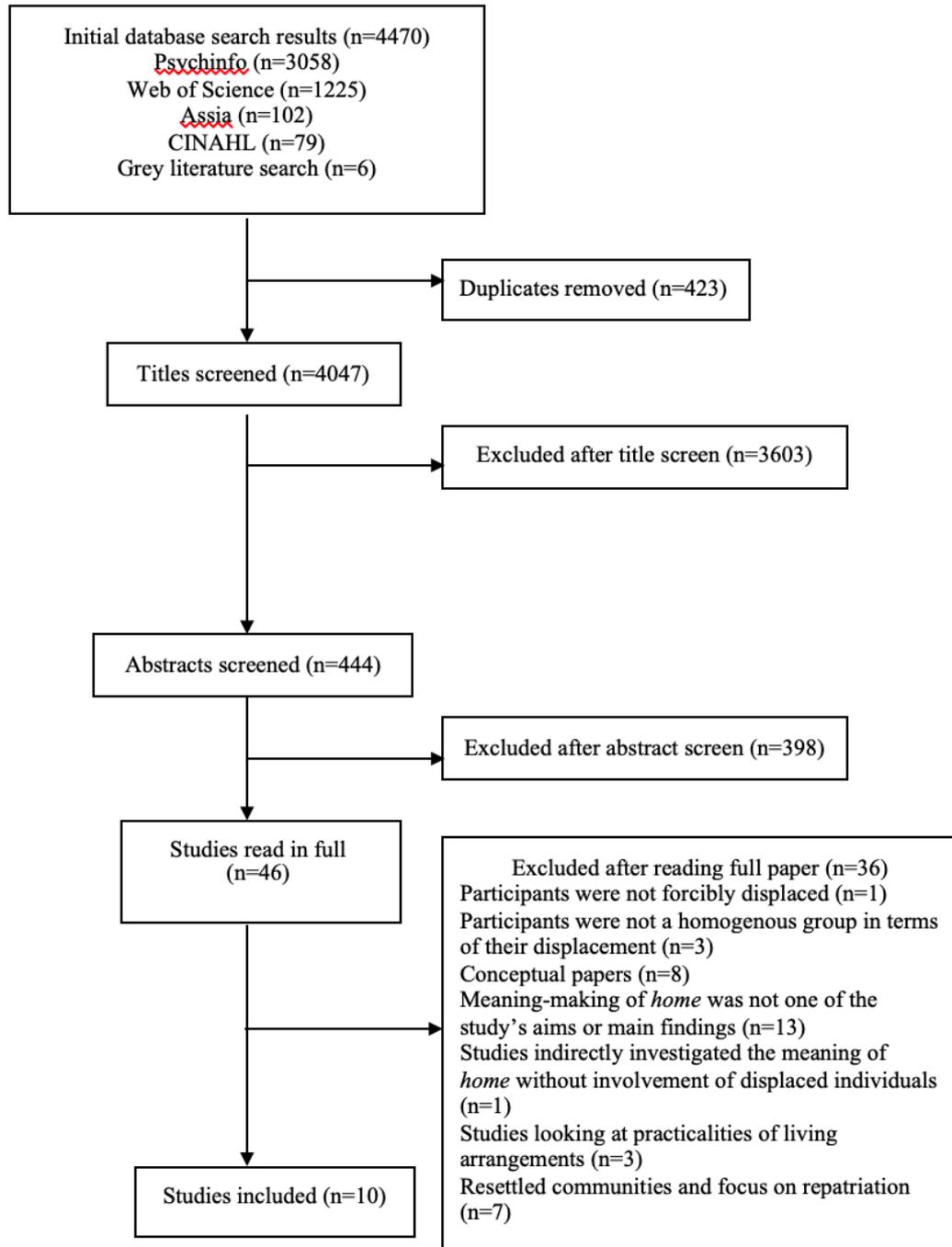


Figure 1. PRISMA diagram outlining search process

Quality Appraisal

Sattar et al. (2021) suggested CASP (Critical Appraisal Skills Programme, 2018) as a tool appropriate for critical appraisal of qualitative research in meta-ethnographic synthesis. CASP was used by other meta-ethnographic reviews (Campbell et al., 2003). Each study was appraised according to a CASP checklist consisting of nine questions assessing methodological validity, results reliability and ethical considerations and the tenth question enquiring into the value and generalisability of the research. The first nine questions offer responses ‘yes’, ‘no’ and ‘can’t tell’ with spaces for qualitative comments, and the tenth question is a commentary box only. See Appendix 2 for an example of a completed CASP checklist. CASP was not designed to be a scoring system (CASP, 2018), however, the reviewer assigned a numeration (1 for ‘yes’, 0 for ‘no’ and 0.5 for ‘can’t tell’) so that the studies could receive a score out of the total possible score of nine in order to assist with the next step of this work (Table 4). This practice is in line with Sattar et al. (2021) recommendations. No studies were excluded from the review based on this rating.

Synthesis

Meta-ethnography was originally developed for a smaller, two-six, set of studies, however its use has been justified for a greater amount of studies (Campbell et al., 2003). Thus, this approach to synthesis remained appropriate for the ten selected studies.

Step 3

A table of studies’ key characteristics and contexts was created in line with guidance for meta-ethnographic reporting by France et al. (2019) (Table 5). Extraction of first and second order constructs for each study is exemplified in Appendix 3.

Table 4. Studies Appraisals (CASP, 2018)

	Dam & Eyles (2012)	Wernesjö (2015)	Miled (2020)	Börjesson & Forkby (2020)	Arvanitis & Yelland (2019)	Simich et al. (2010)	Rosbrook & Schweitzer (2010)	Freund (2015)	Sirriyeh (2010)	Sirriyeh (2008)
Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)
Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1) Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)
Was the research design appropriate to address the aims?	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)
Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)
Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Can't tell (0.5)
Has the relationship between the researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Can't tell (0.5)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Can't tell (0.5)	Can't tell (0.5)	Can't tell (0.5)	Can't tell (0.5)
Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Can't tell (0.5)	Yes (1)	Can't tell (0.5)	Yes (1)	Can't tell (0.5)	Can't tell (0.5)
Was the data analysis rigorous?	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Can't tell (0.5)	Yes (1)	Can't tell (0.5)	Can't tell (0.5)	Can't tell (0.5)
Is there a clear statement of findings?	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)
Total Score	9	9	9	8.5	8.5	8.5	8	8	7.5	7

Table 5. Studies' Key Characteristics

Study	Aims	Participants and Setting	Design	Analysis	Findings
Dam & Eyles (2012) "Home Tonight? What? Where?" An Exploratory Study of the Meanings of House, Home and Family Among the Former Vietnamese Refugees in a Canadian City	To understand how Vietnamese refugees think about a sense of home in a context of settlement and a sense of belonging	Twelve Vietnamese adults residing in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada for at least 15 years and the first researcher (who had arrived to Canada as a refugee child). This population is described as the 'Boat People'. Countries of origin: Vietnam, Hong Kong refugee camps Age: not stated, but adults Gender: mixed	An auto-ethnography. Semi-structured interviews to produce narrative ethnography and a reflexive account of the researcher's experience.	Inductive interview data analysis using editing/organising (finding meaningful text segments) and immersion/crystallisation (coding each segment creating themes).	Home is experienced as a place and as a family in a context of time and journey of resettlement. It is linked to the individual's identity, which in itself is rooted in cultural values, ethnicity and language. For the 'Boat People', home is where the family resides.
Wernesjö (2015) Landing in a Rural Village: Home and Belonging From the Perspectives of Unaccompanied Young Refugees	To understand experiences of unaccompanied young refugees in a rural village	Nine unaccompanied young refugees residing in Barsele (a rural village in Sweden) for length of 1-2,5 years Countries of origin: Afghanistan and Somalia Ages: 16-19 Gender: mixed	Qualitative thematic interviews Additional walk-along interviews (to understand context of the village)	Analysis conducted through a theoretical framework of 'sociological listening' described as linking individual experiences to social and political contexts	The meaning-making of <i>home</i> was described as a process of emotional identification that was established through close social relationships and experiences of familiarity through friendships with other refugee youth. These feelings were negotiated with experiences of social exclusion through othering and racialisation. Safety and housing conditions in themselves were not sufficient to create the feeling of <i>home</i> . Time was a crucial factor in the process.

Miled (2020) Can The Displaced Speak? Muslim Refugee Girls Negotiating Identity, Home and Belonging through Photovoice	To enable participators' voices to be heard as part of a larger ethnographic study	Ten young women who attended an urban school in Canada and self-identified as Muslim (no information about displacement history, but were recent to Canada) Countries of origin: Somalia, Syria, Eretria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran Age: 15-19 Gender: women	Participatory research - photovoice	Three stages: 1 - photo selection 2 - group discussion/photo narratives 3 - writing the photo captions	Photos represented five themes: identity, home, belonging, settlement, school. Discussions about 'home' were around the state of 'in-betweenness' – lost home in the memory and new home in the making; and a sense of home in small belongings brought from far-away home, such as a teapot.
Börjesson & Forkby (2020) The Concept of Home – Unaccompanied Youths Voices and Experiences	To explore what meaning unaccompanied youths make of the concept of 'home' and what role this meaning-making plays during initial time in Sweden	Nine groups consisting of 2-9 boys residing in residential care unit in Sweden since 2015 Countries of origin: Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia Age: 14-18 Gender: boys	Nine focus group interviews with aid of interpreters	First, concepts were identified in the transcripts, including concept 'home'; Then interaction ritual chains analysis was applied	'Home' is seen through two aspects: space and relations; boys' emotional attachment to 'home' was incorporating feeling belonging and feeling alienated, e.g. there was a predictable space to live, but the kitchen was locked at night; the caregivers were mostly supportive, but they did not allow boys to do anything special for their birthdays (not caring for what is special to the boys, emphasising how their age was not believed by the authorities in Sweden)
Arvanitis & Yelland (2019) 'Home Means Everything to Me...': A Study of Young Syrian Refugees' Narratives Constructing Home in Greece	To explore the different meanings of home in the refugee imaginations	Five children displaced with families, living in temporary refugee settlement in Greece Country of origin: Syria Age: 11-15 Gender: mixed	Observations + Interviewing through interpretive paradigm – spatial, temporal and relational notions of home	Narrative inquiry	Greece was a safe place, but not a home, because it was temporary. Home was an intertwined construct of nostalgia for a place of origin and hope for a place of destination where they would be reunited with their loved ones and where their dreams would come true (e.g. in Europe).

Simich et al. (2010) Meanings of Home and Mental Well-Being Among Sudanese Refugees in Canada	To understand the role of conceptualisation of home for resilience and emotional wellbeing for resettled refugees	Part of a bigger study that included 220 Sudanese adults residing in 7 cities in Ontario, Canada since 2000-2003 completing surveys. Thirty Sudanese adults residing in Toronto, Calgary and Brooks partook in interviews; Country of origin: Sudan Age: 20-60 Gender: mixed	Qualitative study is described as “pragmatic research design” – an ethical application of research methods without reliance on theory	Inductive approach to interviews’ analysis (1) a directed a-priori coding framework constructed of 31 categories based on 7 interview topics (2) higher level analysis highlighted common themes across the three sites, one of the themes was ‘home’	In the context of the bigger study, economic hardships and challenges in family adaptations were viewed as affecting emotional wellbeing. Qualitative study: meanings of home was a key concept linking social support, resettlement and emotional wellbeing; narrative description of home interacted with family structure, conflict and cohesion; and these interrelationships linked with emotional wellbeing.
Rosbrook & Schweitzer (2010) The Meaning of Home for Karen and Chin Refugees From Burma: An Interpretative Phenomenological Approach	To understand the meaning of ‘home’ in context of refugees’ experiences	Nine Karen and Chin refugees residing in Brisbane, Australia for a median length of 1.33 years Country of origin: Burma (Myanmar) Age: adults, 20-58, mean age 40 Gender: mixed	Semi-structured interviews conducted with support of bilingual interpreters	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis	Three superordinate themes were found to be central to the meaning of ‘home’: 1 Home as experience of psychological space of safety and retreat 2 Home as socio-emotional relatedness to family 3 Home as geographical-emotional landscape
Freund (2015) Transnationalizing Home in Winnipeg: Refugees’ Stories of the Places Between the “Here-and-There”	To document experiences of refugees in Manitoba, Canada since the end of the Second World War	Three generations of European post-war refugees; Two generations of Salvadoran refugees who arrived in 1980s and 1990s; Young people from Afghanistan; Pilot single-case study of Karen refugee (from Burma); Chilean refugees In total, 53 individuals were interviewed Countries of origin: worldwide Ages: not specified Gender: not specified	Collaborative oral history through narrative ‘life story’ interviewing	Findings presented through six narrative case studies – but the process of collating these case studies from the interviews is not explained	<i>Homes</i> in forced displacement are not simply “lost” and “new” homes, but many homes “along the way”. This makes the process of making <i>home</i> ongoing. This process of making <i>home</i> , identity, family memory and community myths is created through the process of narrating stories about ourselves and our families and communities to ourselves and to others.

<p>Sirriyeh (2010) Home Journeys: Im/mobilities in Young Refugee and Asylum-Seeking Women's Negotiations of Home</p>	<p>To understand these women's experiences of movement in the process of constructing 'home'</p>	<p>Twenty-three young refugee and asylum-seeking women (only six accounts were reported on in the study); women were living in West Yorkshire, UK for duration from 2 months to 6 years Countries and areas of origin: Pakistan, Iraq, Democratic Republic of Congo, Africa, Middle East Age: 16-25 Gender: women</p>	<p>Photography and semi-structured interviews; Photography theme was what did and did not make these women feel at home; topics arising from the photographs were explored in the interviews</p>	<p>Analysis not described, results presented narratively in two themes.</p>	<p>Interlink between 'home' meaning safety and family with the reality of giving up family to be in the safety for some. 'Home' was explored in two themes: as a place of safety and as 'normal' routines and plans for the future. The paper concluded that <i>home</i> in forced displacement was a process of constructing (rather than static) meaning.</p>
<p>Sirriyeh (2008) Young Asylum Seekers Conceptions of 'Home' at a Time of Transition to Adulthood</p>	<p>To highlight that young adults who were UASC in the UK continue to experience needs as 16-18 year olds but are no longer receiving the support they need</p>	<p>Four young adults with experiences of being UASC in Leeds, UK Countries of origin: not stated Age: not stated, but focus of study was described as 18-25 Gender: mixed</p>	<p>Case study consisting of three-session focus group and taking photographs of neighbourhood and housing + semi-structured interviews</p>	<p>Not stated – results presented as themes, but analysis not described</p>	<p>Countries of origin as 'home' – 'home' didn't exist anymore. Some described UK as "part time or temporary home" and 'in-betweenness', 'no man's land', 'citizenship of the world' due to uncertainties about immigration status in the UK. The conceptual construct of 'home' was linked with feeling safe and feeling 'normal'.</p>

Steps 4-5

Mapping out within-study contextualised metaphorical relationships started during Step 3 (Appendix 3). This process developed through hand notes (see example in Appendix 4). The order of the studies for the synthesis was arranged from the study with the highest CASP score to the study with the lowest score with a view to increase interpretative power of studies with greater validity (Sattar, 2021). Where the scores were the same, a judgement call was made as to which study is to be interpreted first, with a preference given to a study that felt likely to make a greater contribution to the scientific understanding of the refugees' personal meaning-making of *home* in its entirety and complexity. The studies were interpreted in order in which they appear in Tables 4 and 5.

Step 6

Building on the meta-ethnographic assumption that all researchers of the included studies followed some rules of scientific research, and their practices were either the same or different (Noblit & Hare, 1988), the analysis at the third order level could be reciprocal (finding the similarities between the practices of scientific interpretations) and/or refutational (finding the differences between these practices) (Sattar et al., 2021). This review employed a combined approach in order to analyse and reconcile the incongruities and exceptions in the overall cohesion of the studies. The third order concepts were developed by systematically interpreting metaphors from one study onto the next until all studies were synthesised. The higher order concepts were created by 'a lines of argument' synthesis, which is an analysis of the relationships between the third order concepts. An example of this process is illustrated in Appendix 5.

Step 7

Step 7 was the write-up of this report. It was conducted with reference to the guidance by France et al. (2019).

Findings

Scope

Ten studies investigated personal meaning-making of *home* in the context of forced displacement in a way that met the inclusion and exclusion criteria of this review. The pool of studies was multidisciplinary. All studies were conducted between 2008 and 2020 in Canada, Sweden, Greece, Australia and the UK and covered experiences of individuals from worldwide regions of origin. The experiences varied from in-transit (e.g. Arvanitis & Yelland, 2019), to newly-arrived (e.g. Wernesjö, 2015) to long-resettled (e.g. Dam & Eyles, 2012, Freund, 2015), and occurred at various lifespan stages from age 11 up. Just over half of studies recruited participants who were children or young adults. Majority of studies were mixed gender. These key characteristics and contexts of the studies are illustrated in Table 5.

All included studies looked at the experiences of refugees who were displaced outside of their countries of origin. The literature search and selection processes yielded only two studies looking at the meaning-making of *home* by the internally-displaced individuals (Fenster, 2013, Murcia, 2019). Both studies could not be included as the participants were not a homogenous group in the context of their displacements.

Quality

The discussion of the quality appraisal below is structured according to the CASP (2018) checklist as a way to give context to Table 4. The discussion is complemented by Yardley's (2000) guidance on best practice in qualitative health research, although it is acknowledged that the pool of studies laid beyond the field of health.

Majority of studies aimed to understand refugees' meaning-making of home in context of forced displacement. Other aims were to understand experiences of forced displacement in more general sense (Wornesjö, 2015), to enable participators' voices (Miled, 2020), to

document experiences of the refugees (Freund, 2015) and to highlight needs of a marginalised population (Sirriyeh, 2008). All studies were independent qualitative studies, although Simich et al. (2010) was conducted within a context of a bigger project looking at factors affecting emotional wellbeing in refugeedom. Due to focus on subjective experiences and meaning-making of individuals, qualitative methodology was deemed appropriate.

Some studies offered a clear statement of their study designs: auto-ethnography (Dam & Eyles, 2012), participatory research employing photovoice (Miled, 2020), narrative inquiry (Arvanitis & Yelland, 2019), 'pragmatic research design' (Simich et al., 2010), collaborative oral history (Freund, 2015), interpretative phenomenological analysis (Rosbrook & Schweizer, 2010). Others offered limited or unclear descriptions of their designs. Lack of clear and consistent description of qualitative methodology across studies may position all qualitative designs into a category of 'non-quantitative', which would be misleading in light of the diverse epistemological stances and traditions (Yardley, 2000). It also undermines researchers' reflexivity required for the assurance of quality due to the subjective nature of qualitative enquiries (Yardley, 2000).

All studies adopted a recruitment strategy appropriate to their aims and a culture-sensitive, context-specific and age-appropriate approach to data collection that enabled meaningful engagement of the participants. Particular examples of engaging young people were walk-along interviews (Wernesjö, 2015), photography (Miled, 2020, Sirriyeh, 2008, 2010) and observations with younger children (Arvanitis & Yelland, 2019), although some indication of how the semi-structured interviews were designed and conducted would have aided interpretation and transparency of one study (Sirriyeh, 2008).

Only half of the studies reported considering the relationship between the researcher and the participants, and the role of the researchers own potential bias in setting the research questions, data collection and sample selection (Arvanitis & Yelland, 2019, Miled, 2020,

Simich et al., 2010, Dam & Eyles, 2012 and Wernesjö, 2015). Fostering trusting relationships may contribute to empowering a meaningful experience for the participants as was reflected in one of the photo captions in Miled (2020) and an ethical consideration is required to where participants, especially, younger participants, might form an attachment with the researchers, as described by Arvanitis and Yelland (2019) and Wernesjö (2015). Studies were enriched in methodology, analysis and interpretations where researchers and co-researchers brought tacit cultural knowledge through themselves (Dam & Eyles, 2012, Simich et al., 2010, Miled, 2020).

A considerable attention to ethical issues had been given to the culturally appropriate adaptability of the research and the researchers' interpretations (Simich et al., 2010), implication of the research on the participants (Miled, 2020), risk of re-traumatisation and sensitivity to the uncertainty of the participants' immigration status (Börjesson & Forkby, 2020), writing about a culture different to Western epistemology in ethical ways (Dam & Eyles, 2012), culture- and individual-specific consent (Freund, 2015), and participants reading and commenting on their interview transcripts (Wernesjö, 2015). However, Rosbrook and Schweitzer (2010) only reported on attaining ethical approval, and other studies did not report on considering ethical issues. Intercultural research with vulnerable population such as refugees requires additional considerations in regard to language, culture and status barriers, power differentials and risk of re-traumatisation (Ellis et al., 2007).

Most studies offered a detailed description of how data was selected for analysis and provided a rich data examples to support the findings. Simich et al. (2010) offered a detailed description of how an ethical application of research methods was considered without reliance on theory, however, this also made an appraisal of the analysis problematic from the perspective of this review. A description of how a decision was made about the coding framework for organising interviews and a reflection on how this might have affected the researchers' interpretation of the data might have aided the transparency. In Freund's (2015)

collaborative oral history study, it would have aided interpretation to know how the six narrative case studies were selected to be reported. Sirriyeh (2008, 2010) did not report on the data analysis. Overall, there was a somewhat unrepresented attention to the researchers own potential bias during analysis and to the selection bias in analysis presentation across all studies with exception of the auto-ethnography by Dam and Eyles (2012).

All studies presented a clear statement of findings discussed in relation to the research questions with a critical reflection onto the existing evidence, practice and policies. Most studies described using several sources of collecting data (Dam & Eyles, 2012, Wernesjö, 2015, Miled, 2020, Arvanitis & Yelland, 2019, Simich et al., 2010 and Sirriyeh, 2008, 2010). Some studies employed more than one researcher (Dam & Eyles, 2012, Miled, 2020, Arvanitis & Yelland, 2019, Simich et al., 2010). However, none reported respondent validation. A use of triangulation (with exception of some research methods) and respondent validation might offer reassurance of the research rigor (Yardley, 2000).

Most studies utilised homogenous groups and the findings were applicable to these groups of population in their local contexts. Bigger studies were generalisable to wider refugee populations, such as Sudanese in Canada (Simich et al., 2010) and worldwide post Second World War refugees in Canada (Freund, 2015). Some studies could be generalisable to non-refugee population, e.g. experiences of Black and visibly Muslim young women (Miled, 2020).

Synthesis

The outcome of the meta-ethnographic synthesis was a metaphor of an iceberg, at the top of which there was a flow of life, held by the experiences of belonging that rose from ‘deep waters’ of self-identity (Figure 2). The flow of life was the story of the self, perceived through cycles of life and everyday ‘normality’ across time. Belonging was about being recognised by others – or not, and (up)rootedness. Identity was about the re-conceptualisation of the self at the threshold of ‘new life’ and the imperceptible, ‘obvious’, self. The iceberg is summarised in Table 6 and described in detail below, starting from ‘the top’.

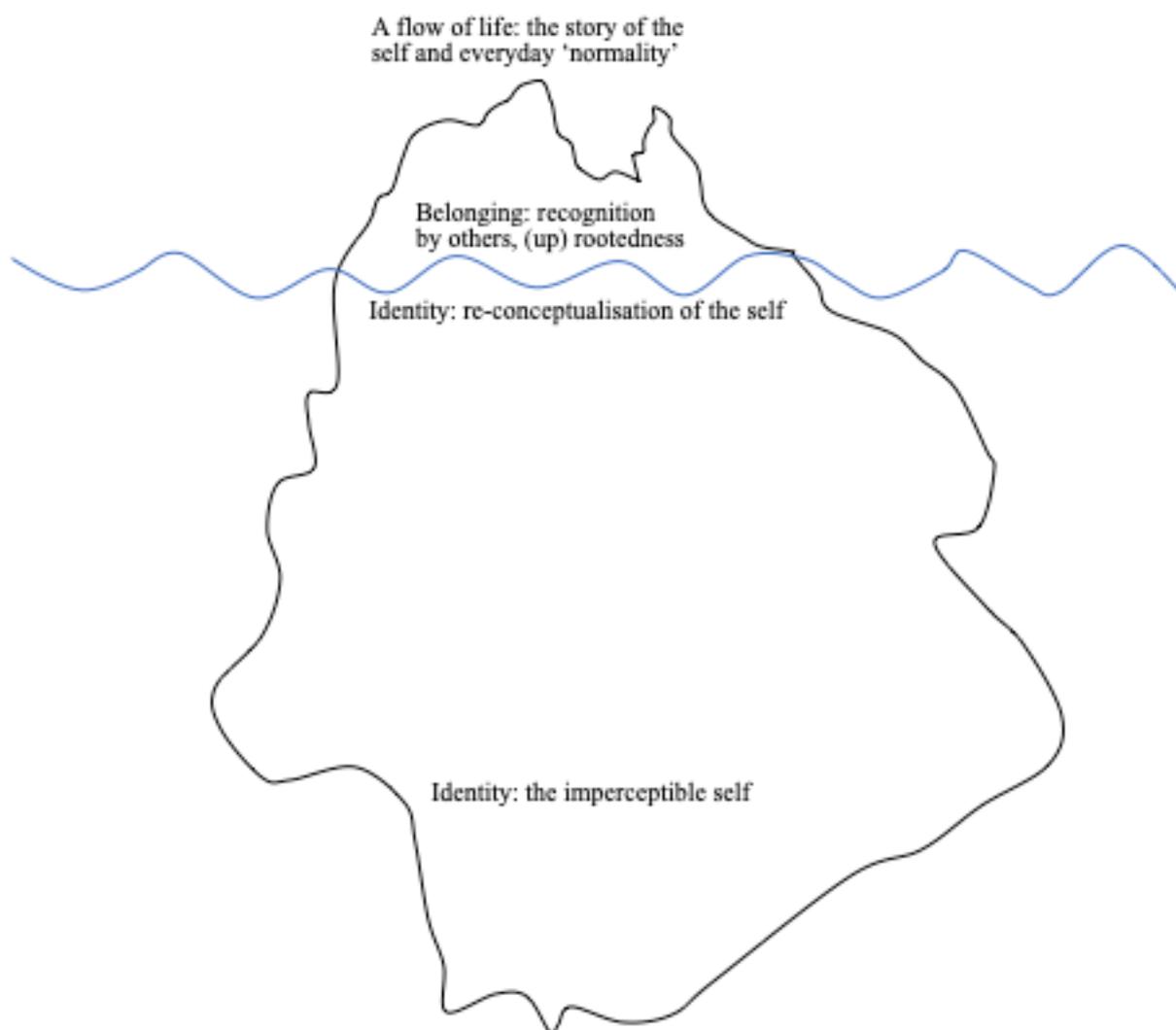


Figure 2. *'Iceberg' of the meaning of home in refugeedom.*

Table 6. Synthesis

1 st Order	2 nd Order	3 rd Order	Higher Order
<p>"I think Hamilton was where all our big milestones were for our family—first car, first house, first university graduation in the family...like I literally feel it's my home." (Dam & Eyles, 2012)</p>	<p>Life cycles over time</p>	<p><i>Story of the self</i></p>	<p><i>Flow of life</i></p>
<p>"So I've lived here longer than any other place I've previously lived in... this place is my home" (Dam & Eyles, 2012)</p>			
<p>"It means everything to me! Aleppo is my second mother. My home was... [describes place, family, including grown-up siblings who started new families] My home was special to me. [describes neighbours, going to market, vacations, school, teacher, friends]." (Arvanitis & Yelland, 2019)</p>			
<p>"It was a farm place where, you know, we had a lot of fruits. ... Moms always working at home; dads working on the fields. Moms taking care of the children; and the children like me were just wild [Laughs] ... That's the way I grew up, to the age of fifteen." (Freund, 2015)</p>			
<p>"Suddenly we became refugees, we lost our country, we lost our home, we lost everything." (Miled, 2020)</p>	<p>Disruption</p>		
<p>Arash says that he wanted to leave immediately when he first arrived, but continues to say that it has gotten better with time. (Wernesjö, 2015)</p>			
<p>"You have no feeling of guilt. You have no feeling of fears. You just relax. That's the idea of a home for me." (Rosbrook & Schweizer, 2010)</p>	<p>Feeling 'normal' – or not</p>	<p><i>Normality</i></p>	
<p>"I feel normal by staying here, I am not bored. But this is not my home." (Arvanitis & Yelland, 2019)</p>			
<p>"I don't have my family with me, so I had to come live here" (Wernesjö, 2015)</p>			

"I came to [name of municipality] and immediately I had contact with my family because I told them I will get an education now; I will go to school now. The most important thing for me was to go to school and get an education." (Börjesson & Forkby, 2020)

Home as 'normal' life – education, employment, routines

"It is the major part of my life and that's the only bit of life that I actually have... going to college." (Sirriyeh, 2008)

"I like going to college but in this country I don't have any funding. I will probably finish my course and I would love to go to university but I don't know. It is very difficult at my age if you cannot predict your future." (Sirriyeh, 2010)

In the temporary, transitional space of a refugee camp in Greece, 'normality' was having daily routines, education and playing with friends. (Arvanitis & Yelland, 2019)

"If I were to go to another city, who would I know there, what do I know there, places I know?" (Dam & Eyles, 2012)

(Non)Recognition by community or state

Homecoming

Belonging

"I know everybody here" (Arvanitis & Yelland, 2019)

"Canada is ... where I am trying to feel at home. But I would like to ask you: Do you see me as a Canadian?" (Miled, 2020)

"[Government] are looking after us well. They're taking care of us." (Rosbrook & Schweizer, 2010)

"Just you feel you are in prison but someone who gets address you feel freedom, citizen." (Sirriyeh, 2008)

"In the beginning... they closed the kitchen at night but after a few meetings we convinced them that this is not acceptable. If your child is hungry in the middle of the night, they go to the kitchen to have something to eat so this does not feel like home for us." (Börjesson & Forkby, 2020)

"Back home [conflict resolution] occurs by simple traditional laws that are our own and are a very peaceful traditional way ... but here it is so problematic." (Simich et al., 2010)

"The Jewish community helped... but they wouldn't let a Jewish boy into their house to mix with their daughters... why should I let my daughter marry a survivor? – no money, no roots, no parents, no family, no relationship." (Freund, 2015)

"[The town] is intimate. It's personal." (Dam & Eyles, 2012)

Intimate spaces and (un)safety

"...Home became toxic in a way that I myself could no longer spend any time at home." (Freund, 2015)

"Sometimes I had to stay on the street because I am so afraid of going back to the house..." (Sirriyeh, 2010)

"I do not know why many people do not like our Hijabs." (Miled, 2020)

"I have decided to live here forever so I think that this is like my home... but sometimes something happens..." (Wernesjö, 2015)

"I guess the only place is where you stay with your family, where all of your family is around you and you're there. That's when you feel home." (Dam & Eyles, 2012)

Intimate spaces and (no) family

(Up)Rootedness

"This teapot is ... to remind us of a family time where we gather, talk, chat and laugh. It is part of what home means to us." (Miled, 2020)

"What home means... is grandchildren, parents, grandparents living in the house happily – a place." (Rosbrook & Schweizer, 2010)

"He doesn't feel like a legal guardian, it feels like ... I am his son... they say that there are more people in the family now, this is how they... introduce me." (Börjesson & Forkby, 2020)

"I feel a little bit like being at my house... but when I will go to my father, I will feel like being in my real house." (Arvanitis & Yelland, 2019)

"... My family over there, they don't have enough good food like what I eat... Emotionally, I couldn't enjoy." (Rosbrook & Schweizer, 2010)

"There were many of us ... if there is just one you don't get along with in the room, it is a problem." (Börjesson & Forkby, 2020)

"It's people that have given me stuff.... And when I look at them they make me happy..." (Sirriyeh, 2010)

"We work together. We support each other. That's one thing from back home that is in us." (Simich et al., 2010) Social support (or lack of)

"...That emotional support that we usually get from our mothers, aunts and uncles is not here anymore" (Simich et al. 2010)

"You know, I do not feel at home here, but since I don't have parents here, I need to find others to feel that life goes on..." (Wernesjö, 2015)

"My home is in Syria even though it is boring and dangerous over there. One day when it is ok there, I will return." (Arvanitis & Yelland, 2019) Homeland and nostalgia

"I'm always dreaming that one day when I retire that I go back to my homeland where my aunts and uncles and my relatives who lives in Vietnam and I live there..." (Dam & Eyles, 2012)

"It [homesickness] feels like, it feels like... I want my childhood back. ... a longing, missing. I feel empty. I feel lonely. I feel sad... I feel like I can never get it back. I can never get my childhood back. I feel it here [points to her heart]." (Rosbrook & Schweizer, 2010)

... He now felt nostalgic about a childhood home where he felt he lived in relative poverty with his grandmother. (Sirriyeh, 2008)

"I was beginning to perceive that my ideas of home were fluid ... I somehow knew that this journey [to Vietnam] brought to the surface and brought into consciousness a tacit knowledge of home and identity, one shared by my respondents in Hamilton [Canada]." (Dam & Eyles, 2012)

Fluidity, thresholds and liminality

*Re-
conceptualisation
of the self* **Identity**

"On one side of the bridge there's my old home country Syria and my old life, and on the on the other one is Canada, my new home. The bridge is a transition period." (Miled, 2020)

"I thought when I will arrive to Greece I can go anywhere because Greece is in Europe, but Turkey belongs to Asia. I feel Europe as being my new home." (Arvanitis & Yelland, 2019)

"...Everyone was saying 'oh I am going to uni and this' and I thought, 'oh no what am I going to say?' I might go and come back tomorrow." (Sirriyeh, 2010)

She described UK as her 'part time or temporary home' while her legal status was uncertain. They appeared to feel that they were in a 'no man's land', in between homes, waiting for access to a safe public space. (Sirriyeh, 2008)

Initially, he decided he was "not going to be a Jew anymore." (Freund, 2015)

Negotiating identity

"I am Syrian. But I feel all the nationalities Syrian, Greek and German" (Arvanitis & Yelland, 2019)

"I see myself as a Canadian; I see Canada as my home. Even though I am from Afghanistan... My children are eventually going to be Canadians." (Freund, 2015)

"Back home... a man is the head of the family and he is the last decision maker... Now here in Canada it is so different. That is the big challenge for both the man and the woman." (Simich et al., 2010)

"Leaving our home country made our vision blurry ... we are overwhelmed by the challenges that we face every day such as language, rules, sense of humor, and adjusting to our new life and to the new people around us." (Miled, 2020)

<p>"I couldn't identify with Israel. To die for Israel, yes, but to live for Israel, no. Because it means that, okay, I'm an Israeli, and I have to believe that the Holocaust was okay, it's just a part of history. It's not a part of history. I paid an awful price, an awful price." (Freund, 2015)</p>	Resistance	
<p>"I am from Africa... so that's why you say me I am not supposed to be here... but me I am free. I am a citizen of the world." (Sirriyeh, 2008)</p>		
<p>"Go home where? ... Go back home? When you're dead? ... Home tonight? What? Where?" (Dam & Eyles, 2012)</p>	Obvious	<i>Imperceptible self</i>
<p>"Soon it is my birthday... We are children and young, so we want to dance and have fun, but we don't have that, it becomes a very boring home." (Börjesson & Forkby, 2020)</p>		
<p>"For me there was no high tree [I wasn't] able to climb... For me, nothing has been impossible, okay?" [value learned from grandmother] (Freund, 2015)</p>	Values and skills learned in past homes	
<p>"Nothing in the world is better than your country if there is peace" (Sirriyeh, 2008)</p>		
<p>"When I was young, I had a special relationship with God. It was pure emotion, pure spirit. I felt that I am a special boy and that God looked after me." (Freund, 2015)</p>		
<p>"...Always I worry about my family and my village and my students. ... Because I worry. I can't sleep." (Rosbrook & Schweizer, 2010)</p>		

Flow of Life

The flow of life was the story of the self, perceived through everyday ‘normality’ and milestones across time. The loss of *home* was about the disruption that occurred to the story of the self. Ability to process loss depended on the length of time staying in temporary places (Miled, 2020).

Several studies with young people emphasised that the ‘normality’ of the routines, such as education, contributed to a sense stability. However, feeling ‘normal’ did not equal *home*. Wernesjö (2015) found that *home* for the unaccompanied refugee youth was living with parents, which was perceived as a ‘normal’ way of being, and placing these children in a residential care home was experienced as a life in a ‘deviant’ accommodation leading to these children being perceived as strangers rather than ‘normal’ teenagers by the local rural community.

Young people coped by focusing on practical issues of education and employment, finding a meaningful existence and a ‘normal’ life, whilst their belongingness lied with their families. The uncertainty of the legal immigration status challenged any attained ‘normality’. Achieving a legal refugee status, therefore, became an official state recognition of the lives and *homes* that the young people had already created (Sirriyeh, 2010).

Belonging

Belonging was described as a mutual recognition of others and places (*homecoming*) and a sense of (up)rootedness. *Homecoming* was about intimate and personal spaces (such as a small town) where one knew others, and was known in return. Being recognised by others as the same as them (e.g. a Canadian) and being recognised by the government (e.g. given a permanent address) fostered a sense of belonging, social inclusion and support. These factors positively impacted emotional wellbeing (Simich et al., 2010). Being seen as someone who

needed management (e.g. residential home restrictions) created a feeling of being the ‘other’, not *at home*.

Some young people were able to actively negotiate belonging (Börjesson & Forkby, 2020, Miled, 2020). Non-recognition led to unsafety, e.g. not being able to leave home as a visibly Muslim girl when an aggressive neighbour is around (Siriryeh, 2008). Living in a small Swedish village was intimate and personal yet hostile and unsafe (Wernesjö, 2015). For young adult asylum-seekers who reached UK as unaccompanied children, *home* was safety. Such place did not exist for them anywhere in the world (Sirriyeh 2008).

Feeling rooted was about sharing intimate spaces with family and having strong social support. Those long resettled spoke about *home* as being around their families (Dam & Eyles, 2012). Those who resettled recently shared symbols that reminded them about their family times (Miled, 2020). Many accounts were about *home* as intimate spaces shared with families, or being treated like family. Some spoke about future *homes*, where reunification with a beloved family member would make *home* ‘real’. Memories of past *homes* and culture were passed on through storytelling (Freund, 2015), for those who did not travel unaccompanied.

Feeling uprooted was described as sharing intimate spaces with those one could not relate to, not having the emotional support from the extended family and longing to return to homeland. Young people negotiated their intimate spaces with those in power and others in community, albeit this was difficult.

Homeland and nostalgia included childhood places for many participants. Rosbrook and Schweizer (2010) described experiences of childhood places as ‘geographical-emotional landscapes’, a deep cavity of longed-for homes. These were narratives of loss and longing for the old roots, but also, of setting new roots in the community. Sometimes, it felt impossible to set new roots because of the old roots. Other times, new roots were possible with maintenance of the old ones.

Meaning-making of those who were long resettled in Dam and Eyles (2012) study were markedly different to other studies who looked at experiences where individuals had not yet reached ‘embeddedness’ in their new homes. A historical approach adopted by Freund (2015) helped to see the latter experiences with a hindsight. It was notable that all accounts in Freund’s study narrated experiences of many homes along the way between the home of origin and the final place of resettlement.

Identity

The fluidity of *home* picked up by Freund (2015) was also illustrated in the self-discovery narrative of the auto-ethnographic account by Dam and Eyles (2012). Dam and Eyles connected the tacit knowledge of *home* to identity that was ‘brought into consciousness’ at the threshold of re-discovering the lead researcher’s connection to her once homeland, Vietnam. The concept of thresholds was illustrated in several accounts through symbolic representation such as a photograph of a bridge (Miled, 2020) or a description of crossing over from Asia to Europe (Arvanitis & Yelland, 2019). Alongside, there was a liminality of existence in the ‘transit’ space of a legal status uncertainty.

Thresholds and liminality were described as a process of transformation from de-territorialisation to re-territorialisation (Miled, 2020) and not being ‘a helpless victim’ but staying alive, helping others, rebuilding life and identity (Freund, 2015). This took form in deciding who one was not (a Jew) or who one was (a Syrian, a Greek, a German, a Canadian). Simich et al. (2010) highlighted that social roles within family were also forced to be re-negotiated. Sometimes, re-negotiation led to resistance, such as identifying as a ‘citizen of the world’ to assert right ‘to be here’ (Sirriyeh, 2008), or refusing to identify as Israeli (Freund, 2015).

‘Underneath the consciousness’ lied the imperceptible self, the one who knew *home* without needing to question or examine it in the conscious mind. *Home* was as obvious as a birthday cake on a birthday. At the same time, home and change of age can be seen as integral parts of self-identity (Börjesson & Forkby, 2020). Where the experience of a birthday cake on a birthday is denied, the repetition of the experiences of the past *homes* (where the loved ones celebrated one’s birthday) are also denied in the new home. The other part of the imperceptible everyday reality were values and skills learned at past homes (Freund, 2015).

Discussion

This review was designed to establish the scope and the quality of scientific literature exploring personal meaning-making of *home* in the context of forced displacement with a view of drawing psychosocial conclusions about this area of study. The studies reviewed here were conducted in the West and Australia and included experiences of children and adult refugees from across the world. The quality of the reviewed studies was generally high, although key limitations were noted. Particular strengths of this pool of studies were experiences that varied across stages of exile journeys and across lifespan, predominantly strong account of rigor in analysis and rich data examples, and a cultural adaptability of the research. Key limitations of the pool were inconsistent reporting of three factors: study design, researchers' reflexivity, and ethical issues specific to the research with the refugee population. The conclusions drawn from the synthesis are that the personal meaning-making of *home* in the context of forced displacement lies within three domains: *home* as the perceptible 'normal' flow of life, *home* as belonging and *home* as self-identity.

Home has been conceptualised as a secure predictable base holding the 'normal' flow of life in a form of significant life events and life cycles, linking the place of *home* with everyday experiences, sense of belonging and identity over time (Low & Altman, 1992). The role of *home* is imperceptible until a disruption occurs (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001, Luci, 2020). Becoming a refugee disrupts *home*, and thus, brings the flow of life and 'normality', belonging and identity into the consciousness.

The disruption of the flow of life and the loss of the secure base of *home* was described similar to a loss of a caregiver, which felt confusing and frightening, like a fear of a child confronting the unknown future (Rosbrook & Schwaizer, 2010) and not wanting to form new attachments (Börjesson & Forkby, 2020). This could be understood from a perspective of the feelings of anger, despair, detachment and grief that accompany a loss of a mother figure

described by Bowlby (1970). The process of mourning for the loss of attachment described by Bowlby (1960), Freud (1922) and Luci (2020) is akin to stages of grieving in a bereavement described by Worden and Winokuer (2011). It is only in the later stages of mourning that the reconciliation with the loss and the creation of the new attachments become possible, but this, too, is disrupted in refugeedom – there is no secure base in the uncertainty of ‘in-between’ spaces of waiting for an immigration decision. Only those respondents who were long-resettled spoke about the new meaning through life events and life cycles in the ‘new’ homes (Dam & Eyles, 2012). In such context, it is understandable that the younger respondents coped by wanting a ‘normal life’. They described that education was the ‘major’ part of their lives, but also, that ‘normality’ did not mean *home*.

Belonging to a family or a culture could be seen as an experiential medium too. Thus, it might remain imperceptible until it is lost (Luci, 2020), and, as in the case of refugeedom, when it also becomes problematic amongst new, at times hostile, ethnic others. *Home* is only possible when one is recognised (Papadopoulos, 2002, 2021), which creates a sense of knowing where one is in the world (Luci, 2020). The longing to belong, and questioning or evaluating recognition, transpired through many quotes in Table 6. Alongside, there was yearning for the lost roots and socioemotional support, and for homeland. This might be indicative of what Papadopoulos (2021) described as ‘nostalgic disorientation’ – an ache to restore the sense of *home* in all of its complexity. Papadopoulos described that when such ache is experienced, one does not know where to attribute it, and therefore inappropriately attributes the ache to the tangible ‘causes’ in the immediate surrounding. Resolving such ‘causes’ leads to attributing the ache to a different ‘cause’, until the ‘root’ of the ache is addressed.

Alongside this ache, there were numerous accounts of non-recognition and threat from the members of community and sometimes, from the cohabitants. In addition to the obvious concern for safety, this can also be understood from the ‘selfobject’ perspective, whereby a

trauma occurs if the new culture and place fail to merge with the individual in the exile (Togashi & Brothers, 2021). The experiences of negotiating belonging and the ambiguity of setting new roots could be interpreted as a 'divided habitus' arising from the conflict of fitting in with the ethnic other and the accompanied feelings of the desire and the fear (Reay, 2015, Bourdieu, 1984).

Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2016) described individuals at the threshold, in context of refugeedom, as somebody who was welcomed, but never completely welcomed; and the places of transition as spaces of 'condensed' liminality. Both, Fiddian-Qasmiyeh suggested, were fundamentally linked to identity and negotiation of identity, e.g. identifying as 'stateless', or as 'Palestinian'. Quotes in Table 6, too, indicate the re-conceptualisation of the self as the unknown self comes into consciousness at the threshold of the 'new' life, or questioning the self in the 'no man's land'. Meyer and Land (2005) described thresholds as 'portals' that open ways of thinking about something in a formerly unreachable way, leading to a discovery that could irreversibly transform one's understanding, which could be sometimes experienced as 'troublesome'. Meyer and Land further described liminal spaces as transformative, whereby an individual is 'in-between' the states, which evokes a desire and apprehension, with no possibility to return to the pre-liminal state. In the context of refugeedom, these conceptualisations help to highlight the irreversibility of becoming a refugee and a discovery one makes as a result of this experience, a discovery that forever transforms one's understanding about the self.

The themes of resistance in synthesis could be understood as a realisation of the discrepancy between the imagined and the reality (Mohammad & Meryan, 2019) and reclaiming self-agency at the site of oppression (Watson, 2019, Ting, 2018) through the reinterpretation of the narrative (White, 1990). Refusing to accept Holocaust as a historical event (Freund, 2015) by actively resisting Israeli identity is a powerful example of this.

The ‘obvious’ self could be understood through Papadopoulos’s (2021) conceptualisation of an imperceptible identity – the fundamental identity that is not readily available to consciousness because it is experienced as ‘given’ or ‘obvious’, e.g. seasonal daylight changes in our latitude. The respondents’ quotes illustrate how these ‘obvious’ elements were brought into consciousness by practices of others, such as the researcher questioning what *home* meant, or an absence of a birthday celebration for a child.

Values and skills learned in past homes were also conceptualised as ‘imperceptible self’ in this review, although this is outside of Papadopoulos’s definition. The rationale was that these values were carried over in the ‘new’ lives without being questioned or examined – they, in a way, were also ‘obvious’ to the respondents. The reviewer wondered whether carrying the values of the past contributed to restoring feeling *at home* in exile, or, perhaps, created a feeling of ‘seeing self where one is not’ (such as worrying about the village and students), and whether abolishing these values (such as religion) was a re-evaluation of the self in the new contexts.

Limitations and Research Implications

This review only included experiences of displacement outside of the national borders of the countries of origin. Just two studies looking into internal displacement were identified (but not included) in this review (Fenster, 2013, Murcia, 2019), despite the systematic literature search incorporating the search terms that would include such experiences in the literature findings. Investigating meaning-making of *home* in the context of internal displacement may offer a different perspective on our understanding of personal meaning-making of *home* in the context of forced displacement as a whole. For example, Murcia (2019) argued that their study challenged the discourses of ‘longing to return’ and ‘belonging to a particular country’. The literature search findings indicate that experiences of internal forced displacement may be currently disproportionately represented in the research of *home* in forced displacement, as 68% of all forcibly displaced individuals in the world live within the national borders of their countries (UNHCR, 2021). However, there may be practical barriers to conducting research in these experiences, such as accessibility to the population, political regimes and ongoing internal unrests, therefore placing the individuals with these experiences at risk of being overseen in the global forced displacement context.

A diversity of study designs and analyses was employed in the investigations of refugees’ subjective experiences and meaning-making. However, a lack of consistent and clear reporting of qualitative methodologies and researchers’ reflexivity about own epistemological bias transpired. A stronger consideration of the design and the self in the analysis might support the assurance of quality and possibility of replication of the research in the future, creating a stronger evidence base. Future intercultural research would also require a rigorous consideration of ethical issues specific to a vulnerable refugee population (Ellis et al., 2007).

Experiences of dislocation in childhood was attended to by studies with participants who were children or young adults. The lifespan stage at the time of dislocation was not

explicitly discussed in studies with general adult population with exception of Freund (2015). Future research considering lifespan stages in relation to dislocation might offer richer scientific understanding of how individuals are able to process and cope with their experiences of refugeedom and how they can be supported in a sensitive, age-appropriate and individual-specific way.

In light of the strong relational and familial constituent of *home*, losing family and traveling alone at a formative age as unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) has a specific effect on belonging (Wernesjö, 2015). Sirriyeh (2008, 2010) highlighted a separate group of needs of young adults with history of being UASC and a lack of research onto this age group. Sirriyeh (2008) also highlighted experiences of these young adults of not having an intergenerational link in a form of a family member who could tell them about their country of origin and culture, and help them with their transitioning into adulthood. Future research might help understand how these young adults make sense of their experiences.

Practical and Clinical Implications

Support in establishing routines and meaningful activities such as education or employment may be helpful in supporting refugees in establishing ‘new roots’ in resettlement. A culture-sensitive and informed approach should be taken when working with families and individuals in refugeedom to facilitate a sense of belonging and *home* in the place of resettlement. Simich et al. (2010) indicated that community support, e.g. community centres, might help refugees form new social bonds and establish a sense support and belonging. Placing children in foster families might help reduce the stigma and support a sense of belonging, ‘normality’ and integration, whereas residential homes may reinforce stigma against these children in their host communities (Wernesjö, 2015).

Clinical psychologists might play an important role in advocating for the community and systemic needs of refugees through consulting and networking, or in offering a culture-informed systemic support directly to the individuals and families in refugeedom. Psychological support should include help managing the unpredictable future while waiting for the decision about the legal immigration status. Psychological therapy might also help addressing belongingness and (re)discovery of self-identity (Papadopoulos 2008, 2021, Luci, 2020).

Conclusion

This review has offered a baseline of current scientific conceptualisation of *home* as a psychological construct in our understanding of refugeedom in a context of what Papadopoulos (2021) described as an “upsurge of interest” and “almost uncontrollable growth” in the studies about *home* (p109). The loss of home in becoming a refugee brings to the consciousness the (lack of) ‘normality’ of life and its cycles and (a lack of) a sense of belonging through mutual recognition, rootedness and support. The threshold of the ‘new life’ brings the undiscovered self to the forefront of the mind leading to a re-negotiation and re-conceptualisation of the self in a context of a liminality of existence in the temporary ‘in-between’ spaces. The ‘obvious’ self becomes challenged where old practices are not observed and the ‘obvious’ is brought into question by the practices of the others, leading to the re-examination of the self in a new context or to seeing the self where one is not. This review concludes that reconstructing a sense of *home* in the context of exile is essential to reconstructing a sense of the self within oneself and amongst others in the world.

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Section B: Empirical study

What sense do refugees make of how they coped with their experiences of displacement to UK from other countries as unaccompanied young people?

Word count: 7,996 (+396)

For submission to the Journal of Refugee Studies

All information has been anonymised, including a use of pseudonyms, to prevent identification of the young adults who took part in this research and the charities who support them.

Abstract

This study aimed to investigate what psychological understandings can be derived from the sense and meaning six young adults made of their experiences as children fleeing home alone and reaching the shores of safety in the UK. The imagery assisted emancipatory form of interpretative phenomenological analysis suggested conflicts between negotiating the ‘new life’ in the UK but staying loyal to the norms and values of own culture and religion, putting down roots but experiencing external hatred, having faith but experiencing emotional distress interpreted as a loss of faith. Overcoming these conflicts might lead to integration of the self and self-growth. Future research might help understanding the impact of the unmet expectations in the UK. Practical help should include support building connections and achieving educational and career goals beyond learning English. Clinicians should adopt a culture-sensitive and gender-specific approach tailored to the survivors of experiences of being an unaccompanied child refugee, including higher risks of stigmatisation.

Introduction

“No one chose to be a refugee. No one chose to be me.”

(Samir*, p.11, 616)

Samir* captured the forced nature of displacement in refugeedom in the stickers he sold to educate others about his experiences. Samir is a young artist navigating refugeedom in South East England. He used to tell his story to the host community through art before he learned English to tell some of it in words. This research captures his voice, alongside voices of Jamal*, Noor*, Fatima*, Berekat* and Belal*, all young adult refugees from East Africa and the Middle East who sought international protection in England as unaccompanied children. Two experts by experience (EbEs), a man and a woman, young adult refugees from the Middle East residing in England and Wales, helped to incorporate implicit cultural knowledge into the interpretation of the metaphors these voices told. My experience of displacement from Ukraine to England in adolescence stirred my interest in conducting this research.

World’s Refugees – Refugees’ World

One condition all of my participants and EbEs shared with all the world’s children and adult refugees was their loss of home (Papadopoulos, 2002). Experiences of being uprooted from a place of attachment (home) and separated from the significant others can create a sense of a disorientation of the self and lead to a fragmentation of self-identity (Giuliani & Feldman, 1993, Luci, 2020, Papadopoulos, 2002, 2021). The need to maintain closeness to the place of attachment is not always conscious until a disruption occurs (Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001). Akin to this, is the loss of the integral part of our identity that is so imperceptible to us that we are not aware of it (sometimes – even if it is disrupted), such as our perceptions of the

* Pseudonyms

landscape, sounds, smells, tastes, textures, routines, pace of life, sense of space and belonging (Papadopoulos, 2021). Papadopoulos explained this as the base that holds our perceptible identity parts; and its loss (much like the loss of home) leads to an *onto-ecological unsettledness* in refugeedom – a disruption in one’s sense of reality and relationship with the environment. Papadopoulos exemplified this by a case study of a Somali refugee woman in the UK who experienced unexplained psychotic-like symptoms. Her recovery was grounded in the realisation that the seasonal changing daylight duration impacted her feeling settled in the UK because her imperceptible foundation of identity was to perceive her day-to-day reality as equal amount of daylight – an environmental condition of living in Somali, near the equator. Papadopoulos further suggested that *onto-ecological unsettledness* is immediately succeeded by *nostalgic disorientation* – a yearning to restore a sense of feeling settled and ‘at home’, a pain of homecoming (reconnecting parts of oneself).

The predicament of refugeedom, however, often extends beyond the disruption of the roots and the the disturbance of the foundation of the self into an impossibility to set roots in the host country due to a ‘legal limbo’ of complex immigration procedures that may last for years (Luebben, 2003) and the practical circumstances of living accommodations (Hobbs, 2021), especially collective accommodations (Wihstutz, 2020). Stonebridge (2013) described the legal limbo as similar to the historical legislation against the Jews that created a condition of rightlessness. Stonebridge noted that the step after the condition of rightlessness was to challenge a right to live. Dudley (2003) found that men and women in Australian refugee detention centres were respectively 41 and 26 times more likely to die by suicide than national average. Oppression creates resistance (Watson, 2019). Stonebridge exemplified resistance by the protest in which individuals detained at the refugee detention camp ‘Woomera’ in Australian desert sewed their lips to signify being voiceless.

Mental health distress in refugees is well-documented by current scientific literature. Particular conditions found in refugees' samples included post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, experiences of psychosis and dissociation (Keyes, 2009, von Werthern et al., 2018). However, the outcome measures used for assessing the mental health were described as not culturally-sensitive (Keyes, 2009). Kokou-Kpolou et al. (2020) found that adult refugees exposed to multiple and traumatic deaths of close relatives were more likely to develop prolonged grief disorder and comorbid psychiatric complications. Hodes and Vostanis (2019) highlighted that whilst most refugee youth functioned well despite adversities, PTSD was more likely to develop in children who had experiences of war.

Petra (2021) described the complexity of the emotional experiences of refugeedom in a study named after words of a refugee individual: "One of my eyes was crying, the other was laughing", and gave examples of the despair and hope, disappointment and desire, feeling loyal but being called a traitor. Someone's ability to survive and come through would depend on the interweaving of the individual and systemic factors unique to each person (Papadopoulos, 2021). Papadopoulos described that individual, family, community and cultural systems would lead to the individual negative (trauma), neutral (resilience) and positive (adversity-activated development) responses to refugeedom. An example of this complexity could be Wihstutz's (2020) description of a six-year-old refugee girl telling her mum that the child could not sit crying with her mum longer because she had to go play with others. This complexity may be lost in the scientific literature dominated by the discourse of understanding refugees' experiences as a pathology rather than a normal human response to abnormal and extreme circumstances (Papadopoulos, 2021). Another epistemological distortion is that refugeedom is researched more from a perspective of shame and less from the perspectives of being in the world and the self-agency in shaping the world and its history (Gatrell, 2016).

Children Refugees Fleeing Alone

Morgan (2009) suggested that an attachment to a place may be akin to that of a child to the caregiver. Place attachment has a profound impact on the self-identity of an individual (Morgan, 2009, Giuliani & Feldman, 1993, Proshansky et al., 1983). The children are actively developing a sense of place attachment, most of which occurs in middle childhood (Morgan, 2009). Children, especially adolescents, are also in an active process of forming their identity (Crocetti, 2017, Pond, 2018). Erickson (1988) described psychosocial stages of development as follows. Children up to 5 are developing their sense of self in the world predominantly through their caregivers, with social aspect of the environment becoming increasingly important in the formation around 3-5. Children aged 5-12 are developing a sense of self-esteem through learning skills that are believed to be valued in the society from trusted adults (e.g. caregivers, teachers). Adolescence (12-18) is an age of forming a sense of self within society. This stage is important for subsequent feeling of having a place in the society, a sense of belonging. These developmental stages of the place attachment and identity formation are complicated for the youth in refugeedom by the unpredictability of frequent relocations, changing living and social circumstances, (in)availability of education alongside exposure to dangerous environments. Fleeing alone adds another layer to this complexity.

For those children who experienced love and nurture at home, fleeing alone involves the pain of separation from the secure attachment figure (Bowlby, 1979). Deveci (2012) described this as a loss that could not be recovered and suggested that building valuable relationships with others, including trusted adults, and cultivating sense of belonging in the host communities could help provide a secure base for these children to be as well as they can be. Children who did not have positive experiences of nurture prior to the dislocation face additional complexity of a painful internal working model of insecure attachment characterised by self as unlovable and others as unreliable and hostile (Bowlby, 1979, Deveci, 2012). Deveci

described an example of how an insecure attachment style developed in a context of an unaccompanied child's experience of growing up ostracised by her father and subsequently by all the village children and families. This child was believed to be a witch due to her mum dying during her birth. Bjørge and Jensen (2015) described experiences of physical abuse from caregivers and schools understood by the unaccompanied refugee children as a norm of their cultures. Deveci reflected that a 'non-professional' role of a caregiver develops within a professional relationship of supporting unaccompanied children. This non-professional role creates a secure base that enables the children to feel belonging and safety, to set roots.

Reaching Safety in the UK

One in 95 people in the world were forced to flee their homes, making up 82.4 million people forcibly displaced around the globe in 2020 (UNHCR, 2021a). This figure includes 26.4 million people displaced outside of their national borders, half of whom were children (UNHCR, 2021a). Home Office (2020) statistics shows that just a fraction of the individuals displaced outside of their national borders sought safety in the UK in 2020. Approximately half of them were granted protection or asylum. There were 36,041 people (0.1% of individuals displaced outside of their national borders) seeking protection in the UK in 2020. Only 7,577 of these applications were children, which constitutes a disproportionate representation of the world's children in the refugee population shown above. Unaccompanied children constituted 2,229 of these applications. All children entering the UK are seen first as subjects to the immigration laws and second as children, in contradiction to the spirit of The 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Hek et al., 2012).

People seeking asylum do not have the right to work in the UK (UNHCR, 2021b). They are housed in properties that are 'hard to let' (unattractive to Council tenants) and they receive £5.39 a day cash allowance (UNHCR, 2021b). UK offers a limited route for refugees to reunite

with their family members, and there are restrictions for the refugee children in the UK to be able to reunite with their parents outside of the UK (UNHCR, 2021b). These policies are believed to be designed to make UK unattractive to refugees as a place to set roots and build new lives (Fox O'Mahony and Sweeney, 2010, Hobbs, 2021). However, Day and White (2002) found that most individuals who flee do not have a real choice in their asylum destinations due to a mix of individual and institutional circumstances intertwining their journeys. The discourses misrepresenting the complexity of the children refugees were also found to be present in the UK media, which often used xenophobic and racist language to separate 'migration crisis' into the emotive stories of the 'deserving' or 'proper' victims and the 'flood' or the 'stream' of the 'less-deserving' adults who present as children, trapping the refugee children seeking safety in the UK between public narratives of protection and threat (Rosen & Crafter, 2018).

It is understandable, given the above, that the children who make it to the UK without a trusted adult and undergo frightening procedures (such as age determination and detentions) become scared about being sent back and struggle to set roots (Hek et al., 2012). These children are more likely to experience lack of social and community support, inadvertent and intentional racism and a very limited or delayed access to education; and they are less likely to seek support and may hide their physical and emotional difficulties (Hek et al., 2012). This makes these children more vulnerable to maltreatment by professionals (Hek et al., 2012) and exploitation within UK, such as sex trafficking (Chase & Statham, 2005). Cohen et al. (2020) have argued that information about ethnicity and asylum status should be included in the UK national suicide statistics due to global evidence that suicide is the second leading cause of death in young people aged 15-29, with refugee and asylum seeking population being particularly vulnerable. Only 30% of foster parents or guardians spot a mental health need in the unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) they look after, and the UASC are less likely

to access mental health services and receive treatment than their accompanied counterparts (Mitra and Hodes, 2019). Dansokho and Council (2016) highlighted significant limitations in the professional understanding of unaccompanied refugee children's needs across the UK.

Rationale and Aims

This research aims to develop a psychological understanding of what sense Jamal, Noor, Fatima, Berekat, Samir and Belal make of their experiences of fleeing home alone and reaching UK in adolescence. The rationale is to bridge the gap in the meaning-making analysis addressing sociocultural issues in refugee studies (Karageorge et al., 2017). Several studies looked at experiences of unaccompanied children's displacements. Rogers et al (2018) used photography to make meaning of what it was like to look after these children, however the children were not interviewed and the meaning was made by the study authors based on the pictures the children took. Dansokho & Council (2016) provided a comprehensive needs assessment for UASC, however their analysis did not include the young people's meaning-making and focused more on the integration into the UK culture without considering the culture children brought with them.

This study might be helpful in informing professional understanding of UASC needs across the UK. This is in line with the government's response to the patient involvement in the NHS "no decision about me, without me" (Department of Health and Social Care and Open Public Services, 2012) and NHS value "everyone counts" (NHS Health Education England, 2019).

Research Questions

1. What psychological understandings can be derived from the sense and meanings these refugees make of their displacement experiences as UASC?

2. What psychological understanding can be derived from the sense and meanings these refugees make of their experiences of having been UASC in the UK?

Method

Recruitment

There were significant difficulties with the recruitment due to the pandemic (Figure 1).

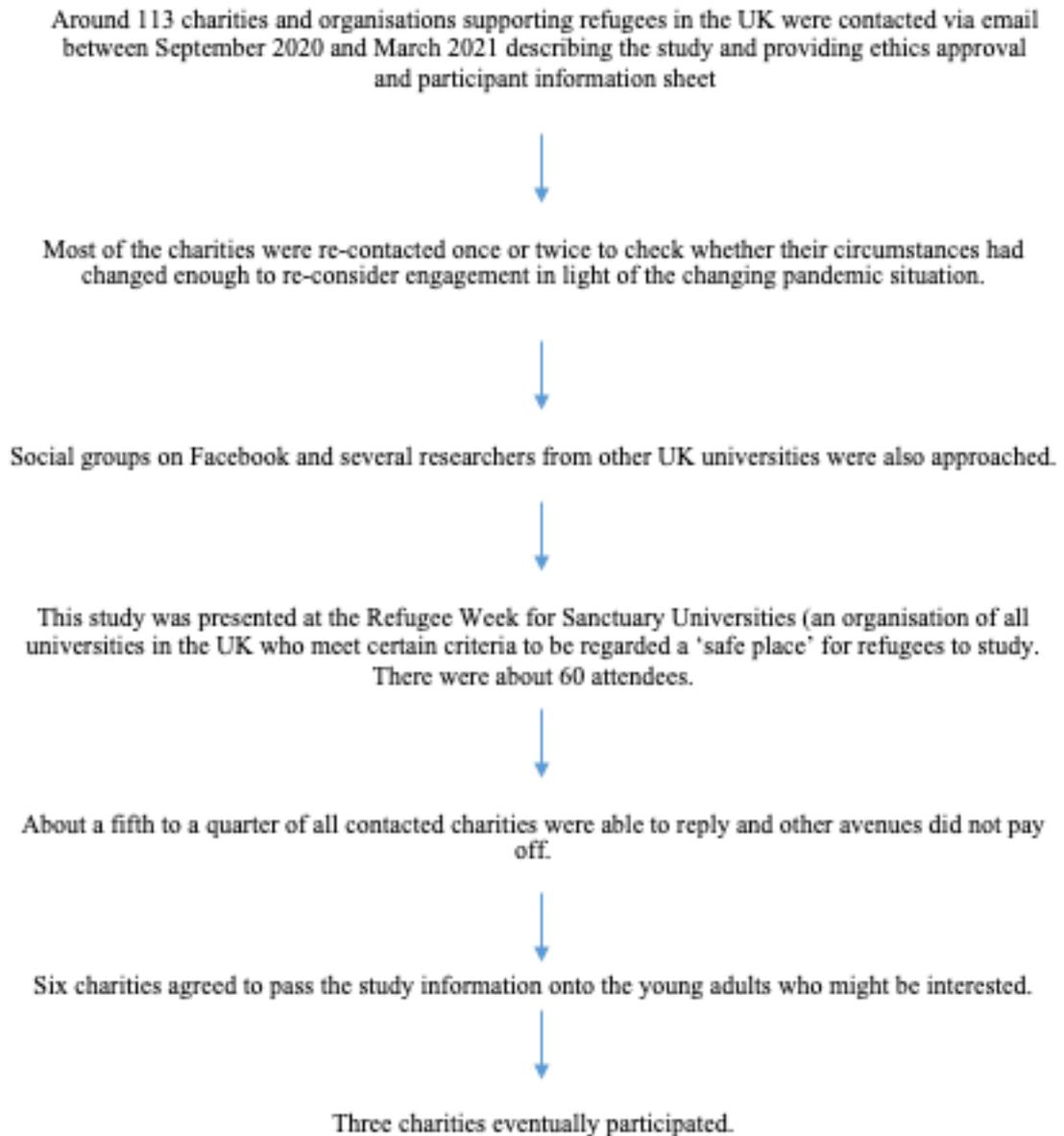


Figure 1. *Recruitment*

Design

This study adopted a qualitative cross-sectional design that included imagery-assisted interviewing data collection and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) data analysis. Imagery-assisted interviewing is a culture-sensitive approach that had been used successfully with refugee youth in the UK and reported to support meaningful engagement of this population in the research (Rogers et al., 2018, Miled, 2020, Sirriyeh, 2008, 2010). This approach also supported participants to be the experts of their lived experience (Beh et al., 2013) and opened venues of exploring latent, often sensory, experiences and meanings, that may be located underneath the consciousness in the ‘imperceptible self’. Sensory exploration was particularly important given that the interviews were conducted in a second language for the participants and the researcher.

The research method evolved into an innovative form of emancipatory IPA whereby the use of imagery and support offered to the participants helped them to articulate their experiences (Farrugia, 2020, deBono, 2015). Incorporation of visual methods to aid eliciting accounts has evidence for being utilised in the IPA (Kirkham et al., 2015, Burton et al., 2017). This is how the visual methods were employed to aid the elicitation of participants’ accounts and to empower the participants. Following consenting to take part in the study, the young adults were unsure how the research works. The emails with the information sheets and the photography instructions did not work, and I used the beginnings of our one-to-one Zoom sessions to talk through these. With exception of Samir, who showed me his original art work, all young adults started by looking for images on the Internet to answer the questions in the photography instructions. As they were searching, I asked them what search words they were putting in. This enabled us to start having a conversation about the meaning behind the images they were looking for, and opened a door for me to ask whether they had an object in their

home that they could photograph instead. Noor took a picture of her necklace, a gift from her foster carers, and Berekat took a picture of his hand whilst writing in a study book, to mean what helped them get through, survive and become who they are now. In such way, the conversations started with all the young adults long before we hit the recording button, as they commented about their choices of images, photographs or art work. We shared emotions and jokes in that process, e.g. Berekat dared me to take a good picture with my left hand whilst writing with my right hand. This helped to break the power and language barriers and to build rapport, trust and warmth (a particular challenge working remotely). Each of the images, photos or artwork then served as a spring board for the interview questions, e.g. “Looking at this picture, what would you like to share about what helped you to get through, survive and become who you are now?”

Participants

Nine individuals expressed interest. Three did not meet the inclusion criteria (not UASC), and two of these individuals became EbEs. In summary, six individuals from three charities eventually took part. Four of them were from the same charity in South East England. Smith et al. (2009) suggested that a smaller sample is sufficient for an IPA study. Table 1 details the recruitment criteria and Table 2 outlines participants’ demographics.

Table 1. Recruitment criteria.

Inclusion Criteria	
- Age 18-28	
- Experience of being UASC in the UK within past 10 years	
- Living in a community (not a detention centre)	
- Is not currently experiencing acute mental health distress	
- Minimal time in UK: six months	
- Communicating verbally in English, Russian or Ukrainian to a level at which a meaningful conversation can be sustained*	
* this criterion was removed during recruitment as approval was sought and received for use of interpreters; however, no interpreters were subsequently required	
Exclusion Criteria	
- Lack of robustness to do 45-90 minutes interview	
- Current acute mental health distress	

Table 2. Participants' demographics.

Pseudonym,	Gender	Region of origin	Religion	Age fleeing home	Age reaching UK	Region of resettlement in the UK
Jamal, 22	Man	South East Africa	Muslim	15	16	South East
Noor, 23	Woman	South East Africa	Christian Orthodox	16	17	South East
Fatima, 18	Woman	South East Africa	Christian Orthodox	13	14	Midlands
Berekat, 23	Man	South East Africa	Christian Orthodox	15	16	South East
Samir, 21	Man	South East Africa	Christian Orthodox	14	14	South East
Belal, 19	Man	Middle East	Christian Orthodox	12	16	East Anglia

Procedures

Interested individuals signed a consent form after reading the information sheet. Briefing and debriefing happened on either side of the audio-recorded semi-structured interview and included risk assessment, identifying a safe support person and a wellbeing plan, and collecting demographic information. Briefing also included participants' engagement, e.g. support in selecting images or taking a picture. Interview schedule was developed in guidance by Smith et al. (2009) and experientially tested with a colleague experienced in UASC work on clinical placement. It was checked for cultural sensitivity and language accessibility by an EbE and verified by a charity ethics department. Interviews were held throughout March 2021. They lasted 45-55 minutes and yielded no risk concerns. All participants received a £10 donation to their charity.

A group meeting with the four participants from the South East, one of the EbEs and the charity officer from the same charity was held prior to interviews. We openly discussed the decision about the EbE's role as co-analyst and agreed his support to the participants to engage in the study in case of any queries. We agreed that all my email communication with these four participants and the EbE would copy in the charity officer to enable pastoral support.

Data Analysis

IPA was selected for its' detailed approach to the analysis of the young people's meaning-making of their experiences (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014) and account for the double-hermeneutic circle of the meaning-making (Smith et al., 2009). Reflexivity about the subjectivity of the researcher was carried out through bracketing interview and research diary (Appendix 6).

The analysis was carried out in accordance to the guidelines by Smith et al. (2009). Data immersion was done through listening to a corresponding audio-recording while reading each transcript once, after which the recordings were deleted for data protection. Each anonymised transcript was then read line-by-line and initial comments of three types (descriptive, linguistic and conceptual) were annotated in a Word document (individual for each participant). Particularly salient passages were deconstructed by reading a paragraph backwards, sentence-by-sentence. Next, emergent themes were derived from the initial comments and checked against the participants' original words, annotated in the same Word documents (Appendix 7).

Emergent themes with example quotes were placed in a separate Word document, individual for each participant. These anonymised documents were shared with each of the EbEs separately through a screen-share option across several one-to-one Zoom meetings. It is through these online discussions between the researcher and each of the EbEs that the emergent themes were grouped together creating subthemes and superordinate themes for each participant, which was reflected through re-arranging the structure of the Word document to reflect progression of the analysis and annotating EbEs' comments (example, Appendix 8). EbEs were blind to each other's interpretations at this stage. Next, the researcher compiled the analysis from all discussions and created a master table of themes with quotes from all participants, discussed with each of the EbEs (Appendix 9). It was impossible to meet altogether due to EbE's individual commitments. The relationships between the sub- and the superordinate themes within- and between-participants became prominent through the process of these triangulation discussions. The researcher reflected the thematic relationships schematically and shared it with EbEs via emails to check validity (no changes were suggested).

Finally, a participant validation meeting was held to check the validity of implementing the implicit cultural knowledge of the EbEs into the interpretation of the participants' interviews in the context of the IPA analysis. Only the four participants from the charity in the South East were invited because they had pastoral support. Jamal and Noor, alongside their charity officer and one of the EbEs (from the same charity), attended the validation meeting on Zoom. Both participants spoke to each of the themes, confirming that the implicit cultural knowledge offered an accurate interpretation of their meaning-making, including the unspoken one.

Ethical Considerations

The Salomons ethics panel at the Canterbury Christ Church University approved this study. The researcher adhered to the ethical issues specific to the research with refugee participants (Ellis et al., 2007, Figure 2).

- Fair subject selection (selecting subjects based on the research objectives and not on geographical location)
- Favourable risk/benefit ratio (the benefit for the participants must be greater than the risk of harm/re-traumatisation)
- Independent review (the proposal review ensures that the researcher does not overlook ethical guidelines because of personal biases)
- Informed consent (language, culture and status barriers)
- Participants respect (considering power differentials)
- Extra caution was taken to be open and clear that participation in the research did not impact the immigration status or any care and education the participants were receiving in the UK

Figure 2. *Ethical issues specific to the research with refugee population.*

Results dissemination

The researcher is currently collaborating with the EbEs on producing an accessible shorter version of this report for participants and charities, who will also be welcomed to get in touch if so preferred. The study has been agreed to be presented at the Sanctuary Universities' Refugee Week event in 2022 and both EbEs are invited to co-present. Findings of this research are also planned to be shared at a workshop designed to liaise mental health services for looked after children with a charity supporting unaccompanied children in London within the scope of a community engagement project completed in partial fulfilment of the doctoral training. Both EbEs have agreed to be co-authors if this research is accepted for a publication.

Darkness	<i>Keeping Going</i>	
Alone / not alone		
Cruelty		
Another journey in the UK		
Following picture of new life		
Sleeping on the street		
People refuse to help		
Doubting self		
Keeping going		
Uncertainty	<i>Vanishing</i>	Kyan
Waiting		
Struggles/vanishing		
Scared		
Sad		
Someone to know		
Flashbacks		
Loss of confidence		
Expectations against reality	<i>Here and There</i>	
Loss of naivety		
Loss of hope		
Here and there		
Building connections	<i>Communicating</i>	Building Connections
Negotiating cultures		
Common language		
Community		
Exploring UK		
Making friends		
Foster family		
Learning English		
Charity	<i>Telling Stories</i>	
Sharing		
Validating		
Humour		
Exploring UK		
Trust		
Comments	<i>Names People Call Me</i>	Discrimination
Opinions		
Unwelcome		
Unkind / indifferent		
Terrible, awful		
Prejudice		
Judging		
Social media		
Hate towards refugees	<i>Try to Understand</i>	
Caring for others		
Coming in humanity		
Empathising with others		
Understand		
Being through a lot		
Good people and bad people		
Many different communities		
Punches in the face		
Education		
Art		

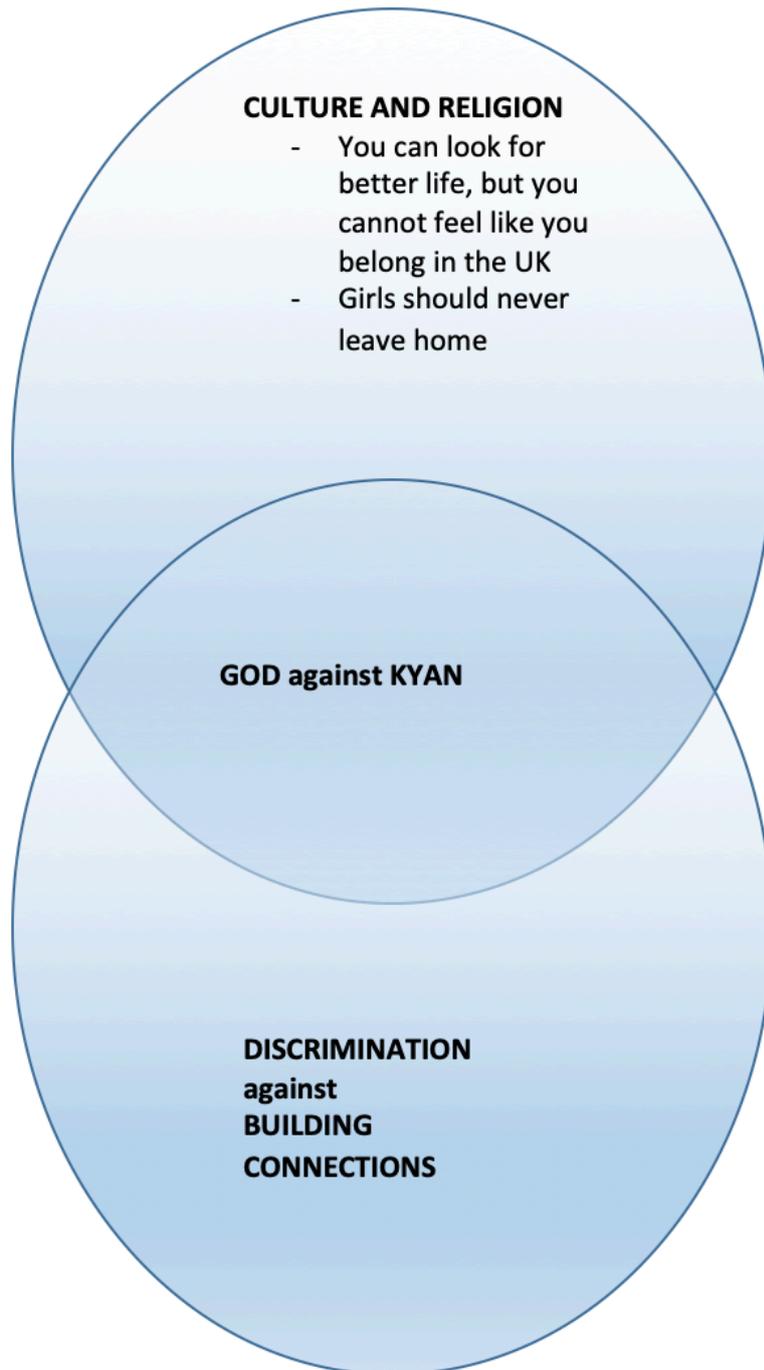


Figure 3. Findings. Internal conflict model.

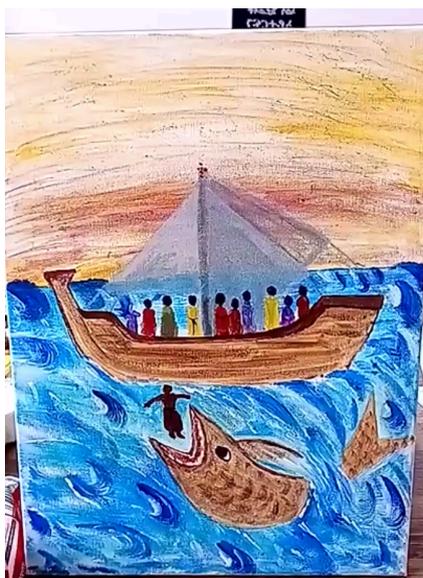
Culture and Religion

People who practice Christianity and people who practice Islam share many practices and beliefs that are combined in an overall cultural understanding in the regions of the participants. The religion and faith are highly prioritised and offer hope and strength in times of suffering, as well as guidance about life.

Communication with God, unwavering faith and the loved ones held in hearts kept the participants going through the ‘darkest times’ to reach the shores of safety. Women, seen as weak and criticised for the decision to provide safety for their families, also survived additional trial of being a refugee girl and the risks that this entailed. Upon reaching the new shores, some described an overwhelming appreciation of the ‘small things’, the value of which is less perceptible by those unexperienced in extreme suffering – the value of life itself.

Hand of God

Some participants described God as the one who held them and helped them through their journeys. Thinking to the word of God, praying and believing gave them the strength to continue and to not feel alone.



Faith, hope and hand of God. First, I only had a hope...

You are in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea. There was nothing. ... I was in my own

space with God, or with this story I knew [Jonah and the Whale] and then, like, okay, I need to pray to like come out of this place. (Samir/2/105) Original artwork by Samir.

Fatima described that it was God who got her out of the ‘darkest place’. It seemed that to her, the feeling that there was God who could protect her was needed in order to come through and survive.

[Image removed from electronic copy: a reproduction of Leonardo Da Vinci “Hand of God” showing only the hands in the sky] ...*The picture is basically...when...God brought me... holded me by His hand to get through that and to be here. That’s all. And we need...we need to feel like um...there is God. That can protect us from anywhere. (Fatima/11/621) Image from Internet selected by Fatima.*

Following the word of God also meant leaving the country of origin. Participants’ cultures believe that when one cannot find a place in their country, it is better to leave and find a safer, better place. One is expected to maintain faith and hope, to trust God. Throughout his interview, Jamal frequently returned to the theme of not losing hope – no matter how dark one’s life is, the sun will rise in the morning.

[Image removed from electronic copy: a silhouette of a hand reaching out into a sunrise]

So, that’s why the sunshine is showing that the sun rising, that means that there is a better place in the world so you can go and have a better life, you know, than the place where you were born or where you are having the problem now. (Jamal/1/8) Image from Internet selected by Jamal.

Appreciation

Culture and religion require living day-by-day, learning from the past but moving on from it, making the future better. Positive outlook and gratitude appeared to be integral to this process. Jamal spoke of the striking contrast between the experiences of an ‘ordinary’ life in the UK and the adversities he had experienced in his life. There was a sense of transcending above any difficulty now because it is incomparable to what had been. There was also a sense of acceptance that for him, life is hard work that he faces alone, without his parents. For him, even small things evoked deep gratitude.

I have a r...roof on top of me, water to drink, you see? ... Um...A bed to sleep, so appreciating those little things I have now...Because <Chuckles.> If you had a place for your whole life you will never understand the...little things in ordinary life...Like your mum, your dad, but for me – no. It’s fine, I have to work hard.

(Jamal/13/674)

Noor’s losses of others led to an intensified sense of appreciation. She spoke about ‘lots’ of people not making it in juxtaposition to herself having confronted death and reaching the UK shore, attaining ‘another chance’ at life.

[Image removed from electronic copy: feet leaving footsteps in the wet sand by the sea, words “Feeling alive again”] *...Especially one close...my friend, he...We left the country together and, but, he died in the sea. Because their boat is...is drowned. Um...So yeah, I feel alive again, I feel like I had another chance.* (Noor/5/216) Image from Internet selected by Noor.

Promise to Mum

In the cultures of the participants, there is a sense of obligation and duty to love and care for one's parents and to never abandon them. There is a strong responsibility for the parents and families. However, this responsibility (especially, to provide safety or money) lies with men. Noor and Fatima taking this on is strongly culturally discouraged.

Most participants described how holding their loved ones in their hearts kept them going through their journeys. Both young women described that their sole reason for becoming refugees was to offer a better life for themselves and their families. Fatima spoke at length about how she became a refugee to seek safety for herself and her mum when the soldiers repeatedly physically abused them after Fatima's dad became a deserter, leaving Fatima, aged 13, and her mum without support and protection in poverty. Upon reaching the UK a year later, Fatima was successful in supporting her mum's asylum process and the two of them were recently reunited in the safety of the UK.

I just couldn't be, I can't, I couldn't be handle this situation that we had. So I had to... I had to leave [my country] and then to help my mum...A better education, better life... (Fatima/2/75)

Belal described how a promise to his mum kept him alive. He was the youngest amongst the participants at the age of displacement, 12. He was the only participant who shared with me being forcibly detained in a European country. Belal witnessed traumatic events and described feelings of suicidality during his imprisonment, followed by PTSD upon reaching the UK and, subsequent to recovery, Belal continued to feel sad and lonely.

You know, like, what I thinking about everything is gonna be fine because I'm says a promise to my mum, I'm gonna do my university, and I'm gonna be an engineer, because I'm saying the promise to my mum. (Belal/5/231)

Keeping Going

This subtheme was devised specifically for women participants to recognise the courage beyond the courage of any refugee child fleeing alone – that of a refugee child girl fleeing alone. Girls are culturally considered to be a ‘weak spot’ in their families. They are worried about and supported, not relied upon. Girls are never expected to leave their homes. Those who do, are ‘despised’ by their society (often including co-travellers and resettled communities). The girls are sheltered from sleeping outside of their parental house, even from a house of a close relative such as an uncle. In this context, sleeping on the streets would have been perceived as the most dangerous experience one could have. Fatima and Noor had real courage to face the whole world in their journeys. They challenged themselves and their culture.

Noor is an experienced public speaker and a skilled representative for other young refugees. Her meaning-making had been well-established and communicated in succinct statements throughout our interview. Only occasionally a new meaning-making was emerging as we spoke. Her speech became more emotional and less structured as parts of her journey were revived in the present. The feeling of doubting herself emerged through these ‘raw’ moments.

Oh my God, it wasn't an option, obviously. It... there was, there was no, like, other, other ways... I...I...I... just hated my life and I was like, why, um, why did I... like, I left home, why? ... And...n...n... it was a really terrible experience for me... To sleep on the street. (Noor/2/106)

Fatima had not told her story outside of the interviews with the professionals as part of her asylum-seeking process. She was sharing her story with a wider audience for the first time. She was an hour late to our appointment – she tried to recall and note down all the details of

her journey, she explained. Fatima tried to give an accurate account of hers and others' suffering, especially, suffering of the girls. Often, in her speech, Fatima got swayed away with the feelings, before returning to her storyline. Sometimes, it felt like through these feelings, she was telling events that happened, but could not be named, thoughts about what if, and when, things went wrong.

It was, it was really sad when like...Um, when they, when they put us in...a camp... that they keep you in there...it was, it was really sad when like...It was really bad. ... We were staying in a little...um...confinement where they keep you, and...it's really dark. There's a lot of women get raped in there. ... So...cause of the like...cause...there is no one to like...bring me to the UK or anything, so I have to...keep going...keep going...until I get where I need to be. (Fatima/3/100)

Both women are studying towards their chosen careers in the NHS. This, too, creates a conflict with their culture and religion, and requires a separate journey to keep going.

I wanna do...I wanna be a nurse, like...wanna be part of the NHS, so this...this...didn't come up, like, it's just a straight-away, it...it took me a long journey as well. But it's not the same like <Chuckles.> my journey. (Noor/5/232)

Kyan

All participants described understandable difficult feelings and thoughts associated with their experiences. Their expectations in the UK were not met and this too led to emotional suffering. However, emotional suffering is culturally and religiously interpreted as *kyan*, thinking about things using brain, and therefore, losing faith.

Vanishing

All participants described moments of desperation and emotional suffering that would be culturally attributed to *kyan*. Some examples were losing confidence, having flashbacks, worrying, feeling sad, anxious, missing family, experiencing trauma and stress. Jamal reflected on a sense of disappearing in an incomprehensible reality.

I didn't have quite idea what's...what's happening, and why people are fighting, so I was just vanishing, and then crying every day and then don't know what's going on.

(Jamal/1/40)

An unprocessed grief shadowed through Belal's narrative when he spoke about never seeing his family again and thinking that they died. The yearning for them left him feeling alone and sad. Cultural music could have evoked that yearning into the consciousness, and the pain would have been too unbearable.

I never-ever, for like, the eight years, nearly like eight years, I'm never ever listening, like, to my music. Never ever. Because it make me be sad. And my feelings a bit horrible.

Like something feelings bad in the my heart. (Belal/1/42)

Here and There

Culture and religion require the individuals to accept what they are given, to be optimistic and grateful, but make it better if needed. Struggling in order to achieve is encouraged, e.g. dislocation journeys (for boys). However, struggling due to unmet expectations is seen as *kyan*, as the mind is believed to dominate over faith.

Expectations about the UK differed to the UK reality for most participants. This was experienced as unanticipated, and described as leading to emotional distress. Jamal described

the illusion of 'the grass being greener on the other side' by comparing his negative experiences in the UK to the grass in his country of origin, dry due to climate and harsh sun.

[Image removed from electronic copy: dry grass with a word "Here" and green grass with a word "There"] *I was thinking everything is gonna be smooth and nice, but...*

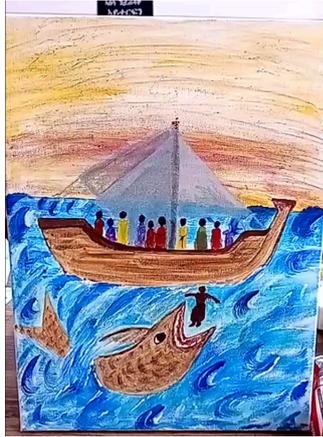
You realise that there's a back and forth with this...living in this country as well. So that's why, like, sometimes, it's gonna be dry, going back, like same I was there, having a bad experiences, and sometimes it's green as well. (Jamal/5/260) Image selected from Internet by Jamal.

For Berekat, the cultural difference was experienced as social exclusion and isolation. In that sense, his culture of origin offered more emotional warmth.

I had kind of mixed feelings, you know, I was happy, because, you know, seeing all the troubles, and the idea is heaven ... We grow up in Africa, we socialise with people around you and then here, it's like, even you can't say, "Hi" to your own neighbour. (Berekat/4/168)

God against Kyan

Interpreting understandable emotional suffering as *kyan* created a personal conflict with one's own faith, a conflict between one's own human mind against one's meaning-making of God's command. Samir described balancing despair with keeping faith.



When you go to the sea, you can never er...reach the land, it's all water, you know? ... I can't reach, it's t...too deep, you know? It's too hard to left mum, and, you know, just being away from brothers or sisters or friends you play with and...yeah...that's how I was feeling. But at the same time I was feeling, as I said to you, I was inspired by this man [Jonah and the Whale], I was knowing, like, I'm gonna do it, and I'm gonna be, like, you know, face it... (Samir/1/1) Original artwork by Samir.

Noor described the balance between the despair and the faith differently. This balance may be different for her because, whilst faith was a source of strength, the faith belonged to the culture and religion, which were also a source of oppression.

[Image removed from electronic copy: a silhouette of a woman watching a sunset above the sea] *...There was two things, whether to...just to give*

up and <Inhales deeply.> and...and...and die in that moment or die in that place, or just to hold at that thought and just keep, keep pushing myself. (Noor/2/60)

Image selected from Internet by Noor.

Building Connections

Building connections is important for setting roots, integrating, belonging and breaking barriers. Simultaneously, cultural differences presented challenges, e.g. English culture is very

different to that of the participants, belonging in the UK is also prohibited by the participants' culture and religion. Yet, the participants did not give up trying to communicate and to find belonging with both, culturally different, and culturally similar, others. Belal struggled to connect. It may be that his early displacement and incarceration experiences had left a long-lasting impact on making new attachments. It could also be that he did not have the community support in his place of settlement, which other participants described as invaluable to them.

Communicating

Many shared ways by which they sought integration through making friends, finding a common language such as football or art, and learning English. Noor shared how love and care of her foster cares helped Noor to connect. It was small everyday acts of humanity.



...And then she put down her knife and fork, and then she said, look, I eat with my...my hands as well, it's fine, you can eat that one. And then we start together using our, like, er...er...eating with our hands, sorry. (Noor/9/445) Photo of a gift from the foster carer taken by Noor during briefing.

Samir shared how the common language of art helped him access education. To him, communicating meant crossing barriers.

... I've been offered two universities. Two universities without being like, not even been studies! ... I always was doing art without any teachers, and then I be able to, you know, show my art, and [an art teacher] was like really into it and she try to buy it. So,

instead of she buying my art, I said, can I study art in your class? ... And now I'm studying art. (Samir/10/567)

Telling Stories

Participants from the South East all attended the same charity. They discovered that telling their stories to other refugees helped them feel validated and develop trust and belonging.

Like being with people who have been through same as me, like, see friends, we share, like, the same experience, telling their problem and when you tell our struggles and then you just laugh at it. (Jamal/2/50)

Berekat described how he had made friends in the Calais jungle who then made it to the UK and joined his charity. For him, they became a family that helps him cope.

...Once I start joining [my charity] I kind of... made a family there, actually. And my problem started to be normal after that, yeah. (Berekat/4/196)

Belal described a profound loss of such connections. It is still paining him deeply.

...I had one friend... Was like the... in jail... He always say, [Belal] you are so strong and you... you never gonna be like the...like the die or something. Oh you are so strong and you are so good talking. And I'm says, I'm not so strong, I don't like the sense of this life. And the boy, after one month, killing the...killing himself. Is killing himself about the jail. And he's die. After one month. Yeah. Because I'm strong the many things, like in the jail, like many, twenty peoples, die. (Belal/6/315)

Discrimination

All participants shared painful experiences of discrimination in the UK. All participants of this study are doubly-marginalised, as Black and ethnic minorities and as refugees. They were also more vulnerable, arriving as children, alone. Their sense-making seemed to be that people who discriminate might not understand the suffering of the refugeedom, misled by the social media and the news. It may be that through partaking in this study, some hoped to change the understanding of the refugees in the UK.

Names People Call Me

Jamal shared experiences of direct racial hatred in the community. He described agonising pain during the first encounters of racism, leading him to question himself. Eventually, Jamal described having accepted racism as a norm of everyday life that happens to him and others, outside of his control.

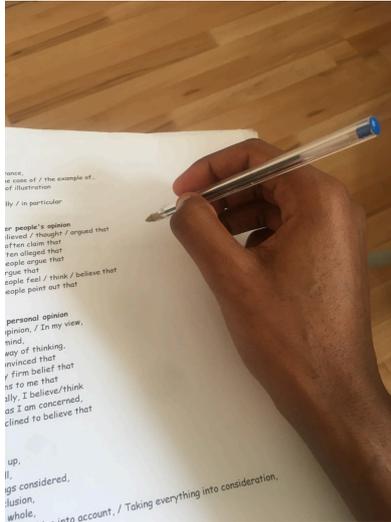
So I have no specific words, things people calling me, because different people from different backgrounds, they are being called by different names. So I'm like, okay... That's how it works. (Jamal/4/205)

Fatima described hidden racism: “*There's people who with racism... people who like... It's just a lot of stuff that's going on under...under words*” (Fatima, 13/717). Others shared how misrepresentation through the news and social media hurt them and made them feel unwelcomed.

When I see there, there is a lot of...um...posts that it hurts people, you know? Yeah. And it kind of hurts me as well. Yeah. So...that has affected me, actually. (Berekat/6/287)

Try to Understand

Most participants felt that people would not be able to hurt refugees if they were better informed and ‘understood’ what it was like to be a refugee. Berekat described that self-education about refugees would evoke empathy that would stop cruelty.



That's the thing, you know, when you trying to understand the reasons, like, why they left the...their country, then you feel, you know, you feel hurt, that's...you hurt yourself, you don't become cruel to them, you know? (Berekat/10/546)

Photo taken by Berekat during briefing to signify education.

Some described taking an active position on educating others about refugee experiences by sharing their stories publicly. Samir used art to communicate.

It's not a holiday, because we get here to make it better. I used to sell stickers: "No one chose to be a refugee. No one chose to be me". (Samir/11/609)

For Samir, raising awareness about refugees had become a cause. He shared he wanted to be ‘a mouth to my friends’, by friends he described refugees making the journeys.



The people who left here [points to the picture]

dying. You can see the bones. They may be alive or die like that. (Samir/13/685)

Original artwork by Samir.

Discrimination against Building Connections

There was a sense that participants overall worked hard on fostering trusting relationships with others. Simultaneously, all participants described experiencing discrimination. This seemed to lead to a realisation that there were two realities in the UK, good and bad.

So I had friends... That means this community is good. I was thinking, like, bringing up, my community is good, good, good, until I learned English fully – and then now I knew there is the opposite opinion and there is friends I have. (Jamal/7/323)

Noor described how this led her to differentiate whom to trust.

I survived, I used to tell my story to everyone...but then...like...going to college, I realised that it's not always like...the people like my foster carer...So I tend to understand...that people, they judge...there are others who don't see it in that...in my foster... <Chuckles.> carer's eye. (Noor/9/479)

Discussion

This study aimed to investigate what psychological understandings can be derived from the sense and meaning the participants make of their displacement experiences as unaccompanied children, and as UASC in the UK. The analysis suggested that holding onto their faith in God and their loved ones in their hearts kept Jamal, Noor, Fatima, Berekat, Samir and Belal alive. These values lie within their culture and religion and helped them to survive and kept them going in their 'new' lives. Simultaneously, Noor and Fatima also survived gender-specific difficulties of the refugeedom and oppression of their culture and religion. The young women are studying to work in the NHS, and the young adults in this study worked hard to build connections in the UK, which fostered their sense of belonging – but this is against their culture and religion. Within this dilemma, there is another conflict local to the host community – the discrimination that hurts and harms the self and the sense of belonging. In the heart of it all, there lie understandable feelings of distress that are interpreted as *kyan* and are experienced as threatening because they mean 'vanishing', or losing what keeps one alive – faith.

Putting down roots and feeling belonging in the UK for young adults like the participants in this study can go hand in hand with difficult feelings of betraying their culture, and facing rejection, discrimination and racism. Some young adults described how initially they experienced euphoria of feeling safe upon surviving their journeys and reaching the UK shores. As their English improved and they were abler to understand media and verbal comments in the community, they realised that they were unwelcome by some (which might feel as being rejected by the whole of the British culture). All the young adults, understandably, worked really hard to find a way to belong and put down roots in the UK – whether that was through education and career, or building intimate relationships such as with a girlfriend, a foster carer, other young adults at the charities, or in a more general community sense, through

football, art, public speeches, media. In order to succeed in putting down these roots, the young adults endured rejection, discrimination and racism, alongside the language, legal and practical barriers. For many, an option to continue to go on putting down roots remains a choice that has to be made every day. Yet, any success in putting down the roots here and experiencing a sense of belonging, in addition to exposure to the external hatred, can also be experienced as a betrayal of their culture and religion: whilst the participants' culture and religion allow them to seek better lives in another country, feelings of belonging in that country may be forbidden, especially when aspects of the host culture conflict with crucial norms and beliefs they hold.

This dilemma has another layer for women. Getting to the UK alone, finding belonging in the UK, getting education and building their careers disconfirms cultural and religious values. The young women are celebrated for their courage and encouraged to build their careers in the UK, but doing so disconfirms another context marker, that girls are weak and must never leave their homes. Bezhani (2014) considered how feminist writings by M. Mahboob, the first female author to flee Afghanistan, described experiences of women in *Outlandia* (refugeedom), whereby the survival journey away from home became a spiritual journey of attaining freedom.

The continuous process of negotiating the part of the self that experiences emotional suffering and the part of the self that contains faith could be seen as a conflict of polarised parts of the self, whereby *kyan* could be interpreted as a shadow self, perceived as 'evil' (Jung, 1995). Jung argued that the very existence of the 'darkness' and the 'evil' brings the 'light' and the 'good' to the human consciousness. Recognising the shadow self might evoke illumination and lead to growth and integration of the self, to wholeness, whereby the 'good' and the 'evil' are the two hands of God.

Overall, the findings in this study were in line with the background literature. Sirriyeh (2008, 2010) also described experiences of discrimination and unsafety in the community

specific to the UASC. The individual abilities to cope could be understood through Papadopoulos's systemic grid (2021). Particularly, availability of resources in the community, such as a charity where one can create a strong sense of belonging, was vital for the participants in this study. A lack of the sense of belonging with others left Belal feeling alone and sad.

Belal's individual ability to cope could also be understood in terms of the developmental identity and the place attachment theories. Belal left home just at the very start of an age of forming a sense of self within society (Erickson, 1988). This stage, in 'normal' circumstances, is mediated by the adults in the adolescent's life and this stage is vital to finding a place in the society, a sense of belonging. Without support, or 'normality', during this stage of life, Belal is left feeling unable to find a place in the UK. Similar to other young people in the study, Belal also experienced love and nurture at home, which meant that he had to survive the pain of separation from his secure attachment figure (Bowlby, 1979), as well as from his place of attachment (Morgan, 2009).

Limitations and Implications

Overall, the participants were well and settled in adequate housing, and had a positive immigration decision; yet, the duration of the interviews was relatively short (45-55 minutes) due to the emotional taxing on the participants. It may be that a meaning-making research akin to this study would not be appropriate for individuals in a more vulnerable emotional and practical situation. However, this study might offer some understanding of some of the processes that may be present for this vulnerable population in the UK context.

This study highlighted emotional distress associated with unmet expectations in the host community. There is a significant body of research relating to the general welfare and emotional support needs of the UASC in the UK (Newbigging & Thomas, 2011), however, there is little research specific to the impact and management of these unmet expectations (Bradby et al., 2017). Further investigation may help to inform clinical practice.

This study offers an interpretation of cultural understanding of young adults from South Africa and the Middle East who have experiences of being UASC. Its findings might contribute towards developing ‘intercultural competence’ in supporting this population in the UK (El-Awad et al., 2017). El-Awad et al. suggested that knowing about cultural differences in values, norms and emotion expression is helpful in creating adaptations in primary support programs (such as education settings) and nurturing emotional wellbeing. This study highlighted the need to support the refugee youth to achieve their aspirations and to build connections in their ‘new life’ in the UK. The participants’ validating meeting also highlighted the need to receive adequate support in understanding how to progress in education beyond learning English towards building a meaningful career. Participants emphasised the role of the foster carers in this process.

Clinical Implications

Clinicians can offer individual therapy, carers' support or advocacy through networking with the communities. Therapeutic support with this population should attend to the internal identity conflict and the dilemmas. This recommendation is in line with the psychotherapeutic approaches of *homecoming* (Papadopoulos, 2002) and rooting the mind into the body and the new environment (Luci, 2020). Particular consideration is needed to attend to the experiences of discrimination in the UK, gender-specific experiences and the unmet expectations.

The formulation should consider including the cultural and religious interpretation of emotional suffering as a loss of faith. The participants described faith as something that helped them to survive. Would it mean that experiencing emotional suffering is deadly? This might need exploration in the therapy room, alongside psychoeducation and normalisation.

The research method of facilitating participants to employ visual images could also be clinically useful in helping people give accounts of their experiences. In a therapy room, individuals could be encouraged to bring in meaningful objects or to use their phones to find words or images that best describe their feelings or experiences. This might help to build rapport, to reduce language barriers or to enable direct communication between the client and the therapist if an interpreter is used. Following this research, I tried animal toys in an assessment with a UASC. Telling me about the animals, the UASC also shared extensive details about his life and family prior and during his journey in relation to these animals (e.g. a happy memory of riding a camel with his dad, witnessing deaths by snakes and elephants) whereas regularly direct questions about the family and the events provoked greater weariness, reservation and sadness. It could be that a use of images or toys enables play, which becomes a transitional space safe to explore events which otherwise may be closed off to the conscious mind as a defence against psychic pain (Winnicott, 1991).

Conclusion

This study investigated the meaning-making of young adults with experiences of being unaccompanied children seeking protection in the UK. The IPA analysis suggested a dilemma posed by the higher contexts of the 'new life' in the UK and the culture and religion, and an internal conflict of emotional distress and faith. Overcoming these conflicts might lead to integration of the self and self-growth. Future research might help understanding the impact of the unmet expectations in the UK. Practical help should include support building connections. Clinicians should adopt a culture-sensitive and gender-specific approach tailored to the survivors of experiences of being an unaccompanied child refugee, including higher risks of stigmatisation.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Bracketing *home*

Entries from research journal and systemic foundation reflexive log

28 January 2021

I told my placement supervisor about my research topic. We are both voluntary migrants in the UK who share a history of living in post-Soviet “independent” countries as ethnic minority. She lived in Latvia, and I – in Ukraine. We both share Russian ethnical background. At different stages we felt unwelcomed by our “independent” countries. She felt like that most of the time since Latvia became independent, and I felt like that since the start of civil unrests and later, war, in Ukraine.

I asked her where her home was. She said, she had no home. Her home was a country that no longer existed. In such way, ‘home’ was a construct of nostalgic memories of a place and a country from her childhood. Since Latvia became independent, it introduced a passport for Latvian ‘non-citizens’ which was given to all individuals who did not have a generation born in Latvia prior to 1938, even if these individuals were themselves born in Latvia. Individuals are permitted to go through ‘naturalisation’ process of obtaining Latvian citizenship if they wish so. Many do not wish to do so, and Latvia agreed with EU that individuals with Latvian ‘non-citizens’ passports were permitted to travel within the EU. “How can this be home?” she said. There were posters in Latvia which ‘encouraged’ Russians to “pack bags – train station – home”, she said, much like the posters about 2,000 euros offered to EU nationals if they leave UK currently...

I thought, Ukraine had welcomed me. I had two homes growing up, one in Russia with my Russian grandparents (who were my strength and love), and another in Ukraine, with my school friends and teachers. When the war came round, we were not allowed to speak Russian anymore. Just under 50% of Ukrainian citizens are ethnic Russians. Who am I supposed to hate? Needless to say some of my Ukrainian friends stopped talking to me. I

refused to hate either. I hate Putin. He has committed an international crime by occupying Ukrainian territory. But brothers and sisters can't hate and kill each other. That shouldn't be happening. When the second world war broke out, people living in far-away ends of Eastern Russia felt they had to defend their home when Ukraine was occupied by Nazi Germany. And now, where is home now?

04 February 2021

Dear Friends, Colleagues, Acquaintances and Complete Strangers,

I have come to the UK when I was 14 and I've lived here ever since. I opened my first bank account, learned to drive on the wrong side of the road, paid all of my bills and taxes, got married and got divorced, started my pension savings here, in the UK. I have lived here 20 years, which makes up most of my life and all of my adult life. I don't know how to open bank accounts and pay bills and taxes anywhere else in the world, and I cannot be trusted to drive safely on the right. I've given my pledge to the Queen, and that is the only pledge I have ever given in my life. I have learned that British pubs close at 11 pm, which is an essential knowledge that makes one British according to the "Life in the UK" test.

So stop asking me if I'm going home for Christmas. Please, just stop. I don't know what to say back to you. Sometimes I say, "I am home". Sometimes I say, "My home is in Kent, but I'm going away to Lincolnshire for Christmas". When I don't have the energy, I just say, "I'm going to my boyfriend's". And then some of you who are particularly unfamiliar with me push on with your ignorance, "No, but where is home? You know, the home-home? The real home? I can hear you are not British, so where is home?". My answer to you has always been, "I am home. And I am British". I want to add, "I gave my pledge to the Queen. Did you?" If you [annoy me] even more, I say, "Home is where my cat feels safe

to bring her kill. Currently that's in Kent. Would you like to come for dinner?"

Ask me where my accent is from. Ask me what my ethnicity is. Ask me what I am doing for Christmas. I'll tell you I was born in Russia and grew up in Ukraine, and that's where my accent is from - bet you wouldn't have guessed, because my accent has gotten so mixed over the years. I identify as a Ukrainian British of Russian Jewish descent. I became a British citizen in 2018, and I am still really excited about it. Christmas is about drinking port on white carpets in Lincolnshire with my boyfriend's auntie. You know why I'd tell you if you form your question right? That's because I'll know that you are genuinely curious and are not making judgemental assumptions, and I'm happy to share, because I find these cross-cultural conversations interesting.

This isn't just about semantics. It's not. It's about, "We will never accept you here, this is not your home". I had worked so very hard to love Britain and to make it my home. It wasn't easy - I was plucked out of my world and placed in the middle of nowhere and surrounded by everything and everyone so very different to all I knew, understood and loved. It didn't make sense for years, but I never gave up on trying to form a relationship with British culture in my heart. I read tons of cross-cultural books, and talked to everyone to learn more, and made friends and lovers, and my relationship with British culture had become a mutual understanding, care and respect. Only then I gave my pledge, and I meant it, in the same way as I had meant my wedding vows.

So, this is home. And majority of you don't ask me if I'm going home for Christmas, and if you do, you take time to listen why that's not an okay question. Those who don't... Would you like to come over for dinner?

The truth be told, my Dear Reader, is that behind this façade of the pledge to the British Queen lies deep pain of searching for home and the feeling of home eluding me all my life. I remember that after we left Russia to live in Ukraine, I would travel from Ukraine to my grandparents in Russian mountains every summer. Those summer months, all fourteen years of when I was taken there and back until my grandpa passed, those summer months were the happiest months of my life.

I remember peering into the windows of the train for all three days of the journey – peering and searching for home. Is it Ukraine, where my life is? Or is it Russia, where there are forests and mountains and abundance of love and care and pure joy? I never found anything but pain and guilt for abandoning one or the other should I dare make a choice... That is why, “Are you going home for Christmas” question is so very painful.

I asked my friend, nationality Estonian, ethnicity Russian Jew. We talked about many things, fools and kings... About the war in Ukraine. About the pain of the ethnic hatred towards Russians, when a Ukrainian mother asks to turn off the Russian music in the Ukrainian public transport, stops the transports and leaves – because every village has a dead hero. About tampons, which wives buy for their husbands to take to war, because there is no money for other effective aids to stop bleeding during combat injuries. About collecting money for military uniforms and weapons, because the country does not have money for this war. About the pain of my Siberian friend’s accidental negligence in saying, “Crimea is Russia now”. About my friends turning away from me because my dad said that the war between Russia and Ukraine is not good for business during an international economic forum. And the horrible word, “Separatist!” Like enemies of people and children of enemies of people (also part of my family history). About absurd and negligent statements that hid deep human suffering and fear. An unbearable humanitarian tragedy where brothers and

sisters and parents and children murder each other God knows in whose name, not even in the name of God...

I asked him. He said, “Here is the deal. We long for home but there isn’t one”.

This elusive feeling of home can be understood well by those who live in exile, for example, somebody like Marina Tsvetaeva, Soviet poet in forced exile in Paris, 1934. Here is how she put it, translated by Andrey Kneller:

“This grief for homeland! It’s despair
And hopelessness of daily worry!
I’m equally indifferent where
- Alone, entirely and wholly, -

I am, which way I slowly stagger
Back from the market, walking homeward,
Into a home, that like a barrack,
Still doesn’t know that I’m the owner!

I am indifferent among whom
I am, - a captive lion rising.
Or which establishment, which room
I’m banished from – it’s not surprising –

Into myself. Kamchatkan bear
Can’t bear without ice – (I’m jaded!)
I am indifferent, I don’t care

Where I am shamed and desecrated.

My native tongue, which often sung
To me, as of this day, can't tempt me.
I am indifferent in which tongue
The passer-by misunderstands me.

He reads a ton of news and then
He milks the gossip from each entry...
He is the twentieth century man –
I'm from – before there was a century!

I stand, a tree stump in the distance –
Left from an alley, green and tall,
Equal to all, I am – indifferent
To all of it, but most of all

To that which once made all the difference.
All signs and marks are now erased.
All dates – have vanished in an instant:
My soul – born in a nameless place.

My native land did not protect me, -
Examining my soul with care,
Even the most precise inspector

Won't find a birthmark anywhere!

Each temple's vacant, every home

Is strange to me, - I care for no one.

But if a tree blooms where I roam, -

Especially, if it's the rowan..."

Appendix 2. CASP Completed Qualitative Checklist Example

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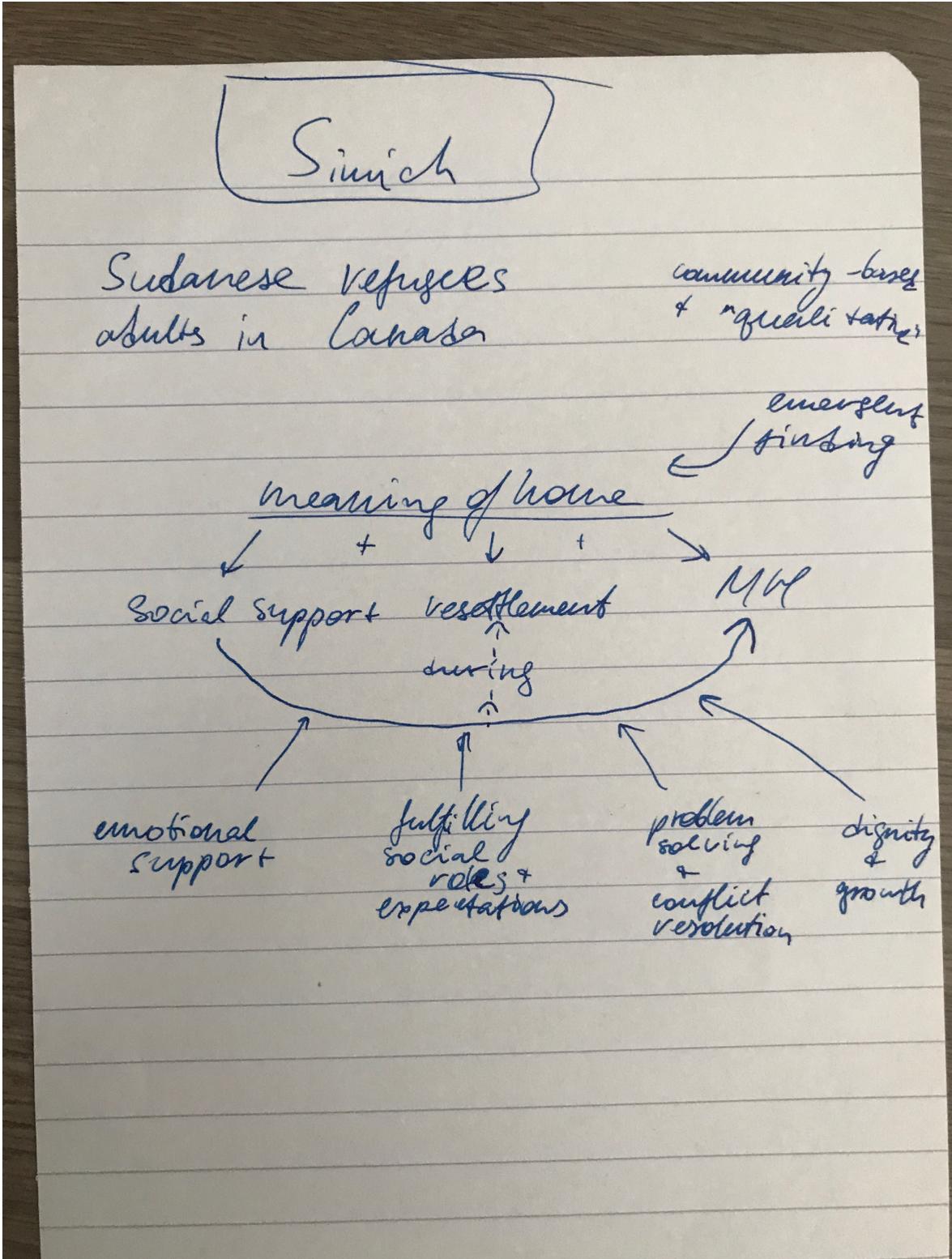
Appendix 3. Step 3

Extracting first and second order constructs; beginning to map out within-study metaphorical relationships. Example of study by Simich et al. (2010).

1 st Order	2 nd Order	Descriptive Themes
<p>In the family back home, the head of the family is responsible for everything... You work for your family all the time. When somebody is sick, you have to take care of that person . . . Secondly, you have to make sure that everybody is safe in the family. When there is a problem in the place you are, you move to another place to make sure that people are safe. (Female participant in Calgary)</p> <p>Back home . . . a man is the head of the family and he is the last decision maker. He is the person who is responsible for everything and everything is on his neck back home. Now here in Canada it is so different. That is the big challenge for both the man and the woman. (Male participant in Toronto)</p> <p>I went to school for one year and that's it. I can't do it because I need to work to support our families back home, because they need help, too. (Female participant in Toronto) It's very hard to live here . . . Sometime you think you want to go back to school, because you are not going work the rest of your life in a labor job . . . I need to help my country, not only myself, to get a good education, to continue to do something back home. (Male participant in Brooks)</p>	<p><i>Fulfilling social roles and expectations</i></p> <p>The concept of home was also described positively in terms of family roles and responsibilities to extended family members.</p> <p>As expected, study participants also described how marriages face challenges and marital roles may change after migration:</p> <p>The traditional interdependence and mutual support that is perceived to be a strength of Sudanese families can become a burden when families are divided and adults must support family members both in Canada and back home.</p>	<p>Social roles / expectations / responsibility</p> <p>Male/female, head of the family</p> <p>Care for sick, safety</p> <p>Head of the family, decision-making, responsibility</p> <p>Contribution to extended family / country</p> <p>Interdependence / responsibility</p>
<p>It's because of the lifestyle in Canada. Kids learn fast. When they go to school, they talk to their friends and get completely absorbed into the society here . . . They start asking for things that probably the parents can't provide. Those are some of the things that cause that a rift between parents and children. (Male participant in Calgary) Here it is so different. You just keep it to yourself until it gets worse and you start to yell at your kids, at your wife and problems arise. The police will be called and the children will be taken. It's not like back home. (Male participant in Toronto)</p> <p>Let me give the example of me and my husband . . . When we come together united, married, we are supervised. If you don't take care of your wife or if you behave badly, [elders] see and then they sit you down [and say], Why are you doing this? You are supposed to be nice. They are advisors. If something happens out of hand, my aunties will come in. They will talk to me. Men talk to boys. Women talk to girls. And the family is together. You don't easily divorce . . . That's family in our culture. (Female participant in Calgary)</p>	<p><i>Problem solving:</i></p> <p>Parent-child conflict</p> <p>In contrast to ideal family life in Sudan, Sudanese households in Canada can be marred by intergenerational strife, increased anxiety, mounting frustration, and few sources of social support.</p> <p>Problem solving: marital conflict</p> <p>Significant concerns from both women and men about the stability of Sudanese marriages in Canada also emerged. Most striking was the association of increased family conflict with the loss of elders who customarily mediate to resolve such problems back home.</p>	<p>Problem solving / conflict resolution (parent-child, marital)</p> <p>Elders</p> <p>Conflict resolution</p>

Appendix 4. Steps 4-5

Within-study mapping out contextualised metaphorical relationships.



Appendix 5. Step 6

Development of third and higher order concepts by systematic between-studies interpretation of the metaphors and analysis of the metaphorical relationships

1 st Order	2 nd Order	3 rd Order	Higher Order	Studies and context
<p>"I guess the only place is where you stay with your family, where all of your family is around you and you're there. That's when you feel home." (Dam & Eyles, 2012)</p> <p>"What home means... is grandchildren, parents, grandparents living in the house happily – a place." (Rosbrook & Schweizer, 2010)</p> <p>"This teapot is a small part of our tradition that we brought all the way from the Middle East to Canada to remind us of our home. And also, to remind us of a family time where we gather, talk, chat and laugh. It is part of what home means to us." (Miled, 2020)</p> <p>"I feel a little bit like being at my house... but when I will go to my father, I will feel like being in my real house. ... My home in Syria was amazing and my uncle and my aunt... they were next to us. My mom stayed in the house with us and my father worked in Lebanon making beautiful pictures." "My home is in Syria even though it is boring and dangerous over there. One day when it is ok there, I will return." (Arvanitis & Yelland, 2019)</p> <p>"... My family over there, they don't have enough good food like what I eat... Emotionally, I couldn't enjoy." (Rosbrook & Schweizer, 2010)</p> <p>"I'm always dreaming that one day when I retire that I go back to my homeland where my aunts and uncles and my relatives who lives in Vietnam and I live there...I hope that I will go back to my country and retire because it's my hometown; it's my homeland." (Dam & Eyles, 2012)</p>	<p>Relationship between place, family and <u>home</u>. (Dam & Eyles, 2012)</p> <p>Home as connectedness and relatedness to family across generation, shared goals, cultural value of staying together (Rosbrook & Schweizer, 2010)</p> <p>Home in the small material belongings brought from old home (e.g. a tea pot, earrings, dress or a praying mat) (Miled, 2020)</p> <p>Minimal connection to the current (temporary) camp accommodation, hopes for future home to reconnect with family and strong attachment to lost home in Syria (Arvanitis & Yelland, 2019)</p> <p>Relatedness to family requires the possibility of contact sufficient to feel lives are intertwined – this is intrinsically related to the experience of home (Rosbrook & Schweizer, 2010)</p> <p>Home as <u>homeland</u>. (Dam & Eyles, 2012)</p>	<p>Roots</p> <p>Family in intimate space</p> <p>Family in a material symbol</p> <p>Family, extended family. Old roots – reconnecting to the roots in the future</p> <p>Homeland (old roots, extended family)</p>	<p>Belonging - recognition by others in homecoming and in old and new roots</p> <p>Roots involve childhood landscapes</p>	<p>Dam & Eyles, 2012 – resettled community</p> <p>Miled, 2020 – young women (14-19)</p> <p>Börjesson & Forkby, 2020 – newly arrived unaccompanied boys (14-18)</p> <p>Arvanitis & Yelland, 2019 – children in temporary refugee settlement in Greece (11-15) Arvanitis & Yelland, 2019 – children in temporary refugee settlement in Greece (11-15)</p> <p>Simich et al. (2010) resettled <u>refugees</u> adults</p> <p>Rosbrook & Schweizer, 2010 – adult refugees resettled for a median of 1.33 years</p> <p>Freund, 2015 – several generations of worldwide refugees</p> <p>Sirriyeh, 2010 – young women in the UK (16-25)</p>

Appendix 6. Abridged research diary including bracketing interview for Part B

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Jamal

“Tomorrow will be better work” – I’m used to the narrative of us working for a better tomorrow (Soviet Union) or working hard/better to achieve certain goals such as education or promotion – for him, better work means surviving, getting out of a dangerous environment where he could die at any minute.

“So I was just vanishing, and then crying every day and then don’t know what’s going on” – overwhelming suffering, loneliness – he was 15. When was I “vanishing” and crying every day? Sense of losing everything you ever knew, impossibility to stay as things are, incomprehensibility of what is happening, not knowing what will happen next, hope is all that’s left.

Overcoming the difficult past he describes feels insurmountable to me; but it doesn’t feel like that to him. How to remove self to do *his* story justice? I find myself “looking for better options, better work”, a bit like my participant.

I feel very struck by, “So I have no specific words, things people calling me, because different people from different backgrounds they are being called by different names. So I’m like, okay... that’s how it works”. The experiences of racism here are perceived as the norm, something that is part of everyday life, outside of one’s control. Racism is something that one has to accept as part of everyday life and learn to cope with. He not once criticised racial discrimination, despite the emotional turmoil it had brought him. Instead, he tried to empathise with people who discriminated against him, trying to understand racial discrimination as a result of people’s lived experiences of adversity. It makes me feel very angry that we (as a host country) are failing to see how much work these young people are doing just to survive day by day and yet have enough space in their hearts to empathise with us, who surely have it better?

My own angry thoughts lead me to an appreciation of how incredibly self-reflective and reflexive this young man is, how he is able to empathise with others and how much internal strength he has to survive so much and to keep going and learning and understanding/discovering new lifeworld.

Working with the Expert by Experience (EbE) on theme development for Jamal's interview, I was struck at how impossible it would have been for me to interpret what Jamal told me in a way that was close to Jamal's truth! The EbE held the knowledge of the culture and the religion – he saw that Jamal was religious from the emergent themes I created (supported by anonymised quotations from Jamal's interview). The EbE could translate the themes in a way that was closer to Jamal's truth because the translation was rooted in the epistemology of their cultural background (their backgrounds are different to each other, but they are much closer to each other culturally than my Russian/Jewish/Ukrainian/British background is to either of them, and they both practice Islam). EbE was blind to Jamal's identity and religious background. After our conversation, I checked Jamal's demographics – he was, indeed, practicing Islam. Without the EbE, I would have gone down the route of interpreting Jamal's story from a position I understand best – a time-based narrative, pre-journey, journey, arrival and future... This would have been a horrific oversimplification of Jamal's truth. EbE could see what I couldn't – religion and culture throughout the experiences and emotions that Jamal was describing, the values that he held and that helped him survive and move on, and the *kyan* – the thinking about things using brain, without religion... How awful it would have been to attempt an interpretation without this deep cultural and religious understanding...

Noor

Brave girl. She struck me as an outspoken, brave young woman from the first time I met her in December last year. Her voice is strong, gaze – direct, posture – confident. How surprised I was to hear she used to be shy! I said I didn't believe her – she laughed. She is proud of her journey – not to UK, *in* the UK. She keeps going even though it remains an everyday decision – to give up or to keep going. Her foster carer is amazing. I can see why Noor chose her as her anchor. I was touched by how her foster carer made Noor feel at ease at the dinner table – it is Noor's culture to eat with her hands. She was embarrassed to touch her food at the British table. So her foster carer put down her fork and ate with her hands, so that Noor could join in. A simple and human-to-human gesture. A true act of human to human understanding and solidarity. I feel this gesture shaping me, as the foster carer shaped Noor. This cannot solve Noor's predicament, but it offers her a stable anchor. Noor wants to work in the NHS, Fatima – too.

I was so struck by my EbE's interpretation of Noor's experiences – the difference between women being “despised” for leaving their homes even if their motives are, like Noor's, to provide better (safety) life for her younger siblings and mum, and men being encouraged to do just that – I was so struck that I started doubting whether my EbE's interpretations were valid, including his interpretation of *kyan* versus faith. It was luck that my second EbE, a woman, joined us in the research. She was blind to the interpretations of the first EbE and yet her interpretation was very close. Particularly, both EbEs interpreted Noor's experiences of the jungle, the camps and the sleeping on the street in the same (almost identical) way – Noor was scared more *because* she was a woman, who culturally was expected to stay in the shelter of her home. Noor doubted herself all the way through, and still does now – both EbEs told me. Participants' validation meeting, which Noor attended, confirmed the interpretation of the gender difference in the experiences and the *kyan* versus faith, which solidified my confidence

in the validity of these interpretations. Perhaps this was my own experience of *kyan* (or Western epistemology) against faith in the validity of using experts of implicit cultural knowledge. It just felt so ‘risky’ to rely on lived experience that is so very different to my knowledge base, particularly in the context of conducting research for an assessment in an institution within a system of the Western epistemology, and particularly after planning to stick to the IPA rules in my bracketing interview. My supervisor said that my use of EbEs in qualitative research in such way is not a usual practice. I can see why – it challenged my epistemological bias, it made me doubt validity of my research and my ability to ‘defend’ it to examiners, or indeed in a peer-reviewed publication. Yet, I see value in it. In fact, I don’t see a way to do these voices justice without this implicit cultural knowledge framework.

Appendix 7. Annotated transcript

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Appendix 8. Example of *live* discussion of themes

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Appendix 9. Master Table

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Appendix 10. Photograph instruction and interview schedule

Photograph Instruction

Please take three pictures.

- Please take one picture that shows what it was like for you to leave home and travel to the UK as a displaced young person.
- Please take another picture that shows what it was like for you to arrive and live in the UK as a displaced young person.
- Please take one more picture that shows something about what helped you get through, survive and become who you are now.

Please do not take pictures of other people's faces or of names of places.

Interview Schedule

1. For each photograph, respectively:
 - Looking at this photo, what do you want to share about what it was like for you to leave home and travel to the UK as a displaced young person?
 - Looking at this photo, what do you want to share about what it was like for you to arrive and live in the UK as a displaced young person?
 - Looking at this photo, what do you want to share about what helped you get through, survive and become who you are today?
 - Prompts: are there particular senses you want to the viewer to connect with in your experience (feelings, sounds, visual experiences, smell, temperature or touch for instance)? Can you tell me some more about that experience? What was it like?
2. What do these photos mean to you?
3. What would you like these photos to mean to others for them to understand what it was like for you?
4. Looking back, what is it like now to have had that experience of being a refugee child?

Possible prompts to help investigate experiences as they arise in the conversation:

- What was your experience of that like?
- Can you tell me some more about that experience?
- What was that like?
- What is it like to...?
- How do you make sense of/ understand/ live with/ cope with having had that experience now?
- How has it changed you as a person, if at all?
- What has strengthened you through these experiences?
- What helped you survive and come through?

Appendix 11. Participant information sheet

Participant Information Sheet

Study Title: What sense do refugees make of how they coped with their experiences of displacement to UK from other countries as unaccompanied young people?

PART 1



Hello. My name is Anya and I am a trainee clinical psychologist at Canterbury Christ Church University. As someone who came to the UK as a young person, I am really interested in the experiences of others who come to UK as young people. I am particularly interested to learn about experiences of coming to the UK as an unaccompanied asylum seeking child and I would like to help other people who live in the UK to understand these experiences better. This is why I'm doing this study as part of my psychology training at Canterbury Christ Church University. Two clinical psychologists, Dr Louise Goodbody and Professor Renos Papadopoulos, help me carry out my study.

I would like to invite you to take part in my study. Before you decide, please take time to read the information below about what it would be like to join in. Talk to others if you wish and feel free to ask me any questions.

What is the study about?

Research suggests there is a lack of understanding and a number of preconceptions around young people who come to UK as unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC). I want to hear from people who have experience of coming to UK as UASC about what it was like.

Why do I ask you to take part in my study?

You have experience of what it is like to be an unaccompanied asylum seeking child and you also know what it is like to not know whether you can stay in the UK and put down roots. Other people who live in the UK might not know how this feels. Your story is important for others to hear.

Will taking part effect my immigration status in the UK?

No, taking part in this study will not affect your immigration status in the UK. It will also not affect in any way, any support, treatment or education you may be receiving.

Do you have to take part?

No, it is up to you to decide whether you should join the study. If you choose to take part, I will ask you to sign a consent form to show that you agree to take part.

What if you change your mind about taking part?

You can change your mind and withdraw from the study any time without giving a reason. If you would like me to not use information you tell me in the interview, I would be able to remove it from the study until I start putting all the information from all the participants together, so please let me know by 30th April 2021. After I start doing that, the information will become anonymous and it would be difficult for me to take your words out.

What will happen if you take part?

I will ask you to take three photographs. The first photograph will be about something that could show what it was like for you to leave home and travel to UK as a displaced young person. The second picture will be about something that could show what it was like for you to arrive and live in the UK as a displaced young person. The third picture will be about something that could show what helped you get through, survive, and become who you are now. I will ask that these pictures do not include images of people's faces or names of places. I will then ask you to email me the pictures.

Afterwards, I will invite you to meet with me over Zoom one-to-one for 45-90 minutes to tell me about the pictures, what they mean and about your experiences of being displaced as a child and being an unaccompanied refugee child in the UK.

I will ask you whether you would prefer to have video on or off. I will also ask you whether you currently experience strong emotional discomfort, nightmares or flashbacks (if you do, we could think together about what to do next to help you, but we will not go ahead with talking about the pictures and about your dislocation journey). I will also ask you for your GP details or for details of someone safe who could support you (like your social worker or a person who works at the charity or someone you know and trust) and I will write them down on a piece of paper just in case you feel discomfort as a result of our conversation and need support from your GP. If we do not need to get in touch with the GP or a person who could support you, I will destroy (tear apart) the paper with your GP details at the end of our conversation. I will also ask you what helps you stay in the here and now.

Afterwards, with your permission, I will use a digital recorder to record our conversation about your displacement story. The recorder only records the audio, not the video.

Following this, I will stop the recorder so that we can reflect on our conversation. I will also ask you about your country of origin, age, gender, immigration status, faith and what experiences had led you to seeking asylum. This information will be anonymous too, which means it cannot be tracked to you individually (for example, in my study report this would read as "3 people were from East Africa, 2 people were from the Middle East").

After our conversation, I will email you a debrief letter. This is a list of resources that offer mental health support to the general public or specifically to people who are refugees. Your supporting charity would have a copy of this list too. In my email to you, I could also include the names of the people in your network who you have told me are people whom you trust and who can support you, just so that you have all the names there should you want to talk to anyone later on.

Afterwards I will transcribe (write word-for-word) our conversation, anonymise it and analyse the information from all the conversations I have with all participants together. Then I will write a letter that summarises the research findings and send it to your charity so that the charity can share it with you without you having to share with me your address. See more detail about what happens to the results of the study in Part 2.

I will offer a donation of £10 to your charity for your participation as a way for this study to help refugee community.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

This study aims to help other people in the UK to understand young people who are UASC in the future, in order to support them better. Sometimes it may also feel helpful to read the summary letter, to find out what is similar and what is different for you and others.

Are there the possible disadvantages and risks about taking part?

I will be asking you about your story. I will do my best to make sure that our conversation does not upset you. However, it may be difficult to talk about some of these things. You should consider this before deciding whether to take part. If you take part in the study, at the beginning of our conversation we will talk about a plan that can help you if you get upset. If during our conversation there are things you would rather not speak about, you do not have to. If at any time you wish to stop the conversation, please let me know and we will stop.

Will your part in the study be kept confidential?

Yes. I will follow ethical and legal practice and all information about you will be handled in confidence. The details are in Part 2.

What if there is a problem?

If you would like to raise a complaint about me or the study, please see detailed information in Part 2.

PART 2**When would I need to tell someone else about something you shared with me?**

There are only a few special circumstances when I would need to tell anyone else about something you share with me. If you told me that you were being harmed by others, or if you were going to harm yourself or another person, I would be obliged to inform your GP and sometimes police immediately. This is the only time that I will ever share information about what you have discussed with me (unless you specifically ask me to do so).

How will I keep all your information safe?

Your real name will only appear on the consent form. I will be the only person who will be able to link your name and your email to a transcript and I will use a password protected Excel document to do that which will be destroyed as soon as I complete the study report.

The audio recording will be kept on an encrypted (strong password protection) memory stick and deleted after transcribing. The transcripts will be fully anonymised and will not include any identifiable information. I will put the photos that you send me onto the encrypted memory stick too and delete all emails you have sent me from my mailbox. I will delete the pictures from the memory stick upon completion of the study. Please note that the pictures will go into the report and into a letter to your charity (see next section for more information).

Three other people might ask to look at the transcription. They are two of my study supervisors, Dr Louise Goodbody and Professor Renos Papadopoulos, and another trainee clinical psychologist who will help to verify my analysis of what you have told me.

Transcribed interviews will be kept on a password-protected memory stick. This memory stick and the consent forms will be kept in a locked cabinet at Canterbury Christ Church University for 10 years. The consent form gets destroyed after 5 years, and the memory stick gets deleted after 10 years. No one would be able to look at it except the administrator in charge of the cabinet and me. You have the right to ask me to see all the information I have about you – any time. If you thought any of it was wrong you could change it.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of the study get written up into a report. I will put quotes from some of the interviews into the report but I will use ‘fake names’ for names of people or places or other details that could identify you or anyone else. I will also put photographs you have taken into the report.

The report will be published on my University’s website once it is examined and has passed. I will also send the report to a journal to be published. If this is accepted, it will be available for other people to read to help them understand more about what it’s like to be UASC.

I will send a letter to your charity to tell you about the findings. This letter will be a short summary of the longer report. It will not have quotes from the interviews, but it will have some of the photographs that people took. This report can be read by people who work at your charity.

Who has reviewed the study?

All research studies trainee clinical psychologists like me undertake are looked at by independent group of people, called an ethics panel, to make sure that the research studies are respectful of people and their rights, and that the research is also likely to be worthwhile. The Salomons ethics panel at the Canterbury Christ Church University have said that this study is OK to go ahead.

Who is organising and funding the research?

This research will be paid by Canterbury Christ Church University. Some of the people who work at the your charity are helping me to set the study up.

What if there is a problem?

If you experience any problems during or after our conversation, please kindly let me know straight away. We can stop our conversation at any time should you feel uncomfortable or unwell.

If you feel like the problem really hasn’t been sorted out, you can make a formal complaint. You can do this by contacting the Research Director for the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology: Dr Fergal Jones, Research Director, Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, Salomons Institute for Applied Psychology, Lucy Fildes Building, 1 Meadow Rd, Tunbridge Wells, TN1 2YG.

Further Information

If you would like any help with understanding this information sheet or you would like to ask more questions before you make a decision, please contact me on details below.

Anya Gkrimpova

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Canterbury Christ Church University
Salomons Institute for Applied Psychology
Lucy Fildes Building
1 Meadow Rd
Tunbridge Wells
TN1 2YG.

Email: ag657@canterbury.ac.uk

Appendix 12. Consent form

Consent Form

Title of Project: What sense do refugees make of how they coped with their experiences of displacement to UK from other countries as unaccompanied young people?

1. I have read and understand the information sheet and have been able to ask questions about the study and have had these questions answered.
2. I have considered that some things may be difficult for me to talk about before making decision about participating in this study.
3. I do not currently experience strong emotional discomfort, nightmares or flashbacks.
4. I understand that I do not have to take part in this study and that I can stop being part of the study without giving a reason. The information I give can be removed from the study until 30th April 2021.
5. I understand that taking part in this study will not affect my immigration application or any support I currently receive.
6. I agree that the interview can be recorded (sound only) and that the recording can be transcribed (typed into words) and checked by the researcher's supervisors and one more trainee clinical psychologist.
7. I agree that anonymous quotes from my interview and photographs I take for this research may be used in published reports of the study findings and that my name or anything that could identify me will not appear in the final report.
8. I agree for the researcher to send a letter summarising the research findings to the charity that supports me.

9. I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

Name of person taking consent

Signature

Date

Appendix 13. Ethics approval

This has been removed from the electronic copy.

Appendix 14. End of study form

A photo of the email with identifying information has been removed from the electronic copy.

What sense do refugees make of how they coped with their experiences of displacement to UK from other countries as unaccompanied young people?

This study aimed to investigate what psychological understandings can be derived from the sense and meaning the participants make of their displacement experiences as unaccompanied children seeking international protection in the UK. Six young adults took part in this study, two were women. Two Experts by Experience, a man and a woman, helped to bring implicit cultural knowledge into the analysis of the interviews.

The IPA analysis suggested that participants were caught in a dilemma of negotiating the higher contexts of the ‘new life’ in the UK and the culture and religion, and an internal conflict of emotional distress and faith. On one hand, participants’ cultural and religious values such as holding faith in God and their loved ones in their hearts kept the participants alive. On the other hand, participants worked really hard to build connections in the UK, which fostered their sense of belonging in the ‘new life’ – but belonging in the UK is prohibited by their culture and religion. The young women in this study also undertook their journeys specifically in order to provide safety and better life for their families and to receive education – but leaving parental home unaccompanied is prohibited by their culture and religion. Within this dilemma, there is another conflict local to the host community in the UK – the discrimination that hurts and harms the self and the sense of belonging.

In the heart of it all, there lied understandable feelings of emotional suffering. However, the emotional suffering is culturally interpreted as *kyan* (a mind without faith, a mind that is suffering). Thus, emotional suffering is experienced as threatening because it means

‘vanishing’, or losing what keeps one alive – faith. The continuous process of negotiating the part of the self that experiences emotional suffering and the part of the self that contains faith could be seen as a conflict of polarised parts of the self, whereby *kyan* could be interpreted as a shadow self, perceived as ‘evil’ (Jung, 1995). Recognising the shadow self might evoke illumination and lead to growth and integration of the self, to wholeness, whereby the ‘good’ and the ‘evil’ are the two hands of God.

Future research might help understanding the impact of the unmet expectations in the UK. Practical help should include support building connections. Clinicians should adopt a culture-sensitive and gender-specific approach tailored to the survivors of experiences of being an unaccompanied child refugee, including higher risks of stigmatisation.

Jung, C. (1995). Jung on Evil. In L. Corbett (Eds., 2018). *Jung and Jungians on evil* (pp.101-116). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351199674-5>

Appendix 15. Author guideline notes for journal publication

For publication in the Journal of Refugee Studies, guidelines taken from:

https://academic.oup.com/jrs/pages/General_Instructions

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