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Schooling of Refugee Youth and its Effect on their Identity

難民青少年の学校教育とアイデンティティ形成

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ABSTARCT

The world is currently witnessing one of the worst refugee crises since World War II, with around 60 million people escaping violence, war, and persecution (MIFKJF, 2016). Children make up over half of the 26-million refugee population (Save the Children, 2019b), and this staggering figure compels policymakers and researchers alike to act towards sustainable solutions for securing the survival and futures of those children. For that objective, this thesis studies the identity development of refugee children and adolescents in host nations. Using qualitative research methods, this thesis seeks to address the following research questions: How does the literature handle the topic of identity construction with regards to refugee youth? how does schooling impact the identity creation of refugee adolescents in host countries that impose integration policies and how do they perceive their experiences? This thesis focuses on Syrian refugees in Germany because of the protracted catastrophe that this refugee group is experiencing, among other reasons. Much of the research on refugee identity creation occurs after settlement, when distinctions between immigrants and refugees become blurred. This thesis attempts to define where these limits should be established and when identity building should be prioritised in order to provide more sustainable chances for refugee children's futures. The purpose of this thesis is to examine the role that education plays in the creation of identity from the viewpoint of refugee kids. Taking refugee youth's voices and narratives into account is the most authentic way to achieve more effective education strategies for this population of students. The data indicates that educating refugee students in countries where integration is the norm has a number of benefits and drawbacks. Several of these benefits are evident in refugee youth's capacity to reconstruct their lives in a

new and safe place while obtaining formal qualifications that would enable them to compete in the new place's labour market. On the other hand, the disadvantages include a slew of social and psychological realisations that negatively affect the refugee children, including degradation of their dignity, feeling forced to adapt to the host country's culture, and having to bear with their othering.

Oraganisation of the Thesis

Chapter 1 offers a substantial introduction to the research topic and the rationale for choosing the research focus. As this research highlights the experiences of refugee children who are forced into schooling that is meant for full integration, this chapter spotlights the dilemmas this approach has in its folds towards refugee identity development. This chapter will provide the context of the research topic, as well as the study's objective, research questions, and definitions of terminology.

Chapter 2 explains the reasons, merits, demerits, and application of a systematic review of literature related to the research topic. The chapter moves on to present the protocol, eligibility criteria, selection process, and results. The chapter then discusses the most important findings of the results and highlights the limitations and gaps.

Chapter 3 covers debates and discussions in the literature that the systematic review could not manage to retrieve on the intricacies of identity construction, especially for children, and how education plays a role in this regard. The chapter extends the literature review to refugee children's identity specifics and how integration into host nations plays into the whole equation.

Chapter 4 presents background information for this research. To help the reader get a better understanding of the research topic, the first part of this chapter presents the plight of refugees in our times. The second part discusses the German immigration and integration policies. Finally, this chapter addresses the situation of refugee schooling in Germany, with supporting examples and details.

Chapter 5 illustrates and discusses the methodology used, as well as the rationale for using qualitative design. This chapter provides discussions of ethical protocols, sampling rationale, and methods for participant recruitment. This chapter will include the researcher's partiality and positionality, in addition to limitations and specific considerations.

Chapter 6 presents the findings of the research, and it is divided into two parts. The first portion familiarises the reader with the participants who were essential to this investigation. Then, the second section discusses the major themes and sub-themes that arose from the participants' stories. The chapter concludes with a thorough discussion of the research results and the mechanisms through which the identity development of the participants have taken place.

Chapter 7 starts with summarising the answers for the research questions. It then proceeds into a discussion of the research implications for educational policy and practice. Finally, it presents conclusions, limitations, and finally state some future research recommendations.

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List of Abbreviations

ADHD	Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
BAMF	Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtelinge), Germany
CCTs	Clinical and Translational Science Research Guide
CRC	Convention on the Rights of Children
ECRE	European Council on Refugees and Exiles
EU	European Union
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights
ICRC	The International Committee of the Red Cross
INEE	The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
JATS	Journal Article Tag Suite
OHCHR	The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PISA	PISA Programme for International Student Assessment, Germany
PRISMA	Preferred Reporting Items for Systemic Reviews and Meta-Analyses
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
RCTs	Randomised Controlled Trials
SDG 4	Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education)
SVR	Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration (Sacherverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration),
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	The Untied Nations
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	The United Nations High Commissioner for the Refugees
UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund

Chapter 1: Introduction

"In the social jungle of human existence, there is no feeling of being alive without a sense of identity."

Erik Erikson (Identity, Youth, and Crisis, 1968, p. 132).

Introduction

Constructive identity development is key to ensuring that children's rights are respected and fulfilled (Brooker & Woodhead, 2008). Children are entitled to a name, nationality, and legal identification under the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). Children are also entitled to their own culture, and thus, children's education should focus on "the development of respect for their own cultural identity, language, and values, for the national values of the country in which the child lives, the country from which they may originate, and for civilisations other than their own" (UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, 1989, Preamble and Articles 18, 23, 27, 29, & 32). More so, if they are vulnerable children who got caught in the middle of conflicts and had to flee their homes and countries. Ensuring access to an education that can safeguard their needs, values, and dignity should be a right for all children.

Over the last decade, a substantial outflow of refugee children from the Middle East and other areas of the world has occurred as a result of the region's multiple conflicts. Refugee youth, in particular, are more prone to face a number of problems upon arrival in a host country, notably managing the new legal, political, or social labels added to their identities, trying to fit into a new culture, and handling concerns including discrimination and social alienation in the new place (Kromidas, 2011; Isik-Ercan, 2015; Woods, 2009; Riggs & Due, 2011). Furthermore, whether in their home country or on their

asylum journey, they may have already encountered adversity that have an impact on their future psychological and physical health, such as mistreatment, trauma, displacement, or interrupted schooling (Ehntholt & Yule, 2006; Scheeringa, Zeanah & Cohen, 2011; Christie & Sidhu, 2002). I have illustrated the different phases of a refugee journey (see Figure 1) to depict the agonising period refugees need to pass through until they reach a safe place, where they will probably start a new period packed with its own struggle.

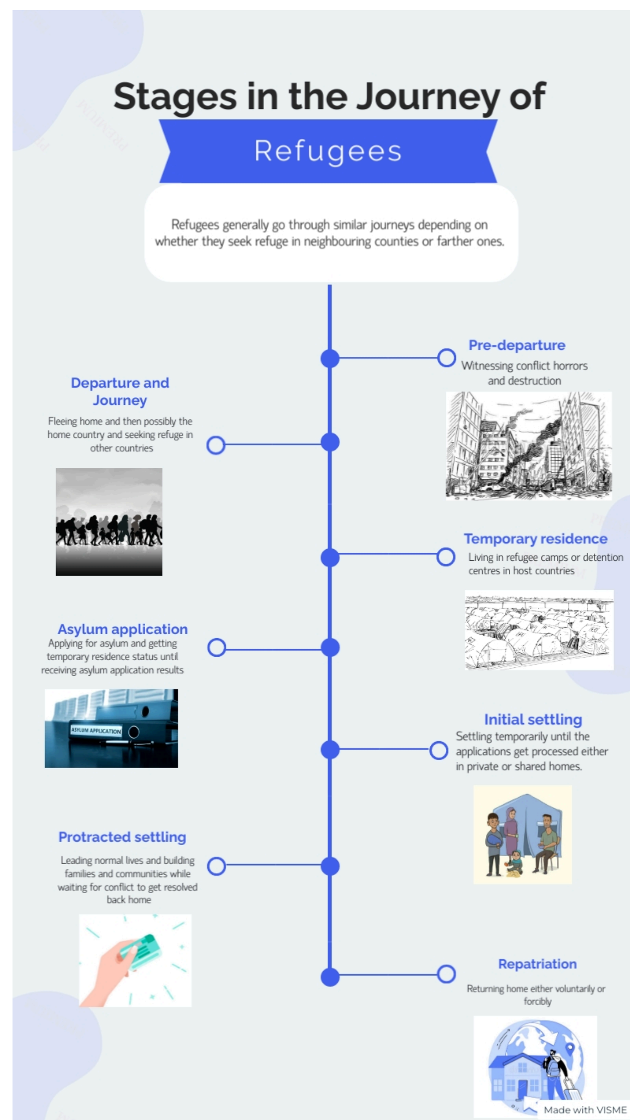

Figure1: The Journey Of Refugees

For host nations, receiving a large number of refugee youth has led to an increase in the diversification of schools, which are now faced with the difficulty of accommodating a large number of students who arrived unexpectedly. This growing diversity in the education sector necessitates the preparation of a significant number of educational institutions to engage with refugee children and their families from a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. In fact, there is much research done on refugee students in refugee camps, but the research done on refugee students in schools in host countries is relatively less and lacks depth, since refugees in those settings are often classified in the literature as immigrants or treated as research subjects without a clear or stable status (Correa-Velez, Gifford & Barnett, 2010, Keddie, 2012; de Heer, Due & Riggs, 2015). The latter outlook on refugees turns them into a problematic population and discourages investing time and effort in conducting serious research on refugees in this phase.

A significant number of scholars and international organisations argue that integrating refugee children into education programmes in host countries is important to avoid having a "lost generation" (Block, Cross, Riggs & Gibbs, 2014; de Heer et al., 2015; UNHCR, 2016). They claim that education is essential for those children's academic outcomes and for their interpersonal and emotional well-being. According to those scholars and agencies, the failure or success of integrating refugee children into education programmes will have an impact on the prospects of integrating them into society and the labour market (Block et al., 2014; UNHCR, 2016). The thesis at hand acknowledges this. That is, of course, if the host countries plan to integrate them and grant them permanent rights to stay there. However, the international political reality is different and the future of refugee children is unclear.

Rationale

On one hand, the international attitude towards refugees has massively shifted in the last few decades, especially after the huge influx of refugees from the Middle East and Africa towards Europe. Refugee-receiving countries complain more about the unprecedented numbers of refugees crossing their borders (Trilling, 2021; OHCHR, 2019, Oxfam International, 2017), or they might completely close their borders in the face of refugees if they manage to (Trilling, 2021; UN News, 2020). Even upon hosting those refugees, the narrative of expulsion or repatriation starts heating up as a political tool for some local national ambitions (UN News, 2021; Sahin-Mencutek, 2021). Meanwhile, repatriation has increasingly been argued as the most sustainable solution for refugees (UNHCR, 2009 & 2013). Nation state-building is critical for any post-war country to stand on its feet and for the people there to find a place they belong to (UNHCR, 2002). Refugees have been considered an important asset in their home country's post-conflict re-building and this has even been progressively emphasised upon recently in the international political and policy-making arena (UNHCR, 2010 & 2019).

Paying close attention to the discussions on the topic of repatriation in social and official media communication channels, the contrast in views between the host communities and the refugee communities cannot be missed. Host communities, on one hand, surely express sympathy and understanding for the plight of refugees, but might also express resentment and prejudice towards such a large number of "strangers" suddenly "invading their country" (BBC, 2017). Refugees, on the other hand, understandably have the right to seek refuge in a safe country they manage to reach and start a new and stable life there. In

the middle of this divide, many activists[1] and researchers[2] stand by the side of refugees to promote their right to permanent status and residence in the host country and to prove how important their stability in the host country is for their mental well-being (Davidson, 2019; Jørgen, 2015).

However, this thesis argues that assuming the repatriation of refugees is something fictional or probably a far-fetched topic is dangerous on many levels. Although it is the biggest cheerer for hosting refugees in Europe and is actually a country that accepted the largest number of refugees within the European Union (EU), Germany has a history of stripping refugees of their residence permits and repatriating them even when their home country was still in conflict. The following synopsis on the Bosnian refugees that were granted temporary protection in Germany during the Balkan wars in the late 1980s and early 1990s is an evident space of argument.

Germany's History with Refugee Repatriation

When the UN, in 1948, enacted Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), it stated that everyone has the right to seek and receive protection from persecution in other countries (United Nations, 1948). Despite being the first worldwide acknowledgement of asylum as a human right, the duty of nations giving refuge continues to remain vague. The 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees established a legal definition of a refugee and highlighted state duties towards refugees. Then, the 1967 Protocol widened the 1951 convention's reach, originally aimed at safeguarding post-war

[1] such as Becca Heller, Kari Miller, and Laura Vaudreuil to name a few.

[2] like Alice Bloch, Marta Erdal, and Khalid Koser, also to name a few.

European refugees (United Nations, 2010). With that, there is still no obligation for countries to award asylum, but they are compelled to accept refugees as short-term residents.

In spite of Germany's initial reluctance to admit Balkan refugees in the early 1990s for a myriad of reasons, the country eventually took in just under half a million Bosnian refugees amid external pressures (Koser & Black, 1999). Balkan refugees in Germany were granted temporary protection status, which enabled them to stay, but did not grant them the right to work or to go to school. Later on, however, and due to multi-party political demands at the time, Germany's federal and state interior ministers stated in 1996 that the country's 320,000 Bosniaks should begin returning to their homeland[3] (Cowell, 1996).

Although UNHCR spokesman Christiane Berthiaume said in 1996 that circumstances in Bosnia were still not suitable or safe for forced repatriation, soon after the elections, the German states of Bavaria and Baden-Wuttembur quickly started the involuntary repatriation of Bosnians (Walker, 2010). Although not all states in Germany took a strict stance with regard to the repatriation of refugees at that time, Germany's massive repatriation programmes produced minority enclaves in Bosnia and Herzegovina and swelled the country's internally displaced people, which did nothing to aid in the country's reconstruction and stabilisation (Franz, 2010).

Past and Present Lessons to Consider

The experience of Germany with temporary protection status and mass repatriation of Bosnians must be considered while dealing with the current refugee population in the country. Depriving refugees of job and educational rights while waiting for the crisis in their

[3] The announcement added that each state would determine the timeframe for its own repatriation initiatives (Bagshaw, 1997).

country to resolve has proven ineffective[4]. Yet, looking today at Denmark, another EU member, and its new policy towards Syrian refugees, forcing some of them to repatriate on the basis that they come from areas in Syria deemed safe by the Danish government, it looks like history keeps repeating itself in different contexts and shapes. The international community is watching, and although there were condemnations of this policy by EU lawmakers and other human rights agencies (Amnesty International, 2021; The Guardian, 2021), it did not stop the Danish government from revoking the residence permits of hundreds of Syrian refugees and forcing them to either repatriate to Syria or be arrested in detention centres awaiting repatriation (The Guardian, 2021; The New Humanitarian, 2021; BBC, 2021).

In short, it has been established that there is a high possibility that refugees might lose their status at any time for an array of reasons that are outside of their control. Thus, this thesis questions the practice of forcing integration on those refugees, and especially their children. The point is that, while conflict in their home countries simmers and erupts into new realities, refugee youths continue to live their lives; they attend schools and integrate into new environments, adopting new values and cultures in the host countries. Repatriation could arguably be the only sustainable solution for host nations as well as refugees themselves (Morello, 2016), but what about the effect of integration in host nations on those refugees when they return to their countries?

Looking into the literature on repatriated refugees, concrete examples might help to generate more tangible thoughts on repatriation realities. Some studies on Bosnian refugee

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[4] Germany did indeed work on its policies in 2016, as it will be discussed in Chapter 4. This policy change was born out of the view that the previous approach to refugees was detrimental not just to the refugees' well-being, but also to inhibiting local integration and heightening xenophobic and social conflicts inside Germany while draining public assistance resources (Walsh, 1992).

adolescents and youth who were repatriated from Germany found that those youths had significant difficulties reintegrating into their home country (Hasanovic, Sinanovic & Pavlovic, 2005). They have been found to suffer from traumatic experiences from having to return to a place they have escaped from and where they may have lost a family member or a friend. Many young people had difficulties adapting back to their own country as it is not quite familiar to them after years of separation, and research shows that using the mother language, re-establishing previous connections, and fitting into the society were among the most critical issues that returnees found it hard to perform (Hunt & Gakenyi, 2005).

It is evident that the repatriation of refugees after hosting them young and integrating them is more detrimental than any measure that can be taken (Hasanovic et al., 2005). Yet, many scholars and policy makers who are involved with the education of refugees on an international comparative level have ignored the significance of the identity development of refugees in host country education. For example, McElroy and Cassidy (2017) pointed out the indispensable role refugees can play in home nation-building after war and conflicts. They focused, however, on the human capital these refugees can provide to their home countries and how investing in boosting their skills via education in host countries is an important tool towards post-crisis nation-building in their home countries. Even UNHCR, in their working paper on refugee return and state reconstruction (Petrin, 2002), investigated the role refugees can play in state rebuilding upon repatriation and how post-crisis states need to re-establish civil relationships with those returnees. They missed, however, considering the changes in refugees' sense of belonging to their home nation after integrating them into host countries and how such changes could undermine any efforts or initiatives in home state-building.

Refugees themselves ignore the possibility of their repatriation and deny that a day of return to their home country could come. Aya Abu-Daher, a Syrian refugee who sought asylum in Denmark with her family in 2016, succeeded in fully integrating into her new place; she learnt the Danish language and could speak it fluently. She was one of the top students in her class, and as she was about to graduate from high school in 2021, the government of Denmark revoked her residence permit, along with her family and many other Syrians. No one expected, not even herself (The Guardian, 2021; DW, 2021; Refugee News: Al Jazeera, 2021; BBC, 2021), that she would need to return home in this manner. Most participants in my research were also perplexed at the thought of repatriation when mentioned to them.

The international environment towards refugees is becoming more hostile, and repatriation is being discussed as the most sustainable option available for refugee populations. It has been established that many host countries that operate under the 1951 Geneva Convention have lost interest in providing a permanent shelter for refugees recently, and nationalism is on the rise. That explains why engaging refugee children in integrative programmes in host countries is counter-productive if they are not guaranteed the right to permanent residence.

Aya's story is one of hundreds of others; young refugees going through the pains and stakes of building their lives again in their new place only to find out one day that they will have to return, or at least settle somewhere different. This research does not advocate against repatriation. I believe repatriation is important and probably the most sustainable solution for refugees. Nonetheless, enforcing integration policies on refugees without taking into consideration what will happen once the "visit" time is decided to be over is irresponsible toward future generations. As an attempt to build momentum towards cultivating a more

serious strategy for the education of refugee and displaced youth, this study is thus examining the voices of those young people and shedding light on one aspect of their integration, notably schooling.

Given the importance of childhood and adolescence in the development of a child's personal and social identity and given the host country's role as an external player in refugee education, it is sensible to ask about the role that refugee education in host countries plays in the development of a refugee child's self-identity. Yet, although the international community and organisations dealing with refugee issues acknowledge the significance of refugee children obtaining and completing their education, it is unclear how refugee youth's schooling experiences affect their self-identification.

In the host country's education sphere, curriculum, teachers, and educational policies all play critical roles in providing opportunities for refugee children to gain access to numerous aspects of a new culture; "through dialogues with other significant people in the vicinity, a child gradually develops a sense of self and identity, social belonging, and the type of person he or she wishes to be" (Sommer, 2010, p. 88). Hence, this study attempts to examine the effect of schooling, taken as one tool towards integration, on refugee children's identity construction. It will focus on refugees themselves by listening to their voices and narratives about their experiences in school. I believe these voices and narratives are essential for a thorough host nation education policy that targets refugee students in a more sensible, constructive, and responsible manner.

When Does Refugee Identity Start to Matter?

The literature, as mentioned earlier, is abundant with studies on migrant and refugee identity development and reconstruction (Correa-Velez et al., 2010; Riggs & Due, 2011; Keddie, 2012; Isik-Ercan, 2015; Block et al., 2014; de Heer et al., 2015). However, the majority of these studies start to examine refugee identity changes after they settle in the host countries for a period long enough to ensure their legal status and their prospects of permanently living there. That usually happens in either the limbo or post-limbo phases in the graph made below to explain this point (see Figure 2). There is a possibility, however, that refugees, after settling for a lengthy period of time in the host country, will have an identity shift and will need to re-construct their self-identification and representation in order to fit into their new environment. The research findings in this thesis suggest that caring for refugee identity development has to take place earlier than what most research attempts to do, especially when it concerns refugee youth, for reasons presented in the discussion in Chapter 6.

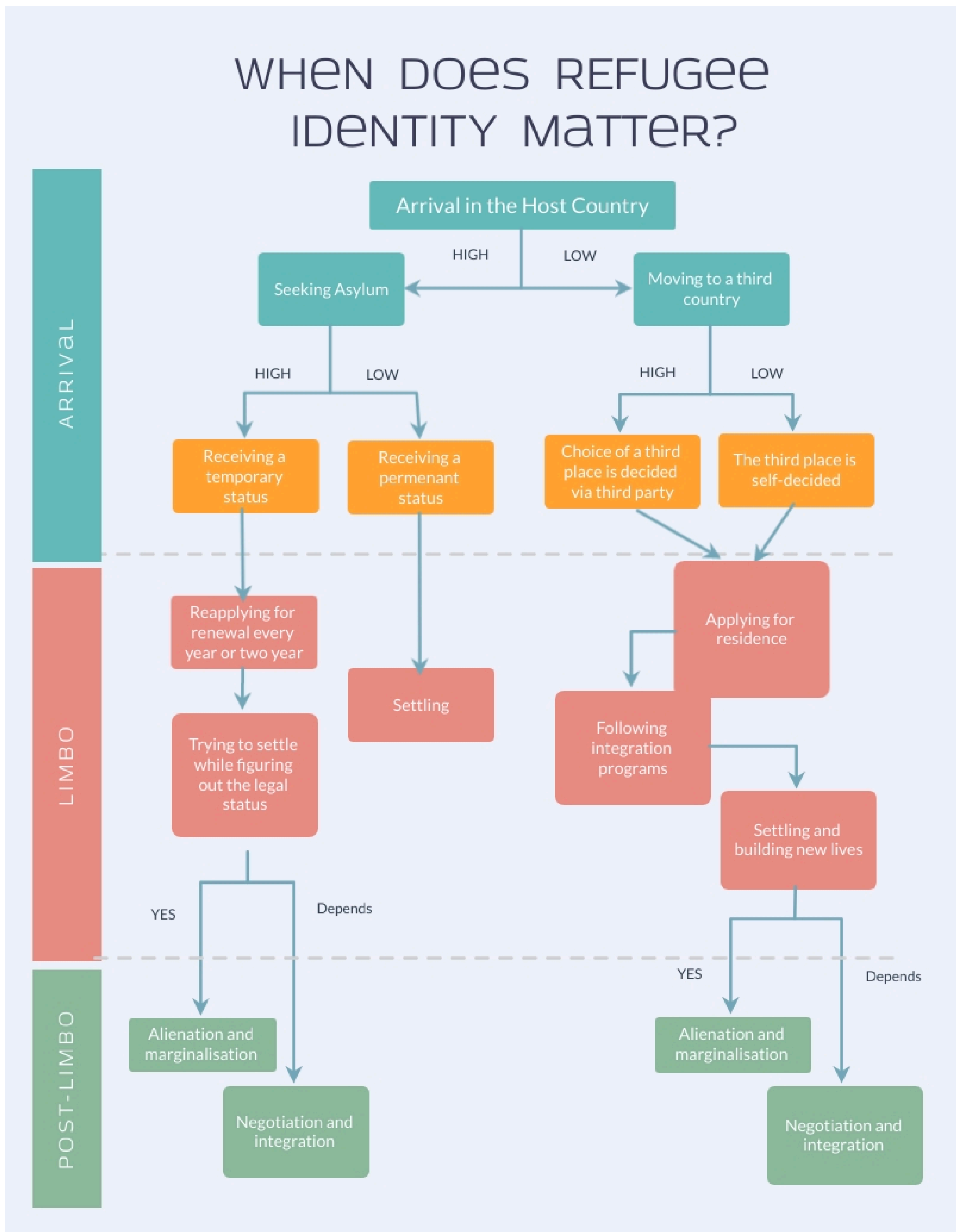

Figure 2: When Does Refugee Identity Start To Matter?

As presented in Figure 2 above, upon arrival in the host country, refugees are prone to witness shifts in their identity only by the mere fact of seeking asylum and waiting for their asylum application to be processed in refugee camps. Encounters with the host nation will

initiate such shifts, and they will certainly develop once the refugees are granted a temporary residence permit. Since research on identity studies is abundant in terms of those refugees who acquire permanent residence status, there is a low priority for research as the discipline tends to shift borders from that of refugee studies into migration studies. In contrast, this thesis places high priority on research conducted on refugee identity studies when they are granted temporary status due to the scarcity of research conducted on refugees at this timing of their journey and also due to the invisible shifts that start happening, especially that children as young as 5 or 6 can perceive discrimination in new environments (Brown & Bigler, 2005) and can distinguish between in-group and out-group social power dynamics (Andre & Dronkers, 2017).

Such factors, among others, influence refugee children's identities in ways that receive less chance of examination and documentation for two main reasons. First, the temporary status of asylum tends to be short-term; between a few months to a year or two, and host countries tend to grant such temporary protection status indefinitely, as is the case of Palestinian refugees in some countries, until new events that affect this status change, such as the cease of war back in the home country or the change in host country refugee policies. Second, in this short period, the host government and local and humanitarian aid agencies' main priority is providing shelter and basic necessities to those refugees. Access to education opportunities has started to be considered a must recently, but is not granted easily even in most developed countries, such as Germany. As will be demonstrated in the systematic review in the next chapter, little research attention is directed towards the identity construction of refugee youth, while most of it focus on the mental and psychological well-being of refugees. The significance of this research comes from the fact that it is an attempt

towards investigating refugee youth identity development in their early period of asylum when they encounter the host nation via schooling even when their status is still vague.

Why Syrian Refugees are the Focus of the Case Study?

So many layers of sorrow have been unfolding in Syria since the 2011 uprisings, which resulted in an ongoing civil war that has killed over 380,000 people, including 22,000 children (UNHCR, 2020; Laub, 2021; BBC, 2019). Hundreds of thousands of people have been irreversibly injured, and countless thousands more suffer from mental trauma and pain[5]. It is critical to stress that this assessment is approximate since the Syrian conflict continues, with the Syrian government preparing to conquer the final stronghold of resistance in the northwest province of Idlib (Hoffman & Makovsky, 2021) at the moment of finalising this thesis.

Undoubtedly, one of the most alarming issues facing the country's future is the loss of human capital: more than half of Syria's population before the war has left, with around 6.7 million Syrians internally displaced and another 5.5 million seeking refuge in neighbouring countries[6] (UNHCR, 2020). The majority of Syrian refugees are impoverished, either in Syria or in their host countries (UNHCR, 2020; World Bank, 2020), and more than half are youngsters who might have grown up to be the future hope of Syria. Today, many of these refugee youths face significant obstacles upon speaking about their return, making repatriation and reconstruction of Syrian society a protracted and excruciating process (World Bank, 2020).

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[5] According to UN estimates from 2018, the economic cost of structural damage alone was more than $400 billion (UNHCR, 2018).

[6] Many of these countries are either unstable or have recently been housing significant refugee populations from past conflicts, placing a burden on their infrastructure and resources.

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) performed a groundbreaking assessment in 2017 on the quality of schooling for Syrian children (IRC, 2017). Although this kind of research is typical in normal situations, Syrians have already suffered almost a decade of one of the deadliest and most catastrophic conflicts in recent history. Regrettably, Syrian children's educational achievement mirrored this devastation. On average, 59% of middle school students were unable to read at a second grade level, and on average, 59% of these middle school students were unable to solve a second grade math question. One-third of Syria's youngsters have completely dropped out of school due to the destruction or damage of a third of the country's schools (IRC, 2017). By and large, the education of Syria's remaining children lags up to six years behind that of their worldwide counterparts (IRC, 2017).

The above-mentioned staggering data is only of displaced Syrian refugee children who still live within their home country's borders. By contrast, the data on Syrian refugee schooling in host countries is under-reported (IOM, 2019; Sieverding, Krafft, Berri, Keo, & Sharpless, 2020), and even if it is presented, it is often meant to show logistical, financial, and organisational issues rather than focus on the students performance (Sieverding et al., 2020). Shedding light on the schooling experiences of some Syrian refugee youth in Germany will give a voice to a silent group that, otherwise, is only expected to speak about their suffering and distress in the pre-asylum phase of their lives. Invigorating this population by giving them the space to express their honest thoughts about their experiences, self-hood, and aspirations can serve multiple purposes for them and for their futures.

Research Questions

This thesis will explore the research topic to seek answers to the following questions:

How does the literature view and handle the refugee youth identity construction?

How do refugee children perceive their schooling experience and its effect on their self-identity?

How does schooling in integration-imposing host countries affect the refugee youth' identity construction?

Definitions and terminology

Terminology and definitions are not neutral, and the terminology used to describe individuals conveys implicit biases, attitudes, and preconceptions (Flynn, Walton & Scott, 2019). This discrepancy is particularly true when discussing refugees, who are typically represented unfavourably in the media and society at large (Ryan & Deci, 2003; UNESCO, 2019). Apart from that, definitions are complex and divisive, with legal and resource ramifications. Several of the obstacles inherent in investigating refugee education include the imprecise nature of terminologies both within and between contexts, which makes proper statistical evaluation difficult (Wedekind, Fakoush & Alla-Mensah, 2019). Therefore, the following decisions were made with regard to the terminology used in this research. For example, in the literature, the terms "settlement," and "resettlement," nations are used interchangeably to refer to the country to which refugees flee to. McIntyre and Abrams (2020) highlight that many refugees are unlikely to return home and instead seek permanent residency in places designated as "resettlement" or "settlement." Moreover, the term "host nation" can be considered contentious owing to its overtones of momentary empathy for the refugee defined as a temporary guest. For such controversial reasons, I will explain hereafter the intended meaning the terms and concepts used in this research.

Children, adolescents, youths, young people

In this study, the terms "children," "youth(s)," "young people," and "adolescents" will be used interchangeably to refer to the study's target population. When reviewing the literature and studies that the research will be based on, these terms will refer to everyone under the age of 18, as stated by the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR, 1989). However, the target of the empirical research that was explored for this thesis will limit the age of refugee students to those between 12 and 20, as analytical and reflective abilities are paramount when exploring how their experiences shape their identity construction.

Asylum Seekers vs. Refugees

According to the 1951 Refugee Convention, a refugee is "someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin due to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion."(UNHCR, 1967). Amnesty International (2016) expands on this definition, stating that a refugee "is a person who cannot return to their own country because they are at risk of serious human rights abuses there, or because of who they are or what they believe in. Because their own government cannot, or is not willing to, protect them, they are forced to flee their country and seek international protection. An asylum seeker, on the other hand, is described as a person who seeks international protection abroad but has not been recognised as a refugee yet (Amnesty International, 2016). As the distinction between asylum seekers and refugees in terms of their accessibility to education services is hazy in many host countries (UNHCR, 2018), there is no compelling reason to distinguish the two categories in this research. As a result, the words "refugee" and "asylum seeker" will be used

interchangeably, and in this research, if the situation warrants it, distinctions will be made and clearly stated.

Home vs. Third vs. Host country

In this thesis, the term "home country" will be used to refer to the country of origin of refugees, regardless of whether they are citizens of that country or not. Conflicts and wars can drive people, whether national citizens or not, to flee from persecution and danger. On the other hand, the term "host country" will be used to refer to countries that receive refugees and host them throughout their asylum process. Third countries refer to countries of first asylum or countries that witnessed the first stops on the refugee journey to seek asylum in the host country.

Local

I used the term "local" to refer to the host country's language, traditions, norms, values, or even people. These aspects of the host nation were "local" from the refugee perspective, so this terminology usage is dominant in the data analysis section.

Individual Identity, Personal Identity, Selfhood, Self-identification, Self-perception

The terms "individual" and "personal" are used interchangeably in the literature to refer to a person's sense of self that develops over the course of their life. This would include areas of the person's life over which they have no influence, such as where they grew up or the colour of their skin, as well as life choices. In addition, the concepts of "selfhood," "self-identification," and "self-perception" all refer to the same notion of how a person views their personal identity. That is why all these terms will be used interchangeably to refer to the same concept throughout the thesis.

Conclusion

To summarise, many displaced and refugee children suffer greatly if they do not have access to education while waiting for the conflict in their home country to subside. Education is critical for those children, as they are the future of their nation and a huge asset for any constructive attempt at rebuilding the country. However, integrating them into education programmes in host nations can be counter-productive, as it will be argued in this thesis. The education programmes in every nation serve to foster a sense of belonging and shared identity for all the children who engage in them, since the goal of schooling is to create a generation that will play a critical role in the labour market that serves that specific nation (UNESCO, 2011; Little, 2014). If the home country and the host country are worlds apart in terms of culture, ideologies, traditions, etc., the refugee children's education needs to reconsider the outcomes of the children's identity construction.

This thesis thus aims at answering the research questions through investigating first the approach of the literature to the identity construction of refugee children and then exploring the schooling experiences of refugee children in host countries and examining the shifts that took place during those experiences. In that respect, the thesis will begin in the next two chapters with a discussion of the theoretical grounds through which the research is exploring the case study and try to find the different approaches that the literature tackled the topic. This will be followed by some background information, a description of the research design, methodology, and data collection and finally the key findings and discussion. The research concludes by examining how refugee students' identities are developed as a result of their educational experiences in host nations and speculates ways to ensure the best practices are implemented.

Chapter 2: Systematic Literature Review

Introduction

To tackle the first research question, the literature review starts in this chapter with a systematic review on the topic of the thesis research and moves into the next chapter to tackle other areas in the literature that the studies in the systematic review could not shed enough light on or attempt to handle due to the time and scope limitations of the research in general and the systematic review design in particular. This chapter will start with a rationale for using a systematic review to answer the first question of this thesis, then it will explain the procedure, protocol, and search strategy for the studies that will be reviewed. After that, the chapter will run through the eligibility criteria, data extraction, and then thoroughly cover the selected studies, characteristics, and evidence level. Finally, the chapter will thoroughly cover the most important points these studies present in relation to the thesis research topic.

Generally, a systematic review of existing literature seeks to assemble as much information as possible that meets predefined eligibility criteria in order to address a specific research question (Oxman & Guyatt, 1993). Although it is quite unorthodox in the field of social or political science to conduct systematic reviews, this research considered employing one due to the perplexing abundance of case-based studies in the field of refugee and child identity research. Research in this field is often case-oriented rather than wide-ranging (Draguns & Tanaka-Matsumi, 2003), and regional rather than cultural-specific (Dzokoto & Adams, 2005). Draguns and Tanaka-Matsumi (2003) advocate research that focuses on connecting separate studies in order to provide academics with a more complete

grasp of behavioural and social dynamics, which can be adequately covered by conducting a systematic literature review (Cooper, 1998).

Justification for Employing a Systematic Literature Review

Researchers, practitioners, and policymakers are overloaded with volumes of information, and it is implausible that they will have the capabilities, whether tools or resources, to assess and analyse such data and incorporate them into policy and practise. To some degree, systematic review of the literature addresses this objective by analysing, synthesising, and presenting information in an accessible style (Mulrow, 1994). Moreover, this approach employs clear, systematic procedures that attempt to decrease bias and hence provide more trustworthy data from which conclusions may be derived[7] (Oxman & Guyatt, 1993). Employing this approach facilitated an organised management system in which the research was informed by the literature in terms of documenting decisions to ensure that the data met the review's context, describing and coding data to ensure systematic rigour, and analysing the data in such a way that reliable reporting of the results was fully justified. According to Higgins and Green (2008), although this technique may look straightforward, it is highly thorough and demanding[8] with high efficacy carried out via the use of research synthesis[9] (Thomas, Harden, Oakley, Oliver, Sutcliffe, Rees & Kavanagh, 2004). Thus, the literature review becomes clear, logically organised, and allows for appropriate analytical freedom within the research (Hart, 1998).

Moreover, systematic literature reviews focus on theoretical investigations, relevant studies, research methodologies, and the findings of such research. They strive to synthesise

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[7] Gough (2004) also advocated that systematic reviews of the literature be conducted systematically and critically.

[8] That is true since the researcher utilises a variety of theoretical and empirical perspectives to produce meaning for the data.

[9] Popay (2005) proposed that rationale and in-depth investigation of the topic area should be used for research synthesis to take place.

research results, examine academic designs, evaluate and establish networks of comparative themes, and discover fundamental concepts in academic research domains (Hedges & Cooper, 1994). Thus, distinctions between the concepts of integrative and systematic reviews have to be made at this point. The integrative research review presents general findings from previous studies by analysing multiple studies that are thought to address similar or connected assumptions[10]. It includes both experimental and theoretical studies, while systematic reviews, on the other hand, include either experimental or qualitative studies, but not both at the same time.

Although this research replicated the integrative review in terms of highlighting the current literature's standpoint, it also correlated to the systematic theoretical foundation of child identity studies[11]. To boost the value of this thesis, it was necessary to recognise that it is founded on existing literature and contributes to knowledge expansion via the use of logical reasoning, proper substantiation, and an analytical and reflective perspective (Hart, 1998), and for that purpose, this approach was utilised.

Systematic Review Procedure

Petticrew and Roberts (2006) provide an overview of the phases involved in performing a literature review. First, it is imperative to establish the nature and objective of the research. The second step details the procedure for choosing literature for the review and thereby implementing the search strategy (Higgins & Green, 2008). To source literature for this study, the electronic databases accessible to students at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Google Scholar, hand-searching for essential resources, and asking personal

[10] The reviewer commits to elaborating on the state of the literature at the time of writing while also highlighting key issues that remain unanswered in the existing corpus of study.

[11] Both forms of reviews are included in systematic reviews of the literature that rely on qualitative content (EPPI-Centre, 2007).

connections and specialists in the area for relevant authors were utilised. In the third step, the material is screened based on the review's ontology, and these studies are described in order to map and improve the literature review. Following the completion of the process of obtaining and summarising the study, the researcher moves on to the fourth stage of the review, in which they analyse and synthesise the data. This involved assessing the data's quality and usefulness, synthesising the results of the research, drawing inferences, and creating the final report (EPPI-Centre, 2007; Savin-Baden & Major, 2009).

It is crucial to remember that the present review is descriptive in nature[12]. Descriptive reviewing is used to study differences in ongoing changes and long-standing patterns (Dane, 2010). This sort of research depicts the overall features of a whole population of research targets and emphasises the particular attributes of a representative sample from a restricted population (Higgins & Green, 2008). Such reviews are helpful since many social scientists have time constraints, depriving them of the ability to stay present in the original investigations, not to mention minor studies in which they may have a special interest (Cooper, 2009). Ultimately, as this research is based in the grounded theory, taking no pre-conceived theories or frameworks in focus, the descriptive nature of this systematic review allows for space to examine tools of data interpretation in the literature.

Systematic Review on Refugee Youth Identity in Education

Adolescence is a complex bio-psycho-social period in a teenager's life. This stage results in subjective changes to their internal makeup, which have an effect on their interactions with the external social context (Anagnostopoulos, Vlassopoulos & Lazaratou, 2006). During this stage of growth and development, relationships between family members

[12] The method's descriptive character is established by a systematic procedure, as explained by EPPI-Centre (2007) and Higgins and Green (2008).

are often re-organised as teenagers want emotional space and a feeling of independence from their parents. Their lifestyles are more concerned with expanding their social networks via deeper connections with friends[13]. Their cognitive and linguistic abilities begin to grow, as do their thinking abilities. Regardless of their physical maturation, teenagers' psychological growth is often a critical aspect of their lives. Their social ties have a significant impact on this aspect of their development. Therefore, adolescents' habits, development, and, in certain cases, physical health are affected by social connections[14].

When social settings are examined, the plight of refugees becomes a major issue that deserves considerable attention. The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) has been monitoring and delivering emergency help in the form of food and healthcare to women and children in damaged nations and to displaced refugees. UNICEF recognised that the surrounding environment created by economic hardship among refugees and other vulnerable populations has compelled adolescents to assume roles much beyond their age (Adolescent Development And Participation (ADAP), n.d.). By assuming financial obligations, refugee youth lose out on education and other kinds of empowerment, undermining the transitional framework that a functioning society should have.

Additionally, youth growing up in places with such a high level of unrest are also compelled to join in and serve the community. During times of conflict and other calamities that result in displacement, it has been expected that young people would take on a supporting role, and at some point, many of them are compelled to drop out of school in order to help their families cope with the absence of the main supporter. Others have been deprived

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[13] They begin to investigate social relationships inside and between same-gender groups and friendships, as well as within and between cross-gender groups and friendships.

[14] Typically, adolescents who have grown up in a corrupted social environment engage in drug and substance abuse, excessive alcohol consumption, and increased delinquent activities, and they face a greater risk of mortality (Anttila, Antilla, Kurki & Valimaki, 2017).

of education and basic necessities such as health, nutrition, protection, water, and sanitation due to conflict and natural disasters (Adolescents In Humanitarian Action, n.d.). An adolescent who has grown up in such an environment, such as that of a refugee, does not have access to these necessities. It should be stressed that in order for adolescent processes to be realised and completed, positive social and cultural qualities must exist so that solid boundaries and requirements for internal representations are granted (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2006). In this time of unrest and insecurity, one of the most vulnerable areas of the adolescent's development is their identity construction (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2006).

This review is conducted to address a void in the existing literature by focusing on a critical population of children. The children of refugees or those of asylum seekers have been an overlooked statistic by governments and the international community as a whole when it concerns their identity development. Failure to supervise these children's psychosocial development has been associated with the creation of several problematic attitudes that have become prevalent in these social structures. These children have been observed to suffer from a high rate of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which emerges as a result of the circumstances surrounding their displacement or the difficulties associated with resettling in a new place. More often than not, however, the mental problems of refugee children have been regarded as imaginary ailments (Crepet, Rita, Van Den Boogaard, Deiana, Quaranta & Di Carlo, 2017). The injustice of this treatment was justified on the grounds that the majority of government personnel believed it was a strategy the children and their families were using to avoid deportation (Crepet et al., 2017). Plenty of social and economic issues, including inadequate access to basic necessities such as food, healthcare, and decent education, are a significant source of worry in refugee communities. The situation is riddled with

vulnerability as a result of family separation, shifting of family dynamics and duties, social isolation, and the overall loss of childhood.

Thus, this review aims to close this knowledge gap through a thorough and systematic literature review that culminates in a consensus of knowledge on the current status of refugee children identity construction. As will be explained later in detail, this review examines the most relevant studies in the field of refugee education that focuses on identity development. It gives a comprehensive review examining the effects of schooling and education on adolescents' identity development by looking at how elements such as cultural background, place, ethnic background, nationality, etc., contribute to the formation of identity. The review focuses on the impact of refugee social contexts on the individual identity development of adolescents growing up in such settings.

Systematic Review Protocol

The protocol for this review was prepared in advance of the review process. The review was conducted in accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systemic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA). As a result, no external pressures or influencing forces affected the inclusion of studies in this review. Moreover, there were no incidents of coercion or unsupported conviction that may have influenced the findings or any of the outcomes of this review. Additionally, there was no external intervention in the inclusion or selection of studies for this systematic review. Having stated that, the protocol was strictly followed in order to provide reliable insights into the subject matter of this research[15]. The PRISMA extension took into account the following criteria:

1. the type or variety of studies being reviewed,

[15] The PRISMA extension that was used to prepare this review was published in Chapter 4 of the Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews and Interventions (Higgins et al., 2008).

2. the review question's complexity and the necessity to evaluate other conceptual frameworks,

3. the time frame in which these studies were conducted,

4. any geographical restrictions, such as a specific region or continent on which the review should focus,

5. whether the review is limited to randomised controlled trials or whether alternative research designs are acceptable,

6. whether or not there is a validated methodological search filter for specific study designs,

7. whether or not unpublished data should be explored,

8. whether the review includes special eligibility requirements based on the study design in order to investigate negative consequences, economic concerns, or qualitative research questions (Higgins et al., 2019).

Search Strategy

The search for studies for this review followed a randomised exploration of various studies researching the identities of children or adolescents and the change of these identities as influenced by various social struggles, with a specific focus on refugees in host countries. Study items were considered based on the database source in which they were published. The research focused mostly on peer-reviewed studies published in databases accessible via Tokyo University of Foreign Studies and those that are open to researchers online. Therefore, the review mainly focused on the JSTOR online database, and the findings were augmented with further searches using the Wiley Online Library and Sage Journals online databases. Due

to the abundance of studies available, the search applied a ten-year time limit on the studies examined, which meant that all studies included in the search had to have been published between 2010 and 2021. This was considered in order to have a better understanding of any recent factors influencing identity shifts among refugee children. In a shorter time period, we can examine how adolescents are maturing and how their lives are unfolding in the middle of a unique displacement context all around the world right now.

The search strategy utilised a range of search procedures in order to maximise the search's final output. The review included both the Journal Article Tag Suite (JATS) and keywords, which were augmented with Boolean operators, truncation approaches, and field tags. Three fundamental concepts served as the basis for the search keywords: identity development, adolescence, and forced migration[16]. The next step in the search strategy was to develop an elaborate search that combines keywords, JATS, Boolean operators, truncation, nesting, quotes, and field terms. This construction generated three searches according to the three concepts that were run through the following three queries[17]. The search was built according to the building block search, and the final search gave 291 results, which were later vetted according to the review's eligibility criteria.

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[16] Identity(ies), identity change(s), personal identity(ies), personality(ies), personality change(s), character(s), and character change (s) were all derived from the first concept (identity formation). The following keywords were generated by the second concept, adolescence: child(ren), adolescent(s), teen(s), teenager(s), youth(s), and juvenile (s). The final concept (forced migration) gave birth to the terms refugee (s), immigrant (s), displaced person (s), and asylum seeker (s).The three concepts were indexed by the Journal Article Tag Suite (JATS), and then the identification was conducted through the database and gave rise to the following JATS terms: "Refugees" [JATS], "Adolescent" [JATS], and "Personality Development" [JATS].

[17] For concept one, the query included: "personality development" [JATS] OR "identity formation*" [tw] OR "identity change*" [tw] OR "personality development*" [tw] OR "personality change*" [tw] OR "character change*" [tw]. For concept two, the query was: "adolescent" [JATS] OR "adolescent*" [tw] OR "child*" [tw] OR "teenager*" [tw] OR "youth*" [tw]. For concept three, the query "refugees" [JATS] OR "refugee*" [tw] OR "migrant*" [tw] OR "displaced person*" [tw] OR "asylum seeker*" [tw]. The final query was conducted with the following syntax: (("personality development"[JATS] OR "identity formation*"[tw] OR "identity change*"[tw] OR "personality development*"[tw] OR "personality change*"[tw] OR "character change*" [tw]) AND ("adolescent"[JATS] OR "adolescent*"[tw] OR "child*"[tw] OR "teenager*"[tw] OR "youth*"[tw])) AND ("refugees"[JATS] OR "refugee*"[tw] OR "forced migrant*"[tw] OR "displaced person*"[tw] OR "asylum seeker*"[tw]).

Eligibility Criteria

The research included books and papers on the same subject of identity development in refugee children, clinical trials, randomised controlled trials (RCTs), systematic reviews, and literature reviews. As previously stated, the search approach used JATS, as well as a total of 13 keywords, which were formed from three fundamental concepts. The identified studies had to either be RCTs, cohort non-randomised controlled studies, or controlled clinical trials (CCTs). The studies were evaluated for their study objective and their relatability to the topics of personal and individual identity, sense of belonging, cultural identity, place identity, and ethnic identity. The nature of the studies considered had to be retrospective or prospective observational studies. This review also considered database studies and rational clinical trials whenever they presented some compelling research findings on the review topic. The demographic location of the study was not considered a factor of eligibility. This enabled the evaluation to include papers from the North and South Americas, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Oceania, from any area that receives the greatest number of refugees. However, the studies considered had to be published in the English language or be translatable into English. Studies were excluded if they did not report the topic of personal identity in children, especially adolescents, the development of cultural and individual identity in refugee children, and how education services and opportunities affect their identity formation.

Data Extraction

Prior to submitting it for synthesis and analysis, data was extracted with the main focus was on psycho-social changes related to young refugees and asylum seekers settling in a new country. A special outlook has been made on how individual identity and the formation of personalities in children and adolescents are affected by resettlement factors, including education and schooling. In this regard, I had to focus on the refugee children's own

perception of their own identity and how this can be influenced by having education services and opportunities available to them in the host country. I finally assessed the search findings for any amendable discrepancies before any data synthesis and analysis could begin, in which a quantitative research assistant helped out.

Results

Study Selection

As mentioned earlier, the original study search led to the identification of 291 studies with complete data. This was accomplished by automation, which used a three-phased search strategy based on building blocks. The electronic search began with the JSTOR online database. Additional papers were discovered by manual searches of other online social science, education, and psychology databases, including Wiley Online Library, Sage Journals, and ResearchGate. Out of the initial 291 research papers discovered, the first filtering step reduced the total to 60 papers having complete free texts online. Following that, the 60 studies were carefully evaluated to exclude those that did not meet the qualifying requirements. Of these, 39 studies were disqualified for their failure to either be RCTs, cohort non-randomised controlled studies, or CCTs. The remaining 21 studies were then further reviewed, and out of the remaining 21 studies, 9 of them were disqualified for several other considerations, such as non-applicability. These considerations of non-applicability include failure to cover the right population, lack of data, not being peer-reviewed, not being retrospective or prospective studies, and much more. The eligibility criteria were further used to screen the remaining 12 studies, of which two failed to meet the eligibility criteria, leaving ten studies to be applied in the review. All the above considerations were made after deliberation and consultation with other systematic reviews that are similar in nature, target, or scope.

Figure 3 below shows a PRISMA 2020 flow diagram for updated systematic reviews, which only searches for databases (Page, McKenzie, Bossuyt, Boutron, Hoffmann, Mulrow... & Moher, 2021).

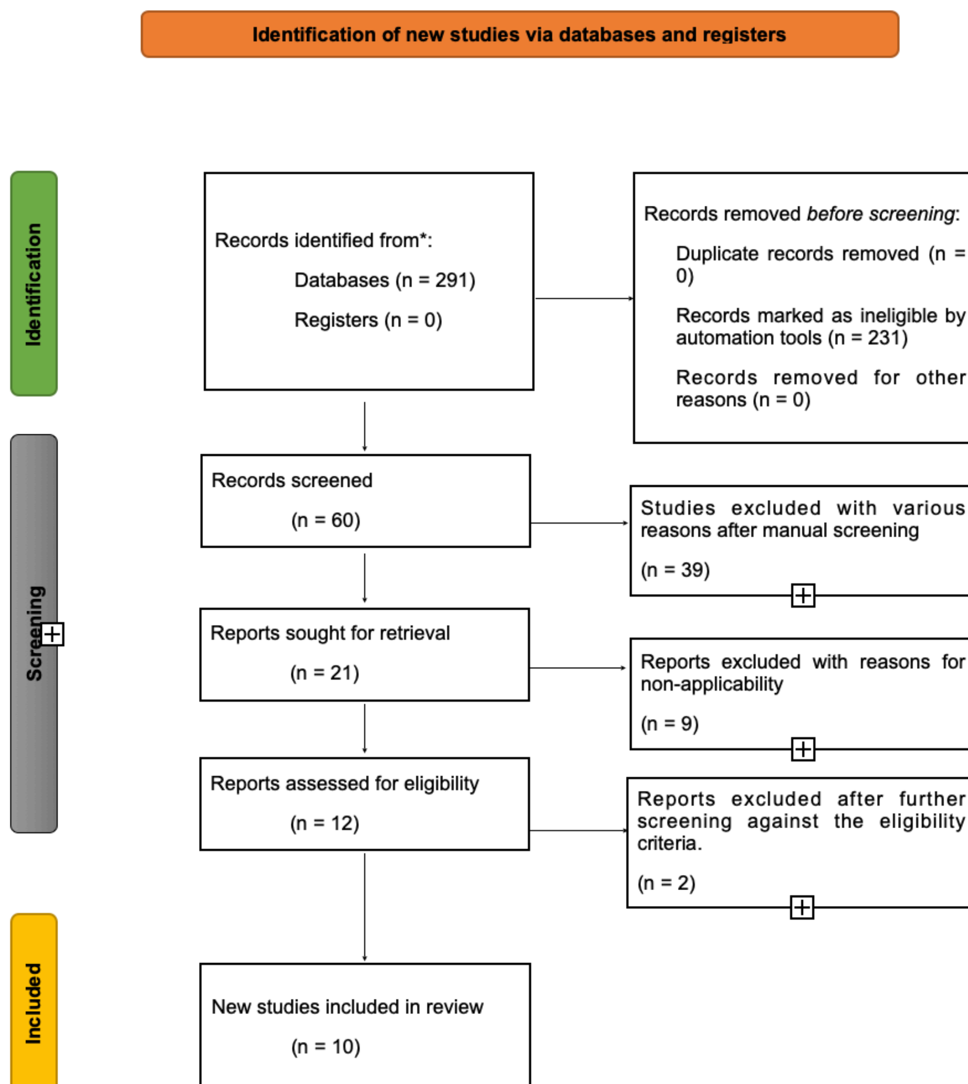

Figure 3: Prisma Flow Diagram Of Studies In This Systematic Review

Study Characteristics

This review covered a total of ten studies and they were evaluated in accordance with the selected research protocol and the specified eligibility criteria. The studies selected had to meet three criteria in order to be deemed suitable for this literature review. To begin, the studies examined changes in children's, particularly adolescents', individual identity and personality. Second, the studies examined refugees, asylum seekers, or forced migrants who settled in a new country when they were still under the age of 18. Finally, the studies selected

should have addressed the issue of schooling in host nations and its effect on the identity development of refugee adolescents.

Evidence Level

The number of studies covering the subject of individual identity and the formation of this identity is relatively abundant. However, there is a scarcity of studies that concentrate on the identity of formation when the focus population is children. This review relied on studies that had varying evidence levels to inform the objectives of the study, which is to discover the manner in which identity changes with regard to psychosocial factors that refugee children or adolescents are exposed to while experiencing schooling in host nations. The study selection process came across intervention studies that surveyed the named subject and provided answers to the formulated questions. Out of the ten selected articles, one was a level 1++ RCT with a very low risk of bias. The review also used three-level 2++ articles, which were cohort studies with a very low risk of bias and a high probability of casual relationships. The remaining seven studies were level 2+ studies due to their moderate level of risk of bias. The study evidence levels were determined in accordance with Table 1 shown below.

Level	Definition
1++	High-quality meta-analyses, systematic reviews of RCTs, or RCTs with a very low risk of bias.
1	Well-conducted meta-analyses, systematic reviews, or RCTs with a low risk of bias.
-1	Meta-analyses, systematic reviews, or RCTs with a high risk of bias.
2++	High-quality systematic reviews of case–control or cohort or studies. High-quality case–control or cohort studies with a very low risk of confounding or bias and a high probability that the relationship is causal.
2	Well-conducted case–control or cohort studies with a low risk of confounding or bias and a moderate probability that the relationship is causal.
-2	Case–control or cohort studies with a high risk of confounding or bias and a significant risk that the relationship is not causal.
3	Non-analytical studies, e.g., case reports, case series
4	Expert opinion

Table 1: Evidence Levels In Systematic And Meta-Analysis Reviews (Sign, 2003)

Although this table is adopted and often used in more practice-based sciences such as medicine and clinical psychology, I think it has significant relevance in this review since handling identity changes is typically considered part of clinical psychology and assessing studies using reliable evidence criteria was essential. Therefore, taking into consideration the interdisciplinary nature of the research questions, it is deemed important to rely in this systematic review on tools often used in the experimental sciences in order to achieve objectivity and avoid any underlying prejudice in selecting or highlighting the selected studies.

Included Studies

As noted in the sections above, the review included 10 studies (see Table 2), which examined data and demographics from across the world. Data from Italy, Australia, Spain (Barcelona Metropolitan Area), China, Sweden, North Korea, and South Korea is represented in these studies. Three studies have been conducted to determine the effects of forced migration and displacement on mental health, which is a factor in determining personal identity. Apart from forced migration, two studies examined the specific types of trauma and violence experienced by refugees and forcibly displaced adolescents in order to determine how these factors affect aspects of mental health and other intrapersonal factors that contribute to personal identity formation. Three further studies assessed different educational programmes that have been introduced to reduce the impact of refugee-related risk factors on children's identity development. The last two studies explored this subject in novel ways. One study examined the overall psychological effect of being a refugee on the child, while the other examined teenagers' behavioural responses to risk factors encountered while attempting to adapt to their new social environments in host countries. The table below highlights the

fundamental characteristics of the included studies, including the authors, the population studied, the population's age, the location, the study's aims, and the findings.

No.	Author	Population	Age	Location	Objectives	Results
1	Gambaro et al. (2020)	199	18 – 79 years	Rome, Italy	The role of Migration on mental health and the consequences of migration-related childhood trauma.	During childhood, physical abuse and neglect were reported respectively by 56.78 and 69.49% of migrants.
2	Mathews (2011)	29	Students	Australia	How schooling and resettlement addresses the trauma of displacement.	Refugees struggle to settle into the Australian cultural landscape. Educational interventions create learning environments and spaces for participation, communication, relationships, friendships, belonging and learning about oneself and others.
3	Marlowe et al. (2014)	Undefined	Undefined	New Zealand	Effects of refugee assimilation strategies on the refugee's cultural identity.	Refugees struggle to settle into the Australian cultural landscape. Educational interventions create learning environments and spaces for participation, communication, relationships, friendships, belonging and learning about oneself and others.
4	Alarcón et al. (2021)	74	Recently turned 18 years	Spain (Barcelona Metropolitan Area)	How educational interventions on migrant youths can improve mental health issues such as self-esteem.	Participation in the mentoring program improved the mentored youths' self-esteem, resilience, and hope, as well as their desired or expected educational outcomes in this new context.
5	Liu & Zhao (2016)	798	Adolescents (mean age 13.10 years)	China	Behavioural response of migrant adolescents into a group identity to form a protective factor against perceived discrimination which lowers their life satisfaction, self-esteem, and collective self-esteem.	Perceived discrimination was negatively linked to the three indices of psychological well-being and that the negative effects of perceived discrimination on psychological well-being were particularly salient for migrant adolescents attending public schools. Additionally, Group identity affirmation and belonging (GIAB) emerged as a protective buffer against perceived discrimination's negative effects on collective well-being.
6	Green et al. (2021)	23	Under 18 years old	Sweden	How does religious guidance intervention programs change the identity formation and social relationships of Polish Youth people migrating to Sweden?	While practicing religion and building significant social relationships within the Polish congregations the young migrants shape feelings of belonging and inclusion, however primarily within the limits of their own ethnic community.
7	Seong & Park (2021)	64	13 – 23 years old	North Korea	Factors related to migration and refugee life affecting intrapersonal factors (resilience, emotional regulation, and quality of life) of North Korean refugee youths.	Expressive suppression of emotions was shown to increase depression over time. Resilience and life satisfaction were significant factors reducing depression in this study.

8	Lee et al. (2020)	157	Mean age 18.66 ± 2.82	North Korea	Early trauma effects on ADHD and depressive symptoms on the mental health of North Korea refugee youths.	Early trauma experience directly and negatively affected both the depressive and ADHD symptoms of North Korean refugee youths.
9	Lee et al. (2012)	868 (102 North Korean refugee youths & 766 South Korea adolescents)	North Koreans (13 – 22 years old) South Koreas (11 – 17 years old)	South Korea	Evaluation of the mental health status of North Korean refugee youths in comparison to general South Korean youths.	The mental health of the North Korean adolescent refugees was severe particularly in internalized problems when compared with that of the general adolescents in South Korea.
10	Fazel et al. (2012)	Undefined	Undefined	Undefined	How violence as a key risk factor of mental health among forcefully displaced children and adolescents.	Exposure to violence has been shown to be a key risk factor, whereas stable settlement and social support in the host country have a positive effect on the child's psychological functioning.

Table 2: The Basic Features Of The Included Studies Capturing The Authors, Population Used In The Studies, Age Of Population, Location, Study Objectives, And Results

Refugee Adolescents and Children's Individual Identity

Individual identity, identity formation, and identity change were defined and understood similarly in the many research studies included in this review. The majority of the studies, on the other hand, have tackled the topic of individual identity from the perspective of psychological implications. This allowed the researchers to examine how mental health difficulties might affect a person's, or in this case, a child's, identity formation and development. Depression, for example, has been shown to alter youths' perceptions of their self-worth. Depression is here defined by having a consistently gloomy mood or a lack of interest in activities. Their self-esteem is severely damaged and degraded. Gambaro et al. (in Gambaro, Mastrangelo, Sarchiapone … & Zeppegno, 2020) look at the traumatic experiences that refugees, particularly children and teenagers, have had and how mental health disorders

like PTSD might lead to aggressive, anxious, and depressed symptomatology. Their identity is sapped by feelings of despair, which have an impact on their early development and lead to adult depression (Gambaro et al., 2020). The relatability of adult identity difficulties, according to this analysis, contributes to suicidal behaviour, thoughts, and attitudes. Gambaro et al. (2020) analysed 199 individuals to see whether this was the case, and found that refugees were subjected to a high rate of physical abuse and neglect, and the percentages were 56.78 and 69.49%, respectively. The study found that these experiences have a detrimental influence on later adulthood as a result of a change in identity development.

Seong & Park (2021) did a similar research on 64 North Korean refugee children and found comparable findings. The research also looked at identity development from the perspective of depression, examining how refugees are influenced by numerous extreme factors, impacting intrapersonal attributes such as resilience, emotional stability, and quality of life (Seong & Park, 2021). The researchers sought to know what variables contributed to increases in depression, and what they found was that depression symptoms gradually increased over time[18]. This study looks at how these refugee youth' mental health deteriorates over time, which might lead to a disruption in the normal course of identity development. According to Seong and Park (2021), these social stressors have a greater influence when refugees attempt to adjust and integrate to their new place of residence. As youth go from adolescence and into adulthood, their whole identity gets impeded by self-censorship and a loss of self-esteem as a result of the numerous stigmas that have developed over time (Seong & Park, 2021).

[18] For example, after three years, the number of despondent North Korean refugee teenagers had risen to 59.4 % (Seong & Park, 2021).

Seong & Park's (2021) research results validate the findings of Lee, Shin and Lim (2012), which were based on a comparative analysis of mental wellbeing status between two groups of adolescents. The first was a group of defecting North Korean refugee youth, while the second was a group of South Korean youth. Despite sharing the same geographical location, their mental health conditions were vastly different. Mental health has been shown to exhibit itself in a child's behaviour, which serves as a strategic marker of their identity as they go through their psychosocial development period. Using the Korean version of the Child Behaviour Check List (K-CBCL)[19], a substantial difference was observed between the groups. Lee et al. (2012) conducted tests on 102 North Korean refugee adolescents and 766 South Korean teenagers who shared a residence. The North Korean refugee youths showed higher scores on the checklist for delinquency[20], depression and anxiety[21] and most importantly, weak self-identity[22] (Lee et al., 2012).

These studies all examined the susceptibility that comes with identity development. Mental health is the foundation for how the mind absorbs both the trauma and violence that young refugees experience (Gambaro et al., 2020; Seong & Park, 2021; Lee et al., 2012). When psychological problems emerge, young people often experience a shift in their roles and attitudes, which results in an identity crisis. To date, many states, particularly those accepting North Korean defectors in South Korea, have prioritised mental health programmes for adults, overlooking the need for such initiatives for youth and children. Since adolescence marks a difficult self-identity development phase, the intensity of these interventions should be targeting refugee youths more than anyone else (Lee et al., 2012).

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[19] That is a standardised checklist to evaluate mental health in South Korea.

[20] (53.98 ± 5.97 versus 54.30 ± 6.14).

[21] (53.04± 5.93 versus 55.34 ± 6.86).

[22] (46.82 ± 10.61 versus 50.06 ± 9.53).

Risk Factors in Identity Formation

Several mental health difficulties impacting personal identity development for refugee youth have been associated with two primary risk factors: violence and trauma. Fazel, Reed, Panter-Brick and Stein (2012) studied the consequences of violence on individuals who have been forcibly displaced as a risk factor for developing a sense of self as violence has a distinct influence on the resilience and vulnerability of a person's mental health. Fazel et al. (2012) examined the social, communal, and individual characteristics of forcibly displaced individuals in order to determine the relationship between psychological symptoms and adverse experiences. The research demonstrated that violence is a significant factor in determining these individuals' mental health outcomes[23]. Fazel et al. (2012) argue that risk factors impacting youth mental health include tragic experiences that took place before their displacement, such as family loss, discrimination, a lack of security, disruption of schooling, impoverishment, and a shortage of food (Fazel et al., 2012). Furthermore, these displaced people face multiple challenges during and post-displacement, such as language hurdles, repeated settlement attempts, a lack of basic necessities such as health care, insecurity, and perceived stigmatisation (Fazel et al., 2012).

A more recent study of North Korean refugee youths produced more grounded findings on the impact of trauma on adolescents' mental health. Lee et al. (2020) found that trauma exposure is a significant risk factor for children's health and development, which correlates with their identity construction. Early trauma may result in emotional control difficulties, which can manifest as attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and depression. This study employed questionnaires to measure participants' childhood trauma

[23] The reversal of traumatic experiences in their home countries or on their way to the host countries is possible via efforts that provide social support and secure settlements (Fazel et al., 2012).

experiences and screen for depressive symptoms, emotion management techniques, and ADHD symptoms. Lee et al. (2020) reported that early trauma experiences had a detrimental effect on ADHD and depressive symptoms in North Korean refugee children. For young North Korean refugee youths, early trauma triggered by violent experiences has an impact on their emotional stability. Because of the expressive suppression effect, these strong negative effects on adolescents' ADHD and depressive symptoms lead to the formation of cognitive buffers (Lee et al., 2020). Expressive repression has been linked to an increase in physical stress on the body. As a consequence of this accumulated stress, the person starts to feel various side effects on their memory, blood pressure, and, most crucially for this study, their self-esteem. When considering these consequences, there is a clear link between emotional repression and how it affects the identity construction of these North Korean refugee youths.

Risk Factors in Educational Intervention

As mentioned above, mental health concerns, such as depression and ADHD, have a profound influence on a child's identity development. Despite being exposed to the same social living conditions as other children in the host countries, the reviewed studies have concluded categorically that refugees do not go through the same developmental stages as other children[24]. Their analysis has provided results that necessitate the creation of intervention programmes that can bring positive effects to the mental status of these children and reduce the negative effects of violence-related trauma as a result of forced displacement. Marlowe, Bartley and Hibtit (2014) assert that the resettlement process entails adapting to and reconciling with a new social context. This study presents a new notion, acculturation, as a major element in influencing the pattern of these refugees' resettlement. The objective of

[24] Past trauma has become a significant factor in the development of delinquency in teenagers, poor self-esteem, and depression, all of which impair appropriate identity formation (Fazel et al., 2012; Lee et al., 2020).

Marlowe et al.’s research (2014) was to investigate how assimilation affects the cultural identity of refugees via assessing the practices of the New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy.

According to Marlowe et al.’s study (2014), acculturation is the process of modifying an individual’s culture through adaptation to another culture or by borrowing traits from another culture. The best strategic approach to this process is usually an assimilation of two cultures, the refugees' culture and the culture of the country they are resettling into. Prolonged contact has been established as an effective means of acculturation and has been used by a broad group of governments and refugee assimilation organisations. It is claimed that acculturation retains the refugees' identity and culture while facilitating a seamless cultural exchange that enables them to adjust quickly to their new place (Marlowe et al., 2014). Marlowe et al.’s study (2014) explores the conflicts inherent in developing these new personal identities during resettlement situations and finds that many responses result in the production of hybrid individuals capable of responding to their past in a healthy manner while experiencing the present (Marlowe et al., 2014). Assimilation, according to Marlowe et al. (2014), demands the integration of a refugee's gender, age, education, ethnic identification, and cultural background into a new social setting. This new framework elicits new conceptions of work, gender roles, education, parenthood, community, and a variety of social practices.

To implement these assimilation initiatives, the host community must develop tactics based on social capital theory, which proposes connecting, bridging, and bonding capital through distinct conceptualised patterns of interactions. These patterns will likely have an effect on refugees' ability to participate in society (Marlowe et al., 2014). This approach permits the identification of integration channels such as religious affiliation, locality, or

ethnic identity that could be connected in order to foster strong and supportive ties between the host community and refugees (Marlowe et al., 2014). Educational services and opportunities are examples of such a bonding resource. Mathews[25] (2011) conducted a separate study to determine the effects of such initiatives on the displacement trauma experienced by refugee children. According to Mathews (2011), schools offer secure settings for refugee adolescents to engage in novel relationships, encounters, and learning opportunities. Following on from Marlowe et al.'s contention that language is an excellent medium for refugees to engage in the everyday social life of the host country, Mathews' (2011) research implies that the educational space should focus on delivering literacy in order to improve settlement choices.

Despite the importance of the program, Mathews' research (2011) discovered that Australia provides very little educational support for refugees' integration. Mathews (2011) emphasises that, while literacy is critical for social participation, education attainment enables refugee youths to pursue short-term objectives in achieving future goals. By doing so, refugee children develop resilience and minimise their susceptibility. These two facets serve as the foundation for their identification and self-perception of individual identity. Their ethnicity is culturally integrated into the new social context, and their self-worth and identity are preserved as a result of such educational initiatives.

A second study confirms the results of Mathews (2011) despite being conducted a decade later and in a different context. The research by Alarcón, Bobowik and Preto-Flores (2021) looks at 74 examples of freshly turned 18-year-old refugees[26]. The educational

[25] Mathews (2011) interviewed 29 informants, including 14 community welfare workers, four state education officials, five non-government agents, three federal immigration officials, eight state immigration and community policy officials, and an ELS policy official

[26] The population was made up of refugees in the Barcelona Metropolitan Area, Spain. The refugee youths were placed in an educational mentorship programme to assess their psychological responses to their trauma-related mental health problems.

program's objective was to enhance the self-esteem of unaccompanied refugee children. Alarcón et al. (2021) discovered that such educational programmes significantly improved the mentored youths' resilience, self-esteem, and hope. Their educational aspirations and expectations increased significantly as well, as did their mental health. Alarcón et al. (2021) and Mathews (2011) both conclude that educational interventions provide adequate support networks for the social integration and resettlement of refugee children. This is true regardless of the place where those refugees are hosted[27]. Failure to establish protective measures to assist them in assimilating, such as temporary housing or socio-legal help from social welfare professionals, may result in significant levels of mental health issues affecting their identity development (Alarcón et al., 2021).

Earlier, Marlowe et al. (2014) examined social capital theory and how it may be used to connect bridges and bond capital through unique conceptualised patterns of relationships[28]. Moreover, the study discussed how the theory offers an understanding of integration channels as with religious affiliation, which may be connected to fostering strong and supportive ties between the host community and refugees. Similarly, Green et al. (in Green, Higgins, Alderson, Clarke, Mulrow & Oxman, 2008) analysed the influence of affiliation with religious guiding programmes in addressing the damaged identity development of refugee youths. The research expanded on the transnational Childhoods research project, which examines the experiences of young people moving to Sweden from Romania and Poland. This illuminated agency serves as the core theoretical component of the study, which

[27] With such high levels of assimilation, the number of unaccompanied minors entering Spain has been steadily increasing over the years. In 2016, there were 588 refugees, but by 2018, the figure had risen to a startling 7026. A similar pattern has been discovered in eighty other nations worldwide.

[28] Due to a lack of government funding in certain areas, this support system may be lacking in efficiency. Simultaneously, not all displaced adolescents are accepted into such systems. However, even small-scale institutions and social organisations such as churches may make a significant contribution to refugee assimilation and identity building through induced social interactions (Marlowe et al., 2014).

examines how the Polish Catholic Community in Sweden influences the identity development of these refugee children positively via educational and religious counselling initiatives (Green et al., 2008).

The primary aim of the Polish Catholic Community in Sweden is reportedly to help these young refugees construct their identities and develop caring and meaningful social relationships[29]. Green et al. (2008) suggest that religious rituals contribute to the development of a strong social bond between young refugees and Polish congregations. These social connections contribute significantly to the development of sentiments of inclusion and belonging within the confines of their own ethnic identities. Numerous young people regarded their post-migration relationships with God, clergymen, and friendships made within the Polish Catholic community as pivotal moments in their lives. On the other hand, many participants struggled to socialise and make new acquaintances in Sweden, especially during their first year, while several of them reported being bullied and subjected to discrimination at school. Even individuals who were born in Sweden said that their native Swedish peers lacked the experience of displacement and anguish associated with leaving close friends and relatives in Poland (Green et al., 2008).

Besides the impacts of institutional support, these refugee adolescents had to develop their protective factors to wade off any perceived hostilities such as discrimination; a factor reviewed by the study of Liu and Zhao (2016). In this study, Liu and Zhao looked at a Chinese cohort of refugee adolescents to investigate the relationship between group identity as a protective factor and the risk factor of perceived discrimination on life satisfaction and

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[29] Green et al. (2008) analyse this influence on three dimensions. To begin, the investigators examined these young individuals' spiritual growth and thus gained an understanding of their religious identity (Green et al., 2008). Furthermore, they evaluated the counselling provided by primarily Polish Catholic priests in the young refugees' family ties and future decision-making (Green et al., 2008). Finally, the study examined the impact of these interventions on the development of new friendships and the meaning-making of shared displacement and religious experiences (Green et al., 2008).

self-esteem. They noticed that refugees attempt to safeguard their psychological well-being by forming group identities in reaction to perceived prejudice. In the study, perceived discrimination was inversely associated with all three psychological well-being indexes, and the detrimental consequences of perceived discrimination on psychological well-being were most pronounced among adolescents enrolled in public schools (Liu & Zhao, 2016). Furthermore, group identity affirmation and belonging appeared as a buffer against the detrimental effects of perceived discrimination on collective welfare (Liu & Zhao, 2016).

Discussion and Conclusion

The construction and implications of individual identity have a multitude of relevance for adolescents and the future structural makeup of the social environment. To begin, individual identity is critical for developing a strong character, which is a person's identifying characteristic. A person who lives a confident life with a strong character, avoiding their weaknesses and capitalising on their strengths, is certain to lead a more confident life. Before digging into the implications of all of this for a growing adolescent, it is critical to first grasp the widely accepted definition of personal identity. The studies reviewed addressed the issue of personal identity in adolescents and children in a number of different ways. As a person gets older, they have the ability to identify numerous elements in their environment. These include both what they can influence and what they cannot influence or control. Adolescence is often the most formative period when it comes to identity development (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2006; Anttila et al., 2017). Children at this stage begin to recognise and alter their perceptions of themselves in reaction to their peers, family, and acquaintances (Shoemaker & Tobia, 2019). Individual identity starts with the establishment of beliefs about skin colour, height, socio-economic status, and weight, among other things (Shoemaker & Tobia, 2019). These beliefs serve as the foundation for self-esteem, motivation, and resilience throughout

their lives. Their personal identity shapes their feeling of belonging and may have an effect on the rest of their personality (Shoemaker & Tobia, 2019).

The process through which personal identity develops and the strength of character as a byproduct are important for a variety of reasons. Self-identity is critical for adolescents because it enables them to survive and thrive with characteristics of themselves. In this refugee context, the majority of refugees feel out of place in the community due to language barriers, food insecurity, and a range of other issues such as a lack of basic amenities (Mathews, 2011; Marlowe, 2014; Alarcón et al., 2021; Green et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2012). Individuals can feel safe and accept their unfortunate situation if they are assisted in reclaiming their identity by learning a new language and assimilating into society through integrating practices (Karwowski, Lebuda & Wisniewska, 2018), which may restore their resilience and confidence to pursue their life goals. With a well-founded or rebuilt self-identity, adolescents can improve their decision-making abilities and the integrity of their relationships (Karwowski et al., 2018). Self-identity should not be overlooked given its importance in an individual's later years.

Thus far, this review has discussed the findings on the construction of individual identities in adolescents and children, as well as the risk factors associated with abnormal development. The review was also able to establish a solid relationship between identity development and mental health, as well as the variables impacting adolescents' identities. The review was able to provide evidence of how educational interventions may effectively reverse these impacts and alter these refugee adolescents' own perceptions of their own identity. This shift is shown by a variety of coping strategies established by governmental agencies integrating refugees or by individuals developing group identities. Ultimately, the need for using educational interventions for this purpose has been adequately shown. This review has

accumulated lenses into addressing the significance of individual identity and providing a rationale as to why the results of these studies should be taken into any sensible consideration.

According to this research standpoint, personal identity is critical for refugee youth because it assists them in creating their acceptance into society through social activities and inclusion. It enables them to begin accepting and adjusting to their circumstances. They may be able to regain their resilience and conviction to pursue their life goals as a result of doing so. Adolescents who have a well-founded identity have greater decision-making ability and stronger relationships. Assimilation measures are consequently critical for the psychological well-being of refugee adolescents. With improved education services and opportunities for these refugee children, there is a hope that the detrimental effects of violence-induced and trauma-related mental health issues may begin to reverse. Being a refugee is never a decision based on favourable circumstances, but on the most heinous ones. Therefore, born out of shared responsibility, the international community could play its traditionally historical role in accepting the most vulnerable of these refugees and providing them with a renewed sense of hope and a reason to live.

However, what is remarkably lacking in the previous studies is a thorough examination of the mechanisms through which those educational interventions affect the identity formation of young refugees. Most literature that focuses on how the content and delivery of education affect young people's identity is done in relation to migrants, not refugees (Ron-Balsera, 2015; Spomer & Cowen, 2001; Mahon, 2006; McFadden, Merryfield, & Barron, 1997), which is a distinction clearly made at the beginning of this research. The reason behind the lack of studies in this field is the rather indistinguishable period of time between the moment an asylum seeker usually applies for asylum and the moment they are

fully integrated into society. Scholars often find it hard to find a population of refugees who would stay in their legal status for a period of time that secures numerous and valid research results on their identity construction in relation to the educational services provided to them.

Studies on identity require working over relatively long periods of time (Meeus, 2011; Wang, Douglass & Yip, 2017) to assess the shift, if there is one, in the self-identification of participants. That is difficult to happen with refugees, as their legal status might abruptly change and their settlement could end or be exported to another place while the study is taking place (Morrice, 2011). There are also logistic issues, including language barriers between the refugee children and researchers, and the unplanned nature of refugee arrivals in host nations (Morrice, 2011). Such circumstances make it relatively implausible for researchers to conduct research on refugee identity development, and thus they would rather focus on migrants and end up lumping migrants and refugees together. Furthermore, humanitarian aid extended to refugees views education for refugee children as a critical component that is often met with praise. Providing education to refugee youth is often a difficult and a costly task (UNHCR, 2021) that many host countries would rather neglect in favour of providing more essential services such as shelter and food. Therefore, approaching such services with a critical approach to evaluate their appropriateness for refugee youth is a step that is not encouraged in the international community.

This chapter aimed at conducting a thorough review of studies that tackle the identity construction of refugee youths in education settings in host countries. It has brought forward some important insights, however, and for the reasons mentioned above, the review could not identity all the available theoretical tools to assess and measure phases of identity development in refugee children. Therefore, the next chapter targets filling gaps that this review could not cover.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Tools

Introduction

As noted in the previous chapter, the literature on the identity construction of refugee children and adolescents within educational frameworks is abundant and it is difficult to take it all into account. For reasons of practicality, the eligibility criteria have limited the scope of the systemic review and produced certain projections in the reviewed literature. It is important to restate that while this chapter tries to cover the gaps that the previous review was not able to cover due to scope issues, the study is not aligned with any of the theoretical frameworks or tools that are to be covered given the grounded nature of this research.

As the review attempted to conduct a comprehensive look into the identity construction of refugee children, it was apparent in most studies that a clear distinction between refugees and immigrants as a target population for the studies was not made. Thus, this chapter will start first with a detailed comparison of the experiences of refugees and immigrants to highlight differences and the reason why researchers need to set clearer boundaries between the two populations. The chapter then walks the reader through the major theoretical diagrams in identity studies, supplying them with key concepts in this field. After that, the chapter will move to focus on the identity development of children and then focus on identification in the case of adolescents. The latter half of the chapter will present the interaction of identity with a few parameters such as liminality, sovereignty, language, and integration.

Refugees vs. Immigrants in the Literature

Disagreements over essential terminology in the literature, such as 'migrant', 'immigrant', and 'refugee', are widespread among scholars[30] (Stein, 1981; Portes & Bach, 1985; Pryor, 2001; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001 as cited in McBrien 2005a). Yet, empirical research has overlooked critical distinctions between refugees and immigrants and the body of research which includes refugees "tends to fall under the category of 'immigrant' studies" (Mosselson, 2002, p. 20).

Even though Europe and other recipient nations have seen a steady flow of refugees, especially in the last decade, research on refugees, per se, is lacking (Ahearn & Athey, 1991). As refugees are settled or resettled in host countries for a myriad of reasons and in a variety of situations, they cannot be referred to or regarded as a "homogenous group of individuals" (Cortes, 2001, p. 465). Moreover, despite the mainstream UNHCR definition of who refugees are, researchers and practitioners do not agree on who actually a refugee is. For example, Cortes (2001) contends that newcomers may be classified into at least two distinct categories: "refugee immigrants" who abandon their countries owing to oppression or conflict, and "economic immigrants" who leave their homes deliberately in search of better employment and financial stability. In contrast, Ogbu and Simons (1982) notes that refugees are not people who willingly decided they would be subgroups in other nations; they are, in fact, people who "have been conquered, colonised, or enslaved" (p. 165).

Many academic fields establish defective differences between refugees and immigrants, obscuring the boundaries between them for a variety of reasons or considerations. As a result, when it comes to the host country's institutional viewpoint, there

[30] According to Hein (1993), immigrants are an economic kind of migration, while refugees are a political one.

is little difference between immigrants and refugees (Portes & Bach, 1985). Similarly, academically speaking, and depending on the research field[31], scope and focus, the categorisation of research subjects whether 'migrants' or 'refugees' are sometimes blurred [32] and other times it is strongly pronounced. For example, in the field of education and psychology, researchers tend to blur those differences in categorisation as they assume people belonging to those two groups have similar needs and exhibit similar trajectories.

This research project, however, views refugees as a distinctive category compared to immigrants and aims to highlight multiple essential traits that distinguish a refugee from an immigrant as depicted in the table below.

Immigrants vs. Refugees

		Immigrants	Refugees
1	Legal and security spectrum	The element of choice and free will is readily available and more prominent.	Choice and free will is completely absent, even in sometimes choosing where to seek refuge.
2		The freedom to return back home whenever desired is available.	Returning in not an option which adds a sense of hopelessness.
3		There is a will to settle in the host country.	Settling in the target country is not a choice, but could become a necessity once they start living in prolonged status of refuge
5		Integration policies are not applied directly as immigrants apply to move on skill basis and they do not move in large groups.	Integration policies are demanded and applied to all refugees (in EU and other western countries).
6		Immigrants have the choice where to apply for work and subsequently can choose where to live, where to send children to school, etc.	Refugees are deprived of this freedom and they often go with the flow of the policies forced on them, so choosing education programs and institutions is out of the window (they are oppressed)
4	Psychological spectrum	Migration is a step towards a new life and often comes with preparations before leaving the home country.	Refuge comes with a pre-departure or during-departure package of trauma, mental and physical torture, abuse, witnessing of destruction and lack of basic needs. It also comes with after-arrival package of issues such as language barriers, family separation, unemployment, lack of access to healthcare and education, etc.
7	Identity spectrum	The dignity of migrants is often preserved and not affected by their migration experience.	Seeking refuge in itself could be degradation for human dignity and loss of self-worth.
8		Migrants, to certain extents, have the freedom to associate themselves with certain political, social or religious affiliations, which can largely give them a say in how they identify themselves.	Refugees receive hosting countries categorisations on them and have no freedom in associating themselves with one or another. This makes their identity easily and critically influenced by external factors.

Table 3: Immigrants Vs. Refugees

First, a major distinction between immigrants and refugees is the way they vary in terms of voluntary vs. involuntary mobility (Hein, 1993). Most immigrant populations leave their home countries voluntarily in search of better economic opportunities, whereas refugees

[31] education, psychology, migration, human rights, health, media, gender, etc.

[32] especially when it comes to sampling

flee for their lives and the lives of their families after being deprived of the right to remain in their home country. Further, whether migration is voluntarily or not, can critically impact the immigrants and refugees experience and approach to their migration journeys as they are preplanned and tend to be safer for immigrants contrary to refugee asylum journeys, which are spontaneous and many refugees risk their lives before even arriving at any safe destination (Stein, 1981; Hein, 1993). This distinction also applies to both categories' experience in the host country as well.

Second, entailed by the difference mentioned earlier, immigrants have the ability to determine their destinies; as they prepare and plan for departure, immigrants have some influence over their destinies in the host countries (Kunz, 1973; Cowart, 2006). By contrast, as refugees are obliged to flee from their homes, generally forcibly and sometimes on short notice, they have little say over where they travel or what they can do upon arrival in the host country (Mosselson, 2002); their destinies are in the hands of the host country's government. Moreover, in the majority of situations, refugees are unable to visit or return to their home country owing to the takeover or destruction of their properties, as well as fear of persecution, while immigrants are permitted to visit or return (Cortes, 2001). Having the option of returning home makes a huge difference in how immigrants experience their migration journeys and chosen residences in the host countries, in contrast to how refugees experience their forced migration journeys and assigned residences (Hein, 1993).

Another significant distinction between immigrants and refugees is that the majority of immigrants can leave after settling things back in their home countries, whether that means taking care of their homes and businesses or getting necessary documents from their schools and governments. As refugees leave their home countries abruptly, they often do not have the

time to do any of that (Cortes, 2001; Schmid, 2001). Accordingly, immigrants relatively have ample time to arrange to take possessions such as money and other valuable items to their destinations, while refugees may arrive with no financial resources or basic documents, which in turn will affect their lives in the host countries (Stein, 1981).

Additionally, according to McBrien (2005), trauma and psychiatric illness serve as a dividing line between immigrants and refugees. Being a refugee is more than a label or a term; it is an experience. In their home countries, refugees are victims of violence, prejudice, and trauma[33] (DeCapua, Smathers, & Tang, 2007, as cited in Roxas, 2011). Many refugees suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of witnessing rape or persecution and watching family members being murdered[34] (Potocky-Tripodi, 2002; Tollefson, 1989 as cited in McBrien, 2005). Moreover, although both refugees and immigrants face stress throughout the moving process and when exposed to new environments, refugees are more prone to suffering from psychiatric diseases and trauma than immigrants[35] (McBrien, 2005).

Moreover, although both immigrants and refugees might experience linguistic barriers in the host cultures, which may inhibit their capacity to acclimate to their new surroundings and seek academic or professional prospects (Hein, 1993; McBrien, 2005), immigrants can still have the time to prepare in advance, learn the language, and research the host country's culture and environment ahead of their migration (Garrett, 2006; Hartog & Zorlu, 2009; Besic & McBrien 2012). On the other hand, the absence of choice and the abrupt mobility of refugees is a substantial source of misery and despondency when approaching their new environment.

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[33] They are eyewitnesses to suffering and many are torture survivors.

[34] Their traumatic pasts may have a detrimental effect on their adaptation to their new environments.

[35] Thus, displacement as a result of conflict and persecution, pre-departure traumatic experiences, and lack of control over their destiny all lead to a more profound psychological and emotional impact on the mental health of refugees (Kunz, 1973).

Furthermore, while the refugees' capacity for adjusting to a new environment is far greater than that of the immigrants' (Suarez-Orozco, 2001), as the formers are greatly motivated to restart their lives, refugees "plunge" into the "unknown" (Kunz, 1973, p.173; Stein, 1981, p. 326), which often has a detrimental impact on their prospects and sense of belonging. When refugees' most basic needs of safety, shelter, and food are met in host countries, they may begin to question their status and where they belong as they encounter policies and rules imposed on them in the new place (Hein, 1993). Immigrants do not often face such dilemmas right from the beginning, as they are more pliable in focusing on economic or other objectives in the host country which they have defined earlier to their migration.

Equally important, immigrants' journeys do not often entail any violation of their dignity as human beings, while refugees seeking asylum in other countries can be viewed in itself as a degradation of human dignity. The sovereignty of countries can be reflected on human beings, and when refugees are faced with the need to seek refuge in other countries, they feel devalued and abased (Noll, 2003). Their asylum experiences can exacerbate their feelings of humiliation, leading to mental illnesses and, in some cases, delinquency in younger refugee populations (Hansson, Ghazinour, & Wimelius, 2015).

Finally, immigrants have the freedom to associate themselves with certain political, social, or religious affiliations in their home or host countries, which can give them a large say in how they identify themselves (Suarez-Orozco, 2001). On the other hand, refugees have no control over the host country's policies and the categorisations under which they are accepted or rejected (Kunz, 1973). Thus, they have no freedom in associating themselves with one group or another since their legal status is at the mercy of the host country, and that forces them to carefully consider their affiliations in order not to lose the right to protection

out of prejudice or discrimination (Stein, 1981; De La Croix & Doepke, 2004). Such considerations by refugees add external influences on how they identify themselves.

In short, there is a considerable amount of differences in the experiences of immigrants compared to those of refugees (see Figure 4), which entails a fair distinction to be made by any academic intending to investigate the identity construction of targets belonging to those populations. The contention in blurring terminology boundaries between immigrants and refugees that already exists in the literature should motivate a more rigorous attempt at making distinctions clear and solid in future research projects, as this study advocates for.

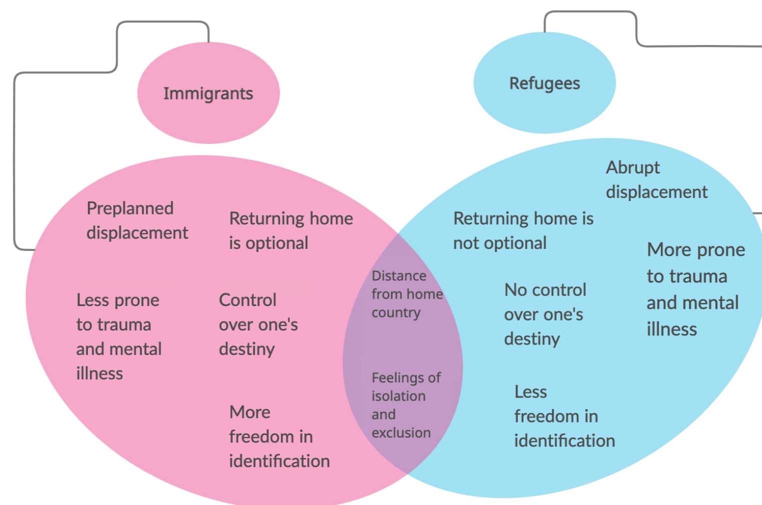

Figure 4: Characteristics Of Immigrants Vs. Refugees

Identity in the Literature

Identity has been investigated in different disciplines such as politics, sociology, education, gender, law and others. Thus, diverse conceptual and academic approaches have contributed to distinct conceptions of identity, which resulted in substantial diversity in the manner in which scholars define identity and self identification (Leary & Tangney, 2003; Vignoles, Schwartz, & Luyckx, 2011). Among the most influential frameworks that focus on

identity in relation to education contexts are three: psychological, sociocultural, and post-structural. Therefore, I will provide a rundown of these paradigms and highlight where they overlap and divide. The Venn diagram (Figure 5) afterwards shows the intersection between the three paradigms with key concepts and the names of key scholars in each paradigm.

Psychological Framework

Several scholars believe that providing a conclusive definition of identity (Erikson, 1959) is difficult. However, the more one analyses identification, the more "identity" becomes "indescribable," as Erickson (1959) put it (p. 9). Identity theories based on child psychology and development approaches were first established by Erikson's work in 1959. Through the lens of psychology, Erickson (1968) examined identity and emphasised the point that for everyone, discovering one's own sense of self is a lifetime pursuit. Erickson saw the construction of one's identity as a multi-faceted and socially contextualised psychosocial dynamic (Schwartz, 2001). Erikson distinguished between the psychological and the more behavioural aspects of identity information when it pertained to the individual's sense of self, which he called "ego identity" (Erickson, 1946, p. 359). He also differentiated between "identity" and "self" (Erickson, 1959, p. 243). If we adopt such an approach, the self may be seen not just as a central element in an individual's experiences, but also as the mechanism that enables them to dwell on and control their personal actions (Leary & Tangney, 2003). Yet, identity is also regarded as a self-construct (Leary & Tangney, 2003), with its construction understood as a lengthy, evolutionary period that advances through a variety of phases. According to Ryan and Deci (2003), the primary problems of identification appear predominantly in adolescents, as the development of stable identities is important for their transit into adulthood. The social component of identity is considered crucial in

determining a person's identity formation since it pertains to how people identify themselves "in a specific historical, cultural, and sociological time period" (Oyserman & James, 2011, p. 119).

Erikson addressed the impact of external variables like families and the community on an individual's development from infancy to maturity, as well as how sociocultural factors determine personal decisions. The presence of a core identity is also a crucial aspect of psychosocial identity theory, owing to the way the 'self' is conceptualised within such a paradigm. Although Erikson recognises that a person will have several identities, he believes that they are merged into a cohesive, core identity that evolves through lifetime (Erikson, 1959). He also claims that this fundamental identity links people to their past and future (Erikson, 1959).

Erikson's research on identity theory evolved into a significant amount of scholarship on identity from a psychological viewpoint, including Marcia's (2007) identity status categorisation and Berzonsky's (2011) identity style assessment. Some critics, though, such as Cote and Levine (2002), have contended that such neo-Eriksonian approaches overlook Erikson's social insights since they operationalise Erikson's research primarily from a psychological perspective, ignoring the sociological aspect that Erikson included in his theory (Cote & Levine, 2002). Cote and Levine (2002) additionally underline the necessity of adopting a more multidisciplinary approach to identity formation.

Sociocultural Framework

Sociocultural theories, like the psychosocial theories of identity described above, take into account both the personal and the communal aspects of identity. They also rely on

poststructural or postmodern theories that emphasise the individual's agency (Lankiewicz, Szczepaniak-Kozak, & Wasikiewicz-Firlej, 2014). Given these parallels, sociocultural viewpoints underline the importance of social, historical, and cultural conditions in shaping the person. Identity is thus considered as socially created instead of evolved, and hence, it is thought to be regulated, interactive, and situational. As a result, social settings and interactions must always play a role in identity development (Adams, 2007; Norton & Toohey, 2011). Therefore, from a sociocultural standpoint, as social settings and interactions play a role in identity development, identity should be perceived as contextual and articulated in terms of actual membership in the community. According to Block (2007), under this paradigm, identity is somewhat "constitutive of and produced by the social environment" (p. 25).

According to Jones Jr.'s (2013) research, under the sociocultural umbrella, human identity is made up of the various components of our social lives that contribute to our sense of self-identification. It is divided into three categories: personal, social, and cultural identities (Jones Jr., 2013). Personal identities may be defined as the components of one's self generated from one's life experiences throughout time, such as interests and hobbies (Jones Jr., 2013). Social identities are formed by participation in social groups with which we are directly related, such as families and schools (Jones Jr., 2013). Cultural identities emerge as a result of one's participation in society, including expectations for social behaviour or actions (Jones Jr., 2013). Individuals' personal and social identities regularly shift as they connect with new challenges on a daily basis (Jones Jr., 2013). Cultural identification features are the most difficult to alter of the three categories unless people reside in a foreign country for at least a decade (Jones Jr., 2013). According to Jones Jr.'s (2013) research, these three aspects

all contribute towards the development of one's individual identity. For example, the identity of one of our study participants, namely Talib, can be segmented into a Syrian Muslim as a cultural identity; a refugee student as a social identity; and a bookworm as a personal identity.

Due to the sheer emphasis on social interactions, a lot of scholars, like Vagan, Said and Park (2011) and Cheung (2015), make the argument for applying a sociocultural framework to examine identity development within educational environments. Under that umbrella, Norton and Toohey (2011) emphasise the necessity of paying "close attention to the activities available for students in their different surroundings, as well as the quality of the physical and metaphoric resources that students utilise" (p. 419). Sociocultural identities are also often seen as numerous and temporary, which challenges the concept of a core identity, a central concept in the psychosocial identity paradigm.

Post-structrual Framework

Post-structuralists likewise deny the notion of a core identity by stressing the absence of a static self, and according to this paradigm, identities are seen as conflicting and constantly evolving (Zembylas, 2003; Fawcett, 2012). This allows for the exploration of dynamic identity development as opposed to the much more methodical developmental process of identity that is typical of the psychological approach. Identity, according to post-structuralists, is socially produced and historically located. Development may be affected by social and interpersonal variables along with self-growth, which aligns with the sociocultural viewpoints stated above. Rather than looking at it as a fixed quality, this framework highlights identity as a process, employing terminology such as "dynamic," "fluid," or "ongoing" to describe it (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Goh, 2014; Hallman, 2007). Moreover, Block (2007) underscores that identities are mediated at the crossroads of the past,

present, and future, whilst Norton and Toohey (2011) argue that identity is "context-dependent and context-producing, particularly in historical and cultural situations" (p. 420). As a result, poststructural identity is seen as fluid, multifaceted, moving, and socially produced (Fawcett, 2012). Although there are clear aspects of overlap with the sociocultural views indicated above, empirical weight is more often accorded towards aspects of status and growth.

Thus, poststructuralism, and especially the sense of autonomy it bestows on individuals, has been deemed especially beneficial for conceptualising how education can result in personal and social change (Norton & Toohey, 2011). According to scholars in this field, identity is the process by which an individual conceives their experience of the world, how that relationship is created over time and space, and the way the person visualises potential outcomes in their future (Norton & Toohey, 2011). As post-structuralists, scholars not only need to recognise a person's social structure background (Peirce, 1995), like in understanding their learning motivation and attitudes towards schooling, but they also need to consider future advantages that this individual may be granted by learning. These considerations have a bearing on identity because they entail individuals constructing and reconstructing a sense of who they are and how to connect to their social environment (Peirce, 1995).

Some scholars (e.g., Block, 2007) have argued that poststructuralism integrates psychological and sociological perspectives as a framework for exploring identity, and accordingly, a poststructuralist framework to study identity encompasses both the individual and society, dismissing the concept that it can be treated as merely a psychological or sociological problem. Yet, poststructuralism has been critiqued for disregarding the likelihood

that there are fundamental and stable components of identity and that they adhere to the core (Zembylas, 2003). Such critiques align the framework with the sociocultural perspective on identity construction and makes it less likely to overlap with the psychosocial framework as shown in Figure 5 below.

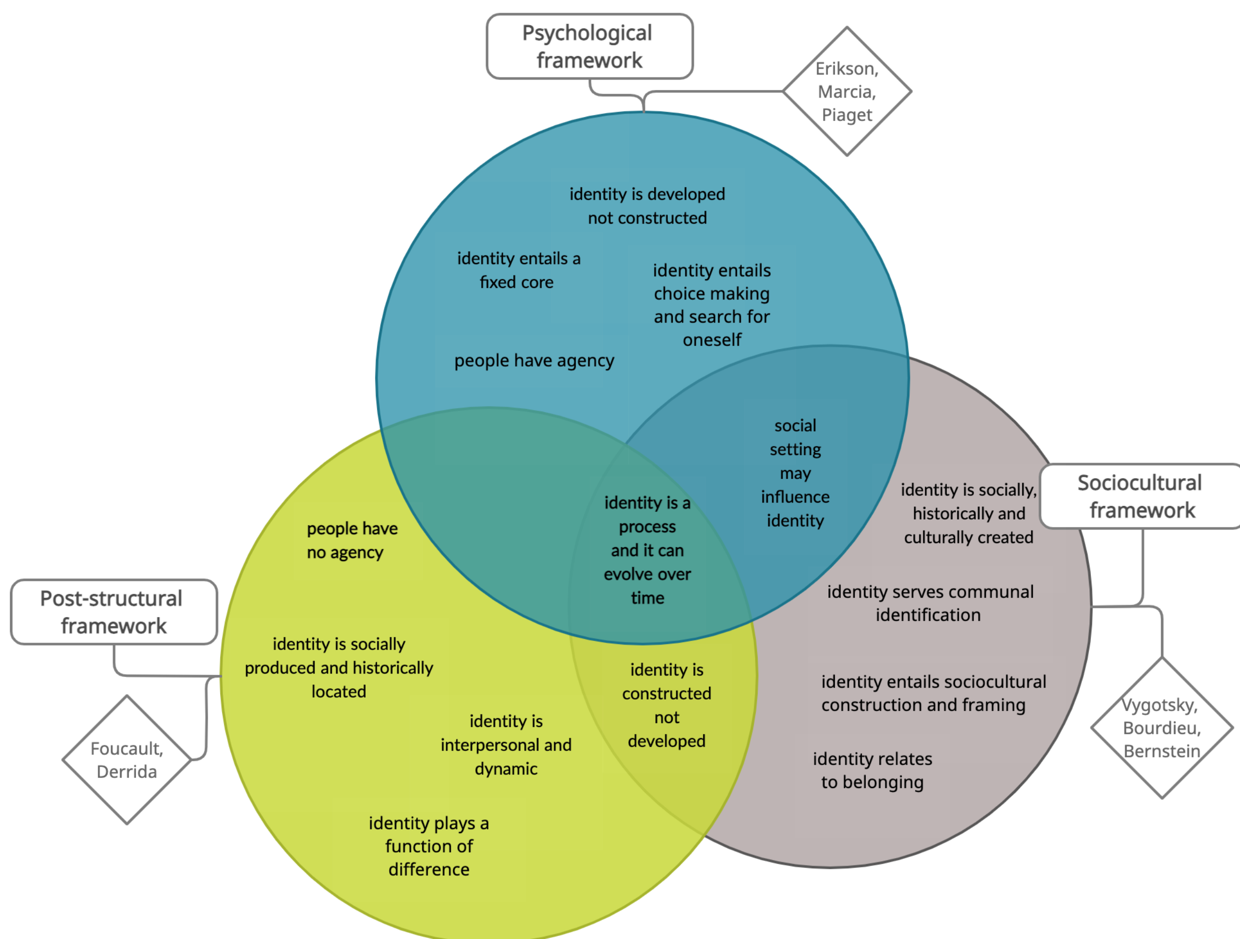

Figure 5: Theoretical Frameworks In Identity Studies

Key Concepts in Identity Development

As established earlier, the process of discovering and creating one's identity is heavily influenced by time and place (Giddens, 1991), the people one associates with (Tajfel, 1978), and the circumstances and experiences one has had throughout their life. Identity has been

defined by experts as socially created (Gee, 2000a), contextual (Hall, 2000), and continually developing (Zacharias, 2010).

Gee (2000a) identified four distinct perspectives on identity: nature-identity; institution-identity; discourse-identity; and affinity-identity; and demonstrated how these four perspectives interact in a particular setting. For example, being the only child in a family is an example of "nature-identity", in which the genetic structure determines identity and people have no influence over it (Gee, 2000a, p. 5). Institutional identity, on the other hand, has to do with the institutional affiliation a person belongs to. Individuals assume a collective identity of the institution they belong to or they have to accept the identity imposed on them by the institution. Thus, an institutional identity is either a "calling" or an "imposition." (Gee, 2000a, p. 5).

Gee (2000a. p. 6) calls the third way of looking at identity a "discourse identity," meaning that people construct their identities via discourse or discussion with those around them. Along with this concept, researchers employed Bakhtin's (1981) concept of "becoming" to investigate identity via speech and experiences (Cho, Al-Samiri & Gao, 2022; Gomez, Morales, Huici, Gaviria & Jimenez, 2007; Hallman, 2017). Bakhtin (1981) sees the individual as socially driven and intellectually developing via beliefs and perspectives (Gomez et al., 2007). Gee's (2000a) asserts, however, that personal identity exists primarily as a result of how others regard, speak about, and interact with the individual (p. 103). According to Gee (2000a), this shows how any given type of identity (i.e., being a student or a refugee) is intricately linked to social identity. Finally, Gee (2000a, p. 7) suggested "affinity" identification as the last viewpoint as it is defined by one's engagement in cultural traditions; a group of individuals who celebrate specific festivals or cultural activities, for

instance, holding common routines. Belonging to an affinity group is normally a choice and such groups do not need to exist in one location; they can be dispersed in different countries.

Nevertheless, it is critical to recognise that people navigate between their different identities. As a result, comprehending identity should not be based on a single explanation since people reinvent themselves in various ways at different points in time as they pursue different meanings in their life (Helsby, McCulloch & Knight, 2000). As a result, the discourse of identity cannot remain in its solitary shape as an identity, but must therefore be viewed as fluid and changeable identities. On top of that, the plural form of identities does not imply that identities are static; rather, it recognises the dynamic nature of identities (Davies & Harré, 1999).

Furthermore, people play diverse roles within society, and their roles are defined by numerous circumstances (Sueda, 2014). Athough studies reveal that the concept of multiple identities has been acknowledged since the mid-1970s (McCall & Simmons, 1978; Stryker, 2001; Turner & Reynolds, 2010), a dichotomous approach to identity neglects to effectively portray the complete variety of identity forms performed by individuals (Ott, 2003, p. 5). For example, Burke and Tully (1977) asserted that the self is "multifaceted and content-rich" (p. 881), and even much earlier than that, Goffman (1961) mentioned that roles and compartmentalisation of identity can exist side by side.

All the previous frameworks have shown that there are several ways to identify oneself. Like Ott (2003, p. 74) puts it, “how a person performs identity has to do with how once conceives of image and reality at/in a particular moment/space,” which is also compatible with the concept that identity is dynamic. Gee (2000a), like Ott, claimed that

people are identified differently in the same situation by various "actors" and differently in other settings by the same actors (p.104). Gee's statement of "setting" and "actor" is critical in identifying one's identity. According to Ewing (1990), numerous selves arise during negotiation "with contextually positioned actors" (p. 252).

Child Identity Development

In alignment with the reviewed theoretical frameworks which govern the majority of identity studies, there are multiple perspectives on the identity formation of children. For instance, Brooker and Woodhead (2008) define child identity formation as a process that involves the growth, socialisation, and cultural conditioning of a child (Brooker & Woodhead, 2008). It has been characterised as a progressive process of integration into the norms, beliefs, and power dynamics of the family's culture, modified by parental and adult supervision. Alternatively, other researchers regards the child's identity as essentially predetermined and that it develops via interaction with others and exploration in a safe environment. Both of these perspectives conform with modern theories of identity development, which acknowledge children's distinct identities from birth and their role in creating and recreating personal identifications within social and cultural settings (Brooker & Woodhead, 2008).

Throughout childhood and adolescence, the individual is exposed to a wide range of cultural experiences, all of which are assimilated into his or her personality and social identity. In this context (Uprichard, 2008), identity is both a state of being and a process of "becoming". In the context of personal identification, this is defined as children's personal perception of individuality from the rest of society, their sense of distinctiveness, and identity (Brooker & Woodhead, 2008). For those who identify with family and/or peers, social

identity describes the manner in which they see themselves as similar to those around them (Brooker & Woodhead, 2008). Identity, thus, combines two of the most fundamental human gratifications: the desire to belong and the desire to stand out (Schaffer, 1996).

The development of a child's identity in the framework of educational contexts has been a major focus of research for many decades. Much cross-cultural research looking at how children's identities grow contradicts the conventional wisdom that children's identities are fixed and unchanging no matter what happens in their lives (Brooker & Woodhead, 2008). Under which, child identity is best defined as the result of interactions with adults such as their parents, as well as instructors, classmates, and friends. Imitation and identification in group activities, such as creative role-play, are part of these dynamic processes. According to scholars, there is no standard framework for the formation of identity, and children, in increasingly challenging contemporary cultures, are seen as adopting multiple and often conflicting identities throughout their different experiences[36] (Brooker & Woodhead, 2008).

In that respect, identity construction and reconstruction are considered as the processes of a network of factors interacting and colliding with each other. Then, according to Brooker and Woodhead (2008), the following are some of these factors that play a big role in the process of a child's identity construction:

1. Inclusion and exclusion in the social structure: If children find themselves in a differently or unfairly structured family, community, or society, they may encounter marginalisation or discrimination, which impacts children's developing identities,

[36] One may argue that identity is more properly seen as a complicated network of interconnected constructs, each of which serves a distinct role (Schaffer, 2006).

their perception of who they are, where they belong, and how much they feel respected and valued[37].

2. Appreciation and tolerance for cultural and social plurality: The degree to which this factor produces beneficial consequences is heavily dependent on how much and in what forms children's social environments[38] embrace diversity.

3. Children's sense of self-worth is mostly determined by the supervision and attention that people, including family, teachers, and caregivers, provide them in their lives .

4. Encouraging children's autonomy and agency is critical for establishing a stable sense of self[39].

5. Building relationships with friends and peers is an important and necessary step in the social dynamics of identity formation.

These factors show how complicated the process of identity creation is and that children's identities are influenced by their immediate surroundings and beliefs, by the particular "developmental niches" within which they reside (Super & Harkness, 1986, p. 546), and by their interactions with a chain of micro-events across their daily lives[40] (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Many children exhibit a high awareness of their social standing at home, school, and in their community, as well as the influence of how they are received on their self-identity prior to entering school (Brooker & Woodhead, 2008).

[37] This group of factors is critical for whether children are given the opportunity to develop a secure sense of their own identities while also learning how they are similar to or different from others, allowing them to differentiate themselves from others.

[38] whether families, schools, or society as a whole.

[39] Identity is a distinctive intrinsic basis through which individuals learn to further distinguish and manage themselves and their environment.

[40] which include time with the family, with friends, and at school.

Applying that to the research target of this thesis, it is safe to say that the new place, the new environment, and the new people all influence how refugee children feel about themselves in the country to which they have relocated. The schooling environment of refugee children in the host country, their asylum status, and whatever family structure they are left with, all contribute to the construction and reconstruction of their identity.

Focusing on schooling, Lisa Delpit's (1988) analysis of multicultural education is informative in its exploration of schools' attitudes toward cultural diversity, contending with ethnic discrimination, racial prejudice, and the education of minority groups, such as refugees. On the basis of Delpit's theory, multicultural education strives: a) to be structured in a context to mirror secular, middle-class value systems; b) to guarantee equal education for all students regardless of cultural identity; and c) to ensure that the authority stays with those who control it (1988). And according to some academics, school education's primary purpose should be to allow children to develop their own selves in school without having unjustified external norms imposed on them (Delpit, 1988).

Regardless of their origin, parents want their children to be educated and equipped with communication styles and language norms that will help them flourish in the society (1988). Yet, according to Delpit, the lack of communication between minority-group children's educators, such as those of refugees, and their parents is at the foundation of many of the issues that those children suffer in their self-identification. She also contends that greater communication between teachers and children may solve many of these issues. Teachers working as "cultural interpreters"[41] for children who find the school system "foreign" is a concept introduced by Delpit (1988, p. 256), and according to her argument,

[41] As educators enter the school arena as "cultural interpreters," they encourage students to discover their capabilities without passing judgement on the country, culture, or background they come from (Delpit, 1988).

teachers cannot begin to teach children until they have transcended their own "distorted perceptions" as well as societal preconceptions in order to see things through the eyes of the children (Delpit, 1988).

Schools, being one of the earliest points of contact for refugee children and their parents with the social institutions of the host country, play a critical part in this process of becoming acquainted with the new culture. The beliefs and values promoted and established in school settings may either enhance or restrict the chances for identity construction. Having to choose between their family's culture and that of the host country can cause problems for refugee children. Instead, they should be able to adapt naturally to their new environment, not have to choose.

Identification in Adolescence

In psychology, the term "identification" refers to the process through which one person adopts another's behaviour, attitudes, or objectives (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). Fragments of identification may be detected in children as young as six months of age when they attempt to mimic their families' movements and speech patterns (Trevarthen & Aitken, 2001), and usually the children's imaginative play reflects across the primary grades the roles of adults around them. Regardless of their theoretical orientation, many researchers see this copying as proof that the child is trying to identify with the people around them. They strive to explore themselves and identify with their families' values and attitudes over the following 10 to 15 years as they grow up and become teenagers. Over time, new connections will be made with other individuals through schooling and socialising. Thus, according to Erikson (1968), the aggregate of these early identifications—both positive and negative—is critical to the ultimate formation of a distinct identity.

Beside its former usage, identification also refers to a system of defence; a cognitive process that alleviates stress and safeguards self-esteem in the person. The concept that one's concerns might be alleviated or one's self-esteem boosted by associating with another has been around for a long time. According to this theory, someone who has been attacked may begin to behave like the attacker (i.e., take on their traits) due to their identification with the perpetrator. Another example is the internalisation of a deceased person's persona, values, or desires by individuals who have experienced loss, whether by death or another reason. This helps buffer the bereaved from the sadness that comes with grief. In that context, as conscious affiliation with family members' beliefs, attitudes, and preferences generally decreases as the child grows apart from them, it is important for adolescents, as they grow up, to identify with a group or a significant partner to avoid feeling alone or lonely[42].

Interaction of Identity with Sovereignty and Belonging

Sovereignty in relation to refugees has been thoroughly examined and analysed by many scholars, most notably Bauman (2002). He explored multiple dichotomies created by the conventional notion of sovereignty, such as legal versus illegal and inside versus outside (Bauman, 2002). According to Bauman (2002, p. 28), sovereignty is unimaginable without an "outside"; it is incomprehensible in any form other than a "localised entity." Therefore, according to him, the trinity of sovereignty, country, and territory generates the conditions for the existence of refugees and displaced people, as those people are only identified as refugees or displaced due to the boundaries of the state territory they belong to. Additionally, in modern nation-states, rights are claimed and exercised by those who belong

[42] One of the consequences of this detachment is a sense of uneasiness, perplexity, and worry resulting from a lack of positive respect from the family (Frank, Pirsch, & Wright, 1990).

to the nation-state only, and individuals who do not belong to a nation-state have no access to these rights (Bauman, 2002).

Refugees, according to Bauman (2002), typically lack a feeling of belonging when they first arrive in the host country. There is a sense that the refugees are physically a part of the place they have found themselves in, as tents and camps get erected and do exist, yet they are not in any way part of the place (Bauman, 2002). Refugees can suffer from either physical isolation or emotional isolation from the rest of the nation in which they are hosted. Physical separation automatically takes place when refugees are isolated in camps and shelter facilities in places far from local communities. On the other hand, emotional separation often happens when aspects of hate and discrimination start surfacing in the host community and feelings of distrust and resentment being to dominate local news narratives in the host country (Bauman, 2002).

Both personal and group identity development are influenced by the state, and this process occurs simultaneously at different levels and locations (Mountz et al., 2002). Refugees' sense of self-identity can and is largely shaped by both their home state and the host state (Mountz, Wright, Miyares & Bailey, 2002). For example, the national states of refugees can play a huge role in the dilemma of border policies and restrictions when it comes to receiving refugees. Ultimately, refugees’ identity is influenced in part by their lack of belonging, to both their home country or the country in which they sought asylum, and their position as an "other" when the host country views them as a threat to its unique social and cultural composition.

Interaction of Identity with Liminality

As the study emphasises on the transitional phase in which refugee children find themselves after displacement, liminality emerge in the literature as a theoretical paradigm. Sociologists and anthropologists have long been interested in the lives of refugees fleeing persecution, displacement, migration, and resettlement, and the premise of liminality has been a central component of these disciplines' lenses (Harrell-Bond & Voutira, 1992; Malkki, 1995; Sayigh, 1998; Chatty, 2010; Chatty, 2015). In his landmark book 'Les Rites des Passages', Van Gennep established the notion of liminality as a threefold paradigm in which the liminal stage is an unclear and unstable time of transition between an uninformed and informed condition (1909). Turner expanded the notion further by applying it to members of society who are without status, lacking assets, in between legal positions, and alienated. Turner referred to them as "liminars" or "border people" who spent a significant amount of time attempting to extend their sphere of liminality despite being viewed as threatening aliens to be feared by host societies (Turner, 1969). Following this thought, Douglas views this structured process of induction as a progression from a lower to a higher position, with liminal or transitional-beings as individuals who exist in a condition of "imperfection" between the uninformed and informed (Douglas, 1969, p. 33).

Refugees are often portrayed as threatening figures in a discourse in which refugees, extremists, and Muslims are all interchangeable categories of the "uninformed" (Leung, 2011). Thus, liminality as a term may be potentially misconstrued inside a formal framework as a linear sequence of evolution or progression from "savagery" to "civilisation." In a similar spirit, the idea of liminality may be misused politically when refugees are classified as liminars, posing a danger to societal structure. This becomes especially troublesome if the

status of liminality becomes protracted or extended into permanency (Malkki, 1995). The purpose of this research is not to depict liminars as "inferior," but rather to view liminars as transitory beings at a junction in their lives. Refugees and displaced children "on the move" can be thought of as liminars, or transitional-beings (Turner, 1964), moving from their birthplace to an unspecified, unfamiliar environment in which they lack defined designation. Thus, they might become detached and omitted from the socially constructed and culturally defined order as they do pertain to a physical but not yet social reality.

Interaction of Identity with Language

Language and how well people communicate and are understood by others are unquestionably important to our sense of self and ability to learn. Language proficiency is often seen as the primary determinant of student outcomes (Robertson, Line, Jones, & Thomas, 2000; Ryan & Hellmundt, 2003; Ramburuth & Tani, 2009). Montgomery (2010) indicates that it is also seen as critical in the development of social competence. Huhtala and Lehti-Eklund (2010) define language acquisition as a "process of identity building" at the school level (p. 273). Similarly, Montgomery's studies demonstrate how students value foreign language acquisition and how this affects their image of themselves as members of "the host community" (Montgomery, Magimairaj & Finney, 2010, p. 101).

For example, according to Montgomery et al (2010), "language is a channel through which others perceive us, and hence it is intrinsically related to how we are regarded" (p. 36). Feelings of social harmony with others are built on a shared set of “ethics, beliefs, lifestyles, experiences, and ambitions” (Duszak, 2002, p. 1). These are communicated in a variety of ways, the most important of which is via language (Duszak, 2002; Montgomery et al, 2010). As a result, language may also be a substantial barrier to group membership, particularly if

the group speaks a foreign language (Duszak, 2002). It might be challenging for second-language speakers who lack proficiency to communicate their sense of self effectively (Montgomery et al, 2010). According to Tian and Lowe's (2009) study, students' sense of self within academic settings was negatively impacted by a lack of language competency and comprehension in the classroom; this was perceived as a "personal constraint" that resulted in a "sense of exclusion" (Tian and Lowe's, 2009, p. 665). Duszak (2002) argues that although language may play a role in defining membership in a social group, it may not be "a key value underpinning people's sense of identity and belonging" (p. 6). However, this research stands by many scholars (Ryan & Hellmundt, 2003; Huhtala & Lehti-Eklund, 2010; Montgomery et al., 2010) who argue against this thought; language is actually an essential part of the process of constructing and reconstructing one's identity and expressing one's sense of belonging.

From a different perspective, the presence of previous information and the primed creation of cognitive structures for learning are two of the favourable cognitive benefits of using an acquainted medium of instruction in learning new content (Benson, 2000; Collier and Thomas, 2004). In comparison, using a medium that the student does not understand substantially hinders learning (Harris, 2011; Trudell and Piper, 2014). To take advantage of the educational possibilities provided by the host country, refugee children need to acquire the dominant language there. The time and circumstances under which those children start learning the new language may have a significant impact on their acquisition and continuous use of their native languages, as well as the growth of their second language. The impact is higher the younger they are when they start learning the host country's language.

Language, as an explicit marker of cultural identity (Archer, Francis & Mau, 2010), might marginalise refugee children, or increase their chances of becoming subject to harassment. When children start schooling and they realise the differences between their home country's culture and the host country's, they develop aversions to anything that distinguishes them from the host country's culture. In that context, even when they are at home, when they switch on the television, they can see how they are dissimilar in relation to language, appearance, and conduct, and they develop an aversion to these distinctions. They may learn from the way others interact with them at school and outside of school that the only language that matters is the language of the host nation, and therefore begin to see their home language and culture as a hindrance to inclusion in their new environment.

Refugee children's losing their mother tongue means losing the method through which their families socialise with them, as well as their daily cultural exchanges and the closeness that arises from common beliefs and concepts, all of which are detrimental to their psychological and mental development. As native languages are an integral part of a stable sense of self and self-respect, it is particularly devastating to see refugee children shed their attachment to their native language, as well as any ties to their place of origin, as a result of this process. According to Wrong Fillmore (1991), the effects of losing a native language "impact [the children’s] social-emotional-cognitive-educational development, as well as the integrity of their families and the community in which they reside" (p. 342). This is a significantly high price that refugee children and their families bear in exchange for their participation in the host country's community.

The majority of refugee families are unaware of the ramifications of not demanding that their children communicate with them in their native language. Teachers are often unaware of the damage they might do when they advise families to urge their children to speak the host country's language at home and to attempt to use it themselves while conversing with their children. Although it is valid that members of the refugee family may benefit one another by jointly learning the host community language, this language should not be used in place of the mother tongue at home. Shunning the native language in favour of the host community can have many adverse implications. For the sake of a desperate urge to support children in a challenging schooling system, both families and teachers are negatively impacting rather than supporting those children, ignoring their basic rights and best interests in holding on to their active language. Furthermore, some families, striving to demonstrate that they are assimilating to their new place, readily abandon their native language. This urge to conform might be overwhelming, prompting them to disregard the child's perspective, fundamental rights, and self-interests.

Only a handful of refugee host countries, such as Australia and New Zealand, recognise the importance of language-in education policy, which is based on the principle of the right of children to be educated in their mother tongue whilst learning the host country's dominant language (Lin & Martin, 2005). When it comes to implementing language-in-education policies, particularly those that address the needs of refugee children, inadequate human and financial resources, or simply the assumption of a lack of such resources, are often a hindrance. When asked why it would be difficult for authorities to adopt mother-tongue initiatives, it is often said that a perceived lack of educational materials is to blame (Lin & Martin, 2005).

Refugee children who are able to attend school in a host nation typically struggle to return to their own country's educational system. For example, due to Afghanistan's lack of recognition of the UNHCR refugee camp education system, Afghan refugees returning from Pakistan were required to retake at least one grade due to that issue (Baker, Irwin, Freeman, Nance & Coleman, 2018). Bosnian refugees who attended schools in Germany before being sent back to their homeland found it difficult socially and academically to reintegrate (Hasanović et al., 2005). It may be difficult for children to acclimatise to a new academic language unless they have been in a bilingual school that employs both the host country's and home country's languages.

Interaction of Identity with Integration

Integration has long been researched as a key cog in the identity (re)construction of migrants. This study suggests it is more so for refugees, and especially the younger in age they are. Integration may be interpreted and conceptualised in a variety of ways. As a result, Castelli, De Amicis and Sherman contend that “there is no universally agreed concept, theory, or model of immigrant and refugee integration. The issue remains divisive and contentious,” (2002, p. 12). At the very least, integration entails the recognition of the rights, settlement, and adjustment of refugees (Strang & Ager, 2010). A growing body of literature on integration has been impacted by Strang and Ager's (2010) work, which establishes a paradigm for formalising integration processes. According to them, the framework is organised around ten domains classified as "means and markers" (employment, housing, education, and health), "social connections," "facilitators" (language and cultural knowledge, safety and stability), and "foundation" (rights and citizenship). Thus, Strang and Ager (2008) advocate a holistic approach to integration by emphasising migrants' and refugees' access to

services and accomplishments. However, after outlining the many domains of the integration processes, Strang and Ager say nothing about the characteristics of receiving communities, the resulting status and circumstances of refugees, or ethnic or gender difficulties.

The European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) defines refugee integration as a multifaceted and bidirectional process that includes both the refugees and a sentiment of acceptance by the local population, as well as other communities (ECRE, 2002). Consequently, upon contact between refugees and members of the receiving community, the question of equal citizenship rights and cultural exchanges constitute a critical component of integration. Likewise, Stubbs contends that integration pertains to the effort to enable the sharing of economic and social resources, the equalisation of political and territorial fundamental rights, and the development of cultural exchanges and new cultural forms between refugees and all other members of a society (1996).

Since the case study is using Germany as a setting, a more German internal understanding of integration is necessary. In this respect, the German scholar Hartmut Esser (2001, p. 1) defines integration as the cohesiveness of individual components inside a whole, in which the behaviour and condition of each component has an effect on the overall system and its members[43]. Esser, then, argues for a critical difference between system integration and social integration. System integration is a term that refers to the sort of interaction that exists between the different components of social systems. On the other hand, social integration focuses on people and the method in which they are incorporated into an existing system. While systems and social integration are intrinsically intertwined, one does not have to lead to the other. Further, Esser (2001, p. 9) distinguishes four different stages of social

[43] Thus, integration is in opposition to segmentation—a state of disconnection between distinct components of an environment, and then, dependency between actors may be thought of as the bedrock of integration (Esser, 2001).

integration, all of which are interconnected: culturation (or cultural integration), positioning, interaction, and identification.

Culturation

Culturation is the process through which humans acquire necessary information and abilities in order to behave and interact in an acceptable, informed, and effective way. It is particularly pertinent to linguistic abilities, as well as cultural norms and standards of behaviour. These abilities may be broadly classified as human assets since they involve the individual's devotion of time and effort. Effective culturation is highly dependent on resources and hence on the early establishment of favourable conditions. For instance, social interactions between migrants and the host community may facilitate a more informal learning experience. This is especially critical when it comes to gaining linguistic competence. It needs to be noted that language acquisition is critical at this stage, as it serves as the foundation for a sustainable position within all other levels of integration (Esser, 2001).

Positioning

As Esser (2001) contends, positioning is the most critical level of integration. It may be thought of as the acquisition of a certain social position by a person. Thus, the person is incorporated into an established social structure and its set roles. Individuals may be positioned by conferring particular rights on them, including the right to nationality. Moreover, positioning might be tied to pursuing a career or finishing schooling. Positioning is strongly tied to culturation: career prospects improve as language abilities improve, while other cultural competencies are learned and developed concurrently via one's profession or education.

Recognition is also a critical component of positioning as it will lead to limiting or preventing biases. Otherwise, prejudice[44] towards migrants may become a serious barrier (Kraler & Reichel, 2011). Discrimination may start taking multiple shapes, including hostile conduct, mistreatment, insults, and even violent assaults. Typically, such prejudices are not the product of one's own experiences, but rather those adopted from others. They are often associated with emotions of danger and competitiveness, particularly in the job and housing markets, or with a concern that one's culture will increasingly be influenced by foreign elements. In any case, they pose a significant hurdle to integration (Heckmann, 2015).

Interaction

Interaction is the third stage of social integration and is defined as a social activity in which people exert influence on one another's attitudes and practices. As such, it focuses on the creation of socialising in a natural setting. As with culturation, chances for engagement are critical, as is both parties' readiness to embrace good neighbour or friendship proposals. However, interaction is hindered by discrimination and segregation, such as the placement of migrants in certain areas of a city (Esser, 2001). Moreover, although interaction is dependent on competencies gained via culturation, cultural and linguistic abilities can only be learned and enhanced by contact with other social system members (Kraler & Reichel, 2011). Nevertheless, according to Esser, early interaction with members of the host community is critical for effective integration (Esser, 2001).

[44] Prejudices are often defined as unfavourable sentiments against an individual or a group of individuals. Numerous characteristics are ascribed to this specific group based on preconceived impressions, which are often based on simplistic and inaccurate pictures.

Identification

Lastly, Esser defines identification as the emotional bond between individuals and the social system as a whole. This may be shown by collective group spirit or national pride as an example (Esser, 2001). Thus, identification pertains to integration as the practice of becoming a part of national, local, or ethnic collective organisations. This is a process that is heavily reliant on favourable and intriguing encounters in the host culture. These encounters are also contingent upon one's language and cultural competencies, demonstrating the interconnectedness of individual degrees of social integration once again. In general, it is critical to remember that integration demands the host community to be open at all times (Heckmann, 2015). As a result, it is intrinsically related to some degree of tolerance. Within this context, Esser makes an intriguing argument about how social distance toward others is a product of one's own marginality (Esser, 2001).

In a nutshell, the success or failure of integration processes is contingent upon a range of contextual and individual preconditions; priority should be given to the environment that migrants confront upon arrival in the host nation. Thus, favourable circumstances in employment and living conditions, as well as the educational system, are critical for this process. Additionally, integration is reliant on the degree of cultural similarity or deviation between the host and the home countries. Generally, the bigger the discrepancy in language, religion, and eating or dressing customs, the more difficult the integration process will be (Esser, 2001). When it comes to positive individual conditions, the migrant's age at the time of arrival and the length of their stay in the host community are important, however, it is particularly the migrant's human assets, including their education, that may have a favourable impact on the integration process (Esser, 2001).

Conclusion

There is a wealth of literature on the identity building of children and adolescents within educational systems. This chapter attempted to add to the answer of the first research question: How does the literature handle the refugee youth identity construction? by reviewing major theories and studies that the preceding systematic review could not cover, yet they were essential for understanding the underpinnings of the empirical data. This chapter discussed different contemporary and traditional academic arguments regarding identity in general, and then focused on identity construction in children and adolescents. The review highlighted key arguments related to refugee children and adolescents' identity construction or reconstruction. The final section concluded the review with a quick look into research about integration and its role in the education policies that serve to assimilate refugee students. The sum of concepts and theories presented in this chapter as well as the previous one will be used as a reference tool for the methodology and data collection procedures as well as a comparative background for the analysis in the upcoming chapters.

Chapter 4: Background

Introduction

This section of the thesis will discuss important historical and contextual backgrounds for the study and its objective. The chapter will start by building a profile of refugees' plight and circumstances in their journeys to host countries and their situations after arrival. Since the case study adopted for this thesis is the Syrian refugees in Germany, the chapter will then examine the situation of refugees in Germany with a focus on the peculiarities of asylum terms used there. After that, the refugee education policy in Germany is examined with a close eye on how it includes refugee students and whether it makes schooling accessible.

Synopsis of the Arab Spring and the Civil War in Syria

In early 2011, a wave of pro-reform rallies surged throughout the Arab world, coinciding with the emergence of the so-called "Arab Spring." First, protests and calls for government reform began in Tunisia. Then, they spread to "virtually every Arab country," with major insurgencies in Syria, Libya, and Yemen, civil uprisings in Egypt and Bahrain, large street protests in Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, and Oman, and minor protests in Saudi Arabia (Hashemi & Postel, 2013, p. 6). However, it was apparent from the start that Syria was unique, and nonviolent demonstrations swiftly turned into a proxy war involving multiple international countries, which has already lasted over eleven years and resulted in the world's biggest refugee population. UNHCR High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres (2005–2015, and now the United Nations Secretary-General) said that this degree of refugee outflow had not been witnessed since the mid-1990s Rwandan Genocide (UNHCR, 2013). Nearly five million Syrians have left their homes as the conflict continues, with

neighbouring countries such as Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq hosting the majority of refugees (UNHCR, 2019).

The Plight of Refugees

Colson (2003) used the term "century of the fugitive" to refer to the twentieth century (p. 1). This term originated owing to the growing number of displaced people in developing countries as a result of protracted crises (Hein, 1993). According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)'s study published under the title "The State of the World's Children" (2001), there are more than twenty active conflicts worldwide on any given day, most of which take place in impoverished and developing nations (Carballo, Smajkic, Zeric, Dzidowska, Gebre-Medhin & Van Halem, 2004). While conflicts are not new, it was not until the latter half of the twentieth century that a greater concern became evident for people in combat zones (Carballo et al., 2004).

The UNHCR stated that the increased incidence of wars has resulted in a rise in forced migration (Carballo et al., 2004; UNHCR, 2000). These wars have culminated in religious and ethnic persecution, leading to the displacement of large populations from their homelands (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2001; Doyle & Peterson, 2005). Scores of people are expelled from their homes with little or no explanation. Individuals who have been displaced face the imminent threat of being imprisoned or murdered when they travel across borders into neighbouring states in search of safety, and then they end up becoming refugees (Cortes, 2004; Hein, 1993; Schmid, 2001; Doyle & Peterson, 2005).

Once outside their nation, the majority of refugees are unable or unwilling to return due to fear of persecution (Kunz, 1973; Hein, 1993). According to the UNHCR, there were

82.4 million forcibly displaced individuals worldwide as of the end of December 2020, including 26.4 million refugees[45]. Children under the age of 18 make up 42% of all forcibly displaced individuals. They are highly vulnerable, especially during protracted crises. According to updated UNHCR statistics, over one million children were born as refugees over the years between 2018 and 2020, and plenty of them will likely stay as refugees for years to come (UNHCR, 2020).

Refugees in Germany

Germany provisionally halted the contentious Dublin Regulation for Syrian refugees in the late summer of 2015 (Zeit Online, 2015). At its heart, the regulation strives to ensure that an application for asylum is processed by only one member state of the European Union-essentially the state into which the asylum seeker originally entered the European Union (Bräuninger, Peters & Schneider 2015). Germany defended its conduct as an act of compassion, assisting states that have been disproportionately impacted by the refugee flow owing to their physical proximity to the European Union's outer borders (Zeit online, 2016). Shortly thereafter, in early September 2015, Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel implemented another emergency measure that opened Germany's borders to refugees stranded in Hungary and allowed them to cross without extra bureaucratic hurdles (Westfälische Nachrichten 2015; Weimer 2016). Consequently, over half a million new refugee claims were lodged in Germany in 2015, almost double the number of applications filed in 2014 (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge 2016). By the end of 2021, 1.14 million refugees, the highest ever recorded figure of refugees in the Federal Republic of Germany's history, have been granted

[45] Numerous nations, including Turkey, Pakistan, Lebanon, and Germany, temporarily shelter arriving refugees, while the United States, Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom permanently resettle refugees from countries plagued with wars and conflicts (UNHCR, 2020).

asylum in Germany, with young male Syrians, Iraqis, and Afghans being the biggest applicant categories (Zeit Online, 2021).

Contextualising the Usage of Asylum Terms in Germany

When discussing refugees in Germany, it is necessary to first examine the existing legal and administrative norms and define terms such as asylum seeker, refugee, and asylee as used in Germany. To shed light on that, interviews for the research included a question asking participants if they knew what their status was. Unfortunately, the question was rather difficult to respond to for some of the participants. However, it was not meant to elicit correct or incorrect responses from participants. Rather, it was hoped that the query would reveal how much that the participants already knew about the distinction. Interestingly, while the government evaluates refugee applications on a case-by-case basis, this information is not well communicated to refugees.

Nonetheless, the difference between the two concepts in Germany is rather straightforward: Each individual seeking protection in Germany is considered an asylum seeker and must submit an asylum application to the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, BAMF). The BAMF eventually decides whether this individual will be granted an asylee or a refugee status (Edenhofner, 2014). The right to asylum will only be applicable if a person is being persecuted politically, and only persecution perpetrated by the government is considered. Other emergencies, such as civil war or starvation, do not qualify as grounds for becoming an asylee (BAMF, 2014). A refugee, on the other hand, is taken as a person who is persecuted[46] on the basis of their ethnic origin, faith, nationality, political opinions, or membership in a certain social circle (Schmickler, 2015). In all asylum processes in Germany, the BAMF is the initial point of

[46] Persecution may occur from the government or other parties and groups, both state- and non-state-based (BAMF, 2014).

contact for newly arrived asylum applicants. As such, it might be regarded as a pillar of Germany's immigration strategy (Wendekamm 2014). In ideal situations, recognised refugees and asylees are issued a three-year residency permit as well as a work permit. After three years, their protected status is reviewed. If the previous permit is not revoked, a permanent residency permit can be obtained (Schmickler, 2015).

While conducting the research for this thesis, no participants could clearly distinguish between the different terms used by BAMF. This ambiguity over legal terminology is likely to mirror a larger trend, suggesting that the majority of people, whether refugees or locals, use the terms "asylum seeker," "refugee," and "asylee" interchangeably in their daily lives, unaware of the distinctions among them. For instance, upon conducting a primary qualitative research in Berlin and Hamburg, Esser (2001) discovered widespread misunderstanding among non-refugees about the distinction between the concepts of asylum seeker and refugee among Germans. This may allude to the fact that asylum seekers in Germany are often seen as a homogeneous group of individuals; a generalisation that may reinforce stereotypical thinking and biases throughout the community[47].

German Immigration Policy toward Refugees

Since integration inherently highlights the issue of context (Eriksen, 2015, p. 53), it might be necessary to examine not just Germany's immigration policies but also the German notion of collective and national identity. All across the past years, Germany's immigration policy has been typified by a reluctance to identify itself as an immigration country and a deficiency in specific integration principles (Koehler & Schneider, 2019). Since the year 2000, a steady shift toward changing the German society into an immigrant society has occurred, although the development of a minority policy was still lacking, which resulted in

[47] This generalisation was identified by Esser as a significant barrier to integration (Esser, 2001).

urging newcomers to conform to German traditions and values (Sauer, 2009). Consequently, integration was generally seen as an endeavour on the part of the migrant community, which was exhorted to become as German as possible (Kaya, 2009).

Germany's immigration laws, in general, may be regarded as a stance of double standards: historically, this paradox expressed itself in the notion of promoting immigration of people of German ancestry[48] while continuing to ignore Germany's history as an immigrant nation[49]. Today, the German immigration policy debate continues to focus mostly on the conflicting concepts of restricting and regulating immigration, but with different reasoning: In the modern era, immigration is often studied in terms of labour market policy and economic theory. Hence, economic benefits are often highlighted, reducing immigration, and thus integration, to a cost-benefit analysis. While the ability to seek refuge is an individually enforceable right enshrined in article 16a of the German Basic Law, integration is often seen as a transitory and incomplete process (Wendekamm, 2014, p. 178/179). This is because Germany's Asylum and Refugee Acts primarily give refuge until an individual's situation in their native land improves (Heckmann, 2015). As a result, refugees confront the dilemma of integrating themselves while nevertheless being prepared to return home (Sauer, 2009).

Therefore, it is understandable that Germany's integration strategy was condemned by the Independent Committee "Immigration" (Unabhängige Kommission "Zuwanderung") in 2001 as a utilitarian policy of adaptation that hinders integration attempts (Unabhängige Kommission "Zuwanderung", 2001, p. 199). Fortunately, several solid initiatives in the right way have been achieved in recent years. Among these are the Nationality Act, the

[48] including Spätaussiedler, who are emigrants returning to Germany decades after World War II.

[49] According to certain researchers, such as Bukow (2011), German society accepts otherness only if it is of German origin and easily assimilated (Bukow, 2011).

Immigration Law, and the National Plan of Action for Integration, all of which are briefly summarised hereafter (Heckmann, 2015, p. 247–249).

As the implementation of the Nationality Act came around in January 2000, Germany's foreign policy dramatically shifted: formerly, German nationality could be acquired only via German ancestry, under the concept of jus sanguinis. Since 2000, the jus solis principle has been implemented, which means that children born in Germany to parents who have been legal residents of the country for at least eight years have the right to demand German nationality[50]. Similarly, by establishing the Immigrant Law in 2005, Germany's concept of nationhood underwent another significant shift, explicitly recognising the country as an immigration country. Nonetheless, the long-established double standard of restricting immigration to some groups while allowing it to others, particularly highly skilled employees, was maintained (Sauer, 2009; Benhabib, 2004; Caballero et al., 2017). Ultimately, the 2011 National Plan of Action for Integration established a consensus on more tangible and quantifiable steps to improve integration and portrayed integration as a continuous, shared duty that must be addressed in a consistent and systemic manner (Die Bundesregierung, 2011).

In 2016, the German government passed the Integration Law, which is primarily concerned with penalising people who refuse to assimilate into society. Such penalties could appear in social benefit cuts and affect their rights to "Wohnsitzauflage"—a regulation that allocates refugees to their new housing arrangements in Germany. Additionally, the bill attempts to make it simpler for refugees to find work.

[50] Yet, when children reach the age of 23, they must give up either their German or their parents' nationality.

It is worth mentioning that although some ruling parties were excited about this law, some human rights groups have strongly condemned the new Integration Law, stating that a law that intends to impose fines would only reinforce discrimination against refugees who are unable to integrate into German society. Moreover, this integration law focuses primarily on the labour market and ignores other critical concerns, such as educational challenges. Thus, it increases the risk of forming a limited concept of integration, which, yet again, revolves around the question of how to maximise the benefits of immigration (Prantl, 2021). Furthermore, and perhaps most significantly, this integration law comes up short in answering a critical question: until when is integration deemed effective, and who will determine its accomplishments? (Mair, Wolf & Seelos, 2016).

In all of its rules and legislation, Germany's integration strategy is based on supply and demand (Bundesministerium des Inneren, 2014). Hence, the Federal Ministry of the Interior notes: "Refugees are advised to study the German language and get acquainted with Germany's legal system, history, culture, and values." Furthermore, the host community is obligated to facilitate immigrants' accessibility to all significant sectors of society, economics, and politics by identifying and removing existing barriers (Bundesministerium des Inneren, 2014). Thus, Germany's notion of integration aligns with the notion of equal efforts and mutual engagement highlighted by Esser and other researchers in their interpretations.

Lastly, it should be noted that Germany's sense of national unity has been marked by ethnic nationalism since the late nineteenth century. Despite the shift to a jus solis premise, Germany's immigration policy is nevertheless shaped by the concept of a homogeneous nation. This situation mostly creates an unfavourable environment for integration to flourish and serves as a key contributor to racism and xenophobia (Hershinger, Bozay, Von

Drachenfels, Decker & Joppke, 2020). Typically, collective identities that are founded on a sense of national pride serve as an exceptionally powerful coping strategy against any alien aspects and result in the marginalisation of other cultural or ethnic minorities (Bach, 2004). As a result, it is not surprising to researchers like Hershinger et al (2020, p. 303) contending that whenever "German identity" enhances its image, it strengthens the pre-existing consciousness of ethnic identification. Thus, effective refugee integration in Germany is highly reliant on a fluid definition of citizenship in which membership in the nation is not conditional on ethnic affiliation (Heckmann, 2015). In other words, Germany needs to develop a notion of 'Germanness' (Deutschsein) that is republican in nature and facilitates engagement in the community for all individuals, regardless of their origins (Koehler & Schneider, 2019, p.88). Although some institutional hurdles to integration have been removed during the past decade, the most difficult job persists: addressing the emotional component of integration and laying the groundwork for what Esser referred to as identification (Caballero et al., 2017, p.57). Otherwise, Germany will continue to be a nation of immigrants[51], not an immigration country[52].

Refugee Education as a Policy

There is a sizeable and expanding corpus of literature on education for refugee students, which can be considered a branch field of education. Numerous studies examine refugee education policy and practice, with a particular emphasis on the difficulties inherent in teaching refugees alongside their classmates in the host community.

Following the onset of the Second World War, the international community recognised a shared responsibility for the education of refugee children under Article 22 of

[51] a place for immigrants to live and work without being able to truly become German even after naturalisation.

[52] where many ethnic and cultural roots create the collective concept of German identity, such as the USA model.

the 1951 Convention. Accordingly, a succession of international accords has been reached regarding refugees' rights to education and the nation's obligations in ensuring their realisation. Prior to this, the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights laid the groundwork for recognising education as a basic human right for refugees. The 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) both contain provisions for refugee schooling. Likewise, there are many other international agreements[53] regarding the most effective means of ensuring the fulfilment of these rights. However, while the ICESCR and CRC are legally binding, they are merely declarations of intent, open to interpretation at the national and local levels (McGrath, Ramsarup, Zeelen, Wedekind, Allais & Lotz-Sisitka, 2019).

Furthermore, the UNHCR has a monitoring responsibility and pays close attention to how refugees are integrated into the host society's education systems. A recent analysis of progress toward these goals discovered that various national normative frameworks existed and that the right to education, as defined in SDG4, was far from fully implemented (Santini, 2017). Similarly, the UNHCR's 2018 report on progress towards the Global Compact for Refugees' education targets suggests that considerable work has to be done (UNHCR, 2019a). Throughout this period, the emphasis has shifted away from fairly exclusive practises of providing separate, provisional education for refugees and towards a growing recognition and acceptance that refugees face prolonged periods of exile, with a large percentage of them never returning to their home country[54]. As a result, UNHCR and UNESCO policies have

[53] The Incheon Declaration (2015) and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda underlined a universal commitment to the right to education for all, with UNESCO overseeing the establishment of normative frameworks to assist individual countries in fulfilling these responsibilities.

[54] This emphasis occurs even though more than 80% of the world's refugees are housed in neighbouring nations (UNHCR, 2019b).

evolved to favour policies and practices that integrate refugees into host-country educational systems.

Most often, the approach to refugees in host nations is contingent upon broader national immigration policies and the degree to which they result in discriminatory behaviour. This reality affects educational strategies and how refugees are integrated into national education systems (Watters, 2007; O'Turner & Figueroa, 2019). An additional layer to this could be the extent to which nation-states work within the global standards agenda for education, as seen by their performance on international assessments such as PISA. There is a higher inflexibility in these circumstances to accept non-standard new members; refugees, who are classified as anomalies on economic metrics of school performance.

Developed countries with education systems shaped by these economic models are more likely to place an emphasis on monitoring and transparency in their educational methods. Although human rights are increasingly relevant in models of education in developing countries (Lingard, 2020), other considerations may hinder the complete participation of refugees in such situations. Gordon (2016), among others, argues that in the developing nations, places that host refugees are themselves marked by poverty, a lack of resources and infrastructure for social services, and consequent challenges in entering the labour markets.

Refugee Education as a Right

Education is one of the most significant human rights, and this right should transcend the borders of any given country or organisation (Dryden-Peterson, 2016). Besides food, shelter, and health, education for refugees is acknowledged as the "fourth

pillar" of emergency assistance in times of war (Machel, 2001). Yet, according to Essomba (2017), the refugee right to education is primarily based on their residence status, or whether they belong to a certain country. Additionally, the mobility of refugees and asylum seekers would also be a barrier to obtaining access to education. Institutional hurdles, on the other hand, sometimes make it difficult to put this right into action. Thus, international policies and national governance do not always conform and attune. As a result, the refugees' right to education is hugely impacted by their legal status and asylum application process. Furthermore, there is a distinction between being an asylum seeker and a refugee when accessing education in the host country, as asylum seekers lose their rights to anything once their applications are denied (Essomba, 2017). In addition, host countries typically prioritise the asylees' access to social assistance, health services, and housing, but not always to schooling (Essomba, 2017).

Education as Empowerment for Refugees

From the developmental approach towards refugee education, academic accomplishment is critical for people's long-term career prospects (Wilkinson, 2002). The significance of education for future employment is undeniable for refugee students (Zeus, 2011; Sinclair, 2007), but it is accompanied by several other advantages. According to O'Rourke (2014), education also offers refugee students the chance to reconstruct their lives, maximise their abilities, and enhance their general quality of life. In this sense, education may help to increase human potential and achieve a more valuable existence (Zeus, 2011).

Refugees have been reported to have high expectations for education as a method of overcoming the traumas of forced migration and socio-economic gaps (Mangan & Winter, 2017). Additionally, according to Dryden-Peterson (2017), education is critical for peace-

building and potential war zone reconstruction. Likewise, education may help with individual and societal development (Dryden-Peterson & Giles, 2010), as well as be a source of encouragement for refugee children and their families (Sinclair, 2007). In many cases, schooling for refugees can also serve as a potential contribution to their home country and family members or friends who are still living there (Dryden-Peterson & Giles, 2010).

Some scholars believe that education for refugees fosters empowerment from the inside and assists them toward transforming into agents of their narrative, which enables them to reverse the concept of refugees as victims in the media and among the public (Dryden-Peterson & Giles, 2010). According to Dryden-Peterson & Giles (2010), the capacity to make decisions is what constitutes power for refugees, and practising this power in their education is an enabling tool for their personal growth. Furthermore, allowing refugees to continue their education may aid in their rehabilitation, mental and emotional recovery, and self-determination (Moskal & North, 2017).

Access to education may also entail gaining resources that have considerable benefits in the host country's job market, with the possibility of allowing occupational identity construction and reclamation of social position (Morrice, 2013). As a result, education may serve as a means of integration and assimilation for those fleeing persecution (Zeus, 2011). Arguably, Zeus (2011) claims education could be beneficial in any of the long-term alternatives for refugees, such as voluntary return to the home country, local integration, or relocation to another host country. From that perspective, education may improve the function of integration in the host community as it equips the refugee students to make significant contributions to their home nations should they repatriate (O’Rourke, 2014). Scholars on this side of thought claim that refugee education helps avoid the emergence of a

lost generation of children and young adults, which has become a phenomenon in the aftermath of conflicts in the past decades (Avery & Said, 2017).

In short, for refugee children, integration typically involves the learning and use of the dominant language in the host country as well as practically attending school with local students (Koehler, 2009; Dryden-Peterson, 2015). From this perspective, schooling can help in the pre-acculturation phase since it is regarded as a space where the new culture, values, and norms are presented and absorbed. Araos Moya (2017) explains that schools turn into a venue of contact and communication between refugee students and members of the host community. Refugee education has an influence on many different layers as it may be regarded as a bridge to a brighter life for both the children themselves and society as a whole (Sinclair, 2007). Education also enhances the skills of refugee children in navigating change, choices, and ambitions wherever they land (Wrench, Soong, Paige & Garett, 2017; Avery & Said, 2017).

Obstacles to Education

The research on refugee education has limitations, including an inadequate awareness of refugee children's different origins, abilities, and experiences (Rutter, 2006; Leo, 2019). Similarly, although attempts have been made to improve refugee children's access to quality education, there is very little support for young people who seek vocational or professional education (Wedekind, Fakoush & Alla-Mensah, 2019). Refugees who want to further their education face a number of obstacles, despite the fact that international law and all parties involved recognise the value of education for this valuable minority. Generally, refugees are more likely to experience greater barriers to learning than other students; “when families

are displaced, it is common for language hurdles, discrimination, and economic difficulties to further limit access to children's and young people's schooling." (O'Rourke, 2014, p. 717).

To start, displacements and disruptions in every facet of everyday life are common for refugees when they move from one place to another, including socio-cultural displacement, physical displacement, and the disruption of education (Wrench et al., 2017; UNHCR and Global Monitoring, 2016). According to Morrice, the trajectory of refugees is one of "belonging and recognition, deficit and exclusion." (Morrice, 2013, p. 654). Under that umbrella, the language barrier is one of the most significant obstacles for refugee children accessing education opportunities in host countries. The process of learning a new language and becoming fluent in it is closely linked to one's success in school (Wrench et al., 2017). Thus, attending regular classes cannot empower refugee students if they have no mastery of the language in which these classes are taught.

Another challenge that many refugees encounter is the unfamiliar and often confusing application processes for schooling in the host country and the long waiting time to get access to available slots (UNHCR and Global Monitoring, 2016). Asylum application in itself is often complex and entails a state of uncertainty as to what the status would be and how it would change, and this in itself can reflect on the refugees' perception of their access to schooling as temporary and unpredictable (Dahya & Dryden-Peterson, 2017). Furthermore, the information gap between different education systems and curricula, the ones that exist in the host country and those of the home country, can create for many refugees a significant obstacle toward their success in schooling (Olagookun & White, 2017). In many cases, the previous formal education of a refugee child is not taken seriously and often devalued. Undervaluation and de-skilling have been reported in recent research. Therefore, the

disqualifying of previous schooling and requiring documented proof, which refugees most often do not carry when fleeing their countries, is also a barrier to education in host nations (Morrice, 2013).

When it comes to integration processes, refugees are more likely than other groups to experience acculturative stress[55] (Berry et al., 1987), which is a detrimental force that works against their learning path in the new place. Furthermore, the everyday experiences and challenges of refugees, which they experience in the host country, must also be recognised as a cause of extra stress for those refugees to overcome in their pursuit of education (Avery & Said, 2017). It is vital to understand refugees' emotional and psychological griefs, such as family bereavement and displacement (Wrench et al., 2017). Moreover, refugee students may develop feelings of alienation in the classroom setting once they feel they are the ones who are coming from a different background and they need to fit into a new culture (Olagookun & White, 2017). Furthermore, viewing the refugee as the "other" may have an impact on their sense of belonging (Olagookun & White, 2017) and contribute to discriminatory situations (Gerrard, 2016).The "other" construct provides a hurdle to integration since the creation of others is often infused with pre-conceived and prejudiced beliefs (Gerrard, 2016), and it increases the social barriers that refugees face on a daily basis, even in educational settings (Synnøve & Bendixsen, 2016). The trauma experiences that refugee children and youth often come into school with (Wrench et al., 2017) necessitate a well-trained school staff who is capable of interacting with individuals from distressing backgrounds (Sinclair, 2007).

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[55] Acculturation is a term used to describe the shift from one culture to another, and the stress that comes with it is known as acculturative stress (Joyce, Earnest, De Mori & Silvagni, 2009).

In short, schooling may be a great asset for refugee youth, but it also comes with a number of drawbacks. Studying within the host country's educational system may have its own unique set of challenges for refugees, who are often under a great deal of stress and hardship in a new environment (Mangan & Winter, 2017). Yet, refugees often encounter school policies and plans that are performed on them, rather than for them or with them (Zeus, 2011). Without taking the refugees' individual needs and circumstances into account, those policies and plans risk creating an "exclusionary inclusion" (Olagookun & White, 2017).

Refugee Education in Germany

Accessibility to Schooling

Germany is bound by international and European law to ensure that all children and young people have equal access to education, regardless of status, nationality, or background (ICRC, 2003). European Reception Directive Article 10 mandates member nations to offer access to schools "under identical circumstances as citizens" with a maximum processing time of three months after submitting an asylum claim. However, it also stipulates that education may well be supplied in accommodation facilities. Accordingly, the statutory rights and responsibilities of schooling are controlled by the constitutional provisions of the states as well as by state education legislation and administrative rules. Accessibility to education is often only seen as an issue once students have completed their compulsory education (Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung, 2016, p.195).

Of all German states, only three require refugee children to attend school from the moment they arrive in the country (see Figure 6). Most laws mandate it within three to six months of arrival, while in some states it is contingent on the timing of an asylum application

or the transfer of refugees from provisional reception centres to municipalities before it can be enforced. For example, in Bremen, education is mandated only after individuals are relocated to municipal facilities or apartments.

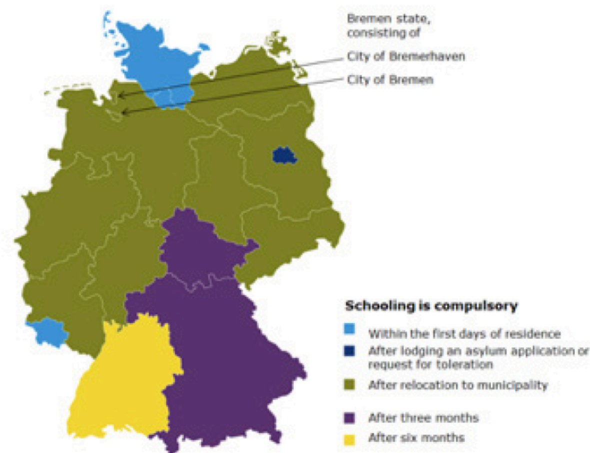

Figure 6: Compulsory Schooling For Asylum Seekers In Germany [Svr (2017A, P.127) Based On Massumi & Dewitz (2015) And Information From The Kmk; Translation And Indication Of Bremen By (Vogel & Karakaşoğlu, 2017)]

On top of that, as part of a series of legislative amendments made in 2017 intended to boost the number of rejected asylum applicants returning to their countries of origin, the state has provided this alternative (Deutscher Bundestag, 2017). Thus, education may not be compulsory for a long time if German states require individuals from safe countries of origin to remain in preliminary reception centres until they are deported or returned.

State-to-state differences in the legal status of young people who lack a school diploma or a school-leaving certificate vary greatly. For example, there are preparation courses in vocational schools for 18-year-olds in Bremen and other states. In addition, special access privileges may be provided to those under the age of 27 in other states (SVR, 2017a). As long as they are not compelled to leave Germany, refugee students may continue their schooling at their respective educational institutions.

The State of Refugee Integration into Schooling

As children and adolescents enrol in school systems, state-by-state integration approaches differ considerably. The first period is largely governed by administrative rules rather than by law. It is a generally held belief that newly arrived immigrants should first master the German language. As a result, children and adolescents are often required to take preliminary German lessons prior to being incorporated into mainstream classes. These courses are known by many names (for example, 'Vorkurs' in Bremen, 'international preparation class' in Hamburg, and 'welcome class' in Berlin). Syllabuses and curricula are often unspecified (SVR, 2017a, p.131) and may consist solely of German language instruction or, in certain situations, subject-specific material.

There are five types of integration models for refugee students in Germany that have been recognised (see Table 4):

1. Immersion model with no additional assisting classes

2. Integrative model, which includes both standard classes as well as additional German language classes.

3. Partially integrative model, with a mix of German and regular classes.

4. Parallel classes are provided briefly as a step toward integration into standard classes after three months to two years.

5. Parallel classes are provided until the school leaving certificate is obtained without integration into regular classes with local students in Germany.

Model *	Regular classes with children socialised in the receiving country	Separate tuition for German language learners
Immersion	Full-time	No specific courses, access to general support options
Integrative	Full-time	Additional German lessons
Partly integrative	In some subjects or some time slots	Preparatory class for most of the school day
Parallel (temporarily)	No joint classes for three months to two years	Full-time preparatory class, mainly German as a second language
Parallel until school leaving certificate	No joint classes	Full-time, German as a second language plus subjects

Table 4: Models Of Refugee Education In Germany (Vogel & Karakaşoğlu, 2017)

A refugee's access to education is not a problem that only arises at the beginning of their residence. The structure and complexity of asylum, which entails a number of residency status changes, has implications for the educational prospects of those refugees. A summary of the critical characteristics of how refugee reception methods work and their implications for attending and changing schools is presented in Figure 7 below. The process can be shortened if the asylum seeker is promptly assigned to a residence in the municipal section where the first preliminary reception centre is situated; it can also be prolonged since the total period of provisional reception centres gets extended quite often (Lewek & Naber, 2017). Under such circumstances, refugee students switch their learning groups, classes, or even schools multiple times. This change in schooling status actually happens more often than

desired, resulting in disruption and a general sense of inability to get included in classes.

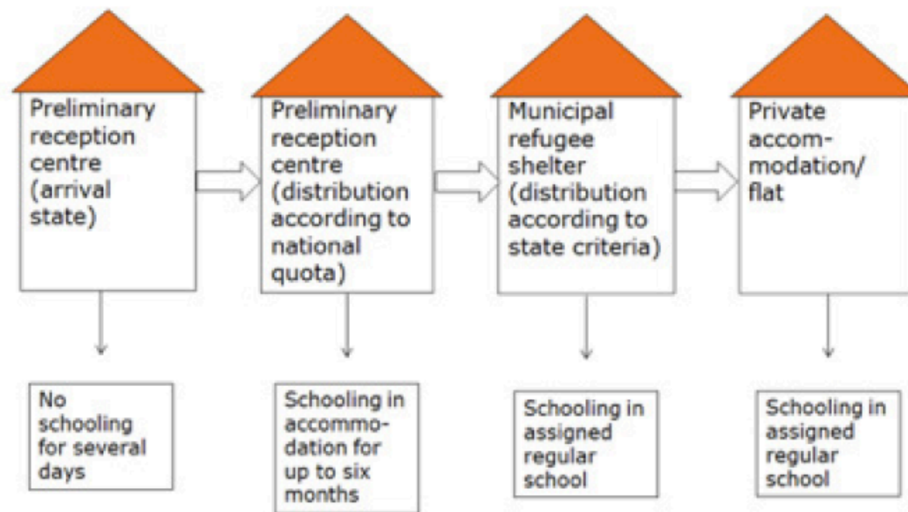

Figure 7: Refugee Accommodation In Germany And Its Consequences For Access To Education (Vogel & Karakaşoğlu, 2017, Based On Lewek & Naber, 2017)

As shown in the figure above, children and adolescents living in preliminary refugee reception centres do not get regular schooling equivalent to normal residents (Klaus & Millies, 2017). For many months, children may not get any school-based instruction whatsoever, or they may attend part-time schooling at the reception centre, which does not meet the standards of a general education curriculum. Classes are usually taught by part-time, non-certified volunteers, and they could be with or without educational degrees. These courses, which can last up to 20 hours per week, include learning the German language as well as general skills such as arts and crafts (Klaus & Millies, 2017). Since March 2017, several "special welcome and deportation centres" have been established for asylum seekers whose chances of remaining in Germany are slim, and these facilities normally have a large rotation of students, notably children and adolescents who have received formal schooling (Klaus & Millies, 2017, p.17).

Furthermore, refugee residents at municipal shelters can face additional obstacles to receiving an education, including a lack of teachers or bureaucratic delays in domains such as registration of residents and medical screenings (Bremische Bürgerschaft, 2017). Refugee students who keep waiting for school placements may need to wait for months. It took many of them over a year before they were put in ordinary schools (Bremische Bürgerschaft, 2017). While this is going on, most students who move into private accommodation or apartments do so within a few weeks of doing so.

Obstacles toward Access and Inclusion

According to BAMF (2018), some German states, such as Bremen, Baden-Württemberg, and Bavaria, allocate refugee students to various schools to assist with their assimilation. In contrast, other states, like Saxony-Anhalt and Rhineland-Palatinate, cluster children in certain schools where teacher skills, notably in German as a second language, are guaranteed and accessible. Nevertheless, before a school is allocated to a refugee student, there is no systematic competence evaluation, neither of the German language proficiency nor of the student's level of subject-related academic skills (Bremische Bürgerschaft, 2017). For example, in Bremen, refugee students are allocated to the nearest primary school with a spot available in a preliminary German course for German language study. Student placement in secondary schools is determined by their residence location, the number of seats available at school, and a quick verbal evaluation by the management staff of the students' former educational experiences (Bremische Bürgerschaft, 2017).

The integration of refugee children into schools differs from state to state according to the model presented in Table 4 (Vogel & Karakaşoğlu, 2017). However, most children generally must enrol in a transitional German class and attend an allocated standard class to study various topics. This partially integrative model is used for up to six months in

elementary schools and a year in secondary schools. The goal is to give refugee children and youth who have been schooled in Germany the chance to speak with each other and practise their German in natural settings. Considerations on allocating a refugee student to a given grade, class, or programme are arranged inside schools, with children often allocated to a grade lower than their age should imply (Vogel & Karakaşoğlu, 2017).

The introductory German language course requires 20 hours per week, whereas the regular study programme is given 30 hours, so up to 10 hours could be devoted in the regular classroom setting (Klaus & Millies, 2017). Refugee children should attend regular courses, but only schools can determine when and in what lessons refugee children should attend regular courses. Thus, the partially integrative model does not in itself correspond well with standard school calendars in certain states. Additionally, when it comes to finding alternatives, while some schools focus on the needs of individual students, others use a more generic approach (Klaus & Millies, 2017).

When refugee children, 15 or 16 years old, arrive in some states, they have their education structured around the aforementioned model. However, starting from 2017, the arriving children with zero German language competency are educated in parallel classes with the purpose of steering them towards attaining a general school leaving certificate (Schwaiger & Neumann, 2014). Thus, in other states, if refugees arrive and are at the appropriate age for upper secondary education, they are either registered in general or vocational schools (Schwaiger & Neumann, 2014). Refugee students are expected to study alongside local children who are much younger in order to receive a post-secondary entry diploma within three years. For the most part, refugees who come in their late teens or early twenties are enrolled in vocational institutions to help them learn German before they enter

school. This way, students receive parallel education in German and several courses with vocational emphasis for two years.

Extended periods of solely studying the German language are detrimental since refugee students miss out on other subject content taught to local students; this usually widens deficiencies in refugee children's education that may already exist due to their experiences of war and asylum. However, there is no simple fix: students' weak German skills prevent them from following courses if they go into ordinary classrooms where German is the sole language of instruction. Furthermore, some typical instructors are not qualified to support them.

In a nutshell, even if the right of refugee children to education is unquestionable under German law and established international norms, attending a regular school is not considered a right. In principle, the right to schooling is typically only provided once formal education becomes mandatory, sometimes requiring a waiting period of many months. There is no formal schooling at provisional reception facilities, and the waiting periods for regular school admission vary. Furthermore, there are several obstacles to education both before and after the compulsory schooling age. Access to primary and secondary schooling should be provided by state governments and fulfilled by local schools.

Conclusion

This chapter covered important background information that framed the conceptualisation and context of this thesis and research. It illustrated briefly the plight of refugees and since the case study focuses on refugees in Germany, the chapter highlighted the German immigration policy that is used as a framework to issue and manage policies towards refugees there. Finally, the chapter covered details about the schooling conditions of refugee students,

the policies used to integrate those students into the school contexts, and the obstacles refugee children face in accessing or navigating those initiatives.

Chapter 5: Methodology

Introduction

The chapter opens with an overview of the pilot study that preceded the dissertation research. The following are the results and comments from the pilot research that influenced the present study. Then, the chapter presents and justifies the study's research design and methodological choices. To begin, I will explain the reason behind relying mainly on qualitative research methods. Following that, I proceed to explore the epistemological underpinnings that influenced the decision to investigate refugee children's experiences through student narration of their own experiences. Then, I show how the narrative approach is used to guide the design of the research and analysis methods in the study. I also handle important aspects of this research, including temporality, research topics, research participants, means of data collection, and trustworthiness. The chapter concludes with final thoughts on the complexities of my own role as a researcher in this study, as well as conclusive reflections on ethical quandaries.

Pilot Study

Pilot Study: Site

The study was conducted in the context of education services provided to refugees in host nations. After resolving their legal status, refugee students in host nations may be eligible to attend educational programmes. Given the research's emphasis on Germany, the pilot study locations were chosen to be in three German districts: Berlin, Hamburg, and Munchen, all of which are densely populated by refugees. However, owing to travel

limitations imposed in the aftermath of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the research site was transferred to be conducted online to include refugee students anywhere in Germany.

Pilot Study: Participants

The pilot study's participants were refugees who enrolled in school programmes in Germany after their asylum petitions were processed during the last six years, between 2015 and 2021. The research included four individuals who were studying in Germany at the time. Selected participants included those who studied long enough, three years at least, to witness changes in their self-perception and self-identity during their educational experience.

Pilot Study: Data Collection

To begin the pilot study, I gathered pre-participation surveys (see Appendix 5), which targeted the demographical data and background information of the refugees and their schooling experience in general. This survey was comprised of a mixture of multiple-answer questions, closed questions, and open-ended ones. The survey questions addressed refugee students' legal status in Germany, their schooling there, and their opinions of their experience. At the end of the survey, the participants were asked whether they were willing to sit for an interview where they would be asked in depth about their schooling experience. Only two participants agreed to have the interview, which was conducted online via Skype. To begin, I coded the data from the questionnaires, sorted it, and then I carried out a simple analysis to establish assumptions about the participants' present legal and educational circumstances. After conducting the interview with the two participants, I was able to deeply dive into the participants' expectations and opinions on their schooling experience.

Pilot Study: Data Analysis

The qualitative data acquired in this pilot project was examined using phenomenology analysis. The data analysis included accounts of the experiences shared by the two Syrian

refugee participants as they reflected on their education experience in Germany. While analysing the qualitative data, I made a point of adopting the epoche perspective in order to "eradicate personal engagement with the subject material, that is, erase, or at the very least clarify, assumptions" (Patton, 2002, p. 485). In a sense, I maintained an impartial attitude throughout the data analysis process.

Pilot Study: Findings and Discussion

From this first study, I was able to infer that there were some variations in the participants' perceptions of their educational experience. The participants believed that their educational accomplishments had a greater influence on their legal status, employment prospects, and capacity to interact with people than they originally expected before seeking asylum in Germany. Furthermore, despite significant socioeconomic disadvantages, participants believed that German education was significantly superior to that of Syria in terms of quality. Additionally, they recognised how critical the academic pillar was to their integration and assimilation into the host country. These results can be backed by Miller-Perrin and Thompson's study (2010) which found that students who get schooling in a different place from that in their home country get exposed to an external environment that challenges their thinking about the world and about themselves while also providing a greater feeling of clarity about their life path. The findings of this pilot research influenced the present study by establishing that refugee students indeed enjoy personal and intellectual progress as a result of their enrolment in German education programmes.

Although this pilot study shed light on the influence of schooling on participants' lives and academic achievement, it lacked an in-depth examination of individual experiences and shifts in self-perception and identity. As a result, while preparing my dissertation research project, I chose narrative inquiry over phenomenological inquiry as a methodology. By

gathering individual experiences using narrative inquiry, I was able to elicit the rich narratives that could not be recorded using directly observed data, particularly given that I was unable to go to the participants' schools and conduct field research in person.

Additionally, this pilot research provided insight about the sensitivity of specific question themes in light of the participants' status as Syrian refugees, who arrived with a loaded package of pain and trauma. To address this issue, I utilised the knowledge gained in tweaking my dissertation research survey and interview questions to eliminate any triggers for sensitive or expected trauma-related topics. Some other critical reflections took place right after the pilot study, and the following changes in the interview design and procedure for the dissertation research were considered and implemented.

Among several other terms, I decided that the word ‘identity’ must be avoided in the interviews since it may inadvertently cause confusion for the participants. Moreover, I had to rephrase several questions since their wording might well unintentionally affect the participants' responses. For example, it could be more appropriate to ask, "How do you feel about the way your teachers treat you at school?" rather than "Do you believe you have been treated fairly at school?" Whereas the second question nearly always elicits a response implying that there is unfair treatment of refugee children at schools, the first sentence is more neutral (Ni Chroinin & Cosgrave, 2013, p.158). Finally, I thought it could be advantageous to conclude each interview with an open-ended question such as "Is there anything further you'd want to share about this matter?" (Johnson, 2012, p. 78). This may result in the participant's sharing of new ideas and a fresh viewpoint on the topic of self-perception in school settings.

Epistemological Background

This research is motivated by the critical nature of comprehending the experiences and viewpoints of refugee students. As such, the research evolved into a qualitative investigation of refugee students' perceptions of their schooling in the host country. The goal of this study is to gain a better understanding of how refugee children view their schooling and the ways in which it influence their sense of self. The interpretivist attitude that informs this study admits that, while there may be an objective reality or truth to the world, this reality is made sense of, given meaning to, and develops via the perceptions of those who are experiencing it, as opposed to those who are not (Blaikie, 2007; Egbert & Barandiaran, 2014). While a positivist perspective asserts that there is a single and objective reality that can be discovered, an interpretivist perspective recognises that individual perceptions can be used to explain how the truth of the world is perceived differently by different people (Clark, 2005).

Phenomenology

This study, which is based on the perspectives of individuals who have been impacted by a phenomenon, used a qualitative phenomenological technique to explore and understand it. The interpretivist position served as the foundation for this approach, which allowed me to go even beyond the surface of interpreting this phenomenon (Klassen, Creswell, Plano Clark, Smith & Meissner, 2012; Martella, Nelson, Morgan & Marchard-Martella, 2013). This overarching paradigm tries to characterise the lived experiences of a phenomenon, with the goal of developing comprehensive descriptions, analyses, and understandings of experiences in order to investigate how individuals interpret their reality and how they interact with others (Bazeley, 2013).

This approach informs the methodological choices that are made in order to comprehend Syrian refugee children's experiences in German education from their own views, analysing how they make meaning of their realities of learning and growing up in displacement. However, interpretivist and phenomenological perspectives have been sparingly attacked. For example, these types of studies have been criticised for exaggerating the importance of experience and stories, leading to their dismissal as excessively self-indulgent and lacking any sense of impartiality (Davies et al., 1999). As demonstrated by the literature review, I argue that the educational context of refugee youth and the ways in which they experience their schooling are critical for policymaking and research, particularly in areas that may be less frequently encountered by global populations, such as studies on displacement and conflict.

Additionally, I strive to reduce the study's interpretivist and phenomenological constraints by referencing the larger literature and connecting children's experiences to the recognised social, political, and economic elements that impact their experiences. Phenomenological investigations are frequently addressed qualitatively, engagingly, and in-depth in order to elicit participants' ideas and experiences (Somekh & Lewin, 2004; Knowles & Cole, 2008). My choice of using direct or indirect phenomenology also influences whether research methodologies are acceptable or not.

When a researcher employs direct phenomenology, they are seen as an outsider to the event, attempting to maintain a distance from participants (Somekh & Lewin, 2004). The researcher asks straightforward questions, and participants respond with plain, ordinary language. Indirect phenomenology, on the other hand, necessitates the researcher's completely immersing themselves in the worlds of the participants and becoming an insider to the investigation. Indirect phenomenology tries to go further into participants' experiences,

delving into the profound meanings they may contain in their "background" or subconscious mind (Somekh & Lewin, 2004). Indirect phenomenology in education is often characterised by the use of creative research methodologies, such as arts-based approaches, and is frequently motivated by phenomenological features derived from qualitative and ethnographic research (Svensson, 1997; Somekh & Lewin, 2004). This difficult endeavour demands the researcher interact with participants' experiences using spontaneous and open data approaches, eliciting recollections and comments from participants.

This research lies in between direct and indirect phenomenology. The study's objective is to generate discussions with refugee children about an experience they have had that is unfamiliar to others outside of it: learning as youngsters living in prolonged asylum contexts. Moreover, the research examines students' perceptions as well as their experiences in detail. However, due to the challenges pertaining to COVID-19 pandemic and travel restrictions, I was not able to conduct a field work in person, and thus this study was unable to use a totally indirect phenomenological method.

Qualitative vs. Quantitative Approach

Quantitative techniques are mostly structured approaches for quantifying social phenomena and evaluating hypotheses using fixed variables. They are suited to somewhat large samples (Silverman, 2020) and promote the discovery of generalisable data due to their standardised measurements (Patton, 2002). However, critics of quantitative approaches may claim that these studies have little or no interaction with the subjects and that variables may also be set randomly (Silverman, 2020), as was clearly the case in the systematic review conducted for this research. Furthermore, many phenomena or social processes are just not quantifiable using numbers, statistics, or random sampling. In such circumstances,

quantitative approaches may actually reduce the likelihood of uncovering specific facets of these occurrences (Silverman, 2020).

Qualitative research, on the other hand, is defined as "any kind of study that yields results that are not quantifiable by statistical processes or other quantitative methods" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.17). Thus, rather than on statistics, the emphasis is on in-depth comprehension of words, ideas, and experiences of participants. Moreover, qualitative approaches place a greater emphasis on the individual than on the aggregate (Mayring, 2004). Qualitative research is mostly inductive in nature. Although supported by a theoretical framework, the investigation should be guided by results, not a theory (Taylor, Bogdan & De Vault, 2015). The primary criticism levelled at qualitative approaches is directed at their validity and dependability, and a detailed account on how this researched handled this difficulty is mentioned in subsequent sections. Furthermore, qualitative research may be seen as subjective, owing to the researcher's personal engagement in a somewhat open investigation. Thus, qualitative research is seen to have a limited capacity for generalisation since it is primarily concerned with individual situations and samples are seldom drawn randomly. However, qualitative research is concerned with comprehending and examining a specific situation or setting rather than generalising to a population (Bryman, 2016).

The approach used in research is largely determined by the nature of the research subject. Qualitative approaches seem to be an appropriate alternative for more exploratory investigations (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), such as the case in this thesis. Rather than quantifying the concept of identity creation as it presented in the literature review in Chapter 2, this thesis explores students' viewpoints using open inquiries. Apart from its exploratory nature based in the grounded theory, the research makes use of established theories to get a

better understanding of the idea of education and how it influences identity creation. However, this study is mostly inductive in nature, attempting to establish an understanding of how refugee children observe and explore their educational experiences. As the participants' perceptions were not totally predictable, it did not seem prudent to investigate predicted factors; risking missing significant concerns connected to identity construction and reconstruction in the context of refugee schooling.

Dissertation Research Design and Paradigm

A research study is produced by selecting a research design that is appropriate for the researcher's objectives, and the design's goal is then to provide a method for answering the research questions and controlling variation within a study (Kerlinger, 1973). Considering the target population of this research, the need to comprehend personal experiences and to make sense of life events is inextricably linked to the constructivist epistemological paradigm (Creswell, 2009). Therefore, narrative inquiry was used in this research to elicit the unique experiences of refugee students attending schools in the host country. By using a narrative inquiry approach, I was able to gather the narratives (stories) of each participant, get a deeper knowledge of their lived experiences, and examine how those experiences have influenced their identity development since their enrolment there.

Constructivism Paradigm

Constructivists (or interpretivists) explore how people build their own realities and how those built realities impact their lives and social relationships (Patton, 2002). The constructivist paradigm is tightly linked with qualitative research because it enables researchers to derive meaning from their interactions with study participants (Creswell, 2009). As a constructivist, when I engage with study participants, I actively listen to what they say and create meaning from their words. We all have life experiences and tales to relate,

and it is these stories and experiences that have shaped who and what we are today. Within a constructivist paradigm, the researcher's objective is to analyse other people's experiences and to make sense of how those experiences influenced participants' ideas and beliefs (Creswell, 2009).

Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry is a distinctive approach to qualitative research that aims to comprehend how people see the world (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). According to Patton (2002), narrative research is inspired by phenomenology in that both approaches strive to comprehend individual experiences and perspectives on them. As Ellis and Bochner (2000) put it, “narratives have a long history of being used rather than analysed; of being told and retold rather than theorised and settled; of offering lessons for further discussion rather than unquestionable conclusions; and of substituting the companionship of intimate detail for the loneliness of abstracted facts” (p. 744).

When researchers perform a narrative study, they collect tales (narratives) from participants in order to learn about a subject via the experiences of others. Narrative research enables a better understanding of how events affect a person, enables readers to connect to the feelings and emotions of others, enables participants to contemplate their own experiences, and enables reform (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Another distinctive feature of narrative inquiry is that the researcher becomes a character in the tale. The researcher and the participants are inextricably linked throughout the inquiry process (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006), whether intentionally or unintentionally, the researcher has lived the narrative with the subject by recounting and repeating their narrative. The research participants are storytellers, and it is the researcher's obligation to guarantee that each tale is communicated correctly. In

this sense, narrative inquiry is a very interpersonal practice, and it is critical that researchers adhere to relationship ethics[56] (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006).

Thus, to recap, I have took advantage of narrative inquiry since it:

1. enables the collection of unique stories of refugee students' schooling in the host country.

2. enables exploring how the participants interpreted their experiences and how these shared their identities.

3. enables having intimate and engaged contact with the study participants.

Driven by the interpersonal nature of conducting a narrative study, the researcher must be aware of their positionality within the study in order to avoid having a negative influence on the investigation. By disclosing any preconceptions or biases explicitly and consenting to do research, researchers can enhance the study's validity (Creswell, 2009). Therefore, to establish my stance explicitly within this study, I will hereby discuss reliability and validity in terms of this research design and then provide a detailed partiality statement in this regard. I will go on to discuss the difficulties and constraints encountered during the research process in the following sections.

Verification in Qualitative Research: Reliability and Validity

Reliability is concerned with the issue of whether a rerun of the experiment by other researchers or by the same researcher at a different time and location would provide the same result (Silverman, 2020). Reliability is particularly challenging in qualitative research. Taylor et al. (2015) go so far as to state that "it is not possible to achieve perfect reliability if we are to produce valid studies of the real world" (p. 9). Additionally, they assert that qualitative

[56] Within the context of a research study, relationship ethics include preserving the anonymity of study participants, being aware of the risks and dangers connected with study involvement, and engaging in continuous self-reflection during the research project (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006).

investigations place a premium on reliability and "are designed to ensure a close fit between the data and what people actually say and do" (Taylor et al., 2015, p. 9). Reliability is often an issue in qualitative interviews since "the data yielded is a reflection of the circumstances under which the interview was conducted" (Lampard & Pole, 2015, p. 127). Reproducing the same interview in a different environment may result in different conclusions. This is not to say that qualitative researchers must ignore the concept of reliability. Silverman (2020) makes recommendations for conducting a reliable qualitative research study, and those were followed in this study. He argues that researchers should be upfront about their research method and theory selection so that the processes taken may be followed, understood, and replicated by others. Additionally, he thinks that readers of a study report should have access to the specific findings made, not just summaries or broad terms. Accordingly, this was taken into account in this study by recording and transcribing the interviews and including verbatim quotations from these transcripts in Chapter 6. Additionally, as pre-testing the procedures and tools, such as the interview guide, may improve reliability (Silverman, 2020), a pilot study was performed earlier in the process of conducting this research.

When it comes to validity, or whether a study properly measured what it set out to assess (Silverman, 2020), the answer is less straightforward in qualitative investigations, and particularly in research that uses exploratory techniques or grounded theory. Thus, it is critical for the validity of a qualitative investigation that the observations obtained correspond to the ideas produced as a result of them (Bryman, 2016). Lampard and Pole (2015) use Dey's (2003) definition of validity by examining whether a study is "well grounded conceptually and empirically" (Lampard & Pole, 2015, p. 208), implying that the process by which a study is developed and carried out has an effect on the study's validity. Examples demonstrating the

data's significance should be provided, and, as with reliability, the context in which the data was collected should also be examined (Lampard & Pole, 2015).

Positionality Statement

The purpose of this research is to examine the experiences of refugee children who are enrolled in schools in host nations, as well as how their schooling affects their sense of self. In the field of intercultural communication, there is a metaphor coined "the salad bowl" to emphasise cultural diversity, in which the salad ingredients can preserve their distinct features rather than dissolve into a single cohesive culture (Jandt, 2017, p. 15). It is possible to have cultural diversity when minorities are given the capacity to hold onto their cultural values without being forced to conform to the majority culture (Jandt, 2017). My knowledge in this subject field is the result of a combination of personal and professional experiences. The metaphor of the "salad bowl" corresponds to my perspective in this study, since I consider my Middle Eastern background to be a valuable advantage when engaging with my research subjects. I also consider myself to be a person who lives in the "salad bowl" since I am able to navigate between diverse cultural backgrounds without one of them dominating the others.

Thus, I depend on my cultural background as a point of reference in order to establish connections with the participants and to reassure them that I am not a total stranger to them. A cross-cultural/multicultural lens is also used to contextualise my study on how participants generate shared meaning via their distinct schooling experiences and social interactions with others at school or at home, which is informed by the social constructionism paradigm. The purpose of this research is to get an understanding of how refugee students evaluate the impact of their schooling on their identity development. Despite the fact that I have no personal relationship with the participants, we could develop a strong cultural connection as a

result of my insider status as someone who belongs to the same culture. As an insider, I am well-equipped to give insights into the phenomenon because of my ability to communicate effectively in Arabic, my understanding of shared cultural values among Syrians, and my awareness of ethnic and religious sensitivities in Syria. All that enables me to build trust with the participants and get them involved in the research via study conceptualisation, in-depth interviews, and translation of transcripts, in addition to the collection of artefacts that were symbolic of their identification.

Partiality Statement

Generally, research attempts to be as impartial as possible, focusing on the data itself. Nonetheless, researchers such as Andrew Johnson (2012) and Robert Coles (1997) contend that researchers are intrinsic to the study process, rendering perfect objectivity unattainable (Johnson, 2012). For example, Coles (1997) notes that as academics delve into the lives and perspectives of others, they are always forced to confront their own selves and identities. This is to argue that our cultural beliefs and life experiences surely impact what we pay attention to and what we deem boring (Coles, 1997).

Apart from this, total impartiality becomes redundant in the face of what Coles refers to as the "selection issue" (Coles, 1997, p. 1021). After all, it is up to the researcher to determine which interview excerpts to emphasise and which to mention either briefly or perhaps entirely. Due to the fact that research always includes judgement on the part of the researcher, it might be deemed subjective. Thus, it is critical to remember that "anyone's analysis, conducted with a specific analyst, is merely one potential set of analyses" (Coles, 1997, p. 1043). Diverse research methodologies contribute to the formation of different viewpoints about reality. Thus, by selecting a certain methodological framework, researchers can virtually always influence the study's outcomes. Likewise, research often creates an

artificial environment, sometimes even a confined area, in which real-world phenomena are attempted to be monitored. Yet, actual life is complicated and most likely does not occur in entirely isolated settings, making generalisation of results challenging. This is particularly true for research involving human subjects, who may act differently when they are aware they are being studied (Johnson, 2012).

All the preceding aspects of research have been considered throughout this research process. As a result, this study is founded on the notion that there can be no absolute reality in research (Coles, 1997). Instead of painting a full picture and making broad generalisations about the refugee students' perspective, this dissertation seeks to introduce some of the several components that comprise the experience of refugee students and their self-perception. Possible avenues of prejudice, such as the inherent connection between the researcher's background and the choices and interpretations made, as well as the friendly interaction between the study participants and the researcher, are addressed in advance to allow readers to account for them (Johnson, 2012; Creswell, 2009).

It is undoubtedly true that research often encounters obstacles like power dynamics, biassed and skewed information, and conflicting commitments to properly provide findings. Nonetheless, in addition to what was mentioned in the previous section, the pre-existing relationship between researcher and study participant has been shown to be beneficial in a variety of ways: Participants seemed to be less apprehensive about being questioned and spoke quite frankly. Being acquainted with the participants on a personal level also facilitated rather extensive interviews (about 2~3 hours apiece) and intriguing conversations that would not have occurred in an impersonal setting.

Overall, I have tried to enhance the reader's trust in the conclusions by connecting the data obtained from the participants with the findings in the narrative analysis. Ethical

considerations addressing temporality, trustworthiness, reliability, and authenticity will be discussed in the following sections.

Ethical Considerations addressing Temporality

One difficulty encountered in narrative research is the temporal aspect of narrative stories. Narratives are chronological accounts with a beginning, middle, and end. Each narrative has a storyline that enables the researcher to understand the environment in which participants face diverse life situations (Riessman, 2008). These narratives assist researchers in visualising life events on a continuum (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Additionally, narratives are defined in a three-dimensional space: a time dimension, a dimension of interaction (personal and social), and a dimension of location (Clandinin & Connelly, 2007). Within each story, researchers and readers should be able to identify the chronological order of events, the individuals who play a part in the tale, and the places where the events happened, while simultaneously analysing all three aspects. Because narratives are time-dependent, narrative analysts must recognise the significance of the past, present, and future.

Awareness of temporal effects enabled me to assess how the experiences of my participants may have been influenced by the past or future. When doing this research, I was aware of the link between time and the story of a participant, since an individual's experience might change over time (Clandinin & Connelly, 2007). As time passes, individuals may forget details of their story or become unable to recall details of their experience. Ellis and Bochner (2000) observed that one's memory in connection to time had no detrimental effect on storytelling, since tales do not strive to replicate individual experiences. Additionally, our experiences are intertwined in a wider life story, and the significance we assign to them may shift over time (Clandinin & Connelly, 2007). Despite these constraints, it is important for

people to share their tales and experiences as stories jog our memories, allow us to reflect, connect us to our history, and help us set goals (Kramp, 2004).

Ethical Considerations addressing Trustworthiness

Guba and Lincoln (1994) defined trustworthiness as the ability of a researcher to convince their audience to give importance to or consider the research results. Likewise, Ellis and Bochner (2000) said that narratives should be realistic, plausible, and credible (p. 751). To establish credibility, I took further measures to guarantee the narratives were appropriately depicted. While developing a trustworthy qualitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), I ensured that the study was credible, transportable, reliable, and verifiable, and for that purpose, I used data triangulation[57]. I triangulated the data acquired via the use of audio recordings, interview transcripts, field notes, and participant artefacts.

For the purpose of triangulation, I made field notes while questioning each participant to refer to throughout the re-storying process. Appendix 10 contains an example of the researcher's field notes. I tried to approach all participants families to request feedback on their perspectives regarding the participants schooling, but only the family members of two participants agreed to share their thoughts. Their input was used selectively in the analysis part. Moreover, I used participant checking to further triangulate the data and confirm its integrity. After the interview transcription procedure was completed and before the re-storying process began, participant checking was conducted. Incorporating participant verification across the data gathering procedure aided in ensuring the study's integrity and validity. Guba and Lincoln (1994) equated credibility with reliability. Hence, when a researcher provides a credible study, demonstrating reliability should not be further required.

[57] Data triangulation is the process of combining data from numerous sources "to add rigour, breadth, complexity, and depth to any enquiry" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 5).

Assuring generalisability of the findings for qualitative research is considerably different from establishing generalisability for quantitative research. In narrative research, readers assess a study's generalisability depending on their ability to connect with the narratives being told to them or others (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Furthermore, Guba and Lincoln (1994) stated that in hopes of improving a study's external validity, the researcher must offer a detailed account of the narrative to assist readers in determining whether the story being told can be transferred or not. Finally, Guba and Lincoln (1994) recommended that external reviews be used to confirm the study's validity. Having an independent external reviewer check the data gathering techniques, data storage, and data analysis contributes to establishing reliability and also enhances the study's trustworthiness. Therefore, I applied peer reviews to verify the study's readability and formatting, faculty reviews to ensure the process's validity and trustworthiness, and participant reviews to ensure the integrity of each narrative shared. These checks were carried out throughout the research process to ensure the study's reliability.

Ethical Considerations addressing Reliability and Authenticity

The ethical implications of narrative inquiry include not only compassionate listening but also suspending disbelief (Huber, Caine, Huber & Steeves, 2013). Inquirers who use narrative methods should do research with and for people, not on them. Throughout the inquiry process, I accepted relational responsibility, which included respecting participants' narrative credibility, being receptive to diverse perspectives, and recognising the audience (Clandinin, 2006; Huber et al., 2013).

I used many measures to assure the quality and integrity of the data. The interview questions were developed with the assistance of two professors at TUFS as well as two researchers who actively work in the field of refugee relief. Their comments enabled me to

enhance the interview questions' legibility and clarity, taking into account the sensitivity of my subjects and my topic of investigation as well. Additionally, Creswell and Poth (2018) advocated for validation via peer debriefing, participant feedback, elucidating researcher bias, and participating in reflexivity. Thus, I ensured the validity and authenticity of my study by clearly communicating its objective, foundational assumptions, and subjectivity.

Moreover, I addressed the authenticity of participants' self-expression by conducting the interviews in the participants' native language, Arabic in this case. Upon transcribing all interviews, a member-checking and then re-storying process took place to ensure that all messages were accurately transferred while enabling conciseness and ease of reading. Throughout the process, I engaged in reflexivity via inter-subjective reflections where both participants and I were involved in the process of meaning formation (Savin-Baden & Majors, 2009). Additionally, this reflexivity process fostered a respect for other views through amassing narratives shaped by participants' experiences (Corlett & Mavin, 2018). Upon transcribing all interviews, a verbatim-translation was conducted and then recreated to reflect the original text. A third party then reviewed it to ensure the authenticity of the narratives and to avoid linguistic effects in changing meaning across different languages.

Data Collection

The research obtained full clearance from the previous committee. Participants who seemed to match the inclusion criteria were approached by an assistant researcher who joined the project to recruit subjects in Germany on my behalf for this study. The participants were then informed about the study and consented to share their experience if they expressed an

interest in participating[58]. Upon receiving their consent and basic information[59], I contacted them via WhatsApp application to provide further information about the study, answer questions, and schedule an interview at a suitable time to make sure that participants were comfortable participating in the study.

I interviewed each participant, and we followed a semi-structured interview plan that focused on their schooling, the challenges they faced as refugee students, and how they saw this impacting their sense of self[60]. Questions were modified in each interview to capture the experiences significant to each participant, using open questions with closed prompts if appropriate to promote dialogue (Hollomotz, 2018).

Prior to the study, none of the participants knew me, and it was conveyed to them and their families that I did not work for any agency or institution that has a direct or indirect relationship with the Syrian regime or the German authorities that oversee their asylum applications or pleas. That was critical to state clearly to allow them ample space to speak freely, eliminating any fear of getting prosecuted for what they might tell me in the interviews.

Two participants requested the presence of a family member during the interview; however, those members' input into the interview was not fully included in the analysis owing to the study's emphasis on refugee children, but extracts supporting the results analysis were added. The use of family member perspective served as a triangulation tool for this research. Participants were offered to choose a pseudonym to reflect their voice in the study, and I assigned one to those who did not in order to maintain anonymity.

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[58] see Appendix 1 and 3 for participant and parent information sheets.

[59] see Appendix 2 and 4.

[60] see Appendix 6.

While gathering data for this research project, I used Guba and Lincoln's (1994) three-phase inquiry process; orientation and overview, targeted exploration, and member verification. The first step, orientation and overview, relates to the research participants' unstructured interviews. The goal of this phase was to encourage participants to give details about their experience and for the researcher to identify which details warranted further investigation (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). During this phase, I conducted an unstructured interview[61] with each participant to allow for the natural development of each participant's story. At the conclusion of the interview, I used follow-up questions or probes to elicit further information about the participants' experiences. The second phase of the inquiry, focused exploration, included organised interactions between the participants and myself in order to elicit further details about noteworthy experiences that emerged during the first phase. When I entered the second phase, I followed semi-structured methods to guarantee that the required data was gathered (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Then, the third part of the investigation was devoted to participant verification. After the interview transcripts were transcribed and the editing process was completed, I asked the participants to check and confirm the accuracy of the information. This procedure was followed to guarantee that I accurately documented each participant's experience and if any modifications to the data were required, I took appropriate actions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Procedures for Data Collection

Sampling and Participant Recruiting

Qualitative research does not have any definite criteria about the minimum number of participants required for a study (deMarrais & Lapan, 2003). Due to the fact that qualitative

[61] Through unstructured interviews, I was able to elicit information regarding each participant's schooling experience.

research is more concerned with depth and complexity, having a small number of participants is ideal (Huberman & Miles, 2002). DeMarrais and Lapan (2003) assert that "less is more" (p. 61). Conversely, since qualitative researchers are not interested in generalising but in creating a more nuanced understanding, a larger sample size does not automatically guarantee a better study. Thus, more participants might imply a shallow analysis. The quantity of participants in research should be less important than the depth with which their experiences are comprehended, evaluated, and re-presented. Taking that into consideration, I chose four participants for my research, keeping in mind the resources and time necessary to get a thorough understanding of each of their narratives.

It was necessary to set a framework for identifying participants who might provide significant insight into how schooling affects the identity formation of refugee youth. By establishing a structure for adopting the sample strategies, I can justify the reason behind selecting the participants for this research (Schwandt, 1994). The following parameters were used to recruit participants for this study: Participants had to be between 12 and 20 years old and have attended formal schooling in Germany for at least 3 years after being granted asylum status. Moreover, potential participants were also selected based on a number of variables that could enhance their self-perception. These variables included undergoing a critical experience that made them reflect more profoundly on their lives, having conflict at home, at school or with the society, or being more mature and having the mental capacity to analyse one's thoughts and behaviour. After compiling a preliminary list of participants who attended some type of formal schooling in Germany and met the basic parameters, the list was scaled back by identifying those who met at least two of the variables mentioned above. Four refugee students who satisfied the given criteria were chosen using purposeful, homogenous, and convenience sampling approaches.

Generally, participant sampling falls into a variety of categories. First, purposeful sampling is the process of choosing participants from a given population that has a large amount of usable data for certain research (Creswell, 2013; Thorne, Kirkham & O'Flynn Magee, 2004). According to Creswell (2013), qualitative research "selects individuals and settings for investigation because they may actively contribute to an understanding of the research topic and primary phenomena in the study" (p. 125). Thorne, Kirkham and O'Flynn Magee (2004) noted that purposeful sampling should be used to elicit information from certain individuals "by virtue of some aspect of their experience that they may be able to assist us in better understanding" (p. 90). Purposeful sampling was relevant to the research since it contributed to the selection of participants who could narrate their experiences of attending formal schooling in Germany while reflecting on changes in their understanding of themselves and their environment.

Homogenous sampling, on the other hand, is the process of recruiting participants who have comparable traits in order for the researcher to recognise the shared pattern in the experience of these individuals while evaluating those experiences to find differences (Glesne, 2011). In this context, homogenous sampling enabled me to conduct an in-depth examination of a subset of participants (Patton, 2002); refugee students who enrolled in formal schooling in Germany for at least 3 years after seeking asylum in Germany. The sample is considered homogeneous because all participants share the same characteristics[62] and they were all selected primarily based on the same variables[63].

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[62] being born and raised first in Syria and then sought refuge in Germany where they attended some kind of schooling there.

[63] they have all encountered a critical incident within their schooling experience and have the faculty to reflect on their own actions and thoughts.

Thirdly, convenience sampling refers to the practice of recruiting participants who are available there, since they may have the greatest insight into shared threads of experience associated with a particular phenomenon (Thorne et al., 2004). A disadvantage of convenience sampling is that it may imply a lack of integrity outside the boundaries of the research. Thorne et al. (2004) said that "although convenient samples might provide a solid foundation for 'description,' they disproportionately increase the difficulty of justifying interpretation" (p. 90). Taking Thorne's caution into consideration, I relied on a wealth of literature to interpret the results of this research, aiming to support as many of the study findings with suitable backup stories as possible.

Following the development of the selection criteria and a list of potential participants from the pool of participants identified initially, I contacted the four participants who met the criteria and expressed a desire for them to share their perspectives on their experiences.

Interview Protocol

Each interview was designed to engage study participants and give them a chance to speak freely about their schooling experience. In line with the chronological nature of narrative inquiry, I aimed to acquire insight into each participant's past, present, and future schooling experiences and how that affects their self-identification. Initially, I collected information from the participants on their experiences and possible consequences. As each story developed, I utilised probes to elicit further information, elaboration, and explanation from participants in order to guarantee that I understood the answers comprehensively. Additionally, I used probes to get participants' narrative accounts back on line during the interview. I was unable to pre-plan precisely all the questions that would be asked during each interview since the questions were driven by the spontaneous flow of the participants' narratives.

Face-to-face interactions with research participants were held either through video chat programmes or via online meeting applications. Two interviews were conducted through WhatsApp, one via Skype, and one via Zoom, in order to meet the interviewees' and, in some instances, their parents' wishes. Although they do not compare to actual face-to-face interviews, real-time face-to-face contact was important because it allowed me to see how each participant reacted to the questions posed and enabled me to alter the questions and probes as needed throughout the interview (Driscoll & Brizee, 2018). Real-time face-to-face interviews also provided me with the opportunity to hear participants' first-hand perspectives on their schooling experiences and to clarify questions and replies during the interview (Dialsingh, 2008; Driscoll & Brizee, 2018). The participants were assured of their privacy and of the secrecy of their responses. This was accomplished via the use of pseudonyms, which were selected together with the researcher and are only used in transcripts and reporting. Some information that entails their demography and could lead to identifying them in some way or another was also handled appropriately. They all granted permission for the interview to be audio recorded to enable the transcription of data. On a password-protected computer, the audio recordings and interview transcripts were preserved and handled with confidentiality.

Interview Guide

Prior to conducting the interviews, extensive research was conducted on projects of the same caliber, and the resulting insights were utilised to generate open questions aimed at exploring how education influences identity formation. Relevant frameworks and concepts were gathered, and multiple questions were constructed for each concept. An interview guide was created based on these questions and can be found in Appendix 6. To facilitate smooth interviews, the questions were classified into several categories, however, the question

sequence was not strictly followed throughout the interviews. Due to the study's open and semi-structured nature, it appeared more logical to allow the participants to respond to the questions in an unstructured manner, stating whatever came to mind. Numerous interviewees brought up issues that had been scheduled for a later segment of the interview at the beginning, so it felt natural to forward the questions on that particular subject. Thus, the interview guide was far more often utilised as a means of assisting with orientation throughout the interview and ensuring that all aspects of the study were addressed (Patton, 2002).

Additionally, since the interviewees came from diverse cultural backgrounds, it was necessary to account for probable misconceptions about the interview questions (Patton, 2002). Therefore, clarifying questions were asked whenever it was essential to ascertain the participants' comprehension of the questions and my understanding of their response. Following the development of the interview guide, a pilot study was conducted to validate the interview questions, the questionnaire, and the technique of analysis. This testing resulted in a few small revisions, including an update to the questions that seemed to be confusing or excessive in number. As a result, I re-evaluated and altered the interview guide's structure and question formulation. Moreover, the brief questionnaire that accompanied the interview guide now excludes questions on marital status, children, and religion but includes questions on mother tongue and self-introductions. The questionnaire was used to elicit information about the participant's history, such as their name, education, and status. This was done mostly to avoid having to ask these questions during the interview, but also to provide a rapid summary of the participants' backgrounds. Given the fact that the pilot study provided various valuable insights for this study, each interview was incorporated and analysed in line with the research questions.

Interviews

Qualitative research employs a number of methodologies, including interviews, ethnographic studies, and focus groups. Interviews appear to be a viable strategy for this study because they allow for the asking of open-ended questions to a small sample and the exploration of individual experiences or perspectives on the topic under consideration[64]. Nonetheless, interviewing is rarely as straightforward as just asking questions and receiving responses. Interviews may become confusing due to the fact that written and spoken words can have different implications (Schwandt, 1994). Yet, Fontana and Frey (2005) claimed that "interviewing is one of the most frequent and effective methods by which people attempt to understand one another" (p. 118)[65]. In this respect, interviews were critical for eliciting information about the participants' actual schooling experiences and how those experiences affected their self-perception.

In qualitative research, three kinds of interviews are often used: structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, and unstructured or conversational interviews[66] (Schwandt, 1994). In this study, the semi-structured interview, as described by Lampard and Pole (2015), seemed to be a good approach for this study since its structuring through an interview guide enabled the researcher to maintain direction throughout the interview. Additionally, the design ensured that critical theoretical questions were addressed throughout the discussion and allowed categorical analysis. On the other hand, the fact that the interview was not totally

[64] Interviews may be understood as "the process of making words fly" (Glesne, 2011, p. 102).

[65] Interviews or conversations between two or more individuals are carried out in order to gain a better understanding of people's lives (Fontana & Frey, 2005; Glesne, 2011).

[66] In structured interviews, the researchers prepare the interview questions in advance, and they typically stay consistent throughout the interview. Semi-structured interviews are more adaptive since the interviewer starts with a set of pre-determined questions but may add or modify them depending on the interview's direction and the material delivered. Unstructured or conversational interviews take place when researchers construct questions during the interview, rather than using a predefined list of questions, and are often similar to a conversation (Fontana & Frey, 2005; Glesne, 2011; Schwandt, 1994).

planned allowed for an unstructured discussion of the refugee students' particular viewpoints and experiences. Due to the exploratory nature of the study question, many of the forthcoming themes associated with the term ‘identity’ by the students could not be anticipated. As a result, a structured interview may have limited the opportunity to go further into forthcoming themes. Additionally, this freedom in the design of the interview guide's questions allowed the interviewer to ask questions in whatever sequence that appeared most appropriate for the specific interview. That proved more feasible with a diverse pool of experience from which the students drew.

It has to be mentioned, however, that interviews, like any other approach, have limitations. Lampard and Pole (2015) assert that interviews are socially created and confined by the interview context. They are artificial and hence cannot be relied upon to "discover the reality or substance of individual belief, experience, or opinion" (Lampard & Pole, 2015, p.127). Nonetheless, upon exploring all available approaches to collecting data for this particular research, it was deemed that interviews are the best data collection tool to be adopted with narrative inquiry in consideration all along.

I conducted semi-structured interviews and directed them as much as possible to be conversational. The semi-structured style was used to relieve the participant from any stress they might have, move them slowly into the interview process, and create rapport. Fontana and Frey (2005) argued for "a collaborative effort between the researcher and participants to construct a narrative–the interview" (p. 117). Given that this is narrative inquiry research, the interview technique was designed to elicit answers that resulted in the development of a story. Numerous questions were posed as conversation topics to assist in directing the interview[67].

[67] The guiding interview questions were purposefully left open-ended to enable insightful story-telling replies. Nonetheless, as each interview progressed, unplanned follow-up questions were addressed to elicit further information about the lengthy continuous narratives.

The following are samples of interview questions that were used as a starting point for the participants' interviews:

1. Briefly describe your current status in Germany.

2. Take me on a tour of your schooling, beginning with the earliest memories you have.

3 . Describe the most difficult aspects of your educational experience.

4 . Tell me about any difficulties you may have had outside of school.

5. Describe how you identify yourself when you're speaking with others or when you're alone.

6. Describe how schooling changed the way you look at yourself and the world.

7. Describe your self-perception prior to starting school.

8. Tell me about your perception of yourself now that you have spent over 3 years in formal schooling.

The issues of identity construction and schooling experiences were addressed in interviews with four refugees, ranging in age from 12 to 20 years old, who were enrolled in German secondary and higher education. They were contacted in a variety of ways; some of them were new connections from my network, while others were approached through respective blogs and social media platforms. All the participants were reached via personal connections and the chain effect[68]. The personal character of the selection process contributed to the development of confidence between the researcher and the participants. The

[68] which occurs when people in a community know others who are knowledgeable about the situation.

participants were all picked using a rather deliberate and purposeful sampling process as stated earlier. It has to be mentioned that due to the sensitivity of refugee situations in host countries, especially those who still fear for their lives and the lives of family members who are still back home, many subjects dropped out of the study after deliberation with their parents or/and care-givers.

Each participant was interviewed for a first introductory meeting then followed by a lengthy interview that took place for around 2.5 to 3 hours. All those interviews were conducted between January and March, 2021. Later on, 3 to 4 follow-up interviews were conducted with each participant to seek more details and verify the acquired data in earlier sessions. Each interview was transcribed upon its conclusion and before a follow-up interview was conducted. Throughout the transcribing process, notes on major incidents were kept to help aggregate the information and formulate questions about specific events or areas that needed more clarification. Prior to performing the follow-up interview, I invited the participants to undertake participant observation checking (Creswell, 2009), in which I verified the integrity of the transcripts and any interpretations they formed based on the data acquired. By doing participant checks with participants, it was possible for them to act as co-narrators of their experiences, ensuring that what was conveyed about their personal experience was not just from my viewpoint. All interviews were conducted in Arabic and were transcribed verbatim. The transcription was then translated into English after passing the member check by the participant.

Upon interviewing the participants and sharing the transcription of their narratives with them, I worked on re-storying their narratives to make them easier to read and more consistent. This process was done with the participants at times, for the purpose of authenticity and reconfirmation of content, and on my own at other times to get the

participant's approval and affirmation that nothing changed in their original story. An example of re-storying is present in Appendix 9.

Data Analysis

For data analysis, the tenets of both narrative and phenomenological interpretational analysis were used; first, individual lived experiences were considered within a bigger framework, and then the data set was viewed in its totality (Tindal, Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). These two sets of analyses have been consistently utilised to investigate and comprehend the schooling experiences of refugee children in the host country (Foti, Basic, Vasileva…& Konle-Seidle, 2019). To reach comprehensive analysis, I followed the phases described below (Larkin & Thompson, 2012; Tindal et al., 2009):

1. Reading and rereading the transcripts to become acquainted with the data.

2. Examining each transcript line by line, focusing on descriptive content, linguistic and conceptual coding[69].

3. Creating themes and patterns that appear in each narrative.

4. Mapping individual relationships, similarities, and differences in order to examine patterns in data collection. Then, categorising concepts, while revisiting the raw data to check for consistency of themes and reconfiguration.

5. An interpretive description of the events was then created driven by the participants' as well as my interpretations and views about the participants' experiences.

[69] see Appendix 8 for a worked example.

Thus, each participant's story was examined and coded to detect recurring themes. By manually classifying each narrative, themes within each story were found. To begin the coding process, I read each participant's story and took notes on recurring topics[70]. After identifying the initial themes in each narrative, I cross-referenced the list to see which themes were most prevalent throughout all four narratives. Four themes emerged as the most prevalent: integration, dignity, belonging, and change. Following the compilation of the four themes, I reread each interview transcript in order to pinpoint particular sections that reflected each topic. Throughout this process, I used coloured pens to highlight key portions of each tale[71]. While the ability to make generalisations is not an aim of qualitative research, I employed the constant comparison approach (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) to identify similarities across the four narratives. This approach enabled me to compare the topics in each story and to uncover recurrent patterns across the study results.

Content Analysis in Qualitative Research

Mayring's qualitative content analysis is a systematic technique for assessing communication materials (Mayring, 2004). It is considered a useful technique because it seeks to capitalise on the strengths of quantitative analysis, such as its rule-based approach and adherence to the concepts of verification, reliability, and validity. The technique then modifies these strengths meaningfully for the purpose of qualitative data analysis (Mayring, 2004).

According to Mayring (2004), there are three fundamental types of interpretation in qualitative content analysis: "summary," which refers to the reduction of data; "explication," which refers to the discovery of additional material; and "structuring," which

[70] see Appendix 8.

[71] see Appendix 8.

refers to the filtering of significant aspects of the data (p. 58). For the current qualitative content analysis, it seemed that "structuring"; filtering out relevant information from the material as a whole and analysing it according to predefined categories (thematic blocs) was the most useful method. Defining the categories enables the interviews to be filtered for remarks that fall within the defined categories, which were established inductively, guided by the data collected. However, several categories were discovered deductively by incorporating theoretical features into the creation of the categories and predetermining them.

Due to the fact that not all of the interviewees' themes could be anticipated, the majority of the categories were provisional and were altered during the analytic process, particularly after the pilot study. This seems to be critical in order to avoid biassing the analysis via the researcher's beliefs or impressions (Mayring, 2004). Silverman (2020) also states that while classifying data, one must be cautious of the possibility of omitting data that does not fit into the categories. As a result, it is essential to define the categories precisely and to keep an eye out for potentially significant data that falls beyond the categories. Then, to achieve a uniform and acceptable analysis, the categories were described and illustrated in accordance with Mayring (2004). Thus, each category was subdivided into multiple subcategories, and variables were constructed for each subgroup.

Coding and Content Analysis

To provide a more extensive explanation of how the transcribed interviews were converted into analysable information for this thesis, the following processes were adopted: As a first step, a coding agenda was created in which preliminary categories, including variables, were specified and discussed based on the pilot study and previous research in related fields. Coding rules were devised to help separate the groups. Following that, the

transcript was studied and any sentences that seemed to be pertinent at first glance were highlighted. Following a review of the identified categories, the transcript's material was organised using a colour system. Statements, views, and quotations were extracted in order of their colour; they were then summarised into the category system. When the items did not fit into any of the existing categories, new ones were created. Although several remarks were explicitly cited, the majority were summarised and paraphrased in my own words. After coding all the interviews, the gathered narratives were analysed and evaluated[72]. It appears necessary to emphasise that in order to do the data analysis, certain categories have to be altered, combined, or reorganised, due to their inter-relationship.

Additionally, the results modified the study's emphasis. For instance, integration was not a primary emphasis throughout the study's design phase. However, as the research and discussion of the data progressed, it became more significant and used more space than anticipated. Similarly, it became clear that the participants placed an emphasis on 'otherness' during interviews and in their interpretations of integration. As a result, the theme of 'otherness' appeared in the analysis process, although it did not exist in the original anticipated themes. Moreover, I had to pick which categories included the most significant results for the study's objective. Therefore, certain discoveries seemed to be less important than others, and thus some categories, such as 'depression' and 'cultural shock', were omitted entirely.

Study Constraints

Numerous constraints were purposefully imposed on the study undertaken. To begin with, my study included only children and adolescents who were officially recognised as refugees. While there are ten million children worldwide who fit the criteria for refugee

[72] see Chapter 6.

status, countless more are unable to finish their schooling due to being internally displaced, stateless, employed as child combatants, or victims of crime. Due to the need to limit the scope of this study, it only focused on those formally recognised as refugees. Secondly, although there has been a recent surge in the number of refugee children worldwide, Germany was restrictedly chosen as the location for this study for two primary reasons. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Germany maintains a semi-open door policy for refugees who have found their way into Europe, and as a result, Germany is home to a large number of refugee children. Additionally, Germany is a nation that requires refugees to be integrated into national educational systems and does not provide alternatives. This qualifies Germany as an ideal study location for examining the effect of such restriction on the country's refugee youngsters.

Another constrain to this study are the decisions made about the target population and the selection method. While these characteristics contributed to the flattening of disparities in a group that is generally quite varied, they also presented significant limits to the generalisability of the results. Therefore, it is important to proceed with care when applying these results to a different demographic. In contrast, refugee voices are placed at the centre of the research process via the use of participant-focused research and analysis, which provides a starting point for understanding the intricacies of refugee resettlement from the perspectives of refugees themselves.

These aforementioned constraints are recorded prior to conducting the survey and interviews. Other constraints and limitations that pertain to the study will be identified in the final chapter.

Conclusion

This chapter summarised the pilot study that served as the foundation for the present dissertation research. Moreover, the chapter detailed and substantiated the study's methodology and design accounting for ethical considerations taken for the study. It also described the methods used to recruit participants, collect and analyse data, and finally concluded with a brief account of the study's constraints.

Chapter 6: Research Results and Analysis

Introduction

This chapter will share the results from the conducted surveys and interviews and, ultimately, the participants' narratives. The chapter will first familiarise the reader with the participants' profiles, including information on their demographics, legal and residence status, in addition to schooling status and duration. The chapter will then present the analysis and discussion of interview results, following procedures that will be explained in the second section of this chapter.

Participants' Characteristics

This is a quick introduction to the characteristics of refugee students involved in this study in order to gain a better understanding of their backgrounds[73]. The participants included four Syrian refugee students enrolled at public schools and institutions around Germany. Two of the interviewed students are female, Reem and Amani, and two are male, Talib and Yousuf. They range in age between 12 and 20 years old. All the respondents are Syrian, however they belong to different ethnic and religious groups in Syria. All of them have received education in Germany, either through formal schooling or through integration programs. The duration of the students' stay in Germany ranges from five to eight years, while the schooling period for all of them has been for three years at a minimum. Three of the students arrived in Germany with family members, while one of them arrived alone and is now residing with friends. One of them got married in Germany and just had a baby, while the others are single.

[73] summarised in Table 5 and 6.

The single students are all living with family members or friends. All students are legally residing in Germany. One of them has a refugee status, one has an asylee status, and the last two have a humanitarian protection status. All were born in Syria and speak Arabic as a first language.

No	Participant pseudonym	Gender	Age	Marital status	Residence status, location	Asylum status	Mother tongue
1	Reem	female	12	single	Independent with her family, Berlin	Refugee	Arabic
2	Amani	female	20	married	Independent with her husband and a baby, Heidelberg	Subsidiary protection, National ban on deportation	Arabic
3	Talib	male	19	single	Shared housing with a friend, Hamburg	Aslyee	Arabic
4	Yousuf	male	16	single	Shared housing with his brother, Munchen	Subsidiary protection	Arabic

Table 5: Participants' Demographic Characteristics

In terms of schooling, the participants vary over the types and duration of schooling[74]. All but one participant attend schools in a variety of settings based on the state in which they live; one goes to an elementary school in Berlin, another goes to a comprehensive school in Hamburg, and one attends a vocational training school in Munchen. Only one participant is on leave, after suspending her schooling for a while since she gave birth. She used to go to a language school in Heidelberg.

No	Participant pseudonym	Duration of Stay in Germany	Duration of schooling in Germany	Type of schooling	Current Schooling Status
1	Reem	7.2	6.7	Public elementary and elementary school	6th grade in elementary school
2	Amani	6.7	3.3	Integration programs and language school	On a school leave for private reasons
3	Talib	7.4	5.2	Integration programs and public vocational secondary school	10th grade in secondary school

[74] see Table 6.

4	Yousuf	7.1	4.5	Integration programs and secondary school	8th grade in secondary school

Table 6: Residence, Schooling Duration And Status Of Participants

As mentioned earlier (see Education of Refugees in Germany), the school system for refugees in Germany varies according to the state they are received within, and is not based on a federal system. To understand and compare the schooling status of each of the participants, a chart showing the school system in Germany is included below[75].

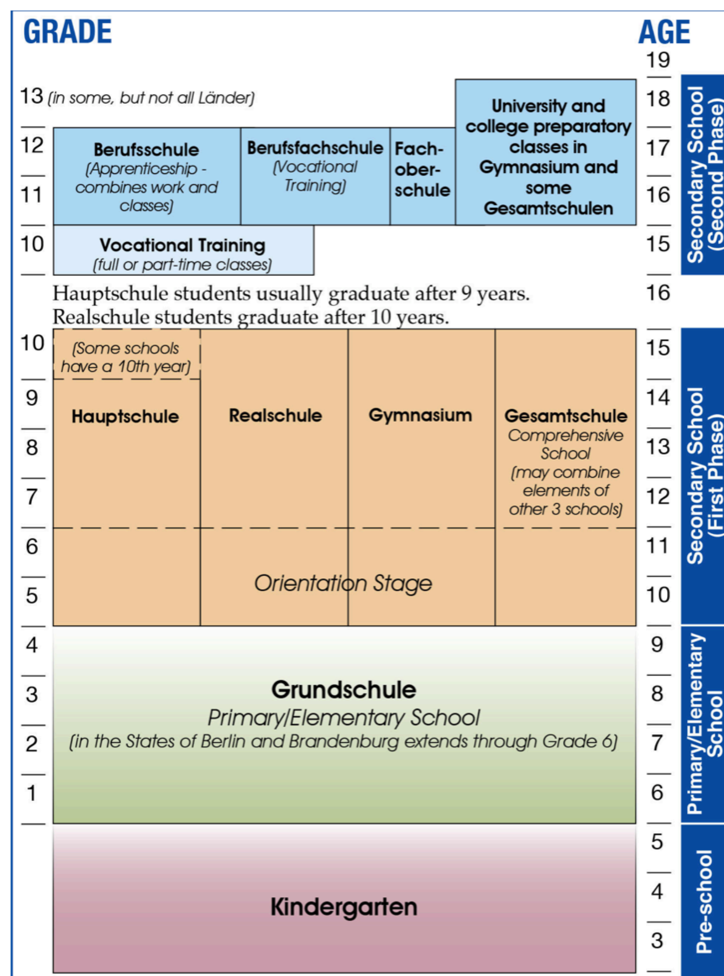


Figure 8: German School System (Source: Howtogermany.Com)

[75] see Figure 8.

Participants’ Profiles

Reem

Reem is now[76] a twelve-year-old girl, born in Damascus, Syria, to be the first child for her parents, both well-known physicians. Just before the fighting started in Damascus, she was five at the time and used to go to a kindergarten there. The family had to evacuate to another city, Homs, while the mother was pregnant and almost due. There, and after the safe delivery of a baby boy, the hospital they were staying at was shelled by the regime army, and many mothers and babies were killed. Reem lost her baby brother just a few days after his birth. The family had to evacuate further north, to Turkey, where they had the opportunity to take a flight and go to Berlin, where they sought asylum upon arrival. She goes to an elementary school in Berlin, where she still lives with her family, and she will graduate soon. Her family was blessed in Berlin with Nizar, another baby boy, which made Reem proud to become an older sister. Back in Syria, the family still has some relatives who could not evacuate. Among them is Reem’s grandfather, whom she is closely attached to.

Amani

Amani is now a twenty-year-old mom with a three-month-old baby boy. Before the war started in Syria, she used to live with her family in Yarmouk City, a shift camp built on the outskirts of Damascus to host Palestinian refugees since 1957. She was born there, and her parents were also born there, so the whole family holds both Syrian and Palestinian traits. Amani, fourteen years old at the time, used to attend preparatory school there and was intending to become a nurse. However, when the fighting reached the camp, Amani, had to evacuate north with her mother and two younger brothers, and after being displaced for a few months, they reached a refugee camp on the border with Turkey. There, the UNHCR assisted

[76] ‘now’ in the Participants’ Profiles is a reference to the moment of writing this thesis, January 2022.

them in seeking asylum in Germany. Back in Syria, Reem was separated from her father and older brother who got arrested by the regime. Only the father managed to survive and join the family in Germany after a few years while the older brother is still missing and no one knows his whereabouts. In Heidelberg, Germany, after a couple of years in a refugee camp, she started going to a language school in preparation to attend a nursing school. She met her now-husband there, and they married a year ago, in 2021. She is on maternity leave from the school now as she gave birth to her baby boy, and she will return soon once the baby is old enough to be left at a nursery.

Talib

Talib is now a nineteen-year-old young man, born in Aleppo City, north of Syria. Before the war started in Syria, he used to be very studious, attending preparatory school in the morning, two different cram schools in the afternoon, and then getting tutored at home in the evening. Although he was only twelve at that time, he was aiming to study business administration in the future to take over the family business, a big trading shop. When the fighting reached Aleppo, however, he stopped going to school and joined the protests against the regime. He started losing many relatives to either death in fighting against the regime or random arrests carried out to cull the opposition. Talib remained in Aleppo until one day the regime shelled his neighborhood, bringing the entire place to ground. At that time, and after losing his uncle, Talib and his family had to evacuate. Due to the blast that targeted the area, the family got separated. The parents evacuated south to Jordan, where they have some relatives, while Talib and his older brother evacuated north to Turkey, where they later continued through Europe until they reached Germany. Talib now lives with his older brother in a shared house with other refugees in Hamburg, Germany. Luckily, even after he lost 2

years on his asylum journey, he managed to return to school and he is currently attending a secondary school there.

Yousuf

Yousuf is now a sixteen-year-old young man, the only child in his family, born in Homs, Syria. Before the war started in his city, he used to go to an elementary school in his neighbourhood, and he was eight years old at the time. His father was arrested by the regime, and he does not know, even today, whether he is alive or not. His mother was taken in by some relatives, while he started attending protests against the regime after school. One day he got the news that his name, along with some others of his friends', was on a list of those to be arrested, so his mother urged him to leave the city and seek asylum in Turkey. He left with a group of friends and, after reaching Turkey, they all attempted to reach Europe through the sea. Yousuf lost a couple of his friends on the road, but he managed to reach Germany and seek asylum there. He is now attending a secondary school and he is aiming to become a car mechanic. He lives in Munchen, Germany, in a shared house with some other refugees, while his mother is still back in Syria.

Data Presentation

This research involved two male and two female Syrian refugee students in Germany, offering their perspectives on their education in Germany. The anecdotes shared gave insight into the particular experiences of each refugee student since they arrived in Germany, and each refugee's tale reveals the subjective significance of their schooling stages. Each narrative included details on important moments and the evolution of each participant's perspective on their identity. This chapter will give the results in relation to the primary research questions: how do integration-imposing host nations' educational systems impact the identity of refugee

youth? And how do refugee children and adolescents assess their educational experiences in host countries?

Since the narratives were too long to include in the thesis, I opted to weave the analysis results of the narratives with the parts that corresponded to them. I analysed the narratives of the four participants—Reem, Amani, Talib, and Yousuf—for major themes and sub-themes as they will be discussed in the next section of this chapter. I analysed each narrative on its own first to get insight into the themes that surfaced throughout the interview. Then, I triangulated the data by including extracts from Reem and Amani's diaries. Talib and Yousuf did not keep diaries, which explains why none of them were included. I also interviewed two of the participants' family members, Reem's and Talib's, to further triangulate the results. The parents' interviews are only used to support the participants' narratives; they are not the focus of this research. Finally, I added comments from my research journal for reflective thoughts on the interviews[77].

I first analysed the results and then evaluated and discussed them in light of the academic literature. Extracts taken from participant narratives, their parents' narratives, and diary entries will be presented with quotation marks and followed by the name of the participant between brackets to confirm the owner of each narrative. Everything not quoted will be either my comments or supporting literature review results. This classification is intended to assist the reader in identifying the numerous voices included under each theme. In addition, the extracts presented in the analysis are often taken from a continuum of narrative, so subject pronouns may sometimes confuse the reader as to what they refer to. Therefore, I

[77] see Appendix 10 for an example.

included small reference words between brackets inside those extracts to help the reader understand what the participants meant by those pronouns.

The findings are categorised according to the themes that emerged from the participants' tales and narrations, and they were organised in a methodical approach to elicit personal insights into the meaning-making experiences of each refugee student. Table 7 below summarises the chapter's major themes and sub-themes[78].

	Themes	Sub-themes
1	Motivation behind schooling	Beginning a new life
		Refreshing old knowledge
		Realising personal ambition
		Enhancing future work opportunities
		Returning to a familiar environment (learning)
		Returning something back to the family
		A family pressure
		A desire to contribute to the home country peace building
2	The journey to schooling	The documents needed to register for schools
		The registration system is not clear
		The registration system is not the same in all schools or states
		Devaluation and de-skilling of students home schooling credentials
		Financial hardships
3	Access to education	Mostly school-, rather than state-, controlled
		language barrier
4	In-class experiences	Language issues in comprehension and communication
		Disparities in home and host country education systems
		Learning new skills to adapt to the new schooling system
		The nature of teacher-student relationship
		Faith in the classroom
5	Relationship with Peers	Difficult to establish friendships with peers
		Verbal or behaviour-transpired discrimination
		Collaboration and feelings of exclusion
6	Refugee-Centred Difficulties	Language learning ability

[78] The process these themes were concluded by is mentioned in detail in the Data Analysis section in Chapter 5.

		Age and maturity
		Knowledge gap
		Skill gap
		Daily hardships
		Traumas
		Separation from families and friends
7	Curricula and Study Content	Good quality (textbooks and pedagogy)
		Up-to-date content
		Ethics and faith
		Sex classes
8	Education and Integration	Education facilitates social interaction
		Integration is a lengthy and vague process
		School is a way to forget about the label "refugee", and integrate with the role of a "student"
9	Perceived Effect of Schooling	Mother tongue deterioration
		Feeling Distant from close people
		Shifting approach to previous values
10	Self-Identification	Simpler and more focused on individual identity back in the home country
		Labels such as "refugee", "Syrian", and "Arab" outweigh individual identity in the host country
		Being a refugee has different meanings
11	Choice in schooling	Being a student is a source of pride
		The concept of freedom of choice has double standards
12	Incidents that triggered deeper sense of selfhood	Nudity and dignity
		Nudity and embarrassment
13	Otherness, the label 'Refugee' and Dignity	Otherness based on national affiliation 'Syrian'
		Otherness based on ethnic affiliation 'Arab'
		Otherness based on religious affliction 'Muslim'
14	Symbols of Selfhood	Family and the past
		Passport, a national symbol
		Residence permit, focus on the present
		What is left of previous possessions
15	Possibilities of Deportation and Return	Losing motivation to study
		Source of motivation to study
		Return is unthinkable
16	Concerns and Aspirations for the Future	Fear of deportation
		Uncertainty about future in Germany
		Focusing on the present
		Focusing on the objectives in life

Table 7: Themes And Sub-Themes In Participants' Narratives

Results

The super-ordinate and sub-ordinate themes were observed throughout the interviews and represented in Table 7. The findings reveal three major aspects of the effect of schooling experience on refugee students: growing self-realisation of difference, the influence of surroundings on schooling experience and outcomes, and negotiating the desire to change while performing self-identification.

To further classify and compare and contrast the data in light of the research questions, the results are divided into: a) experiences of refugee children that intersects with experiences that immigrant children might face[79] and b) experiences that are unique to refugee children. Visual cues are provided under each sub-section to help the compare and contrast process.

Refugee Children Schooling Experiences and their Intersections with Immigrants'

Motivation behind Schooling

When refugees arrive in the host country, it is unclear which route they can take. "When I first arrived in Germany, I had no idea what I was doing," (Yousuf). However, education is a choice for a variety of reasons. "I wanted to continue my education in Syria and earn a degree, but owing to the circumstances there, I couldn't even finish my preparatory school," (Talib). As Talib recalls his situation before and after getting enrolled in secondary school in Germany, the phase of not knowing what to do in a new country may be quite stressful, and the potential for engagement in education can bring positive emotions, "before going to school, I felt like I was in a state of despair. But things are better now," (Talib).

[79] based on findings in the literature.

According to the literature reviewed in this study by Sinclair (2007), Zeus (2011), and Wilkinson (2002), education serves as a way to attain personal worth and possibly future professional success in the host country. Indeed, the viewpoint that education may contribute to greater chances can be heard by most participants (Amani, Yousuf, and Talib) and can be summed up by Yousuf's comments, "it is a key that unlocks a lot of doors," (Yousuf). This is connected to the concept of beginning a new life, as Yousuf explained that he had to restart his secondary education from scratch because he could not bring his school documents from Syria and there was no proof of where he was at in his academic performance. Furthermore, Amani and Talib stated that going to school is necessary to refresh what they have studied in Syria since they have been away from the educational settings for some time.

Nonetheless, it is feasible to conclude from the interviews that the incentives that drive refugee children to attend school in the host country are diverse and extend beyond those outlined in the literature. Schooling, for example, has a dual purpose for Yousuf, "it was sort of an unrealised ambition that I wish to continue... and to obtain good work opportunities," (Yousuf). According to Yousuf's comments, education serves as a desire in addition to securing future work chances. This has also surfaced in the narratives of both Amani and Talib.

From a different perspective, Amani does not perceive a direct relationship between her education and her future job, "... from a professional point of view, I don't suppose it's especially relevant," (Amani). Still, she feels that he may gain some benefits from her education in different ways, "... but from another side, I'm interested in learning more and being able to study things that I did not do in Syria. I think this is very important," (Amani). She also includes an additional noteworthy attribute: according to Amani's goals, by

attaining education she can contribute to enhancing the prospects of her children getting a proper education as they may look up to her and take her as a role model, "he (my son) could be like, if mom was this successful, I better do more. I think I can help him in his studies when he goes to school," (Amani).

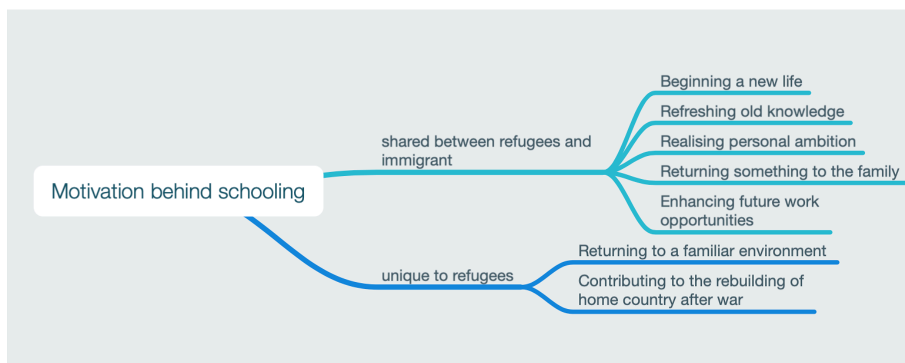
Schooling might sometimes be driven by a desire to return to a familiar, comfortable environment which surfaced in the narratives of Reem, Amani, and Talib. For example, Talib explained, "... I come from a household where learning is sacred. Everyone should, at worst, earn a bachelor's degree, minimum," (Talib). For Talib, the fact that he is making progress at school is also an important factor for his relationship with his family, especially his older brother, as he feels indebted to all their sacrifices for saving him from the terrible war in his home town and risking their lives for a better future for him, "I feel I need to study hard at school to show them I am thankful. I think they know I am, but I want to show it in my studies," (Talib).

Amani, in turn, adds that her family exercises a form of pressure to drive her towards finishing her schooling, "... with some pressure from my father. He is always like, without credentials, you cannot achieve anything here or anywhere," (Amani). Amani adds that her objectives stem from her heritage and that it is closely tied to her identity creation, "as a Palestinian refugee in Syria, we didn't use to have the same rights as Syrians did. So, our parents raised us up like you don't have anything, you don't have money, you don't have connections or even assets that might make you successful in life. You don't have anything except your education," (Amani).

On yet another point, Reem mentioned that she feels responsible for exploring answers to problems in her homeland through her schooling, "... this war shouldn't continue and no more generations should feel what we have felt leaving the country. I don't

want any other person to suffer the same as we did. I think about it a lot at school," (Reem). Likewise, Yousuf aspires to study about his home country as well as how to stop human rights violations back in Syria, "I think we can do something better there (in Syria) by studying here (in Germany) and understanding the situation. I wish to make a difference in making people get their basic rights there," (Yousuf).

The literature has shown that refugees and immigrant students have different motivations for attending schools in host countries, as illustrated below. What was found to be particularly unique to refugees in this study is the need to return to a familiar environment in the middle of their uncertain present and future. Additionally, refugees have the urge to do something to improve the situation back in their war-torn home town or country.



The Journey to Schooling

A wide range of potential roadblocks to schooling have been found in the literature for this study. First, during the displacement, it happens a lot that paperwork and certificates are left behind (Essomba, 2017), which might be a problem throughout the registration process. Moreover, the registration itself might be a hurdle, since it can be difficult for the new arrivals (UNHCR and Global Monitoring, 2016). Furthermore, it occurs more frequently than desired that earlier schooling completed by refugee students in their home country is devalued and de-skilled (Morrice, 2013; Essomba, 2017). Lastly, economic considerations

might constitute a challenge for refugees and their families as they feel eager to access schools (Sinclair, 2007; UNHCR and Global Monitoring, 2016).

Most of these variables mentioned in the literature have appeared in the narratives of participants' experiences. The first hurdle, however, was not as dominant as it was initially expected. The participants' experiences with the lack of paperwork have varied. For example, Talib expressed how he felt lucky for having a staff member considerate enough to overlook this at the registration time, "I was scared they would tell me there was no school for me, but the staff looked at me and said no problem. You can start next week," (Talib). Yousuf, however, had a snag with his registration documents: he did not have his last school certificate on him, "I really had a terrible time before leaving Syria ... and did not manage to retrieve any documents. It was truly painful to explain to the staff that my school was no longer there, back in Homs. So, there is no one to ask to prove where I reached in my schooling in Syria," (Yousuf). On the other hand, Amani had photos of her original papers and they accepted her registration only based on those. Reem, in turn, started elementary school from the first year, so her family did not need to provide any documents.

The second obstacle, the school registration system itself, was unclear for several participants. Yousuf stated, "I didn’t know how to start. I felt overwhelmed with the amount of information. And I’m not a citizen here, nor am I an international student. So, even though I am permitted to stay here, I didn't know which category I would be in. It was pretty frustrating," (Yousuf). Yousuf further added that the timetables and procedures necessary for enrolment are complex and difficult,"sometimes, I had to follow the rules for local students and other times I would follow the requirements for international students," (Yousuf). Another participant, Talib, added, saying that information about refugee students' rights and

ways to access schools is not always very clear, "you can't find all the information in one place or source, especially if it is for refugees. My brother and I had to ask in different places about how to register for school. At times, the staff knew and helped me immediately, but at other times they did not know," (Talib).

In reality, refugee students find themselves in-between when it comes to registration and enrolment procedures. For sure, this differs from one school to another, and from one state to another. The choice of courses available to refugee students, shown in Table 1, can be used to comprehend this issue. Yousuf reported, "(when) you are a refugee (student), you have to start by studying the German language, so you cannot go back to school casually like before," (Yousuf). It is quite reasonable to assume this is the case for all participants. However, Talib said, "when I told them I'm a refugee, they asked me what languages I could speak. When they knew I could speak English a little, they decided I could start studying in English. I was prepared to spend a year or two studying German before I could continue my formal schooling, but they said, "no problem, you can continue schooling in English and the German language is like an additional subject," (Talib). It is worth noting here that, while Yousuf lives in Munchen, Talib lives in Hamburg[80]. Different states and different schools within one state could implement refugee education initiatives differently (Vogel & Karakaşoğlu, 2017).

In essence, this aspect of schooling can be a deciding factor in the registration process of refugee students. Reem explained that in one school, they told her family she should start from pre-school to get proper foundations in the German language. "They said, 'no, you have to enrol her in preschool. Otherwise, she will not be able to catch up easily in grade one'," (Reem). But upon inquiring in other schools, her family found that they could enrol her

[80] see Table 6.

in grade one at an elementary school even if she knew nothing about German. "(In this school) they didn't care about my German language, so my parents decided to enrol me directly," (Reem). When inquiring about the reason from Reem's parents, her mother said they wanted to save Reem from the fate of having an age gap between her and her peers, as she was already at the age that she was supposed to start first grade at elementary school, "so we decided to go along with that because we knew Reem is smart enough to pick up the language fast," (Reem's mother).

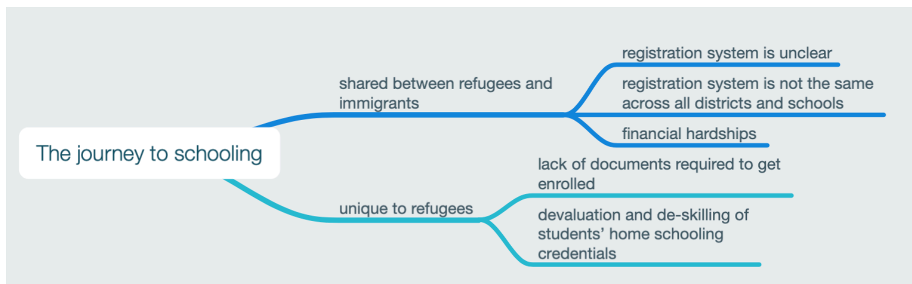
As confirmed by Vogel and Karakaşoğlu (2017), the devaluation and de-skilling of prior student experiences were the third issue and were brought up subtly throughout the interviews. As mentioned earlier, Reem felt that her chances of joining elementary school were not hampered by the underestimation of her prior language learning skill, "I was relieved to be able to go to school, even though I still didn't speak German. I could speak some English at that time, but it didn't matter to them, " (Reem). On the other hand, Yousuf reported that since he did not carry any certificates that could prove where he had reached in his schooling in Syria, "they (the principal and another teacher) tested me. I had two tests in mathematics and physics. I think I did well, but they decided to place me at a lower grade. They advised me to learn slowly at first so that I could catch up with other students later. I felt upset. I think I was ready to challenge a higher grade," (Yousuf).

The situation was quite similar for Talib. Before submitting his registration documents, he and his brother met with the school advisor and explained his circumstances. He emphasised the disruption that he encountered in his former schooling and his present status: "When they discovered that I had no papers to prove my former schooling level and achievements, they first denied my application. Then they agreed to assess my skills in some subjects. Based on an interview I had with a teacher, they said I could attend school in grade

6. It was a shock to me, as if losing two years of my life before finally getting back to school was not enough," (Talib). Talib used to attend preparatory school in Syria in grade 8. Therefore, in addition to having two years evaporate in his journey of asylum, he was faced with the fact that his learning was de-valued and he had to repeat two years he had already finished in Syria. Amani, in turn, felt that the fact that certain schools do not offer refugee-oriented classes helps the de-skilling of prior learning experiences. She reflected on this while reporting being placed one class lower than she was supposed to be, "I am not expecting them (schools in Germany) to treat me with special care, and I know some schools in Syria might not be that good, but they (people in charge at German schools) assume we all overestimate our skills. They don't even have a way to fairly evaluate us," (Amani).

The final factor highlighted in the literature is the financial impediment. However, none of the participants mentioned financial hardships in relation to going to school per se. Yousuf mentioned that going to school for him was almost free of charge, "I don't worry about the tuition cost, travel, or book expenses, but I sometimes cannot go on excursions because I have to pay for that," (Yousuf). Reem also reported that the teachers at her school suggested they would collect donations for her to go on an excursion if her family could not afford it, "they told me they would gather the excursion fee for me from school donations. They thought the reason I did not want to go was that my family could not pay for it, but it was actually something else entirely," (Reem).

In short, refugee students are unique in their experiences compared to fellow immigrant students in that they often lack the necessary documents for school enrolment. In addition, they are often faced with the practice of devaluation and deskilling of their home-country schooling credentials.



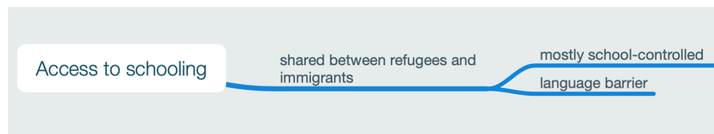
Access to Education

The participants believed that access to education is more influenced by school policy than by state regulations, "I spoke to many other refugee students, and I've learned that each school has its own set of rules and regulations. If you're a refugee, some schools will demand that you have a certain level of German or hold a certain paper, but others will look at your motives and make a decision on that basis. This is why it's important to be aware of your options when applying to schools," (Yousuf). Talib added, "I feel it's about how much they are tolerant of refugee students. I saw that some of my friends (other refugee students) from the camp did not have a problem registering at a school when they left. My brother and I had some issues when we tried that. It is about the school, I think," (Talib). Despite these experiences, most participants (Yousuf, Talib, and Amani) felt that the country offers a great educational environment for refugees.

According to many participants, language can be another barrier to education for refugees. "It is really difficult when you don't know how to speak German or English to a degree that is good enough to attend regular classes right away," (Yousuf). Talib elaborated, "considering the language barrier, I think I lost most of my time trying to learn the language rather than actually study the things I wanted to study," (Talib). For Amani, giving birth has stalled her schooling, but she is still learning German on her own at home until her son becomes old enough to be left at a day care while she continues her schooling, "I do it (studying German) when my son is sleeping and I have free time. It's not

easy at all without a teacher, but returning to school with poor German is not practical," (Amani).

In a nutshell, refugee students face similar challenges to their fellow immigrants when it comes to gaining access to education, provided they meet the admissions requirements of the school to which they apply.



In-class Experiences

Although participants' stories varied, three things appear to be generally applicable when it comes to their experiences in class: first, language issues, second, the fact that the German educational system is vastly different from what they used to have in Syria, and third, the way they relate to their teachers is quite different from what they were used to back in the home country.

Language Issues

For all participants, language was an issue, which conforms to the literature reviewed earlier (O'Rourke, 2014). There are several ways in which language may impede a student's ability to learn in class: difficulties in interacting with the teacher or German classmates (Talib, Reem, Amani, and Yousuf), academic reading and understanding their study material easily (Talib, Yousuf, and Amani), or doing some tasks and understanding class or school rules (Reem and Yousuf). Language acquisition and competence are intrinsically linked to inclusion in the school system (Wrench et al. 2017). For instance, Reem reported her frustration in her first year at school not understanding what she was being taught in class due to language barriers, "they asked me to repeat after them (teachers), but I

had no idea what that was. I only did it. They looked happy as I was repeating and mimicking my classmates, but I did not know what I was learning then. I didn’t know how to even ask questions," (Reem).

There are many different degrees of English competence among refugee students in Germany. However, they often face the extra obstacle of having to learn German as well. Until they learn the local language, most refugees feel isolated. According to Bauman (2002), refugees are frequently referred to in the literature as having a sense of estrangement when they cannot communicate in the local language. They can be perceived as strangers by the host community, which can lead to the refugees' loss of a sense of belonging (Olagookun & White, 2017). This can make the task of learning even much harder and more isolating, "... and then I thought, 'why do I have to do it (learning German)?' It was so hard, and I had no friends to practise speaking with. I thought my skills could never be as good as theirs (local students')," (Talib).

Disparities between Home and Host Countries' School Systems

Then, when it comes to disparities between home and host countries' educational systems, most participants (Talib, Yousuf, and Amani) agreed that the contrasts between the educational systems of both Germany and Syria were evident. Such differences appeared in the relationships between teachers and students, the teaching methods, the expectations of students in and out of the classroom, the workload… the manner in which teachers deal with students, the number of students in class... and the technology used in class," (Talib). Aside from that, "back in Syria, normally lessons look like lectures; one-way instruction from the teacher to the students, but here it's more about study and research focused groups; it's more discussions than instructions, you see," (Yousuf).

Amani illustrated the challenges she experienced in class in contrast to her past schooling experiences, "as you may know, in Syria, we learn everything through our teachers, so the teacher is our source of knowledge. We simply need to be present in class. It was not necessary to read a lot or even think. But here, they want us to be more critical and not think like the teacher, "… but thinking deeply about something by myself and speaking my own mind is not easy," (Amani). In this respect, it was necessary for some participants to learn a new set of abilities to adapt to the new educational system and classroom dynamics, "here, I need to be more analytical while learning. I have to discover the causes, effects, and final conclusions on my own. In Syria, this was discouraged. I didn't need to do anything else except read the material and study for the test," (Yousuf).

Reem did not have much educational background in Syria to compare with, but it seemed that her parents were the ones who were at a loss with the way she was being taught and the type of tasks she was studying at school, "we tried to see what she was studying at school, but it seemed like it was a different style from what we were used to having in Syria. I am not sure I can be of much help to my daughter in her studies," (Reem's mother).

Relationships with Teachers

It is undeniable that the degree to which participants interact in the classroom and with their instructors varies, and it is far more dependent on personal preferences and personality. Some students, like Amani, "want to avoid any conversation with my teacher," (Amani), while others, like Yousuf, "enjoy asking questions," (Yousuf). Yet, in terms of class engagement, it is worth noting that most students may not be able to fully participate in classes due to a lack of genuine understanding. This was the case with Talib, who described how he was at first reluctant to express his thoughts in class, but after some time and a lot of self-study, he found that he was able to participate more

enthusiastically in class, regardless of his poor skills, "I was embarrassed by my poor language skills at the beginning, so I refrained from speaking much. I just listened and asked some questions. But now I can ask the teacher any question I have. I feel more confident speaking in class," (Talib).

Participants generally believe that instructors are accessible and willing to engage in conversation, "I think all our teachers are kind and they are ready to help and answer our questions. I sometimes ask them for help in the break, and they say, 'no problem', like they don't tell me they are busy or have no time," (Reem). Yousuf highlights that his relationship with his teacher in Germany is much more informal than that with teachers in Syria, "I don't need to use Mr. or Ms. when I speak with my teachers here. I can just say their first names and talk to them casually. It is nice to be able to do this," (Yousuf). Amani elaborated, "what surprised me was that in Syria we had this formality in interacting with our teachers, so here it feels so strange to me to see students eating with or directly talking with the teacher. We are even told to call the teachers by their (first) names," (Amani).

Generally, the participants' former connections with their teachers in Syria were characterised by a hierarchical gap, with the students' engagement in class mostly passive, "there (in Syria), teachers had to be respected just like generals in the army. We had to stand up and salute the teachers when they came in," (Talib). Nonetheless, none of the participants discounted the value or validity of their earlier schooling experiences. Amani said, "I'm not criticising the Syrian school system in any way. There, I learned many things, but I learned them in a different way," (Amani). Talib added, "we studied like this: this is the book, and you must memorise it from cover to cover, word by word, which means, at the end of the day, learning. I think I like the German style of learning more," (Talib).

In several cases, the participants observed that the instructors were more accommodating to their needs than they had previously thought they would be. When it comes to class projects, for example, Amani and Talib stated that they could not finish their assignments on time on many occasions. When they sought an extension on the deadline, their teachers were more than willing to comply. Yousuf was allowed to use a dictionary when taking multiple tests to overcome the language barrier, "I didn't think she (the teacher) would let me use it (a dictionary), but she was cool about it," (Yousuf). Teachers were similarly tolerant of Reem's language errors, "in my first few years, I used to make lots of mistakes in my sentences, but my teacher ignored them. Yet, he was strict with German students," (Reem).

Faith in the Classroom

Regarding the demonstration of religious beliefs, the female participants saw their relationships with their teachers as unpleasant at times and felt their teachers were condescending. Upon asking Amani about her relationship with her teacher, her first response was, "it's OK, not good, but not bad. I have this teacher who I just wish would stop negatively commenting on my hijab (head scarf). He takes every opportunity to speak to me out of it. I am tired," (Amani). Similarly, when Reem decided to wear the head scarf in her 5th grade, she attracted her teachers' attention too much to her liking, "she was shocked when I went to the school putting on my hijab for the first time. She asked me if my parents forced me to put it on, but I said no. I want to do it myself. She looked at me like she didn't believe me. She said it was repressive, and I didn't know what she meant until I asked my mother," (Reem).

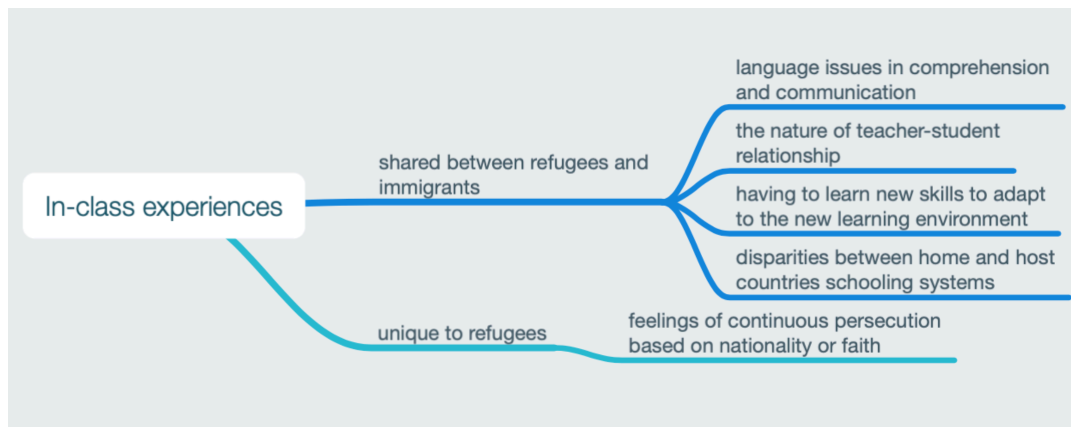
The male participants, on the other hand, did not encounter any direct interaction with their teachers on that matter. They mentioned, however, that they felt their beliefs were scrutinised and ill-spoken of at times, “he (the teacher) brought an article from a newspaper

and asked us to read it first and then discuss it. The news was about what extremists have been doing in Syria. He asked me why Muslims do horrible things like that. I tried to tell him that those were not Muslims, but he didn't let me," (Yousuf). Talib reported similar experiences with his teachers during his orientation course, "we had to practise speaking and discussing topics in the German language. But, then there was that one teacher who would always include a discussion paper or two, targeting Islam, like what do you think about having sex before marriage, or what do you think of jihad. My German was not good enough yet to say clearly what I wanted to say. I also felt that my teacher was judging my religion and me based on his opinions without looking for the truth. It hurt me that I could not speak up for myself," (Talib).

Most participants did not think that the teachers were intentionally trying to demean their beliefs; "he just does not know. I understand. If he learns more about it (Islam), he wouldn't be so critical," (Amani). Yousuf also states that "they (teachers) think they are teaching us the values and way of life of German people so we can live easily here. I agree with that. I don't think they meant to make Islam look bad in front of my classmates," (Yousuf). Reem, took it further to reflect on the double standards in adopting values; "she tells me we are free here, we can do anything we want to do, and so I choose to put on a hijab. She tells me it is not good for me because it is difficult to do many activities if I wear a hijab. I know that, but with her pressure to take it off, I feel I am not free to wear what I want anymore," (Reem).

In some ways, all participants felt that the reason they were persecuted before seeking refuge has continued in class in different ways, especially because of their faith or where they come from, as will be displayed in the next section. Facing such experiences ignited feelings of despair in some, like Amani and Talib, and anger in others, like Yousuf and Reem. This

point is what distinguishes refugees from immigrant students in experiencing their schooling in host countries, as shown below.



Relationships with Peers

In educational contexts, relationships with peers constitute a critical element. There was a wide range of interaction styles between the participants and their peers, and these connections were not always straightforward. For example, Amani felt that she was alienated at school and that she did not know what to do about it, "since I started going there (to school), I felt like I cannot fit in. Not having relations with my classmates does not affect my studies, but I don't know, I feel I don't belong there," (Amani). Talib goes on to internalise his issues forming new relations with his peers, "I couldn't make friends in my class or in my school. I tried, but it seems it's not working. Maybe my style is wrong. I am not sure," (Talib). Luckily, for those participants, however, this feeling of isolation did not translate into unpleasant outcomes.

Nevertheless, the experiences of other participants were strikingly different. Reem reported how her relationship with her friend, who used to sit next to her in class, had deteriorated after an event at school where parents were invited to watch a play performed by the students. "we were good friends. Then, after the play, she stopped speaking to me and

asked the teacher to allow her to change her seat. When I approached her to ask about what made her angry with me, she said her mother told her not to speak to me because I was a bad person. We never spoke again after that," (Reem). Yousuf, on the other hand, got into verbal quarrels with some of his peers after they addressed him with discriminatory comments in the playground and on breaks between classes, "not all of them, but some would tell me to go back home, and that I am a terrorist. I could not stand it, but I was scared of doing something that would get me suspended from school. After all, I am the stranger here," (Yousuf).

Upon further discussions with the participants about their relationships with peers, Amani reported that her relationship with German students was quite neutral, "they were kind to me and one of them helped me understand what the assignment was. We are not friends, but she was polite," (Amani). However, her relationship with some other refugee students was sensitive, "... three students from Afghanistan kept making fun of me in front of everyone. They kept attacking me with silly questions during our discussions, like 'do you even know what a mobile phone is?' 'Have you even seen a TV?' 'How long did it take to reach your school in Syria on a camel?' That was stupid. I didn't think anyone would believe that we were living in pre-history in Syria. I tried to retaliate at times, but it felt stupid. I wish guys could be more mature," (Amani).

Collaboration and Feelings of Exclusion

Collaboration with peers was demanded in some classes, and some participants had never collaborated with a team before. They found it difficult to do group assignments with their peers, "I looked at them, like what should I do, but they did not even need to think about it. They immediately started working on their parts as if they knew what their roles were in advance," (Yousuf). Amani also mentioned, "sometimes, when we have group discussions, I feel like there are secret rules for how to do it and that I am the only one who doesn't know

about these rules. I keep hunting for signs for when I should add my comment or move to another topic, but it drains me every time," (Amani).

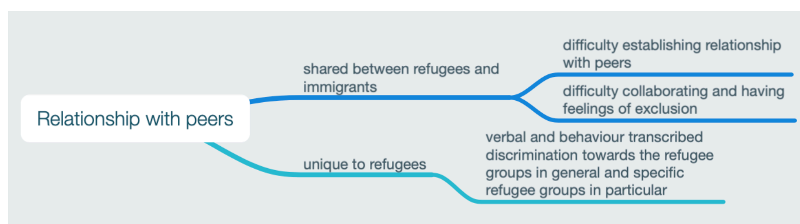
All participants, except for Reem, used the rationale that they were 'new' in that context to validate their feelings of exclusion, "well, they already knew each other before I joined the class, so I felt like a stranger in their group," (Talib). Amani reported, "it is natural that they do not want to include me in their groups. I am the new one. In class, it did not make much difference, but after class, they would all walk home or go someplace together, so I felt like I had to leave them. I didn't feel I belonged there (in the group)," (Amani).

The literature is full of how the topics of otherness and belongingness play a huge role in refugee narratives (Bauman, 2002; Olagookun & White, 2017). The participants' stories of their relationships with peers reflected that. For example, Yousuf and Talib decided to keep their refugee status to themselves whenever they could manage it, "they (some of his classmates) didn't ask and I didn't tell them (that I was a refugee). I thought it was better not to tell them. If they knew I was a refugee, our relationship might have been affected," (Yousuf). Talib chose to play along with the misconceptions of some of his peers, "they thought I was an immigrant, not a refugee, and I felt it was safer to let them continue thinking like that. It is not like I would lose anything if they knew, but I did not want to rock the boat," (Talib).

As stated by Gerrard (2016), the notion of otherness is steeped in preconceived assumptions. This is reflected in both Talib's and Yousuf's narratives. To avoid inviting unpleasant images of 'the other', Yousuf and Talib decided not to reveal their backgrounds. Yousuf elaborated on that, "I'm not ashamed of being a refugee. It's not like I committed a crime or anything. I'm just a person whose country suffered horrible things and I wanted to live. The reason I don't share that I am a refugee at times is that I don't want them to look at

me with pity. I hate it when people pity me. I am a refugee, true, but I'm a human who has dignity," (Yousuf).

In short, it is common for refugees and immigrants alike to face difficulties in forming new relationships with peers, and both groups will encounter feelings of exclusion from peer groups. However, since situational awareness is intensely heightened in the minds of refugee students, they are more likely to feel discriminated against for the mere fact of being a 'refugee'.



Other Difficulties

One of the questions in the interview was about the obstacles that refugee students perceive themselves to be experiencing, which they feel are on top of those that other students may encounter. Language was an issue that all participants mentioned as an obstacle in their paths towards engaging in the same activities as other students. Refugee students have to exert additional effort to learn the local dominant language before they can actually return to their schooling journey, "it took me a year of hard work, every day, to be able to speak decent German, so they would accept me in other classes," (Talib). Children pick up new languages more easily than adults (Krashen & Scarcella, 1979); however, refugee children find it stressful that their efforts to learn the local language are more scrutinised and that their poor performance might lead to irreversible consequences, "in Syria, I learned English a little in kindergarten, and I had fun. But here, in my first two years, I felt I was under pressure to learn German perfectly. I was scared they (teachers) would get angry and

call my parents to school if I did not do well. They might as well withdraw our papers (asylum application), right?" (Reem). Reem's last comment displays the psychological pressure refugee students face as they assume, subconsciously, that there is a link between their legal status and how successful they are at integrating and performing in daily activities.

Another issue reported by some participants is the age gap and feeling older or too mature compared to other students in the class. Yousuf said, "I feel the difference is huge between me and other students. I had to stop going to school in Syria for a couple of years, then I lost one more year seeking asylum and waiting to register for school. I am much behind other students in learning and it is frustrating," (Yousuf). Amani added to that, "I am the oldest among my siblings, so I already feel mature, but at school I feel I am too mature. I could have fun when I used to go out with my classmates in Syria, but here I feel they (classmates) are too silly," (Amani). Even Reem, who started going to school in Germany at the proper age for her grade, felt she was too mature at school, "my teacher sometimes asks what my age is again, she looks like she does not believe I am still 12," (Reem), and added on the same topic, "they (some classmates) invited me a couple of times to sleepovers, but I think it's childish. I did not go because I have more important things to do in my evenings or at weekends than hang out with them," (Reem).

Along with the age gap and being away from schooling for some time comes another issue; the knowledge gap. Some participants felt they had to study extra on their own to fill in knowledge gaps in their previous schooling that they felt they needed to have in their current learning experiences. Talib elaborates on this point, "as I told you, I used to be very good at maths in Syria. I was great in algebra and calculus. When I got the maths textbook here, I saw formulas we did not study at the same grade back in Syria. I had to ask a friend from the

camp to teach me those things. I don't think I understood perfectly, but anyway, it took me many hours every night to prepare for maths lessons," (Talib). Amani felt the same, but she also thought there was a reverse knowledge gap for local students when it came to history and social studies, "I had to study German history, geography, and many Europe-related topics. Everything was new to me, so I had to read a lot by myself to understand what some other students found easy. But they also don't know anything about my country or the region I come from, other than what they hear on the news, of course. It can't be helped that they don't know or are not interested in knowing, but if they just make a similar effort, well, in the end, I am in their country, and it is only natural that I have to learn more about them than they do about me," (Amani).

Similarly, some participants reported feeling a gap in their required skill sets at school, "... everyone could use the software easily. I did not know how to even find the file. It was frustrating to do the assignment at the same speed as everyone else was doing it. It took me time to learn," (Yousuf). Talib also mentioned physical education as an area where he felt he was behind his peers, "... and then there was this time when everyone had to jump over the pommel horse. I was shocked that everyone could do it, even some other refugee guys, but I have never done that. I was afraid I would get injured if I tried it there, so I asked the teacher to let me practise alone first," (Talib).

Moreover, refugees' everyday hardships should be recognised as a source of enormous pressure and additional challenge (Avery & Said, 2017). One such hardship was reported by two participants. Talib first reported his residence outside the camp as one of his problems, "... finding a place to live with my brother was too difficult, but the problem is, when we moved there, I had to commute for one hour to get to school," (Talib). He added, "... on top of that, since it was an apartment shared with other refugees from Iraq, it was too

noisy. I could not study at night sometimes, so I would wake up early to study when everyone was still sleeping," (Talib). Amani also mentioned something similar, "we had to look for an apartment to rent for months. You know, it is kind of impossible for refugees to find a place to rent here (in my district), but even after we were told about a place, and we moved in, it was too small. I have five family members, and we all live in one room. Studying in such a space is sometimes impossible, especially with my young, noisy brothers," (Amani).

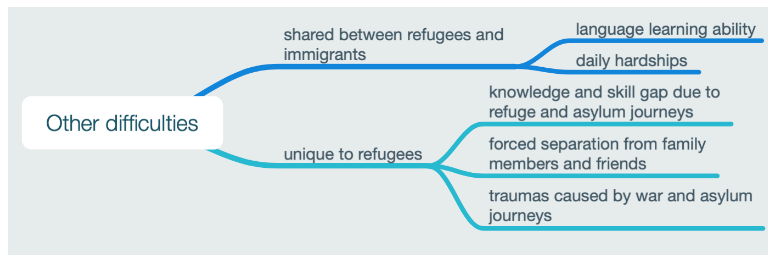
Additionally, the impact of trauma on refugee students' schooling experiences (Wrench et al., 2017; Sinclair, 2007) was another topic of discussion in the interviews. Refugees' emotional and psychological distress, such as the loss of a family member or the disruption of their lives, must be taken into account (Wrench et al., 2017). Yousuf reported that "the news about the war in Syria sometimes turns up as a topic of discussion at school, "I guess it can't be avoided because the conflict there is ongoing. But I don't want to remember. I want to focus on studying something useful for my future. I feel irritated some days and I wish they would stop speaking about the war there," (Yousuf). Talib elaborated on an experience he had once, "... I didn't know why it happened, but he (the teacher) asked us to speak about a memorable day in our lives. Some students had great memories. When it was my turn to recall a memory, all I could think of were the last few months I spent in Syria.Then, I shared the most memorable day of my life when I saw my uncle get blasted in a bombing that targeted our neighbourhood in Homs. He died later at the hospital. I can’t shake that memory from my mind. The teacher told me he was sorry to hear that, but this is life. I know. I just don’t like these topics of speaking practice in class," (Talib).

On the same topic, Amani reported one painful experience she had on a school trip to a museum in Germany, "we were walking slowly and looking at artworks when one classmate ran up to me and said, 'Guess what! They are having a temporary photography

exhibition on the war in Syria!' I went to see the exhibition, but I regretted it later. There were lots of photos, very sad photos, and very horrible photos of places I knew and places I didn't know. I felt a wave of sadness and helplessness hit me suddenly. My tears started pouring uncontrollably, and my teacher and classmates tried to calm me. I don't know. It was surreal. It didn't feel like I had ever lived there (in Syria). The photos were in black and white, so they felt like they were photos of a war that happened a long time ago. It was terrible seeing them and realising how bad the war there was. It is going on. You see, it is not finished. I felt like my life back there was a lie," (Amani).

Furthermore, some participants have reported that being separated from their old friends and family members is another source of anguish for them. Reem reported, "... and he (the teacher) asked us about what we did on the holiday. Many classmates said they visited their grandparents or went out with their families. Then I remembered my grandfather; he is still in Syria. I talk to him by phone when he has internet connection, which is not very often. My friends are probably still in Syria. I don't know. I lost contact with them when we left Syria. I had nothing nice to say about my holiday that day. I just stayed home," (Reem). Amani added to this narrative, "the people I love and care about are scattered in Syria, Lebanon, or Turkey. I don't think I can create similar relationships here at school. It is different. I became different," (Amani).

To summarise, refugee as well as immigrant students face daily hardships in their schooling experiences. They also struggle while attempting to learn the local language. However, refugee students face particular difficulties caused by their war and asylum experiences. Such difficulties range from trauma and forced separation from family to having to deal with filling in knowledge and skill gaps while attending school.



Curricular and Study Content

All participants had something to say about the curricula and learning materials they had in either their orientation courses or at school. In the orientation course, participants reported that the material focuses mainly on the German language and the values and norms of life in Germany, "we studied German in the mornings and afternoons. We also had special classes where they taught us about German values and rules. I enjoyed learning at the beginning, but when my language started developing and I moved to higher levels, it became more difficult. I struggled to learn some things in the German language which are non-existent or completely different in Arabic," (Yousuf).

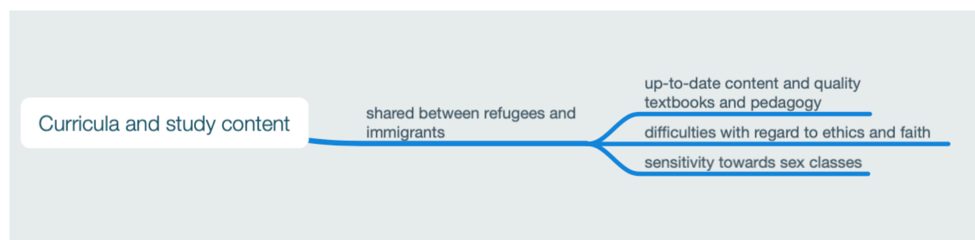
Talib goes on to discuss how Germany has up-to-date textbooks despite the fact that they are highly 'Europe-centralised,' as he puts it, "there (in Syria), I did not notice how old some of the information was in our textbooks back home. I am surprised to see how quickly Germany updates information, especially in the sciences. We can get information about theories and discoveries made just recently in our textbooks. This is incredible. But, they are Europe-centralised, if you know what I mean. I rarely find any mention of where I come from in my textbook. I feel like I came from space," (Talib). Amani also expressed how impressed she was with the quality of textbooks and teaching methods at her school, "I enjoy learning with coloured textbooks. My teachers are also great at teaching different levels. And they are patient too. If I don't understand, they keep trying to make me get it by using different examples. I think the quality of teaching methods here is very high," (Amani).

On the other hand, both Reem and Talib had a critical outlook on some of the content in the curricula. For instance, Reem explained her anger when she discovered that her parents, upon enrolling her in the first grade, had requested the school to refrain from making her attend any classes that teach faith, "… I was telling her (my mother) what we learnt in class about different religions in the world, then she got angry and went to talk with my father. I knew later that I wasn't supposed to attend any religious classes, but that wasn't the first time. Since first grade, I have been learning and singing church hymns. We learnt a lot about Jesus and Christmas. But I didn't know that they (my parents) had requested that (not making me attend religious classes) from the school. Thinking about it now, it is impossible for the school to submit to their request because they teach us about these things in subtle ways. Like in drawing classes, they take us to the church and ask us to draw the cross. In music classes, they teach us songs about the Christ. I only noticed when my parents told me, but even after they went to school and requested it (canceling my ethics class) again, I don't think they can change the curricula. It's sneaky how they put information in it," (Reem). Reem's mother added later, upon inquiring about this point, "we wanted to teach Reem about Islam at home and didn't want the school to interfere in her religious upbringing. We thought, since it is a secular state, that it is similar to Syria; children only learn about faith in faith classes. We were shocked to realise that when they teach her ethics, it is all about Christian values. They (school staff) were not clear with us," (Reem's mother).

Talib, in turn, elaborated on his disbelief at what he was taught at school at times, "they bring toys and photos to explain, you know, how to do it, I mean, sex. Then they also show us videos of how to do it in different positions. Without shame or embarrassment, they show us the whole process, as if they were demoing a cooking class. I couldn't believe it. I was too embarrassed to even look. It is like showing that (pornography) to us. I didn't know

where to look. It seemed it was OK for the others (classmates), and some were excited about trying it themselves. But I think it is unacceptable to show this to students. We go to school to learn. I don't know what to say," (Talib). Upon confirming with the other participants, it seems there is a general discomfort with sex classes (with all participants), but only Amani and Talib expressed critical views on how religion is being taught or "presented in a different shape," as Talib put it.

Generally speaking, and from the data collected from the participants, there is a negligible difference in how refugee and immigrant students view and handle the content of their curricula. Both groups express difficulties pertaining to accepting differences in how some topics, like faith and ethics, are taught while admitting the good side of such differences, quality and being updated.



Education and Integration

Integration was one recurrent theme that was mentioned multiple times in all interviews, although the interview schedule did not include it. The participants' views on education as a means for assimilation were not uniform, and some participants expressed reservations about the degree to which integration and schooling experience may be jointly linked. On the other hand, a few participants recognised the strong connection between the two. Within the scope of the literature, some scholars suggest that education should act as an integrating tool and aid in acclimating refugee students to new circumstances (Zeus, 2011). Other scholars define education as the space during which pre-acculturation

occurs, in which the host country's language, history, values, and norms are introduced (Araos Moya, 2017). Accordingly, the literature recognises the critical function of education in facilitating integration (Wilkinson, 2002; Koehler, 2009; Zeus, 2011).

The participants who forwardly admitted the importance of education in the integration process attributed it to the fact that schools are supposed to assist in social interaction. Yousuf elaborated, "through schooling, I can meet and socialise with German students. I can also learn a lot about Germany through my teachers," (Yousuf). Talib added, "I can collaborate on assignments with other students, and this will help me have a better understanding of the culture and way of life here," (Talib). Amani mentioned, "... by going to school, I can meet other refugee students as well, and through connections with them, I might be able to get more opportunities for work and other things in the future," (Amani).

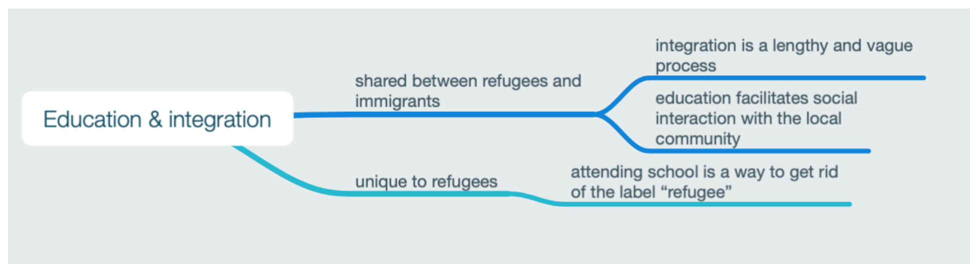
On the other hand, Reem felt that integration is a vague and lengthy process, and that establishing a relationship between integration and her schooling experience would be premature, "I am not sure now. I think it will take more time. I should focus now on my studies. I don’t know how integration in Germany will come about through schooling," (Reem). Additionally, Reem mentioned that she thought she was able to form bonds with her peers and teachers at the beginning, but she is not sure about the integrity of these bonds now, "I thought I was a friend to them, but now I feel like there is a hole between us and it is growing every day, even with my teacher, I don't think he likes me the same as before," (Reem). When asked about why she thinks this is the case, she said, "at the beginning, I was trying to do everything like them (classmates and teachers). I wanted them to like me, and I wanted to be a part of this place, but the more I did that, the further away I felt from my parents. I love my mom and dad. They sacrificed a lot to bring me here to this safe place. So, up to my fourth grade, I used to spend most of my time after school playing

with other kids from school and from the neighbourhood. But, since then, I decided to spend my free time with mom and dad more." (Reem). She elaborated later, "... no, that is not it. I think my relation with my friends and teacher changed when I started wearing hijab. That happened in the fifth grade. I had been thinking about it for a while, and although my dad told me not to, and that it was too early for me, I really wanted to do it. So I did. Then suddenly, I felt some distance from my friends and teachers at school, and I felt like some of them looked at me with some hate or disgust in their faces, and some looked at me with pity," She wrapped up after some thoughts, "I am not sure integration will work out this way," (Reem).

Talib sees the school setting as a comfortable one that enables him to interact with a variety of individuals and situations, "at school, I can speak about many different things and learn a lot of new things. It is nice to meet a variety of students coming from different backgrounds. When I go back home (the apartment we share with other refugees), I feel it is a stressful environment there. We all have lots of problems with our papers and residence. The discussions are always about these issues. It is full of negativity and hopelessness," (Talib). Yousuf adds to this idea by noting that schooling enables him to alter his "assigned" identity, "...everyone at school sees me as a student, which creates a sense of a new identity. I feel proud of my status as a student, as I am no longer a refugee, at least on the surface. It is not like being a refugee is bad or that we are criminals. But, if you look at the news and how people talk about refugees every day, I feel school is the only place I can be free from this negative image of refugees, me included. At school, we have different roles, like teacher and student, so it does matter who I am outside of school," (Yousuf).

Refugees and immigrants alike view education and attending school in host nations as a means to facilitate their integration into the local society. Some refugees, particularly those

who are highly sensitive to their label identity as refugees, see schooling as a means of gaining a more respected identity; a student identity.



Perceived Short-term Effects of Schooling

First, most participants complained about the fact that their mother tongue; Arabic, or that of their family members had deteriorated since they started their schooling in Germany, "I don't have the chance to speak in Arabic except when I meet other refugees, and even then, if they are not Arab refugees, I would communicate with them in German… it (speaking German) became much easier for me, but I started forgetting many Arabic words. It is starting to take me some time to remember how to say things in Arabic when I speak with my relatives and friends," (Yousuf). Amani also commented, "I can still speak Arabic well because I speak with my family every day, but speaking with my younger brothers is a rare thing. They (my two younger brothers) have gotten so used to speaking in German that they don't feel comfortable speaking in Arabic, even with me or our parents. I feel like they are in their own world and our language (Arabic), which I thought could connect us, is now a barrier between us," (Amani).

Reem was not able to evaluate her Arabic language, so her mother commented on that point, "... she can't write it (Arabic) well, but we make an effort to teach her speaking and reading it. She didn't show interest in studying Arabic until recently, when she put it (hijab) on and wanted to know more about her heritage," (Reem's mother). Talib, in turn, reported his frustration balancing between the use of his mother tongue and German, "I have to use it

(Arabic) more, I know that. But there is no time. Sometimes, days can pass without me using it at all while I am busy at school or studying at home. It happens many times that when I video-call my parents, I stop mid-sentence trying to remember how to say the names of things in Arabic, because the German names are what pop into my mind first," (Talib). He also added, "... it is easier to speak with my brother. He knows some German, so I can speak with him in Arabic, but if I forget how to say something in Arabic, I will try in German. Our conversation is often a mix of both. I feel less confident speaking with others in Arabic now," (Talib).

Along with the mother tongue deterioration came another issue; feeling distant from people they used to be emotionally close to. Reem had attributed her feeling distant from her parents in the first few years of schooling to the fact that she could not communicate enough with them, "... they (my parents) used to ask me how it (my day at school) went, in Arabic, of course, but my brain was full of German language, so I could not speak much with them. They were happy that my German language was improving and that I was getting better at school, but I was not feeling happy. They were studying German too, but they preferred speaking Arabic at home, and I wanted to be part of that, but my ability in Arabic was low. I slowly felt I was far from them," (Reem). As mentioned earlier, Amani felt distant from her younger brothers as they are integrating through their schooling at a higher pace than anyone in the family, "..they started their schooling young in Germany, so now they only talk to each other at home, in German, of course, and they don't bother talking to anyone else, not our parents, or me, after they used to tell me every single detail of their lives at school a few years ago," (Amani).

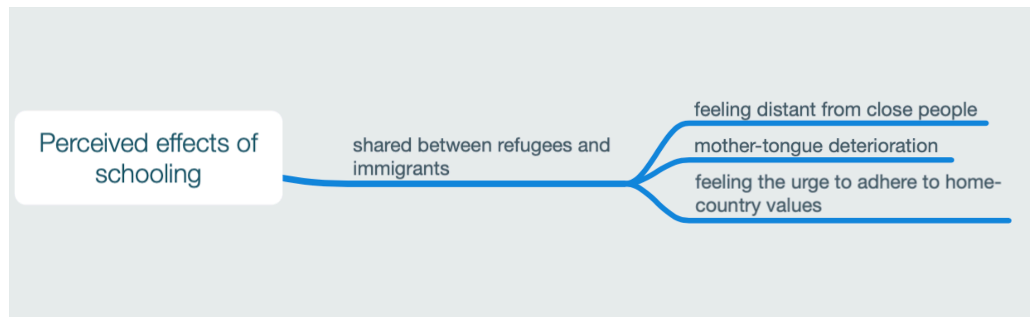
On the other hand, all participants reported how schooling generally made them more confident and vocal in stating their opinions, "before going to school, I was feeling very

depressed in the camp, and I didn't want to even speak with anyone there. But after going to school for a while now, I feel I can speak to anyone and that I have the power to stand on my own," (Talib). Reem also added to this point, "I thought I was shy when I joined the school, but now I feel like I can stand and quarrel with my teachers. I am sometimes surprised at myself," (Reem). In turn, Yousuf reported, "I was broken. What I experienced in Syria and on my way to Germany made me feel empty, so I used to be quiet when I started going to school. Gradually, though, I started feeling that I can and I want to speak up and tell people about my opinions, even if they don't agree with me," (Yousuf).

From another perspective, some participants reported that feeling this much confidence has affected their approach to value sets they used to have before their schooling, "I thought it was wrong to speak up against my father's opinion and disagree with him so bluntly. We were raised differently, like we shouldn't disobey our parents, even when they are in the wrong. But now, after I saw at school how Germans don't look at it this way, I started speaking up and letting my father know I disagreed with his ideas at times. I don't feel that well after that, though. I feel like my father is hurt, but he doesn't say it to me," (Talib). In addition, Yousuf elaborated on his approach to dating, "I was shy about speaking with girls before (I went to school here). But, at school, I learnt that I don't need to be so strict about it. I mean, you know, we were not allowed to date in Syria because of religion and the society, but here it is OK in their culture, so I felt like why not live like them? I am not doing anything wrong," (Yousuf).

Similarly to the previous section, both refugee and immigrant students can suffer from mother tongue deterioration and, consequently, can feel distant from people they used to communicate with in that language, such as family and friends from the home country. Furthermore, even as they gain confidence in communicating with others in the host country,

they begin to feel pressure to adhere to the values established there, regardless of the consequences.



Self-Identification

According to Bauman (2002), displacement might result in different shapes of identity construction and reconstruction. The study participants displayed this in a variety of ways. Upon asking them about their self-identity before seeking asylum, most participants agreed that they used to focus on their individual self more than anything else. Talib reported, "I used to introduce myself to others like, 'hi, I am Talib.' I would also talk about my hobbies and interests, like 'I love maths and physics. I love reading about them.' Nothing more than that," (Talib). Yousuf also agreed with that, saying, "it was very easy to identify myself in front of others. I never even thought about it. It just happened naturally, like 'hi, I'm Yousuf'," (Yousuf).

Reem did not have much experience introducing herself or talking about herself to others in Syria, as she was a small child when she left the country, but Amani, on the other hand, experienced something quite different back in Syria, "since I was very young, my parents, especially my father, used to remind me often that I am Palestinian and I should be proud of it. At first, I did not know a lot about what that meant. When I went to school in Syria, everybody there was Palestinian too. So I felt normal. But then, when I started going to a community centre to learn knitting, I found out the true meaning of my being Palestinian in

Syria. Only when meeting Syrian people did I realise the meaning of being a refugee. I was young, though, like 9 years old, so I am not sure I understood it well, like I do now," (Amani).

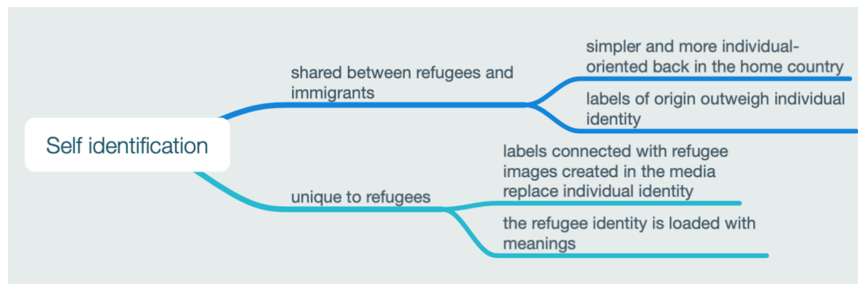
When participants were asked about whether their self-identification had changed since seeking asylum and how, a flood of narratives surfaced. Reem reported that her self-identification did not change much after she started going to school in Germany, but later, as she moved higher in grades, her attitude towards how she presents herself to others altered, "I wasn't thinking at all about how different I was. I just wanted to fit in, so when I had to introduce myself, I just said 'I'm Reem,' but slowly I started feeling that wasn't enough. As I grew older, I felt like people around me at school wanted to know more. Because, first, I look different. I don't have blond hair or blue eyes. My skin is darker than most students. My parents, when they visit the school, also look different from my friends' parents. I started feeling like I had to say more, but I didn't know what to say," (Reem). When asked if she mentions that she is a refugee to others, she replies, "... no, I don't say I am a refugee. I only say I am Syrian. I think they understand that I am a refugee, but I am not sure what difference it makes," (Reem).

Amani's self-identification as a refugee is something she has had since she was young, so it was not a new identity for her. However, the way she chooses to express it is different, "in Syria, I only needed to say I was Palestinian. It was a self-explanatory word there. Everyone knew I was a refugee, but no one said it out loud. But when we left Syria, things got complicated. Even upon seeking asylum in Germany, it was difficult to explain to the authorities how we used to be refugees in Syria. Not all the staff were familiar with our situation, so when I present myself at school to other Germans or refugees, I say 'I am from Syria', because if I say I am Palestinian, they get confused, and if I say I am Syrian, it is a lie.

I was born in Syria, so saying I am from Syria is less of a hassle. When talking to Syrian refugees, though, it is complicated, but usually I can be the most honest with them; I am Palestinian," (Amani).

Both Talib and Yousuf are having a dilemma dealing with their refugee status at school. As slightly touched upon in the earlier section, Yousuf sees schooling as a way to forget about his refugee status, "going to school is my favourite activity here in Germany. I can focus on what I am studying and forget about the world outside. It's not like the world is ugly, but only education can give me hope right now. My being a refugee stops at the school gate when I enter, and this fact only returns once I leave. This is how I think of it. I have many friends outside of school, and most of them are refugees or Turkish immigrants. But my friends at school are my friends at school only. I don't even try to meet them outside of school. It is better for me to have this separation, so I can keep things simple," (Yousuf). Talib also elaborated on the same point saying, "I feel like I chose to be a student, but I didn't choose to be a refugee. I can proudly see myself as a student. Studying and learning are things my family always encouraged me to do. They view them with pride, and I want to make them feel proud of me. I also want to be proud of myself. But I am hesitant to say I am a refugee, especially at school. I know I am a refugee, but I wish it was a different reality," (Talib).

Self-identification used to be simpler and more focused on the individual back home for both immigrant and refugee students. But once they started school in the host country, the focus turned to their national identities and where they came from. Refugee students have the extra burden of carrying the label "refugee" and having to make decisions on whether to present themselves as refugees or opt towards hiding this fact.

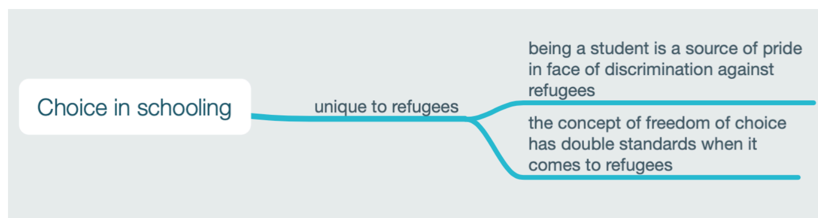


Choice in Schooling

As is apparent in the last narrative of the previous section, the theme of choice appears in the participants' narratives, and it connects their self-identity with feelings of self-respect and dignity. Reem commented on how she felt her right to follow her faith was violated, "you see, at school, they always tell us we can be what we want to be, and that nobody can judge us for our choices. But I found out this is not true. When I chose to wear my hijab, they treated me at school as if I had made a horrible mistake. They even called my parents and asked them to come to school. I actually wore hijab despite my parents' wishes not to do it, but they still respected my decision. My teachers were furious about it, and even after they knew it was my own decision, they kept trying to talk me out of it. They told me I could be a Muslim, but there was no need to wear anything different from other girls. They don't get it. I feel like I have no right to be who I want to be," (Reem).

Similarly, Amani, although she had been wearing hijab prior to her asylum in Germany, faced a similar attitude from her teacher for the same reason, "I told you before, it annoyed me a lot. I used to go to school to study, but he (my teacher) kept focusing on my hijab. He didn't say it directly, but he commented on it almost every day, like 'it is not easy for you to study wearing this, no?' or 'you don't feel too hot with this?', I am tired of his attempts to make me take it off. He doesn't understand that this is me. It is part of my personality. I can't see myself without it, and if he respects me, he should respect how I dress, Muslim or not," (Amani).

When faced with the concept of integration, immigrant and refugee students might feel that they have little choice while adapting to the norms and values of the host country. However, refugee students exhibit a heightened sense of oppression if they feel their freedom is restricted. That is especially the case if their said freedom contradicts the newly found freedom in the host country. For example, the female participants in this study used to have the freedom back in their home country of wearing a head scarf if they came of age as Muslims, so they were shocked to see they do not have this simple freedom in a country that promotes individual freedoms.



Incidents that Triggered Deeper Realisation of Self-hood

One of the questions in the interview inquired about incidents or moments that made the participants realise their sense of self-hood. Some students remembered such a time, while others did not. Talib, for instance, had an incident at school that caused him to change schools and realise the limits of how much he could accept integration practices to affect his identity. He reported, "shortly after I started attending regular classes at school, I found out we had a swimming class. I was so happy, because I love swimming. But it wasn't until my first swimming lesson that I learned about the no-clothes culture. After the class, we had to take a shower. The shower room had no separating walls between shower heads, and everyone could see everybody, so I kept my swim suit on and took a shower wearing it. My teacher got angry with me and told me to shower again after taking it off. I couldn’t believe it. For as long as I can remember, I have never been naked in front of anyone including my

own family. My teacher got really angry after I repeated the same behaviour a couple more times, and he told the principal. They called my brother to come to school and started complaining and explaining to us that these were the rules at schools in Germany and that we had to follow them. Otherwise, we can leave. My brother tried to convince me, saying that there was no problem, and that no one was looking at me, but I couldn't accept it. I feel so degraded as a human being if I show my body to others, including my brother. You can call me whatever you want; my classmates actually laughed at me and called me words I didn't understand, but if I am not allowed to have this little amount of dignity, I choose not to go to school at all. Of course, after my brother saw how stubborn I was, he helped me move to the school where I am studying now. They (the new school staff) are more flexible and understanding of my culture. Just remembering this makes me have goose bumps at how embarrassing it was to be naked in front of everyone in my class," (Talib).

When interviewing Talib's older brother, he commented on this incident by saying, "… I understand him (my brother). You know yourself that in our religion, and even our culture, we never appear naked in front of our family members, not to mention people outside the family. Decency and modesty are more important in our culture than they are here, and Talib is very shy, so it was hard to change his opinion. We were lucky to find a school that understood this aspect of our culture and allowed him to leave the swimming pool 5 minutes earlier than others to shower in privacy before others joined him. It is rare though to find these kinds of people who give you special treatment," (Talib's brother).

Reem also mentioned that despite her young age when she started her schooling in Germany, nudity was an issue for her when it came to swimming classes, "I was shocked that I had to change and be naked in front of my classmates, boys and girls. I did it a couple of

times, but I was too embarrassed to do it again. From then on, I started either pretending to be sick on the days I had a swimming class, so my parents would allow me to stay home, or more recently, lying to my teacher and telling her that I am at this time of the month when I cannot swim, so she lets me skip the class. I feel they (my classmates) have no sense of shame, showing their bodies in this way. But this is their culture," (Reem). It is interesting to note that Reem, despite being raised most of her life in Germany, used in her narrative earlier a Syrian style of talking about her period. Periods, among many others, are considered cultural taboos to speak about, even among women, in the public sphere, so Syrian people refer to these cultural taboos with phrases that indicate them indirectly. Reem must have learned that from her family, as she came into puberty just recently. When inquiring whether she uses the same style of speaking about her period with her classmates, she said laughingly, "no, no, only when I speak in Arabic. I feel it is more appropriate. But when I speak in German, I can naturally say ‘Periode.’ I feel like I have a different identity when I speak German. I can be more open and direct," (Reem).

Upon confirming this point with Reem’s mother, she commented, "… (shy laugh) you know, we don’t say these things, like we call it (a woman's period) ‘this time of the month’, or that thing, you know, when we go to the bathroom, we just say ‘we will be back’, and people immediately know where we are going, like that. I am glad Reem is polite and does not say vulgar expressions," (Reem’s mother).

As incidents triggering deeper realisation of self-hood are personal and cannot be replicated easily, the aforementioned incidents cannot be said to be unique to refugees more than they could be to immigrants. Generalisations are not possible in this sense, even with the shared home country cultural influence the participants showed in this study.

Incidents that triggered deeper sense of selfhood
Nudity and dignity
Nudity and embarrassment

’Otherness’, the Label ‘Refugee’, and Dignity

The theme of dignity in relation to 'otherness' has surfaced multiple times in participants’ self-identification narratives with regards to the label 'refugee.' As reported by Yousuf in this relation to that, "it's all over the news, posters, and social media: refugees are portrayed as thieves coming to steal the money and jobs of Germans. The German people I know are all kind and never make me feel like I am a thief, but I can’t help but feel like I need to prove that the media image is wrong and that I am not coming to steal anything. I only want a chance in life. I cannot deny that we have to show our weakness when we apply for asylum because they wouldn’t protect us if we didn’t. But that doesn't mean we are weak human beings. We only had a weak phase. We couldn’t live with dignity in our country, so I thought I could find it here. The word 'refugee' itself became an anti-dignity," (Yousuf).

Additionally, Talib related the concept of 'otherness' to his origin saying, "I told you (before) I avoid telling others that I am a refugee, but I think they can guess only by looking at me. I obviously don’t look German in any way, so it is hard to hide. My German language skills and my accent are not all that good. It is my fate to be a refugee, but I don’t like how they make me feel about being Syrian. When a discussion about the conflict in Syria takes place and they know I am from there, I get asked, "why is it like this in Syria?" as if I myself know. Some also targeted me with comments like 'Syrians must be cowards. They didn’t stay there to fight for their country' or 'Syrians are pitiful people as they were ruled by such a regime.' I feel like they are attacking me personally every time they mention the word 'Syrian', but I cannot defend myself. At times in new classes or groups, the teacher introduces me to other classmates like ‘This is Talib, a Syrian refugee,’ and at that moment, I feel like I was stabbed twice, once with the word 'refugee' and another with the word 'Syrian.' Maybe I am overthinking it, but this is how I feel," (Talib).

Scholars have noted in the literature on refugee studies the negative load that the label 'refugee' can carry for refugees (Vigil & Baillie Abidi, 2018). It is apparent in the participants' narratives that it has caused some of them some mental anguish, as it is used with unpleasant connotations most of the time. Amani, however, had a different outlook on how the term 'refugee' retains her dignity and gives her a purpose in life, "for us, Palestinians, our home is Palestine. I feel proud of being a refugee because this means I do not need to melt into other cultures and I can preserve my own culture and identity while waiting for the time when I can return to my home land. Saying that I am a Palestinian refugee gives me back a piece of dignity that the policies of refugee acceptance take away from me at times. Freeing Palestine may not happen soon, and maybe it won't happen in my lifetime, but I am sure it will one day. I must keep being proud of my Palestinian identity until that day," (Amani).

On the other hand, Amani had quite a contrasting attitude when identifying as 'an Arab' at her school. In this regard, she reported, "when I get asked about Arabic culture, I get upset. They assume all Arabs are the same and we only have one culture. Honestly, the moment anyone says the word 'Arab', I get ticked off. I expect some stupid question or comment to be directed at me after that, and I always anticipate the worst. I feel like I am Palestinian, not Arab. I cannot speak for them (other Arabs), and I don't like to be responsible for fixing people's stereotypes about them," (Amani).

Finally, Reem associated dignity with her self-identification as a Muslim. When asked about which time she feels like she is most true to herself and most sure about her identity, she said, "it is my time reading and studying Quran with my mother at home. I feel like I am free from any pressure to be what others expect me to be. I love spending time with Mom,

reading the Quran and studying stories from it. I feel I respect myself completely at that time. In school, I have to pretend to like things I don't approve of and I have to lie to fit in there, but then I hate myself so much. Every time that happens, I feel like I am a bad person, contrary to how I feel when I spend time praying or studying Quran at home," (Reem). Reem's thoughts resonate with literature; as per McCrudden (2014), the freedom to practise one's faith and religious liberty is an essential part of human dignity.

Symbols of Selfhood

The participants were asked to bring to the interviews items that represented their self-perception and to explain how those artefacts could be symbols for their identities. The use of artefacts is helpful for discerning aspects within human descriptions of life events in order to comprehend and transmit fundamental meanings (Yamasaki, Sharf & Harter, 2014, p. 101). This activity allowed the participants in this research to have a way to materialise their sense of selfhood and use concrete objects to express thoughts that are mostly abstract in their minds.

Reem brought a photo (seem Picture 1) of her parents that they took themselves on a sightseeing trip to the coastal area of Syria. She explained, "I thought about it a lot, what represents me. It took a lot of time, but after our first interview, I realised that my parents are the most important for my sense of identity. But, this photo is not of my parents now. It's a selfie taken in Syria before the war. You can see them smiling happily in that photo. That time, my baby brother was still alive. That was the last time my mom and dad smiled like that. When the war started, and my baby brother died in the hospital, my mother stopped smiling for a long time. She smiles now, at times, but not like before. She became better after she gave birth to Nizar (my younger brother)... I told you last time that I wanted to be close to my parents. I feel calm and happy when I am close to them. Of course, I miss how they used

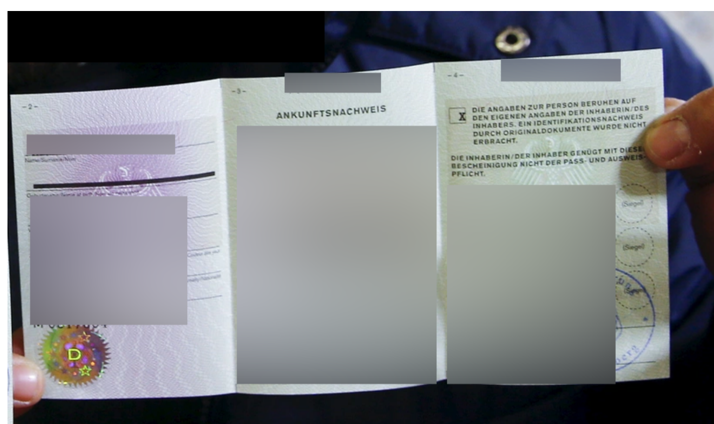
to be happy before everything happened there (in Syria), as you see in this photo. That is why I treat it (this picture) as my treasure," (Reem).

Picture 1: Reem's Artefact; A Photo Of Her Parents Back In Syria (2010).

Talib, in turn, brought his Syrian passport (see Picture 2), which had expired and he had no intention of renewing it. He elaborated, "I searched in my belongings for something to bring to the interview that could be a symbol of my identity and the closest thing to that was this passport. It expired last year, but since I am a refugee, I don't need to use it anymore. My brother advised me to throw it away; many refugees threw away their passports, believing that doing so would increase their chances of receiving protection, while others saw it as a way to start a new chapter in their lives. But I kept it, because it felt like it's a part of who I am. You see, it's not a full representation of my identity, but it's a part I feel so strong. Everything around me here in Germany is new, and that is why I remember my roots a lot. I miss many things about my life back in Syria. Sometimes, because of the endless news about the war there, I cannot have an honest conversation about life there before the war with people around me here in Germany. Everyone is so sensitive, and maybe only my brother would listen to me without judgement. I am not renewing it as I am not allowed to contact any Syrian authority, but I will definitely not throw it away," (Talib).

Picture 2: Talib' Artefact; His Expired Syrian Passport.

When it came to Yousuf's artefact, he presented his residence permit (see Picture 3) in Germany. He explained his choice by saying, "nothing can represent me now more than my current status as a refugee. This card (the residence permit) is me, and only this card can allow me to rent a place, go to school, and simply have a life. I focus on seeing myself in the present moment because when I look at my friends who sought asylum in other countries and didn't get accepted, I realise I could have been one of them. I could have been, like them, a stateless person who is viewed as an illegal immigrant about whom everyone speaks badly or fearfully. I think this card represents how I think about myself right now," (Yousuf).



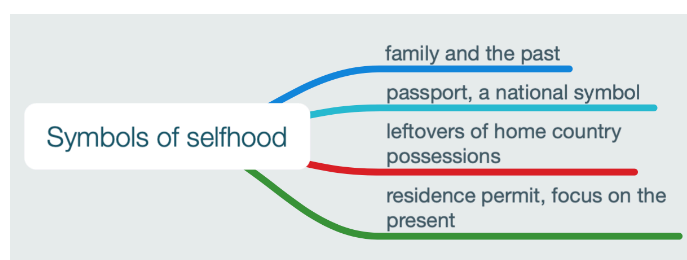
Picture 3: Yusuf's Artefact; His Residence Permit In Germany.

Finally, Amani brought keys (see Picture 4) from her house back in Syria to the interview as her artefact of choice. She reported, "these keys are for items I used to have back in my

home in Syria. They were keys to a book case and a box where I used to keep my accessories and valuables. I took the keys with me when we left Syria, because I thought I would return one day. But then, soon after we left, we (my family and myself) heard that our house was destroyed along with other houses in the neighbourhood. The whole camp is reportedly on the ground now. When I heard the news, I wished I could have taken what was inside my bookcase and box, but then, remembering how we left in a hurry with only a backpack of essential items, I think now it was impossible. I keep the keys for the sake of recollecting happy days from my childhood. ... those days are part of me and they make who I am today. I was raised there and I don't think I have changed a lot since then. Well, I only became more realistic, but apart from that, how I remember myself from when I used to live in Syria is how I think of my true self, if you can understand me," (Amani).

Picture 4: Amani's Artefact; Keys From Her Home Back In Syria

To summarise, participants had different ways through which they perceived themselves and had different reasons behind them. To some, the past, with whatever was left to them from it, is a source of identification they associate their self-hood with. To others, the present is more important than the past with whatever potential it carries for them.



Possibilities of Deportation or Return

When the topic of deportation was opened, some participants commented on that with a sense of despair and anxiety. The issue of uncertainty about their legal status and the prospects of their stay getting extended or not weighed a lot on participants' minds. Amani mentioned, "we had some issues with our papers, and my father's status was not clear. If he had to leave, I wanted to leave with him. He wouldn't let me do it, but I would insist. This thought was on my mind a lot during my first year of going to school. Some days I wondered why I should study hard if I had to move to another place soon, but then I tried to focus on my lessons," (Amani). Talib also described how ambiguity in his future residence status hunts him at times, "I see that in my dreams, they come to our room and take me and my brother to another place. It is just a dream, but I keep thinking about it a lot because I've seen the same dream many times. Even if I make myself busy, it is always there in the background of my mind. I sometimes lose motivation to work hard, because I wonder what the meaning of all this is if I am deported tomorrow," (Talib).

Other participants rather viewed the prospect of getting deported as a motivation to actually study harder. Reem said, "it (leaving Germany) can happen tomorrow, next month, or maybe 6 years later. I don't know, but, that is why I have to study and learn more before it happens. It is better to leave with something, like a degree, than nothing," (Reem). Similarly, Yousuf considered his time in Germany as "... the golden chance to achieve many dreams. Of course, I don't want to leave. I didn't struggle so much to come here to simply leave. But my

status is not in my control. It is a different story for my education. I am studying to get a diploma in car mechanics. Even if I leave Germany, I can still use my diploma and the knowledge I got from working anywhere I go," (Yousuf).

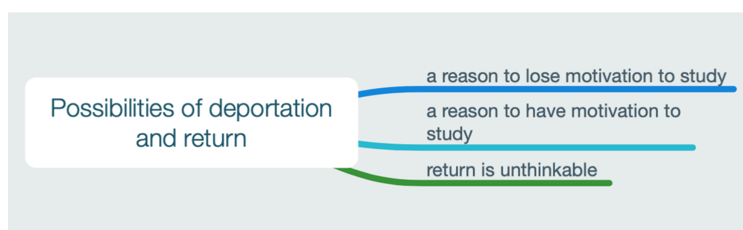
However, when asked whether they would choose to return when things simmer down in Syria, all participants expressed the same thought; to never return. Reem said, "it is possible that I might return one day, but I don't have anything there to return to except for my grandfather. I left when I was 5 years old, and I have hazy memories of my life then. I have not contacted my friends since I left. I don't know. I don't think I will return," (Reem). Amani, on the other hand, was more determined in her stance, "I cannot go back there. My life in Syria was full of bad memories. As you know, I am a Palestinian, and we used to live in Yarmouk camp. I didn't have a glamorous life to return to. It is true that I was born in Syria, but I was born a refugee and will continue to be, but there I had fewer rights and chances of education and work than I have here in Germany as a refugee. If I need to leave Germany, I would rather go to other countries, but never back to Syria," (Amani).

Talib expressed shock at the mere fact of him being asked whether he would voluntarily return to Syria, "RETURN? ME? This must be a joke. After all they did to my family and my city, you ask me whether I would return! Of course not. There is no way I would return to that place. Many family members died there. We lost our home, our business, and everything. We barely made it out of there alive. What would make me return? Even if the regime changes and the war ends, I still have too much anger about many things there, and I don't think this anger will go away easily. I don't care about rebuilding Syria, but I might try to help in rebuilding my city (Aleppo). I can send money to relatives and friends who are still there when I graduate and start working, but I will not return. If I had to leave, I

might move to live in neighbouring countries, like Turkey or Jordan, where my father and mother live now, but never to Syria," (Talib).

Yousuf, in turn, elaborated on the reason why he could not see himself repatriating. "When I read the news and see how Denmark is cancelling stay permits for Syrian refugees, I get worried about my status here in Germany, but then I think that it won't happen here. I think the German government is more sympathetic with us and our plight in Syria, so I think they will consider our rights more humanely. I wouldn't choose to go back. Well, there is no hope there. Even if the regime changes, which is kind of impossible, the laws and rules would stay. I ran away from Syria before they could arrest me, and my name is mentioned on a list for those to be caught upon arrival in Syria. A new president or new regime won't change this fact. That's it, "(Yousuf).

In short, the possibility of deportation can be a drive for refugee students to either get motivated to study or lose such motivation. However, they all shared a uniform attitude when it came to the thought of repatriation, as they generally were against it to varying degrees.



Aspirations and Concerns for the Future

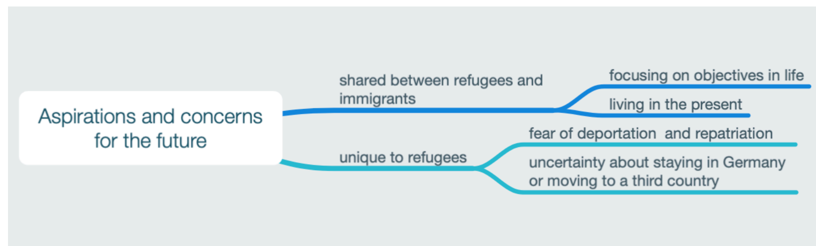
It appears in the literature that refugee children, despite their resilience and ability to rebuild their lives from scratch in host countries, exhibit fear for the unknown future and hesitance towards having big dreams (Lustig & Tennakoon, 2008; Moses, Aldridge, Cellitti, & McCorquodale, 2003). In this regard, upon commenting on his future aspirations, Talib

said, "it didn't occur to me that I would come to Germany. I thought that I would remain in Syria, finish my education, and work there. When I was in Syria, I used to think a lot about the future, like what I wanted to study in college and what career I wanted to have. But since the war started and I had to leave my home, I stopped thinking because I didn't know what would happen tomorrow. I am not sure whether I can even finish my education in Germany. I'd rather not think at all, because only scary thoughts come to my mind when I do," (Talib).

Additionally, Reem expressed her concerns about the future as she was following the recent news on repatriating Syrian refugees in Denmark, "I'm not sure, but that could happen to us here. I talked to my father about it (the news), and he said it wouldn't happen here. I don't speak to anyone else about it, but it's on my mind. Anyway, I try to focus on my studies because I want to be a nurse in the future. I am not sure I can be a nurse here in Germany, but I hope I can at least finish my studies here," (Reem). Amani was also concerned about the future, but her son's birth has changed her perspective, "I used to be worried a lot, about everything. Even after getting married, I wasn't happy because there was not a day that passed without me thinking it would be our final day in Germany. Then, when my son was born, I had a different way of thinking. He brought me hope. I live for him now, so I don't care what the future is as long as my son is healthy and happy," (Amani).

Finally, Yousuf opted toward forsaking his concerns and focusing on his objectives in life, "... focusing on my goals in life makes me push harder. I will soon graduate from the vocational school, and I am applying now to start an internship at an auto maker. I hope I can learn how to work in this market, so I can have my own business one day. There are many things to worry about, but I choose not to spend time thinking about them. I lost a lot of time already, and it's not good for me to let my worries steal more time from me," (Yousuf).

In conclusion, refugee students' perspectives on their current situation and future prospects differ; each has a personal motivation. Although trauma and fear of the unknown might affect some of them more than others, they generally keep looking forward and focus on their daily life and schooling.



Discussion

Being a refugee holds contradictory stereotypes created in everyone's mind, including the host communities and the refugees themselves. One such stereotype is that refugees are resilient, yet vulnerable. Refugees often have to express their vulnerabilities "to get the protection [they] need," as Yousuf put it. On the other hand, they might feel upset if they are treated with "pity," as Talib elaborated. Refugees have to assimilate into host nations to show good will towards the community and avert host communities' emotions of resentment and discrimination only for being "different" as Reem saw in her schooling experience. Nonetheless, they are expected to hold on to their national identities while awaiting a day when they can return to their homelands, as Amani stressed in her view. These seemingly contradictory underpinnings are important dynamics through which a person, in this case, a refugee youth, attempts to reach their self-hood. This part of the chapter is dedicated to discussing the results that were aggregated and exploring the possibilities through which the participants' schooling experiences have affected their identity construction.

Switching Identities and Affiliations

Some participants exhibited in their narratives a general tendency to switch between different identities. For example, Amani often spoke about herself as an individual, but when the concept of 'otherness' appeared in her narratives, she immediately switched to speaking about herself as an embodiment of Palestinians in exile, "for us, Palestinians, our home is Palestine," (Amani). Yousuf also expressed his clear-cut self-identification and deliberate shift between the identity of a 'student' inside the school and the identity of a 'refugee' outside the school when he said, "My being a refugee stops at the school gate when I enter (the school), and this fact only returns once I leave," (Yousuf).

Other participants also showed a tendency to associate themselves with different groups whenever it suited the situation. For example, when Yousuf was defending himself against the perceived notion of being a 'thief' coming to Germany to steal its benefits and jobs, he first spoke about himself, saying, "the German people I know are all kind and never make me feel like I am a thief, but I can't help but feel like I need to prove that the media image is wrong and that I am not coming to steal anything." (Yousuf). But then, right after that, he switched from talking about himself as an individual to speaking about himself as one who belongs to the asylum seekers' group, saying, "… we have to show our weakness when we apply for asylum because they wouldn't protect us if we didn't. But that doesn't mean we are weak human beings," (Yousuf).

Literature in social psychology (Benet-Martnez, 2012) shows that individuals may quickly switch identities in temporary, relatively context-dependent situations. Behavioural and cognitive findings support these changes. Subtleties pertinent to a person's identity may influence their ideas and actions in a non-conscious and reflexive fashion, referred to as

"cultural frame-switching" (Benet-Martnez, 2012). For example, it has been indicated that individuals employ tactical decisions to choose among various identities when presenting themselves to others in a method called bi-or multi-cultural identity performance (Wiley & Deaux, 2011; Klein, Spears & Reicher, 2007). These decisions are influenced by a variety of circumstances. Asylum seekers at the borders or students at school, for example, are more likely to highlight an image of themselves that is aligned with the surroundings or the traits of individuals in the vicinity. Most such decisions are influenced by societal norms and expectations.

The participants in this study used this technique to present themselves often as they were exploring their identities while reporting on their schooling experiences. This frequent shift in self-representation in participants' narratives is also connected to the concept of 'role identity.' According to Burke and Stets (2009), the term "role identity" refers to the role or persona that individuals adopt when they assume certain social standing within communities. It is context-dependent, as individuals engage with one another via their role identities, and a component of a person's identity that is generated as a result of their membership in significant social groupings and organisations (e.g., refugee camps, schools) and categories (e.g., asylum seeker, Syrian) (Burke & Stets, 2009). In essence, it is via social perception that individuals are able to comprehend the world around them by inferring their similarities and differences with other individuals through these generalisations. Thus, role identification is the process through which people identify with their groups in order to develop a shared sense of identity or collective consciousness (MacKinnon, 2014).

According to Tubin and Lapidot (2008), by attending schools in the host country, refugee students are forced to reconcile their assumed ethnic identity with their newly acquired legal status as refugees and their academic identity at schools. Acculturation occurs

by "intertwining," "ordering," and "buffering" (Tubin & Lapidot, 2008, p. 212). This explains the way the refugee students feel when they need to embrace their own personal identity along with the one they have just assumed in the host country while being refugees. It is not always easy for all these identities to coexist harmoniously, as some feel those identities are conflicting and they end up feeling frustrated when switching between them.

In this light, if we take the role of 'refugee' as an example of role identity and analyse the participants' narratives in this regard, we can come up with a variety of perspectives depending on their situations and experiences. For instance, some participants, namely Yousuf and Talib, in some of their narratives thought of being a refugee as a role they had to play in order to obtain the protection they needed, while in other narratives, they looked at it as a label loaded with stigma. Other participants, Reem and Amani, viewed the refugee identity as a status assigned by the host government and community, while they also saw it as a destiny over which they had no control. In this study, the role identity seems to align with the concept of institutional identity (Gee, 2000a) that is assigned to them by the authorities in the host country.

'Refugee' between an Identity and a Label

According to Roger Zetter, the refugee label has fluctuating values and "exchange rates" similar to currencies (Zetter, 1991, p. 40). This label can be affected by the host country's government's way of looking at it as host countries have an array of reasons to host refugees apart from the humane one. They could see refugees as a stimulant for the economy and job market (Loschmann, Bilgili & Siegel, 2019), a method for demographic enhancement (Whitaker, 2008), a tool for internal political gains (Moorthy & Brathwaite,

2019), or a way to get regional or global political leverage (Whitaker, 2002; Moorthy & Brathwaite, 2019).

Zetter's image of the refugee label can also apply to the way refugees themselves evaluate their existence. Studies show that refugees might over-present or under-present certain facts about their situation and background upon seeking asylum depending on the "value" of refugee status in the country where they are applying (Ludwig, 2016). Some countries provide better protection or a faster path to a secure residence than others (Stachel, 2009), and this has led to a preference among refugees to apply for asylum in certain countries over others (Long, 2013). This tendency influenced how refugees perceived their status and label (Stachel, 2009).

The participants in this research demonstrated a variety of attitudes towards being a refugee that mostly fell between either viewing their status as a label ascribed by the host country and community or an identity that they either found themselves having or decided to willingly embrace. In the first camp, Reem and Yousuf expressed instances of feeling the label "refugee" imposed on them. Reem did not mind it much, or rather she decided to ignore it, as she considers her home country's national affiliation a self-explanatory of her legal status in the host country, "I don't say I am a refugee. I only say I am Syrian. I think they understand that I am a refugee, but I am not sure what difference it makes," (Reem). Yousuf has more conflicting thoughts towards the label "refugee" and he even terms the word "refugee" as "anti-dignity," (Yousuf). He elaborates on the reason he dislikes this label, saying, "the reason I do not share that I am a refugee at times is that I don't want them to look at me with pity. I hate it when people pity me. I am a refugee, true, but I am a human who has dignity," (Yousuf).

On the other hand, Talib and Amani belong to the second camp of those who view being a refugee as an identity. Talib once considered his being a refugee part of his destiny in life, "It is my fate to be a refugee," (Talib), and in another narrative he expressed it as a "reality" when he said, "but I am hesitant to say I am a refugee, especially at school. I know I am a refugee, but I wish it was a different reality," (Talib). He differs from Yousuf, who only views being a refugee as a label ascribed to him. Talib was pragmatic accepting the fact that he was a refugee, but he is still trying to reconcile with this new identity, which he is not quite happy with. Amani is one participant who embraced her refugee identity and even felt proud of it. According to her narrative, her upbringing and her strong homeland affiliation positively impacted the way she views her identity as a refugee, "saying that I am a Palestinian refugee gives me back a piece of dignity that the policies of refugee acceptance take away from me at times," (Amani).

Narratives of Integration

Previous research findings (Birman, Persky, & Chan, 2010; Ethier & Deauxe, 1994; Phinney, Chavira & Tate, 1993) show that immigrants might either assimilate into the host country (giving up their home cultural identity and embracing the host's completely), identify solely with their home culture, or develop a bicultural or multicultural identity. The majority of such studies find that a high level of home country ethnic identification combined with a strong host country cultural identity promotes the best adaptation for immigrants (Deaux, Reid, Mizrahi & Ethier, 1995; Phinney et al., 1993; Suárez-Orozco, 2001). Unfortunately, not much research with this focus has identified the ordeal of refugees. The participants, in this research, had different views on integration and its effects. They saw it as a way to "socialise with German students" (Yousuf), "have a better understanding of the culture and way of life"

in Germany (Talib), and "through connections... get more opportunities for work and other things in the future," (Amani).

Further deliberation with the participants, however, showed their reservations and concerns. Reem, for example, felt some distance from her teachers and classmates soon after she started wearing the hijab, a symbol of religious identification. She viewed their reaction and her teachers' insistence on her taking it off as a rejection of her choices and eventually her identity. Research shows that immigrant youths may develop an aversion to assimilating or even becoming bicultural and instead embrace "reactive identification," in which they fully adopt their home country's cultural identity while dismissing the host country's culture, especially after feeling they have been 'rejected' (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Rumbaut, Gonzales, Komaie, Morgan, & Tafoya-Estrada, 2006; Fine & Sirin, 2008). This aligns with Esser (2001)'s emphasis on that discrimination from the host community can limit the chance of interaction and thus affect the prospects of integration.

Amani, on the other hand, expressed her notion of integrating into other countries as "melting" when she said, "I feel proud of being a refugee because this means I do not need to melt into other cultures and I can preserve my own culture and identity" (Amani). Using the term 'melting' was an expression of her concern that integration into the host country's culture might have a shadowing effect on her "Palestinian identity" (Amani). The case of Palestinian refugees coming from Syria intrigued research efforts to theorise Palestinian refugees' collective identity (Kimmerling, 2000; Peteet, 2005; Hanafi & Long, 2010). In "Landscape of Hope and Despair," Peteet (2005) offers a deep insight into the construction of Palestinian identity. According to Peteet, Palestinians in exile construct a sense of place and purpose in new places by using culture and memory to establish a feeling of belonging (Peteet, 2005). She believes certain political events have had a critical role in the construction

and reformation of the collective imagination of a community to which Palestinian people have developed a strong affiliation under the name 'Palestinian identity' (Peteet, 2005). Amani was concerned that the host country could have the strength to "melt" her collective identity and thus opted towards "preserving [her] Palestinian identity," (Amani), by limiting her social interactions at school.

Furthermore, among the abundance of assimilation theories, research identifies a general category under the name "selective assimilation" or "selective acculturation" (Esser, 2010; Bean & Frank, 2006). Selective assimilation refers to assimilation to the host country in which foreign-born individuals preserve their home country's culture in strong ethnic enclaves but successfully participate in the local culture as well (Esser, 2010). Some participants in this research have shown their learning towards this kind of assimilation in their schooling experience, at least in some aspects of their home country's culture, and not entirely. For example, Talib may have exhibited signs of selective assimilation into the host nation when he refused to accept showering naked in front of his classmates. He went through the trouble of rearranging his schooling and commuting to a school farther from his home only to have his need for privacy accommodated. There is no way to identify whether this trait is part of his personal identity or a cultural one, as identities merge and combine to produce a daily and context-oriented representation of oneself (Burke & Stets, 2009).

Confusion between 'Cultural Assimilation' and 'Multiculturalism'

Advocates of cultural assimilation, such as Zárate and Shaw (2010), think that quick assimilation of minority groups, including immigrants and refugees, to the majority culture is the best strategy to control cultural variations. They contend that assimilation to shared norms and values is the ideal end goal and that abolishing ethno-cultural borders would dramatically decrease interpersonal and group prejudice (Zárate & Shaw, 2010). Those who maintain a

multicultural viewpoint, on the other hand, think that all cultural groups in a given country should be able to keep their essential cultural practices, values, beliefs, and language inside a larger cultural structure (Zárate, Shaw, Marquez & Biagas Jr., 2012). Multiculturalists believe that by recognising and appreciating group diversity, one can reduce bias while enhancing self-esteem (Zárate et al., 2012).

The participants varied in their attitude towards integration practices at schools, and generally, there was a disparity between how the participants viewed the meaning of ‘integration’ and what it means to the German authorities when they promote refugee integration. Both German authorities and the community see integration as cultural assimilation (Esser, 2010), in which refugees assimilate into the German society and adopt the norms and values that exist there. However, the participants' narratives exhibited instances of conflicting feelings, as if they were confused with what they were being asked to do and what they thought they should do.

For example, Talib demonstrated his disbelief at being asked to shower naked with his classmates, and although he loves going to school, he said, "if I am not allowed to have this little amount of dignity, I choose not to go to school at all," (Talib). He could not comprehend that his personal needs, which are born from his home cultural norms, could not be met in a system that promotes assimilation into the local culture alone.

Moreover, when commenting on her teachers' attitude towards her wearing hijab, Reem started by acknowledging the German value that she was being taught, saying, "at school, they always tell us we can be what we want to be, and that nobody can judge us for our choices," (Reem), then she finishes her comment by expressing her frustration that they

cannot see the contradiction in what they are teaching her, "they told me I could be a Muslim, but there was no need to wear anything different from other girls… I feel like I have no right to be who I want to be," (Reem). The teachers' way of interpreting religious freedom is by keeping it in the heart while conforming to society in terms of behaviour and appearance, while Reem's interpretation of this freedom entails practising it regardless of its contradiction with the dominant norms.

Both Talib's and Reem's reactions to their experiences stemmed from their confusion about where their freedoms and limitations started and/or ended, and that is a by-product of the cultural background they come from. In Syria, society is based on multicultural foundations where ethnic and religious groups and sub-groups coexist and respect each other's affiliations and cultural differences (UNESCO, 2012). Their interpretation of their experiences is sometimes influenced by their home country's cultural identity, which is passed down to them either directly or indirectly via family and social interaction with people from their home country.

Liminality in Identification

Participants' narratives were packed with comparisons between their learning experience in Germany and that which they had in their home country. They relied on their previous life experiences as an anchor to assess and reflect on their current experiences. The stories were full of "here" and "there" moments, especially for those participants who were old enough to have had substantial learning experiences in Syria before their asylum journey. In that context, Reem was six years old when she started her schooling in Germany, so she did not have any prior experience in formal schooling that would allow her to use such a comparative lens. Thus, for the participants, except in the case of Reem, the understanding of

the host culture is based on their understanding of the home culture. This was apparent in their frequent usage of markers of comparison; "here" and "there" (Gadoin & Ramel, 2013; Kirk, Bal & Janssen, 2017).

Liminality may appear in time references (Kirk et al., 2017). The liminal phase that displaced individuals may experience occurs the moment they are physically or symbolically separated from the normal social order in which they previously lived, preceding their entry into the host country in a new social status (Tsoni, 2016). From another angle, liminality may also refer to the transitional phase between the individuals' self-identification in their youth phase back in their home country and that in the host country (Kirk et al., 2017). The participants in this study recognised that their liminal period began some time in their home country, and for some of them, it still continues. For example, when Reem was asked to introduce an artefact that represented her identity the most, she showed a picture of her parents taken in 2010. She explained that her true self associates with her parents, but the older version of them, the one before the war in Syria started, as it was the genuinely happy version of them. Strangely enough, the youngest participant feels the most nostalgic for the past; the time when she was 5 years old. Her identity formation has evolved since then, but her representation in a photo that refers to a past memory indicates her liminality in that time, at least psychologically.

Moreover, liminality can also appear when referring to space (Hampshire, Porter, Kilpatrick, Kyei, Adjaloo & Oppong, 2008). As mentioned in the literature review, refugee children can be viewed as liminers, moving from their birthplaces to unfamiliar environments where they are still detached from their new surroundings in some ways and have a loose social reality in the host country (Turner, 1964). Some participants expressed their feeling as

such when reporting their uncertainty about their residence in Germany getting extended. Reem, for example, repeatedly mentioned she was "unsure" while speculating whether she could stay in Germany and become a nurse, "I am not sure... but I hope I can at least finish my studies here," (Reem). Yousuf also felt like he was in this liminal space, not knowing whether he would be staying in Germany for a long time or whether he would move somewhere else if he got deported. He, however, thought of it as a positive driving force to focus on the present moment and try to take advantage of all chances given to him, as he has no control over his legal status or residence permit, "it is not good for me to let my worries steal more time from me," (Yousuf).

As shown in the literature review, the national state and the host state both hugely impact the sense of self-identity of refugees. When the letters are caught between border and asylum policies, they develop a feeling of liminality in space and time, and this leads to a feeling of lack of belonging to eight home or host countries. This situation that they find themselves in creates a feeling of 'otherness' born from within and it influences the construction of otherwise stable social and cultural identities (Mountez et al., 2002).

Group Identification as a Buffer

As found in the systematic review, group identity affirmation has emerged as a protective buffer against perceived discrimination (Liu & Zhao, 2016). The participants in this study have used such identification in different situations throughout their schooling experiences. For instance, Reem says that at the beginning of her schooling experience, she was striving to fit in and identify with the local community, "at the beginning, I was trying to do everything like them (classmates and teachers). I wanted them to like me, and I wanted to be a part of this place," (Reem), but along the way, she had second thoughts, "... the more I

did that (trying to fit in), the further away I felt from my parents," (Reem). To compensate for the guilt she felt being away from her parents, she started identifying with her home culture more, and that brought her some sense of stability with her family. Because of her family's strong religious identity, Reem's efforts to integrate into her school look like they failed her, "I thought I was a friend to them (classmates), but I feel like there is a hole between us and it is growing every day. Even my teacher, I don't think he likes me the same as before," (Reem).

Some factors that played a role in the participants' choices of group identification are convenience and comfort. For example, when Amani decided to identify herself as someone "from Syria" rather than a Palestinian at school, she decided to do that out of convenience due to the hassle of explaining her background as a refugee in Syria and a second-time refugee in Germany, "when I present myself at school to other Germans or refugees, I say 'I am from Syria', because if I say I am Palestinian, they get confused, and if I say I am Syrian, it is a lie. I was born in Syria, so saying I am from Syria is less of a hassle," (Amani). Reem, on the other hand, used her identification as a "Muslim" to describe the peace she finds at home when practising her faith. When asked about that, she said, "it is my time reading and studying Quran with my mother at home. I feel like I am free from any pressure to be what others expect me to be," (Reem).

These dynamics of identity seem to affect the participants not only in terms of their identification with the host nation but also refugee in-group identification among refugees belonging to different ethic groups or home countries. Amani has expressed that when she reported the harassment she experienced from three classmates from Afghanistan, "... they kept attacking me with silly questions during our discussions, like 'do you even know what a

mobile phone is?' …I didn't think anyone would believe that we were living in pre-history in Syria," (Amani). Faced with the prejudice of another ethnic group among refugees, Amani again identified as someone from Syria, but this time as a self-defense mechanism rather than as a tool of convenience.

At times, this group identification was motivated by feelings of exclusion from one's surroundings, while at other times it was motivated by a desire to be included in one group rather than the other. That was clear in Amani's narrative on her "Arab" affiliation, "when I get asked about Arabic culture, I get upset… I feel like I am Palestinian, not Arab," (Amani). It sounds like Amani herself is confused about where exactly her "Arab"ness starts or ends. At first glance, it looks like she is opposed to being lumped with "Arabs," stressing her Palestinian identity as opposed to that of an Arab. Yet, when she says, "they assume all Arabs are the same and we only have one culture" (Reem), she uses the pronoun "we." This pronoun usage signifies that she does identify as part of the group "Arab", even though she does not like to admit that consciously. This ambiguity may be the result of the Arab nationalism movement that arose in the aftermath of the Ottoman empire and the colonisation of the Middle East (Baban, 2018). Communities living in the Middle East, especially Muslim ones, experienced an imposition of national identities that entailed wider non-organic group affiliations. As national identities there, such as Syrian, Lebanese, Iraqi, or even Arab, did not grow naturally as a result of social and political evolution, many members of those communities could not embrace them fully, and the identification of an "Arab" is one such example (Muslih, 1991; Baban, 2018).

Trauma and past grievances had an effect on some participants in considering which group to identify with rather than the other. For instance, upon asking Talib whether he would

repatriate to Syria and help in post-war reconstruction, he got very emotional and said, "we (he and his family) barely made it out of there alive. What would make me return? Even if the regime changes and the war ends, I still have too much anger about many things there, and I don’t think this anger will go away easily. I don't care about rebuilding Syria, but I might try to help in rebuilding my city (Aleppo)," (Talib). The last part of his statement can be looked at as a clear indicator of his identification with his birth place, Aleppo city, and the people there, while at the same time stating indifference towards the nation-state as it symbolises the regime that caused his grievances. Talib’s inclination to identify only with his home city is identified in the literature as a place attachment in contrast to nationalism (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). This attachment helps him stream his group affiliation without feeling that he needs to identify with a group he has strong grievances against.

Self-Marginalisation and Internalisation

Due to asylum experiences, including being in temporary isolation in refugee camps, most of the participants had moments where they felt detached from their surroundings, and that continued into their schooling context. This feeling intensified the more they had to work in groups with their classmates. For instance, Amani reported that "sometimes, when we have group discussions, I feel like there are secret rules for how to do it and that I am the only one who doesn't know about these rules," (Amani). Talib also mentioned that he feels the same with his classmates, "well, they already knew each other before I joined the class, so I felt like a stranger in their group," (Talib).

Thus, along with utilising different group identifications as discussed earlier, such feelings of detachment made the participants seek another technique of self-protection, namely self-marginalisation. For example, Amani reported, "it is natural that they do not want

to include me in their groups. I am the new one. In class, it did not make much difference, but after class, they would all walk home or go someplace together, so I felt like I had to leave them. I didn’t feel I belonged there (in the group)," (Amani). Self-marginalisation was used by some participants as a protection method to handle situations where they already felt they were out of control. Self-marginalisation has been shown to reduce feelings of exclusion; because it is self-imposed, it may feel less painful than feeling excluded by others (Vigna, Poehlmann-Tynan, & Koenig, 2018).

Additionally, the systematic review showed that the internalisation of problems was salient among refugee adolescents when they face discrimination and prejudice (Lee et al., 2012). That was obvious in many of the participants' comments, such as "I thought my skills could never be as good as theirs (local students)," (Talib), when commenting on language skills, "I tried, but it seems it's not working. Maybe my style is wrong," (Talib) when commenting on socialising skills, and "after all, I am the stranger here," (Yousuf) when reflecting on their need to adjust to different schooling environments and their requirements.

The participants’ internalisation of their issues sometimes took the form of self-blame for others’ wronging them rather than directing blame where it should be. For example, Talib blamed himself for not being able to defend himself or his religion when his teacher was critical of it, "it hurt me that I could not speak up for myself," (Talib). He ascribed self-imposed guilt due to his poor language skills that did not assist him in defending his values, neglecting the simple fact that attacking others’ values is not excusable, regardless of how capable they are of self-expression. Some studies (Hadfield, Ostrowski & Ungar, 2017) view this behaviour as a symptom of internalisation that migrants and refugees often use to justify the discrimination and bias they receive in host countries. This behaviour also resonates with

Bauman's research (2002) on the sovereignty and belonging of refugees. Talib felt his personal sovereignty was violated the moment the teacher initiated a discussion and criticism of Talib's place of origin and his faith. Although he expressed in another narrative that he did not identify with Syria as it was being led by the current regime, he still felt violated for being perceived as belonging to Syria.

Idealisation and Devaluation

Most participants exhibited some form of idealisation of German culture or devaluation of their own. It was underlined in many of their comments and even decisions. Although most participants were resettled to Germany from other European countries or ended up in Germany on their route to other places, Yousuf mentioned that he opted to come all the way to Germany, out of all European countries, to seek asylum. He justified his actions by saying, "I knew I had to make it here… reaching Germany is worth it. In Germany, they have the best systems for, you know, government and organisation. I had heard a lot about it before, but it is even better than I expected," (Yousuf). He clearly had some idealised image of the country in his mind, which drove him to take such risks in order to get there.

This idealisation, however, was accompanied at times by low self-esteem in terms of capabilities or even culture. Earlier, a repeating comment in Amani's narrative, "I am stupid," denoted how low she views her skills in studying certain subjects. Yousuf, as well, illustrated this point on a different account upon asking him what he thought of his experience while taking the orientation course, ".. and they talked to us about how we have to treat women. I ought to be careful not to disrespect women in my actions or behaviour in Germany. It seems my style of talking to women was condescending, but this was normal for me back in Syria. I had better be careful from now on," (Yousuf). According to Brooker and Woodhead (2008), feelings of self-worth stem from a youth's appreciation and tolerance of

their surroundings. When the participants did not feel tolerated, they internalised this issue and started doubting themselves and negatively comparing themselves with others in the host country.

Amani related to another side of this issue when reporting about her teachers' ‘high’ expertise in teaching in comparison to her low aptitude for studying maths and science; "the teachers here are different; they have a high level of knowledge … I am very stupid in math and science, but the teachers' great skills in teaching here made it easy for me to understand and pass some tests, "(Amani). It is obvious that she put herself down by repeatingly using the term "stupid" to describe her learning skills. According to Akhtar (2010), the other side of idealisation of the host country is devaluation, either of oneself or of one’s home country's culture, and this is a recurring theme among displaced individuals.

It was evident that this low self-esteem of one’s capabilities and culture only surfaced after some of these participants became refugees. Upon asking Amani and Yousuf whether they used to think the same way about themselves when living in Syria, Amani said, "I never thought I was stupid or my teachers were bad at the time. I was just not into going to school when I used to live in Syria. Here, though, I feel like everyone is more clever than me," (Amani). Yousuf also commented, "… no, back then (when I was in Syria), I never needed to compare. It is true that I heard great things about Germany back then, but I didn’t think that Syrian culture was bad in any way," (Yousuf).

Identity and Culture

It is believed that identity is a product of culture, language, time, and location (Barker & Galasinski, 2001; Flottum, 2009). According to Doherty and Singh (2005), “cultures are formed via continuous contests” (p. 53). In that sense, shared cultural identities are constructed and reconstructed normatively via encounters with those classified as ‘others’

socially and historically. Thus, educational programmes offered to refugee students in host countries may be seen as getting them "involved in cultural production" by constructing and enacting an account of "how the host culture is done" pedagogically, positioning those refugee students as outsiders or "others" (Doherty & Singh, 2005, p. 53).

The participants in this research built their concept of self in a new educational setting and in connection with people around them (Barker & Galasinski, 2001; Flottum, 2009; Doherty & Singh, 2005). Briscoe (2005) observed in his research that when we employ the pronouns "we" and "they," we are communicating a feeling of group identification. This is applicable to the participants in this research as they utilised rhetoric that implied a "we" versus "them" duality. Perhaps this was more acutely perceived by those admitted to German language and orientation courses. This notion of "us" and "them" was first a response to ethnic groupings during their camp residence and persisted even when students advanced to their schooling. The "us" and "them" duality had varied meanings at different points in time and defined groups in relation to one another. Who people are is always changing due to geographical, cultural, national, and organisational factors. This notion aligns with the poststructural frameworks concept that identity is dynamic in its process to evolve while developing in daily encounters with others (Fawcett, 2012).

Identity and Religion

As mentioned in the literature review, acculturation of refugees comes with transitory stress when moving from one culture to another (Joyce et al., 2009; Berry et al., 1987). Such stress is also referred to in migration studies as 'minority stress'; chronic social stress that results from stigmatisation for being part of a minority group. This stress was mostly apparent when the participants of this study confronted issues of discrimination related to their cultural, ethnic, and religious affiliations. This may explain the tendency to exclude such

members from group activities. Some participants in this study, especially Reem and Amani, reported their involvement in such discriminatory encounters with their educators when it comes to their religious affiliation. Muslim girls are easily distinguishable once they wear the head scarf (hijab) and are thus more visible than Muslim boys are since the formers' religious affiliation is clearly symbolised at all times.

In a study of primary school inter-religious encounters, Ipgrave (2014) identified the importance of religious and racial identity in children's self-understanding and the significance of ethno-religious power relations in the process of identity construction (Ipgrave, 2014). When teachers or other members of the school setting exhibit bias against the group to which a child belongs, the child tends to either segregate themselves from that group and embrace the new culture, or reject the new culture and instead embrace their in-group cultures and traditions (Dasgupta, 2014). Such behaviours are especially exhibited by young children who have a heightened need to 'fit in'. From age five, children show decreased liking for in-group members who do not conform to group norms (Luigi, 2017). Talib expressed his anger towards his teacher's prejudice against Islam and himself as a member of the Muslim community, "I also felt that my teacher was judging my religion and me based on his opinions without looking for the truth," (Talib).

Studies into children's national and ethnic identity construction point to the importance of the dominant culture in education, especially regarding religion (Krashen, Long & Scarcella, 1979; Scholefield, 2014). Children's perceptions about the religious nature of their school may be an important factor. One study of Jewish identity in a British school highlighted that identity boundaries are fuzzy and can be affected by school ethos, and that religious identity is repeatedly constructed and performed (Scholefield, 2014). Children

participate in this construction, but adults often frame children's perceptions of religious group hierarchies. Children develop identity affiliations with particular groups and group symbols from a very early age, and these affiliations are influenced by their immediate and broader society (Krashen et al., 1979).

Community attitudes toward religious differences may be a factor in the inclusive or exclusive nature of school approaches to religion in education. Some studies (Koukouzelis, 2008; McGoldrick, 2011) suggest that there is a structural bias within education departments in Germany and some other western countries, evident in the fact that many public schools celebrate Christian festivals and conduct Christian prayers at assemblies. This type of structural bias exists not only within the education system, but also in the broader public sphere, such as parliament assemblies and public institutions. Thus, even when educational content is claimed to be secular, there is still structural bias practised by academic institutions and the people managing these institutions. Reem experienced it first hand and expressed it in her narrative, "they (my teachers) told me I could be a Muslim, but there was no need to wear anything different from other girls… I feel like I have no right to be who I want to be," (Reem).

Identity and Language

As shown in the literature (Ryan & Hellmundt, 2003; Huhtala & Lehti-Eklund, 2010; Montgomery et al., 2010), language competence is a crucial problem that surfaced as a noteworthy finding in this research. Language issues varied, from refugee students claiming the desire to learn German as a step towards integration in Germany to students noting low language proficiency as a reason for making connections with locals harder. Refugee students in my research saw a barrier to interacting with German speakers as a lack of language

competency; rejection as a consequence of insufficient language competence led to a reluctance to seek out native German speakers for collaborative working partnerships.

This initial sense of deficiency seems to have resulted in an overall challenge to refugee students' confidence; both sides seemed to recognise a connection between German language abilities and topic learning. This perspective seemed to result in a negative self-image of those who did not speak the language; they were regarded to be more intelligent if they actually spoke the host country language. Thus, Talib and Amani both considered themselves to be less intelligent than their German counterparts.

Speaking of the mother tongue, according to literature (Beenstock, Chiswick & Repetto, 2001; Guler & Berman, 2019), these children lose their native languages just as they acquire new ones. Research findings indicate that losing a native language, especially when it is the sole language spoken by family members, could be extremely detrimental to children, their families, and society overall (Guler & Berman, 2019). This has already appeared in the narrative of Amani when commenting on her relationship with her younger brothers; "they (my two younger brothers) have gotten so used to speaking in German that they don't feel comfortable speaking in Arabic, even with me or our parents. I feel like they are in their own world and our language (Arabic), which I thought could connect us, is now a barrier between us," (Amani). It sounds like as the two boys become more comfortable speaking German, they tend to avert situations that require them to use their mother tongue, even if that means not communicating with their family members as frequently.

It was clear in the literature that, as an explicit expression of cultural identity (Archer, Francis & Mau, 2010), language may marginalise or increase the likelihood of harassment for refugee children. When children begin school and become aware of the cultural distinctions

between their home country and the host nation, they develop an aversion to anything that separates them from the host country. The way others engage with them at school and outside of school may teach children that the only language that counts is the language of the host country. As a result, they may see their home language and culture as an impediment to their integration into their new environment. The earlier children begin this process, the greater the impact on their native languages. Then, when they begin to conform to their host society's language in order to be accepted and respected, they abandon their native language as they see it as prohibitive.

In this research, Reem exhibited signs of this, as reported by her mother, "… she can't write it (Arabic) well, but we make an effort to teach her to speak and read it. She didn't show interest in studying Arabic until recently, when she put it (hijab) on and wanted to know more about her heritage," (Reem's mother). It sounds like Reem was already in the process of losing her mother tongue, but due to her undergoing a reactive identification after experiencing discrimination at school, she reversed the process and is now balancing both languages, her mother tongue and the language of the host country. Losing their mother language is damaging to the psychological and mental development of refugee children because it eliminates the methods through which their families interact with them, as well as their daily cultural exchanges and the closeness resulting from shared values and conceptions. As native languages are a vital aspect of a secure sense of self and self-respect, it is especially heartbreaking to witness refugee children lose their connection to their original language and any links to their country of origin as a consequence of this process.

Conclusion

To sum, it is worth pointing to a German article titled "Germany's education system is failing refugees," where a new research asserts that educators' approaches to integrating young migrants into Germany must be rethought (Deutsche Welle, n.d.). According to this research, German schools have accepted around 130,000 young refugee students since 2015, offering them a range of educational possibilities, including preparatory programmes, rigorous language lessons, and one-on-one mentorship. Nonetheless, according to this research, as long as teachers are having difficulty integrating refugees, German authorities cannot ensure that those refugee students in the German education system will not get disoriented along their schooling journey. This thesis aim was to show the link between schooling and the refugee students identity construction and how schooling might negatively affect this construction in relation to the students connection with their home country. The situation calls for more immediate consideration if German authorities themselves are not sure they can secure the futures of those refugee students inside Germany.

This chapter examined refugee students' schooling experiences and how they affected their identity construction. Almost every facet of schooling has some unique aspects to refugee over immigrant students, from the motivations of refugee students to the classroom experiences and perspectives on integration. Looking closely at individual experiences, it looked as if the refugee students' interactions with others, like family members, friends, classmates, and teachers, or the lack of such interactions, were critical factors in their perceptions and trajectories.

However, when looking at the refugee students' experiences from broader lenses, particulars pertaining to the schooling system and refugee integration policies into the host

community continue to have a great impact, although not on all refugees. The individual experiences of every refugee student, in addition to the overall system they need to navigate and operate within, constitute drivers that influence the identity formation of those refugee children, probably with lasting outcomes.

The literature review was critical as a springboard for analysing the interviews. However, the complexity of refugee student experiences was much beyond the scope of the material reviewed in this study, especially when it comes to the critical role of interaction with people in the refugees' experiences of schooling.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Revisiting the first research question that created the core of this research project: how does the literature view and handle the refugee youth identity construction? the thesis aimed at first finding out how the literature approaches the topic of identity constructions when it comes to refugee youth in host countries. Through applying a systematic review and then mapping the gaps using a more selective review of major schools of thoughts, it was concluded that in the field of identity construction, the population of refugee youth gets lumped up with the population of immigrants quite often for reasons of convenience, lack of funding and other logistic considerations researchers deem more significant than the importance of isolating refugees from other subjects. The thesis made an effort at indicating why this is a recurring problem and why distinguishing refugees from immigrants in this field of research is critical.

Speaking of the other research questions that guided the entire study: how does schooling in host countries imposing integration affect the refugee youth' identity construction? and how do refugee students perceive their schooling experiences? from the findings of this research, I can conclude that there is definitely an interaction between the schooling of refugee children and their identity construction in the host country. This interaction is multidimensional as refugee children are faced with the tasks of integrating into a completely new environment and learning a new language in an immersion mode, in addition to the typical duties that any student needs to follow to succeed in their schooling. Different factors have been identified to play a role in the relationship between schooling and the identity construction of the participants. These factors included the host country's policy regarding the immediate integration of refugees, the traumas and painful memories the

participants had before their schooling, the rhetoric of "otherness" that was prevalent about refugees in the media and public sphere and even moved into classrooms at times, and the interaction the participants had with their teachers and peers throughout their schooling.

The relationship between host country schooling and the participants' identity development can be classified into different categories: a relationship of exploration on the part of participants of new aspects of their identities; a relationship of specifying and defining the participants' current self-perceptions of their identities; and finally, a relationship of reflection on their understandings of how their identities have changed or not. The participants have reacted to those relationships by adopting a myriad of attitudes, including shifting their group identification, self-marginalisation, issue internalisation, selective assimilation, and, in some cases, reactive identification.

As discussed, variations in self-identification are a major indication of processes of identity construction and reconstruction in adolescence. The participants explored how they identify themselves in different situations and how their environment affects the way they identify themselves and makes them change the way they present themselves to others. This was especially salient in relation to their status as refugees. It seemed there was internal resistance towards incorporating their new status into their self-identification, except for the case of the Syrian-Palestinian participant. Moreover, forces of integration within schooling, whether they originated from the system itself, or the people in charge of running the system; teachers or principles, have all played a significant part in influencing the identities of the participants by expecting them to fit in, accept all the host country's core values, and participate in all activities and events just like all other children, regardless of apparent or invisible contradictions that might occur with the refugee children's home values and culture.

The graph below is created to summarise the main mechanisms that refugee youth in this study went through to reach their model of identity construction/reconstruction. Such mechanisms include:

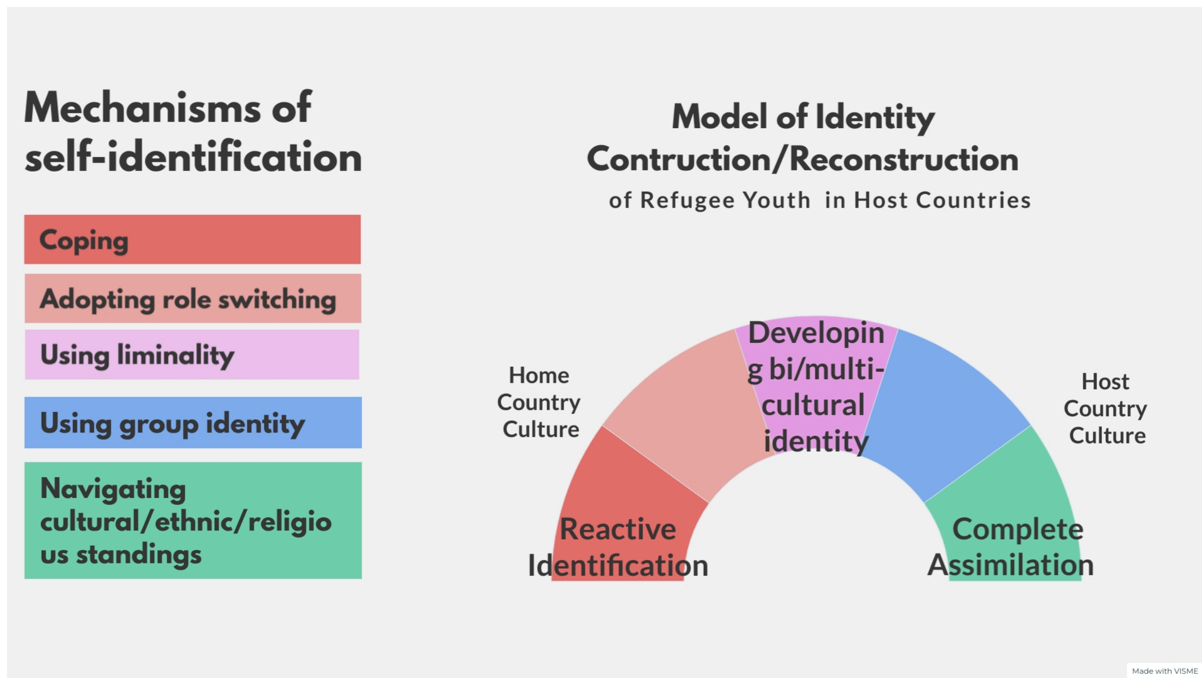


Figure 9: Mechanisms Of Self-Identification And Model Of Identity Construction

1. Coping mechanism where refugee youth exhibited the necessity to adapt to their new environment. Their experiences at schools required more flexibility than the average person to switch between identities when the situation called for that.
2. Adopting flexible role identity switching as their roles in the host country had a wider variety than traditionally expected roles in the home country such as being a daughter/ son, a student, a neighbour and so on. At times, they needed to switch their role identity to play as a refugee, as a Syrian/ Palestinian, as an Arab, etc.
3. Using liminality as a tool to find one's own place and time and to identity oneself and others. This mechanism allowed them to fill gaps in the identity construction as they have shifted from one culture into another. Liminality was also an important tool for refugee

youth to construct social connections with the new norm, yet it gave them the space and time to explore the differences between their home country culture and host country.

4. Using group identity more often than they would do back in their home country. Pressure felt from peers and teachers made the refugee youth resort to identifying with the national or ethnic groups they belonged to but have not been aware of its existence before. Schooling made them have heightened awareness and sensitivity to the national and ethic groups they belong to.
5. Navigating one's cultural, ethnic, and religious standing much earlier than they would have done in their home country as the participants identity construction was influenced by the school culture and language used in the learning environment they were subject to.

Using those mechanisms, refugee youth, and through their schooling experiences, construct and reconstruct their identity following three main models:

a. some assimilate but are not aware of why they are not fully accepted in the society,
b. some fall back towards reactive identification by fully embracing an identity associated with their home country and rejecting the host county culture. This is mostly due to experiences where they felt that they have been "rejected" and their home country culture was "dismissed" for being "less developed" and "oppressive", and some do the same for fear of melting into the host country culture as it will erode their home country identity and threaten its survivability,
c. some try to embrace a middle ground standing by developing a bi/multi-cultural identity. This occurs by opting for selective assimilation where they choose agreeable aspects of the host country and accept them, while rejecting the aspects that they cannot reconcile with due to personal preferences or home country culture latent effect.

In this research project, surely, the concept of cultural assimilation is not yet ripe in the mind of most participants as they are influenced by their home country social model of multiculturalism where assimilation is not a requirement for coexistence with other people in the community. In some instances, depending on where on the model spectrum they place themselves, the participants engaged in self marginalisation and internalisation of their problems at school especially after feelings of detachment, discrimination and prejudice become salient when trying to integrate in the host community.

Schooling of Refugees in Integration-Imposing Host Countries

The right of refugee children to education is not a given. It is usually provided, administrated, and controlled by the responsible authorities in host countries. Due to the established fact that refugees and immigrants tend to get lumped together in host countries' migration policies, the schooling of refugee children does not get special treatment. In EU, and Germany is only one example in this context, the policy of using refugee children's schooling as a tool for integrating them into the host community has many flaws as shown in this thesis. Among such flaws is the sheer disregard of the psychological needs of this group of students for special care for their traumatic experiences before and during their asylum journeys, in addition to the package of distress, prejudice, and inhumane treatment they might face once they apply for asylum in the host country and even persist throughout their schooling. Other flaws include the lack of understanding from the school staff and teachers of the experiences of refugee children; using classrooms as a space to prosecute the refugee children for pre-conceived images and demonised perceptions of ethnic, religious or political backgrounds the children come from; and neglecting the importance of providing support with regard to teaching the mother tongue and home country culture and history.

During heightened encounters with the host country's culture and community, integration practices implemented on refugee children in their schooling have shown that they can make the youth feel inferior, with a tendency to devalue their competence, values, and home culture. These encounters in schooling manifest themselves through the refugee children's communication with peers and teachers, or the lack thereof, and through self-reflections and the realisation of their social and legal status in the host country. Such encounters, at best, result in the children's feeling of uncertainty about their futures, in addition to facing despair and frustration regarding their language and academic skills as they compare themselves with their peers and fear that success at school is intertwined with their legal prospects as residents in the host country.

Integration-imposing host countries have a long history of implementing strategies to integrate immigrants into local communities, and yet they face issues with high rates of immigrant youth falling out, either ending up as deliquents, radicalised or idiomatically lost (Bizina & Gray, 2014; Hansen, 2012; Ganor, 2011; Goerzig & Al-Hashimi, 2014). The question is what they expect such integration policies to do with refugee children who have already been received with visible and invisible psychological scars from their home country's crises and asylum experiences. Depriving children of their basic needs, such as feeling accepted as they are, feeling safe to express themselves ethnically, culturally, and religiously, and even feeling dignified as human beings, is a major failure for any education initiative, especially if such an initiative is intended for refugee children. If host countries consider investing in the practical implementation of sustainable solutions for refugees, they have to reconsider the education programmes and schooling contexts that refugee children have to go through. If they genuinely aim towards securing a better future for those refugee

children, regardless of their future prospects, but more so if they are to be repatriated, host countries need to consider implementing what this thesis call for; a ‘dignified education for refugees’.

Dignified Education for Refugee Children

This thesis arrives at understanding dignified education for refugees as an education where they are given the freedom and space to understand and appreciate their self-worth, articulate their identities, and regain their dignities, which were taken away by the mere fact of their being refugees. It is an education that makes the refugee children feel like they are normal human beings and nothing distinguishes them other than their individual competences and differences. It is mostly an education that does not allow for anyone inside it to pass judgement on those children based on their ethnicity, religion, or cultural background. For refugee children, a dignified education is one that treats them with respect and allows them to focus on learning and expanding their horizons without having to conform or adapt because of fear or discrimination.

Literature is scattered with the term "dignified" when exploring the issues of refugees, but it only appears in 'dignified [media] image’, 'dignified repatriation’, ‘dignified legal representation’, or ‘dignified through self-determination’ (Hathaway, 1998; Purkey, 2015; Nyaoro, 2019; Mohajan, 2020; Hartman, 2021). Academic research in the field of refugee education is preoccupied with the actualisation of schooling, as if in our day and time it is still a mission impossible to provide education to refugee children in western host countries (Chadderton & Edmonds, 2015; Eckhardt, Jungblut, Pietkiewicz, Steinhardt, Vukasovic & Santa, 2017; Koehler & Schneider, 2019; Streitwieser, Leo, Ohorodnik & Jeong, 2019). Research on the education of refugee children in affluent host countries has yet to catch up to

the gravity of ignoring the effects of imposing integration in host communities while understating the refugee children's cultural and ethnic heritage.

Refugee children are human beings before anything else; they have their own voices and perspectives on their life experiences, whether in education or elsewhere. Their agency had better be recognised and accounted for when consulting research on them in any discipline, but more so in the field of education. This thesis urges future research to exert efforts in the direction of materialising dignified education for refugees and creating a formula for the practical implementation of it in any humanitarian aid provided to refugees.

Critical Reflections on the Research

According to Spencer and Ritchie (2012), qualitative research should be evaluated based on its integrity, research methods, contribution to knowledge, and reliability in data analysis, all of which impact the credibility of the research results and conclusions. Hereafter, I reflect on the entire research project and address these topics, starting with limitations and then with strengths.

Limitations: Scope and Research Tools

When it comes to research scope, as I mentioned in the chapter on methodology, the pandemic has forced a change in the setting of this research, making it an off-site study, which eliminated the possibility of observing the participants within their natural surroundings in schools in the host country. Although interviews were managed to be conducted online using video call applications, it is undeniable that the technological medium could still limit how much the researcher and participants can comfortably interact and understand each other. Conducting the research off-site has caused some logistic issues as well, such as limited access to the participants, zero access to their physical school settings,

and a time difference between Japan and Germany that affected the schedule of interviews and follow-ups.

In terms of sampling, although the criteria were set to select participants who had at least three years of schooling experience in Germany, there was a variance among the participants due to their studying in different schools and in different German states. Although this variance did not cause a conflict with the aim of the study, it prevented the research from making comparisons to reach generalisations that could lead to more compelling conclusions.

Limitations: Research Subjects

There are always difficulties associated with research that draws from a limited number of participants, especially with children who may not be able to articulate their experiences well enough. Although the conceptual language for this research was developed after consulting with experts in child psychology, and participants were selected from a pool of subjects to ensure that they had reflective and analytical skills, some problems emerged during the interviews. For instance, when some participants did not touch upon their self-identification in their narratives, I had to ask them "how do you identify yourself?” This is a difficult question to answer even for an adult, not to mention a growing child with a vague sense of selfhood.

In addition, the language used in the interviews can pose some challenges as well. The term ‘identity' in Arabic can carry connotations that English does not. Some participants used the terms ‘nationality’ and ‘identity’ interchangeably. For example, when Reem was asked, "how happy are you with your identity?" She replied, "being Syrian is something I should be proud of, my father said, but I am not sure. I am still thinking about it," and elaborated when asked what she understands when she hears the term ‘identity’, "I think it means where we

are born or where we come from, our passport, I think." (Reem). As needed, I explained to the participants the nuances of such terms in simple language, but the limitation ground remains.

Limitations: Data Analysis

The interview protocol aimed at making the interview questions as open as possible to limit the possibility of the researcher influencing the participants' narratives by using specific questions rather than others. However, when it comes to analysing the data, finding significant thematic categories can be hugely determined by my perspective and the relationship between the participants and myself. It is probable that another researcher could have generated a divergent dataset by just observing how they are appraised by the participants. Moreover, I realised, after reflecting on my data, that themes of familial conflicts or bullying at school were nearly totally missing from most of the interviews. I reasoned that participants may have deemed these issues too private or improper for conversation with a person they were unfamiliar with, and therefore, the relevance of these themes may be overlooked in the data I have acquired.

In terms of data analysis, some limitations emerged in the framework under which I had to operate and refer to while conducting the research. To analyse and understand the narratives of the participants, I had to rely on the findings of studies and research presented in the literature in Chapters 2 and 3. When it comes to content analysis, however, there was a lack of resources I could depend on to investigate the psychology of refugees when they are in their first stage of integrating into the host nation through schooling. I had to refer to studies that tackle the psychology behind immigrants' integration into receiving nations, as there is no shortage of studies in this field. For the reasons presented in Chapter 3 on the differences between refugees' and immigrants' experiences in host nations, studies on one

group cannot fully explain the experiences of the other group, and vice versa, but out of necessity, I borrowed some terms commonly used in the field of immigrant acculturation to explain the situation taking place with the acculturation experience of the participants through schooling.

Furthermore, the theoretical framework is based on research findings in identity constructions that are mostly based on social and psychological norms prevalent in Europe and North America. Even identity construction studies that are conducted in other geographical areas often rely on theories and paradigms made in the "West." I believe this could be a major flaw in such studies, as different cultural and social systems entail different contexts for identity formation (Yep, 2004). Thus, while acknowledging the similar phases a young person passes through when they move from childhood into adulthood, wherever they could be, the identity construction of such a young person may be wildly different between a youth growing up in Syria and another growing up in Germany. Unfortunately, theoretical schools of identity are not developed in the Middle East as they are in the West.

Research Strengths and Contributions

The study was original in its approach to investigating the effect of the schooling of refugee children on their identity construction. A small sample of refugee students' narratives can only give a limited window into how their schooling influenced their identity formation. However, the implications may be rather informative and warrant further exploration. The findings of this research contribute to theories in the area of identity development by addressing how schooling can affect the process of identity construction of refugee children. This effect was obvious in the limited opportunities for free self-exploration and expression in an unfamiliar school setting where their lack of local language and cultural skills created a barrier to completing critical developmental functions of adolescence.

Refugee youths do not seem to have the same prospects as other adolescents for a psychological and social moratorium[81]. Rather, they typically concentrate on acquiring the fundamental literacy skills that non-refugee adolescents would have acquired by early childhood.

In terms of research tools, the use of artefacts has proved to be a successful aiding method towards self-exploration of the participants' narratives in this research. Most research that utilises artefacts falls under the disciplines of history, where artefacts are themselves story tales of the past (Beaudry, Cook, & Mrozowski, 1991), ethnography, where artefacts are used as items that symbolise lifestyles (Fabian, 2004), or pedagogy, where artefacts are used as stimulation objects for students (Gannon & Dove, 2021). It is rarely used in identity research and the available literature shows its usage only when investigating cultural identity in exile, where artefacts are used to exhibit items from participants' home cultures (Mehta & Belk, 1991; Vukov, Gergova, Matanova & Georgova, 2019). This research made an attempt at employing the use of artefacts as items to provoke participants' self-reflection on their individual identity and its status and in this attempt, its originality proved to be successful.

Implications and Recommendations

Research-oriented Implications

This study calls attention to the impact of schooling in host nations on the identity formation of refugee children. An empirical quantitative approach to address some of the challenges mentioned in the narratives of this research may be beneficial to reach more generalisable conclusions. Additionally, it may be beneficial to investigate how integration practices within school settings affect refugee children and to study teachers' perceptions of their ability to react to the needs of refugee children.

[81] a time of decreased responsibility during which they may explore their future prospects (Erikson, 1986).

The thesis did not aim to answer the latter research questions quantitively as it was difficult to conduct a pre-schooling study to establish a comparison between the participants' identity construction before and after schooling. This would require a longitudinal study and more strategic selection of research samples and follow-up with them. Although this research reached out for answers on the mechanisms the identity construction of refugee youth, it did not have the resources or even the time to quantitively answer such query. This question was out of the scope of this research, and it would be great if future research efforts tried to quantifiably answer that.

Moreover, according to Brittian (2012), "studies that look at the existence of identity at a particular moment in time are examining an instance of identity, not its evolution" (p. 190). Therefore, a longitudinal study could be advantageous as part of a conceptualisation of identity construction and a developmental process that takes place within the schooling environment. It may be feasible to follow up with the study's participants in order to monitor their identity development over time. Future research might also examine the experiences of refugee children who belong to different ethnic and cultural groups in order to uncover major parallels or contrasts between them.

Furthermore, future research in this field would need an approach that better matches the age group's limited experience and lexicon. Alternative identity measures, such as ranking orders of importance and checklists for self-identification, may be appropriate. Guided group discussion could also be a useful strategy, but might draw out only the opinions of the articulate participants or only those ideas perceived as acceptable. Additionally, future research might address the difficult task of separating schooling from other socialisation factors such as family attitudes, media exposure, and community engagement.

Policy-oriented Implications

Save the Children, a non-profit organisation, published in 2019 a survey showing that children place education at the top of their list of priorities during times of crisis (Save the Children, 2019). It was a significant study of what children, rather than aid planners, believe they need in humanitarian crises, and surprisingly, the report's results show that youngsters are more concerned about their education than they are about basic necessities like shelter, food, water, or health care (Save the Children, 2019).

In the classic understanding of humanitarianism, aid for refugees is comprised of three critical components: food, shelter, and health. These are the essential items that must be included in every humanitarian mission conducted by governmental or nonprofit groups. However, in the past decades, there have been growing requests for education to be included as a fourth component, or "pillar" (MacKinnon, 2014). Unfortunately, there are occasions on which education is not seen as a priority in emergency situations, but rather as a development activity that receives little financing. It is critical to question conventional notions of humanitarianism and push for the addition of education as a fourth pillar.

For example, the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) is one organisation that represents NGOs, United Nations agencies, charities, corporate contributors, and university institutions in matters of education. In collaboration with officials from different countries, the INEE (n.d.) developed a set of minimal requirements for the education sector, focusing on the introduction of conflict-sensitive educational curricula and the role of education in resolving conflict. These organisations are paving the way for educational initiatives to become an integral element of every humanitarian effort conducted on a global scale. Once governments and funders, both public and private, understand the critical nature

of education, the aim is that programmes will be better supported and more broadly accessible to reach all children in need.

This research would like to add to this by emphasising not only the importance of accessing education, but also considering the content and delivery of this education to better equip refugee children with the means to build their lives and states. Additionally, this research views young refugees as agents of change in their home countries when the conflict is resolved and repatriation becomes a viable option. In that context, educational policies targeting those refugee children can either enhance or undermine this agency, which will ultimately affect the nation's state building back in the home country. The simplistic view of refugee children and adolescents as helpless victims imprisoned in this in-between situation is deceptive and does more harm than good. Young refugees have shown they can take the initiative and exhibit commitment to overcome their predicament in the host countries, regardless of their traumatic experiences in their home countries. This resilience and strength are best built upon by creating a space for youth to freely express themselves and their identities and by creating an environment that fosters a will to return home and rebuild their own country.

Recommendations for Policy-makers and Refugee-receiving Authorities

This thesis places a strong emphasis on the fact that refugee children's best prospects are back in their home countries, and therefore the best policy is to help in swiftly resolving the conflict in the war-torn country and securing a safe path for all refugee children and their families to return home. If this solution is not viable, then implementing refugee-tailored education programmes that ensure their dignity is highly respected and their home country's culture, history, and language are duly taught and valued.

In the current context of events, governments in host countries can play an essential role in improving and expanding training and professional development for schools and educators that are engaged in educating refugees. They could also ensure that attention is given in the teacher training to how to interact with traumatised children, and supply schools with personnel who are experts in problems pertaining to refugee children. Authorities may also extend guidance and support on schooling to refugee and asylum-seeking children and their families upon arrival to assist the latter in making more informed decisions about the children's educational needs and opportunities. It is also critical that they guarantee enough resources are available for recruiting and training mother tongue instructors, since research has shown that mother tongue education promotes the acquisition of a second language.

On the school level, topics connected to multiculturalism and associated concerns such as xenophobia could be addressed in the curriculum, and schools may create awareness among students about refugee and asylum seeking issues to counter misconceptions propagated by the media at times. They may pay more attention to the special educational needs and experiences of refugee children and not reject children based on their legal status or other grounds. Schools may also allocate enough resources for language instructors and mother tongue instructors, as well as suitable in-service training for educators dealing with refugee children.

Final Words

The unprecedented number of refugee children who have been forced to flee their homes calls for action. Although the nation-state has traditionally been given the duty of dealing with asylum seekers (Hansen, 2014), recent circumstances have forced that obligation to be shared by a far larger group of people (Heimann, Müller, Schammann & Stürner, 2019). Global cooperation is required to address the so-called refugee crisis, as stated in the UN's

2016 New York Declaration. Education, in particular, plays an essential part in this environment since it serves as an essential asset for refugees to grow and realise their full potential (Magos & Margaroni, 2018). As a result, the function of education calls for a redefinition of the schooling system and the people who manage it. It is important to re-define the school's role in the lives of refugee youth by making it an active and positive driver of change rather than only a recipient and reactor. It could be too much to ask of host nations to consider the pressing factors that affect refugee children and impact them negatively in their schooling experience. It is therefore a call to those in charge of schooling systems to account for their policies when it comes to how they deal with and handle refugee students. Additionally, refugee students' experiences, such as those investigated in this study and others, should be counted towards formulating and improving those initiates.

An increased influx of refugees brings out an increased diversity, a modern international issue born of global mobility. Refugee education in this regard may benefit from international collaborations. Many developed nations have explored the facts of this issue and ways that education can better navigate it (Magos & Margaroni, 2018). The emerging consensus is that public education must be neutral on issues that relate to home traditions and religion and must take a secular approach (Waters & LeBlanc, 2005). Only then can they aspire to be inclusive. Good and constructive education helps refugee children to develop understanding and skills without the demand for singular ideological and moral identification with that of the host country. In nations that promote inclusion and diversity, it is the schools' duty to encourage multi-ethnic and religious exploration and dialogue.

Schools have the implicit power to enable belonging and respect for others. This study suggests a potential relationship between school ethos and refugee student exclusion. The

findings are limited to local contexts, but they suggest that children may exclude those with perceived differences and become more excluded as they progress through their school years. Results also suggest that children sense a difference between home and school in this regard. The findings of this research highlight issues of ideology and pedagogy in schooling initiatives targeting refugee children in host countries. Such findings may lead towards the development of a best education policy framework to provide a map for the refugee education reform journey.

This research identifies some elements of what might develop into a best practice framework. These elements include: reviewing and revising legislation and policies regarding the access of refugee children to schooling and making it easier and faster; developing and reviewing curriculum and classroom resources that promote inclusion and allow for refugee students to be themselves; and training the teaching staff on dealing with students from diverse and possibly traumatic backgrounds. Further framework elements in need of attention involve: school board awareness and practice of cultural sensitivity when dealing with refugee students; reconsidering the integration programmes for refugees and making them optional; providing refugees with support to promote teaching their home country's language and culture; and being transparent on worst-case scenarios for the future of refugee residence in the host country.

Such efforts require an awareness of the ideological influence that education has on students and society in large. This awareness will foresee how educating refugees in host nations that are strikingly different in political, social and ideological cohesion can only confuse them and prevent a healthy relationship between one's self and one's home country. Education instructions in the host countries are privileged dictating their ethos to refugee students. As privilege must first be addressed by the privileged, there is a need for those

institutions to be more aware of the grave consequences of forcing their ethos on refugee students. They hopefully would be more inclusive, plural and intercultural.

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Appendix 1

Participant Information Sheet

The Schooling of Refugee Youth and its Effects on their Identity

Vivian Turk

Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

Tokyo, Fuchu

Thank you for considering participating in my research project. I am currently a graduate student at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies and am interested in learning how schooling is affecting you and your identity in Germany. If you agree to take part in this study, I will be interviewing you. This study will provide more details about the impact of schooling on refugee students and their identity formation. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you have before you agree to take part.

What I Will Ask You To Do

If you decide to participate in this study, I will ask you to sign a consent form granting me permission to interview you to gather information about your schooling experience and reflections on your life in Germany.

What I Will Do With the Information You Give Me

Any information I get about you will be kept strictly confidential. All the information you give me will be kept in locked files. I will not give any information to anyone, unless you give me written permission to do so. The only time I would be forced to break this promise is with people who are a danger to yourself or others. The law requires me to report that kind of information.

Risks and What Will Be Done to Reduce the Risks

Whenever research takes place, there are some possible risks involved for you. Because I will have personal information about you and your family, there is always the possibility that someone might see the information when they are not supposed to. This is what I do to keep people from seeing the information you give me:

A. I will keep the information about you and your child strictly confidential. All information is in locked files.
B. I will give you a pseudo-name for all papers dealing with you and this project. I will not mention or share any real names with anyone.
C. The audio files of the interviews will be destroyed within one year after the project ends. Written files will be destroyed within five years of the end of the project.
D. Only authorised academic personnel are allowed to see the information you give me.
E. All academic members are trained and experienced in working with private information. They are committed to protecting your right to privacy.
F. Because I am asking for some personal information about you and your family, there is a possibility that this could lead to some discomfort.
    1. If any questions make you feel uncomfortable, you may skip them.

2. You may stop the interview at any time.
3. If answering questions during the interview causes you to feel emotional or psychological distress, I will help you find a mental health counsellor in your area.

Benefits to You for Your Participation

Your participation in this study will add to the knowledge of how schooling affects refugee children in host countries and how it influences their identity formation. Being involved in this project may also give you useful information about yourself and your family.

Right to Withdraw from the Project

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. I am free to refuse to participate or to withdraw from participation at any time, and it will in no way affect my relationship with, or treatment at, any school. If I decide not to participate in this part of the study, I can quit at any time without penalty.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the research committee at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. Should you have any questions or concerns throughout the course of the study, you may contact me, Vivian Turk, by e-mail. If you have questions or concerns regarding your treatment as a subject, you may contact the main supervisor on the research committee, Prof. Isezaki Kenji, via e-mail at kenji-isezaki@tufs.ac.jp.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Appendix 2

Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

Tokyo, Fuchu

Study's Title:

The Schooling of Refugee Youth and its Effect on Their Identity

Informed Consent for Research Involving Human Subjects

Principal Investigator: Vivian Turk

E-mail address: vivianturk@hotmail.co.uk

Cell Phone: (+81) 080-6797-9463

I hereby give my consent to participate in the research study entitled "Schooling of Refugee Youth and its Effects on Their Identity," details of which have been provided to me earlier, including anticipated benefits, risks, and potential complications.

I fully understand that I may withdraw from this research project at any time without prejudice or effect. I also understand that I am free to ask questions about any procedures that will be undertaken.

Finally, I understand that any information about me obtained during the course of this study will be kept confidential unless I consent to its release. (Return the signature page to the researcher and keep the remaining pages for your records.)

____

Participant's Name

I hereby certify that I have given an explanation to the above individual about the contemplated study and its risks and potential complications.

____

Principal Investigator

Appendix 3

Parent Information Sheet

The Schooling of Refugee Youth and its Effects on their Identity

Vivian Turk

Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

Tokyo, Fuchu

Thank you for considering the participation of your child in my research project. I am currently a graduate student at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies and am interested in learning how schooling is affecting your child in Japan. If you agree to have your child in this study, I will be interviewing her/him. This study will provide more details about the impact of schooling on refugee students and their identity formation. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you have before you agree to take part.

What I Will Ask You To Do

If you decide to allow your child to participate in this study, I will ask you to sign a consent form granting me permission to interview your child to gather information about her/his schooling experience and general life experience in Japan.

What I Will Do With the Information You Give Me

Any information I get about you or your family will be kept strictly confidential. All the information you give me will be kept in locked files. I will not give any information to anyone, unless you give me written permission to do so. The only time I would be forced to break this promise is with people who are a danger to themselves or others. The law requires me to report that kind of information.

Risks and What Will Be Done to Reduce the Risks

Whenever research takes place, there are some possible risks involved for you. Because I will have personal information about you and your family, there is always the possibility that someone might see the information when they are not supposed to. This is what I do to keep people from seeing the information you give me:

A. I will keep the information about you and your child strictly confidential. All information is in locked files.

B. I will give you a psuedo-name for all papers dealing with your child and this project. I will not mention or share any real names with anyone.

C. The audio files of the interviews will be destroyed within one year after the project ends. Written files will be destroyed within five years of the end of the project.

D. Only authorised academic personnel are allowed to see the information you give me.

E. All academic members are trained and experienced in working with private information. They are committed to protecting your right to privacy.

F. Because I am asking for some personal information about you and your family, there is a possibility that this could lead to some discomfort.

1. If any questions make you feel uncomfortable, you may skip them.

2. You may stop the interview at any time.
3. If answering questions during the interview causes you to feel emotional or psychological distress, I will help you find a mental health counsellor in your area.

Benefits to You for Your Participation

Allowing your child to participate in this study will add to the knowledge of how schooling affects refugee children in host countries and how it influences their identity formation. Being involved in this project may also give you useful information about yourself and your family.

Right to Withdraw from the Project

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. My child is free to refuse to participate or to withdraw from participation at any time, and it will in no way affect her/his relationship with, or treatment at, any school. If my child decides not to participate in this part of the study, s/he can quit at any time without penalty.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the research committee at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. Should you have any questions or concerns throughout the course of the study, you may contact me, Vivian Turk, by phone or e-mail. If you have questions or concerns regarding your treatment as a subject, you may contact the main supervisor on the research committee, Prof. Isezaki Kenji, via e-mail at kenji-isezaki@tufs.ac.jp.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Appendix 4

Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

Tokyo, Fuchu

Study's Title:

The Schooling of Refugee Youth and its Effect on Their Identity

Informed Consent for Research Involving Human Subjects

Principal Investigator: Vivian Turk

E-mail address: vivianturk@hotmail.co.uk

Cell Phone: (+81) 080-6797-9463

I hereby give my consent to have my child participate in the research study entitled "Schooling of Refugee Youth and its Effects on Their Identity," details of which have been provided to me above, including anticipated benefits, risks, and potential complications.

I fully understand that my child may withdraw from this research project at any time without prejudice or effect. I also understand that I am free to ask questions about any procedures that will be undertaken.

Finally, I understand that any information about my child obtained during the course of this study will be kept confidential unless I consent to its release. (Return the signature page to the researcher and keep the remaining pages for your records.)

____

Child’s Name

____

Parent’s Signature

I hereby certify that I have given an explanation to the above individual about the contemplated study and its risks and potential complications.

____

Principal Investigator

Appendix 5

Survey

Umfrage **استطلاع للرّأي**

final version

...

* Required

1

Ich heiße__________إسمي *

Bitte die Antwort schreiben

الرجاء كتابة الإجابة

Enter your answer

2

Ich bin________أنا

*

- weiblich أنثى
- männmich ذكر

3

Ich bin______Jahre alt **عمري**

*

- Uner 8 Jahre أصغر من 8 سنوات
- 11-15
- 16-18
- 19-22
- 23-25
- Über 25 Jahre أكبر من 25 سنة

4

Ich lebe in Deutschland____________أنا أعيش في ألمانيا
*

- ◯ Alleine — لوحدي
- ◯ Mit meiner Familie — مع عائلتي
- ◯ Mit meinen Verwandten — مع أقربائي
- ◯ Mit Freunde — مع الأصدقاء
- ◯ Bei einer Gastfamilie — عند عائلة مضيفة
- ◉ Anders (Bitte eingeben) — غير ذلك (يرجى الإيضاح)

5

Bitte die Antwort schreiben
الرجاء كتابة الإجابة
*

Enter your answer

6

Ich bin nach Deutschland eingereist_________قدمت إلى ألمانيا
*

- ◯ Direkt aus Syrien — مباشرة من سوريا
- ◯ Über die Türkei — عبر تركيا
- ◯ Über ein EU-Land — عبر دولة أوربية
- ◉ Anders (Bitte eingeben) — غير ذلك (يرجى الإيضاح)

7

Bitte die Antwort schreiben
الرجاء كتابة الإجابة
*

Enter your answer

8

Ich lebe in Deutschland seit___________أعيش في ألمانيا منذ
*

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Bitte auswählen يرجى اختيار عدد السنوات

9

Ich kann folgende Sprachen sprechen_____________أستطيع التكلّم باللغات التّالية
*

**Mehrauswahl möglich* **الخيارات المتعدّدة ممكنة*

- [ ] Arabisch العربية
- [ ] Kurdisch الكرديّة
- [ ] Deutsch الألمانية
- [ ] Englisch الإنجليزية
- [ ] Französisch الفرنسيّة
- [ ] Andere لغة أخرى

10

Als ich meine Heimat verlassen habe, studierte ich___________

عندما غادرت بلادي كنت ادرس حينها *

Bitte die Antwort schreiben الرجاء كتابة الإجابة

Enter your answer

11

In Deutschland besuche ich jetzt___________الآن في ألمانيا أدرس في
*

- ○ Grundschule المدرسة الابتدائية
- ○ Hauptschule المدرسة الإعدادية
- ○ Realschule المدرسة الإعدادية التخصصية
- ○ Gesamtschule المدرسة الشاملة
- ○ Gymnasium الثانوية
- ○ Berufsschule المدرسة المهنية
- ○ Fachhochschulreife مدرسة التأهيل الجامعي
- ○ Universität الجامعة
- ○ Sprachschule مدرسة تعليم اللغة
- ◉ Anders (Bitte eingeben) غير ذلك (يرجى الإيضاح)

12

Bitte die Antwort schreiben
الرجاء كتابة الإجابة
*

The value must be a number

13

Während der Schulzeit/des Studiums/des Lebens in Deutschland habe ich meistens Probleme mit______________________خلال حياتي/دراستي في ألمانيا أواجه مشكلات
*

- der deutschen Sprache مع اللغة الألمانية
- Die Kultur zu verstehen مع الثقافة الألمانية
- Mit anderen Personen zu interagieren التواصل مع النّاس
- Mich meiner Umgebung anzupassen التأقلم مع محيطي
- Freundschaften schließen إنشاء علاقات و صداقات جديدة
- Nach Hilfe zu fragen طلب المساعدة من الآخرين
- Der Integration in die Gesellschaft الإندماج في المجتمع
- Anders غير ذلك

14

Mit dem Studium/Schulbesuch in Deutschland bin ich_______________رأيي في الدّراسة في ألمانيا *

- sehr zufrieden راضٍ جدّاً
- zufrieden راضٍ
- weder zufrieden noch unzufrieden لست راضٍ أو غير راضٍ
- unzufrieden غير راضٍ
- (●) sehr unzufrieden غير راضٍ أبداً

15

Warum? لماذا؟
*

Enter your answer

16

Bist du bereit für ein Gespräch, in dem du mehr über deine Erfahrungen bezüglich studieren und leben in Deutschland redest?
هل ترغب أن تتحدّث عن تجربتك في العيش و الدراسة في ألمانيا؟
*

- Ja, ich bin bereit — نعم أرغب بذلك
- Nein, ich bin nicht bereit — كلا، لا أريد

Submit

Never give out your password. Report abuse

Appendix 6

Interview Guide

The researcher will identify themselves, express gratitude for the participant's readiness to take role in the study, and then ask the participant to choose a pseudonym for the study.

Script:

My name is Vivian Turk, you may call me Vivian. I am a PhD student at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies' Global Studies Program. Thank you for accepting to engage in this doctorate dissertation study. The study will explore your educational experience and how it impacted you. More precisely, this research will examine how you perceived schooling in Germany and how it affected you. I hope the research will give me a better understanding of how education affects refugee students in host nations. All data is and will remain anonymous and secret, with no personally identifiable information being utilised. I shall refer to you throughout the interviews by your preferred pseudonym. Your participation is entirely optional, and you may discontinue at any moment. I will record this session with your consent. Following that, I will send you a copy of the transcript for you to review it. Shall we start ?

After gaining the subject's consent to proceed, the researcher will address the individual by his or her pseudonym and conduct the formal interview in the following manner:

Survey Verification Questions

Script:

Please allow me to ask you some questions before we begin the actual interview in order to check or clarify the survey responses you have kindly supplied earlier. This part should take no more than a few minutes, so please give me brief answers.

Immediately after the end of the verification questions, the researcher will proceed to the formal interview.

Interview Questions

The interview questions are designed to provide answers to the main study question: How do refugee youth assess the impact of education in host nations on their self identity? The interview questions are designed to collect information on the students' schooling experiences in Germany as well as their perceptions of how those experiences have influenced their identity. The table below displays how the interview questions have been classified according to the themes that are presently being investigated and previously identified in the pilot study. The close-ended questions are meant to be a trigger for follow-up narration on the topic.

Part 1: (Schooling in the home country or a third country)

1) Before you came to Germany, did you go to school somewhere? What did you study? What degrees have you earned/completed?

2) Think back when you were studying then. How did you feel about your school and learning experience?

3) What did you like or hate about your learning experience then? Why?

4) If you introduced yourself to a new friend back then, how would you describe yourself?

Part 2: (Schooling in Germany)

5) Describe your schooling experience in Germany since you got enrolled.

6) Tell me about the merits and demerits of schooling in Germany compared to that in Syria, if you can compare.

7) Did you have any great or not so great moments while studying in Germany?

8) Describe key experiences from your schooling journey.

Part 3: (Environment influence on schooling)

9) How did your family influence your learning experience? What do you think about their role in your life here as a refugee student?

10) Tell me about your relations with your teachers and how it affected your learning journey.

11) Describe your connections with your peers at school

Part 4: (Self-Identification)

12) How would you introduce yourself to someone for the first time in Germany? How will that introduction differ according to who you are speaking to?

13) Tell me what it means for you to be a refugee in Germany.

14) Describe a triggering experience when you had a strong sense of self-hood.

15) Tell me the story of the item that you think it represents you.

Part 5: (Reflections and Future)

16) If you could, what would you change in your life right now? Why?

17) Tell me about your fears or concern for the future.

18) Describe your future aspirations

19) What do you think about returning to Syria?

Thank you for taking the time to participate. I will get in touch with you later to gather any additional information that may be required. In addition, I will provide you the transcript of this interview so that you may check the accuracy of the information provided.

Appendix 7

Email of Appreciation to Participants

(to be sent within 24 hours after the interview)

To ____________ ,

I appreciate your sharing of your experiences with me about your schooling in Germany. I am grateful for your sparing the time to do so. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any new thoughts, suggestions, or comments since our conversation.

You may reply to this email or phone me at your convenience. vivianturk@hotmail.co.uk is my email address, and my phone number is 080-6797-9463. You may also contact me through WhatsApp or Facebook.

With Sincere Regards,

Vivian Turk

Appendix 8

Example of Re-storying Narratives

(Extracts from Reem’s Narrative)

Storying (Transcribing)	Re-storying
a. When I left Syria I was 4.5 maybe 5. and when I went to school here I started from grade one but no German skill then.	a. When I left Syria, I was around 5 years old. And could go to school in Germany, I started in the firs though I could not speak German.
b. Going to school was my love. I had, I don’t know, like many friends at that time. I miss Lara she was my friend she was my best friend. I don't know she is in Syria, out of Syria. where she is now? but I hope she's okay.	b. I loved going to school. I had many friends back miss Lara, who was my best friend. I don't know w is now, but I hope she's okay.
c. I love the school it was short time I will go to school but it was fun time at that time I felt like school is more fun than home because my brothers are very young and nobody play with me at home.	c. I loved going to school, though it was for a shor was a fun time and it felt like school was more fun home because my brothers were still too young an played with me at home.
d. At school I learnt alphabet and I can read and write some sentences. I was happy to read small um….what do you call these… stories by myself. my teacher also taught me how to do easy maths it was fun I wish I can go back.	d. At school, I learnt the alphabet and I could read some sentences. I was happy to read short stories b My teacher also taught me easy maths. It was fun a wish I could go back (to visit that school).
e. At that time, in Syria, um, if I speak with somebody for the first time, I tell them “hi my name is Reem… I am … I like the green colour and….. my favourite fruit is Tangerine”.	e. When I was in Syria, if I spoke with somebody f first time, I would tell them, "Hi, my name is Reem the green colour and my favourite fruit is Tangerin

Appendix 9

Examples of Coding and Theme Creating

Interviewer: Did your way of introducing yourself to others change in Germany? Reem: I wasn't thinking at all about how different I was. I just wanted to fit in, so when I had to introduce myself, I just said, "I'm Reem," They used to ask me how to spell my name and what my hobbies are. I was glad they wanted to know about me. That happened in the first two years, I think, but slowly I started feeling my difference. Because, first, I look different. I don't have blond hair or blue eyes. My skin is darker. My parents, when they visit the school, also look different from my friends' parents. I started feeling like I was deceiving myself if I didn't say who I was clearly. But I was confused. Maybe they know who I am already, so it doesn't matter. I used to go home and question my mother or father about why I or they treated me differently. I started understanding, but it didn't make things easier. I thought time would change me and make me feel like them, but I feel like time is making me feel more different. I am strange. My friends tell me so, and even my brother. Maybe I am indeed.	desire to fit in feeling different reflecting on self-identification feeling different internalisation of feelings of difference due to environment pressure

Interviewer: Tell me about an incident that made me realise that you reached some kind of limits.

Talib: Shortly after I started attending regular classes at school, I found out we had a swimming class. I was so happy, because I love swimming. But it wasn't until my first swimming lesson that I learned about the no-clothes culture. After the class, we had to take a shower. The shower room had no separation between shower heads, and everyone could see everybody, so I kept my swim suit on and took a shower while wearing it. My teacher got angry with me and told me to shower after taking it off. I couldn't believe it. For as long as I can remember, I have never been naked in front of my own family before. My teacher got really angry after I repeated it a couple more times, and he told the principal. They called my brother to come to school and started explaining to us that these were the rules in Germany and that we had to follow them. Otherwise, we can leave. My brother tried to convince me, saying that there was no problem, and that no one was looking at me, but I couldn't accept it. I feel so degraded as a human being if I show my body to others, including my brother. You can call me whatever you want; my classmates actually laughed at me and called me words I didn't understand, but if I am not allowed to have this little amount of dignity, I will choose not to go to school at all. Of course, after my brother saw how stubborn I was, he helped me move to the school where I am studying now. They are more flexible and understanding of my culture. Just remembering this incident makes me have goose bumps at how embarrassing it was to be naked in front of everyone in my class.

← nudity

cultural shock

home-culture reference

← nudity and dignity

← limits of accepting integration

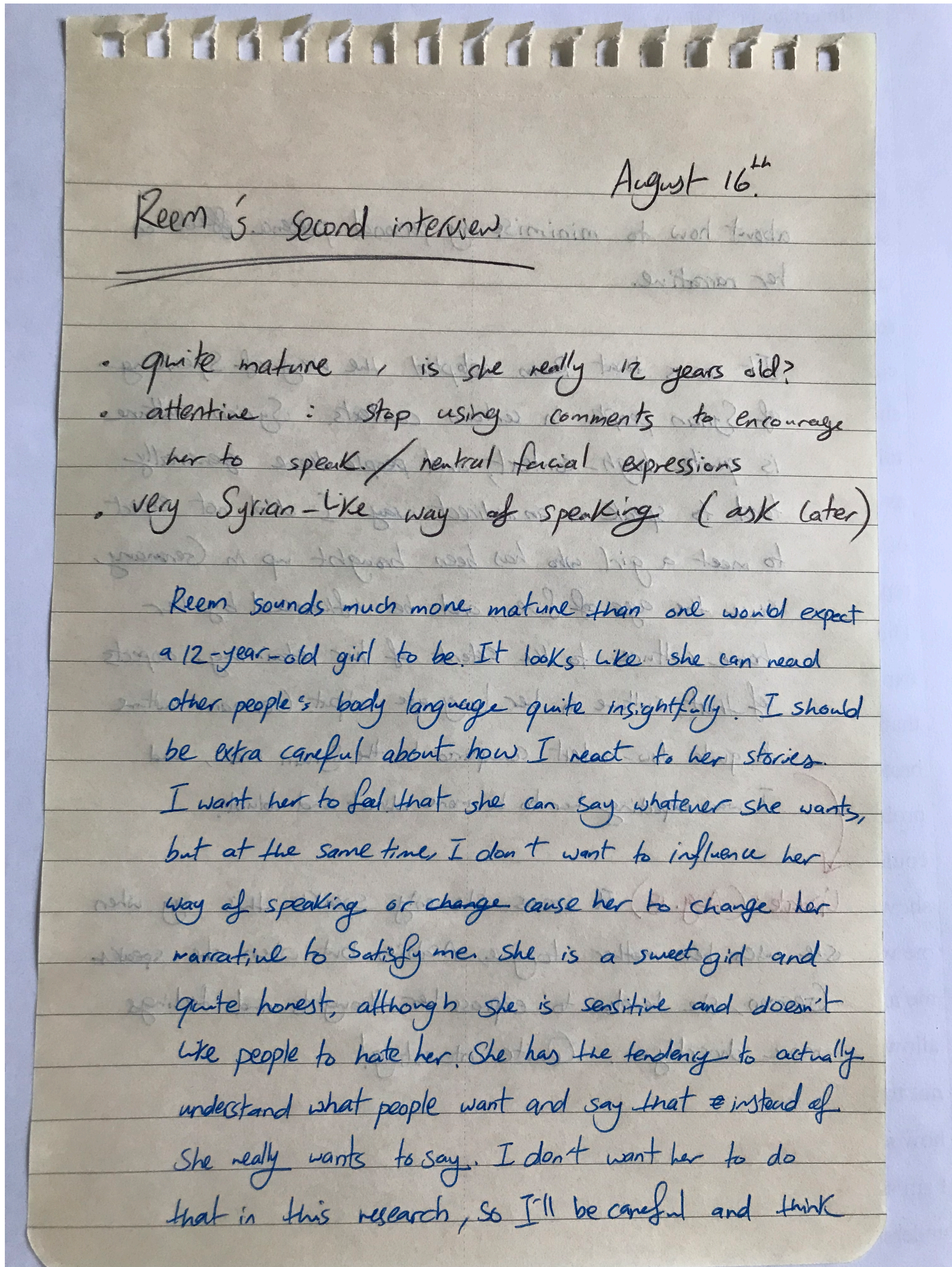
← home-culture reference

← embarrassment (nudity)

Appendix 10

Example of Reflective Notes

This is an extract from my research journal that I kept throughout the research project. The extra is taken from the reflection I made upon my second interview with Reem.



Reem's second interview August 16th

- quite mature, is she really 12 years old?
- attentive: stop using comments to encourage her to speak / neutral facial expressions
- very Syrian-like way of speaking (ask later)

Reem sounds much more mature than one would expect a 12-year-old girl to be. It looks like she can read other people's body language quite insightfully. I should be extra careful about how I react to her stories. I want her to feel that she can say whatever she wants, but at the same time, I don't want to influence her way of speaking or ~~change~~ cause her to change her narrative to satisfy me. She is a sweet girl and quite honest, although she is sensitive and doesn't like people to hate her. She has the tendency to actually understand what people want and say that instead of she really wants to say. I don't want her to do that in this research, so I'll be careful and think

about how to minimise my personal presence effect on her narrative.

It seems that Reem adopted the way of speaking of Syrian people in certain contexts. Syrian culture is quite high-context, and people there generally tend to speak in an indirect way. I did not expect to meet a girl who has been brought up in Germany since the age of five, and be influenced by her home culture to the extent of her retaining aspects of that culture in her language output. German culture is quite low-context compared to the Syrian one, and I was expecting her to be more direct and blunt.

Update: (Aug. 18) It seems she only speaks this way when she uses her mother tongue, Arabic, but when she speaks German, she tends to express her thoughts and feelings more directly. Quite interesting!