



**Navigating the Higher Education Border:  
Routes to Belonging for Forced Migrant Students in the  
UK and Sweden**

**by**

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## Abstract

This thesis investigates the impact of managed migration policy and practice on forced migrants' access to, and participation, in higher education. 'Forced migrant' is used as a broad non-legal term, which includes individuals with 'settled' and 'unsettled' claims for asylum. In Western Europe, the perceived influx of forced migrants has reinforced the hostile environment encountered by those whose experiences are characterised by exclusion and limbo. The distinct marginalisation imposed upon forced migrants within civil society is replicated within higher education. Forced migrants with unsettled immigration status are categorised as international students, rendering them ineligible for student funding. Yet, in spite of seemingly insurmountable challenges, it is often central to their aspirations and pursuit to belong in the destination country.

This research draws on Foucauldian governmentality, Giddens theory of structuration and Bourdieu's model of habitus and capital to explore the relationship between forced migration and higher education at different societal scales. This thesis investigates state-led governance, institutional university-level practice and the actions and impact of individuals – agents who work within higher education and forced migrants. A cross-national country comparison between the UK and Sweden, across six university sites, facilitated analysis of locally specific practices and their potential for extrapolation to the European and global level.

This thesis responds to a palpable lack of research and data documenting forced migrants' aspirations and participation in higher education, expanding our knowledge of this area and contributing to empirical and theoretical debates around key themes of displacement, limbo, and belonging. The invisibility of this group and the deficits in forced migrants' capital contribute to the construction of the 'higher education border': wherein state-led managed migration policies of exclusion are enacted, as well as resisted. This thesis interrogates whether British (Article 26 scholarships) and Swedish (intensive language programmes such as Korta Vagen) initiatives targeting forced migrants perpetuate the higher education border and its inherent inequalities or achieve valuable incremental change.

## Dedications

This thesis is dedicated to three very important people:

Ahmed, without whom it would never have got started.

My Dad, David, for his enjoyment of good grammar and referencing and, for responding to every crisis of confidence with 'shut up Rebecca'.

My husband Coni, for his love of dinosaurs and over the course of the past 20 years, me.

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## Preface

It was a Wednesday evening in late February 2005, I was sitting in a stuffy overcrowded office packed with young people in South Manchester, patiently waiting for the chatter and laughter to quieten down so we could start the weekly meeting. The young people in the room were all asylum seekers, either in the UK with or separated from their parents, gathered together under the auspices of a new national self-advocacy project entitled 'Brighter Futures'. At Save the Children we prided ourselves on being experts at advocating for the specific needs of asylum-seeking young people - but what we weren't doing was asking questions about what they wanted us to do – we pre-empted and prioritised their needs in the absence of any input from them. The aim of Brighter Futures was to resolve this problem and fulfil two functions – the first to find out what members of the group wanted to change, the second to train the young people to design and implement an advocacy campaign that could achieve this change.

Sitting in the meeting that night I was incredibly nervous. I tried to reassure myself that I knew about advocacy, I could produce an evidence base, lobby, and negotiate on behalf of individuals and groups. However, I had little confidence in my ability to teach a group of young people with no prior understanding of advocacy nor for some, experience of life in the UK, how to do this. I naively thought we protected the young people from the true extent of the unpopularity of their presence in the UK and I was concerned that this process would expose them to how unpleasant things really were. The prospect of them being devastated and disappointed in the event they were unsuccessful also played on my mind. However, these fears played second to my primary concern, which centred on their choice of campaign.

Discussion and debate about the focus of the campaign was drawing to a conclusion as tonight it was time to make a decision. We were supposedly going to vote, but I could see that this process was futile, as the group, led by a young man called Ahmed repeatedly returned to the same issue. As I watched Ahmed I recalled our very first meeting. Born and raised in a refugee camp, Ahmed's family paid smugglers to take the family to Canada. The entire family ended up in the UK and we met at a weekend drop in for asylum seeking children in the centre of Manchester. Ahmed stood out amongst

the other young people, immaculately turned out in a shirt and tie (I wouldn't see him in a tie again until he secured his first position as an investment manager for one of the biggest banks in the UK). Tonight Ahmed was far from uncertain, as he stood up and presented his proposal for an advocacy campaign, the group responded by offering their resounding support. I felt forced to mount a challenge to try and avert the impending disaster. However Ahmed stood his ground and I had no choice but to concede that we, Brighter Futures, were going to embark on a campaign to overcome the two major hurdles the young people faced in their pursuit of higher education: their categorisation as international students for the purpose of university tuition fees and their lack of eligibility for student funding required to meet the cost of their higher education studies.

Three years after the campaign commenced, I led a pilot initiative within Save the Children. Ahmed, was the first member of the group to be supported to commence an undergraduate degree programme: the following year three of his peers followed in his footsteps. In 2010, in order to respond to the growing number of opportunities created for forced migrant students, I established the Article 26 project under the umbrella of the Helena Kennedy Foundation with Nick Sagovsky. The project takes its name from article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that in addition to education being a human right, access to higher education should be based on merit (United Nations 1948).

The main purpose of the Article 26 project was to provide a conduit between prospective students and higher education institutions willing to, support these individuals but uncertain as to how to do so. In the beginning the project managed the recruitment, application and selection processes on behalf of universities prior to the scholarships being mainstreamed into universities' existing provision in 2013. In academic year 2010/11, the first three Article 26 students commenced their degree programme. By academic year 2015/16, the number of available scholarships had risen to 28. In the summer of 2015, the impact of the war in Syria was felt profoundly across Europe, as the number of displaced people seeking asylum on the continent dramatically increased. The positive response from the UK higher education sector was reflected in academic year 2016/17, as the number of scholarships exceeded 75. A new challenge

arose as it became difficult to accurately track the extent of the provision being made for forced migrants across the UK.

This Preface is written in recognition of the young asylum seekers and refugees who didn't just design and deliver a hugely successful campaign but fueled my interest in this area, which ultimately led to my undertaking this doctoral research.



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## Abbreviations & Glossary

<b>Asylum seeker:</b>	an asylum claim has been submitted and the applicant is either awaiting or appealing a negative decision.
<b>ARC:</b>	asylum registration card
<b>CAS:</b>	certificate of acceptance for studies
<b>Country of origin:</b>	country from which a forced migrant originated.
<b>Destination country:</b>	country in which an asylum application was submitted.
<b>EU:</b>	European Union
<b>EUA:</b>	European Universities Association
<b>Establishment Plan:</b>	Etablering Plan (integration programme - Sweden).
<b>Folk University:</b>	Folkuniversitetet (further education provider - Sweden).
<b>Forced migrant:</b>	non legal term to describe a broad spectrum of immigration statuses.
<b>HE:</b>	higher education
<b>HEI:</b>	higher education institution
<b>HEFCE:</b>	Higher Education Funding Council for England
<b>HO:</b>	Home Office (ministerial department responsible for immigration, security, law and order – UK)
<b>IOM:</b>	International Organisation for Migration
<b>Lagom:</b>	term used to reflect neutrality and moderation (Sweden)
<b>LLR:</b>	limited leave to remain (leave granted outside of the immigration rules UK)
<b>NASS:</b>	National Asylum Support Service
<b>NGO:</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>NHS:</b>	National Health Service
<b>NUS:</b>	National Union of Students
<b>OFFA:</b>	Office For Fair Access
<b>OFS:</b>	Office For Students
<b>Migration Agency:</b>	Migrationsverket (manages applications for anyone who wants to live, visit, study or seek asylum in Sweden)
<b>PG:</b>	postgraduate

<b>Refugee:</b>	refugee is someone who has recognised legal protection.
<b>Residence Permit:</b>	documentation permitting residence (Sweden)
<b>Employment Agency:</b>	Arbetsformedligen (Sweden)
<b>SAS3:</b>	Level of Swedish language required to study at degree level / access professional positions of employment
<b>SFI:</b>	Swedish for Immigrants – entry level Swedish language
<b>SHUF:</b>	Swedish Association Higher Education
<b>Swedish Council for</b>	
<b>Higher Education:</b>	Utbildningsbedoming (UHR)
<b>UCAS:</b>	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
<b>UG:</b>	undergraduate
<b>UNDHR:</b>	United Nations Human Declaration of Human Rights
<b>UNHCR:</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UUK:</b>	Universities UK

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

‘And while they waited for their papers to be processed, their past lives lay behind them in ruins. But they couldn’t afford to mourn because of a more pressing problem: their new lives couldn’t begin’ (Kassabova, 2017:191)

Forced displacement resulting in migration and the subsequent resettlement of people is not a new phenomenon but one that dates back to Christ: the Gospel according to Matthew proclaims that Jesus spent several years as an unwelcome stranger residing in a foreign land having fled the tyrannical rule of King Herod. Jesus’ experience as a refugee was relatively short lived in comparison with his fellow Hebrews, many of whom spent 40 years in the desert, in search of the ‘promised land’. Conflict, war and persecution have throughout history, whether at the national or international level, led to mass disruption to civilian life, often resulting in the mass movement of people on a collective mission to find a place of sanctuary. However, for many, and subject to far less scrutiny, seeking sanctuary is coupled with the dream of the ‘promised land’ or a ‘better life’: at the very least to resume a life commensurate with that which they left behind (Horst, 2006; Gladwell et al, 2016).

Borders feature heavily in the lives of forced migrants; borders are crossed in the process of and upon leaving their country of origin; borders are traversed in a transitory country or countries in pursuit of a welcoming destination (Arbel & Brenner, 2013; Burrige, 2014; Jenkins, 2014). The 6% of the global population of displaced people who seek asylum within the European Union (UNHCR, 2016a) find that borders in the vicinity of their country of origin are replicated at the border of the continent, appropriately labelled ‘Fortress Europe’ (Cardwell, 2013). Borders are positioned throughout Europe, as the denial of the freedom of movement that is afforded to EU citizens places additional pressure on the already hugely challenging task forced migrants face in finding a place in which they can settle. Yet borders are also found within nation-states and forced migrants encounter overt, as well as covert borders and barriers to belong within a new society. This study focuses on the role played by higher education in forced migrants’ construction of and quest for a better life. Borders created as a mechanism through which to manage migration are increasingly mobile and complex, as they extend



from the territorial to the everyday experiences of forced migrants, who seek not just asylum but opportunities to study at university.

The motivation and resilience born out of a need to reclaim agency and overcome the chaos caused by displacement is often the driving force to reach Europe. This determination is met by states who in failing to exclude forced migrants at the territorial border, endeavour to enact their physical, social and economic exclusion, forcing them to the periphery of society wherein they are afforded what Agamben (2005) describes as 'bare life': the bare minimum required for human life to survive as opposed to thrive. Agamben's (2005) 'state of exception', deployed to describe the spatiality of bare life, is also illuminating of the forced migrant experience at and within the territorial border, and the ways in which their presence in civil society is marked as 'temporary' and a 'threat' to both the security and resources of the state and subsequently the wider population. However, as Mountz (2010; 2011a; 2011b) similarly argues regarding her work on refugee camps, once residing in the destination country wherein a claim for asylum has been submitted, forced migrants continue to exercise agency, as they seek to move from the periphery to the centre of society through their participation in higher education.

### 1.1 Higher Education as a Priority Issue in Forced Migration

'I would say that it's your right and you need to take it out of the throat of each and every government or university administrator or university manager or any idiot who tells you, maybe it's better to take this job or that job. Be greedy, rip it from their throat'

Halil, Syrian-Palestinian forced migrant living in Sweden, a respondent in this research.

The mass movement of highly educated Syrians into Europe has had a huge impact on the inclusion of higher education as a priority need, one now considered to require the development of a rapid response mechanism to deal with emergency situations (HOPES, 2017). This is a relatively recent phenomenon occurring during the field work undertaken in the course of this research and a decade after the inception of the Brighter Futures higher education campaign. In spite of the relatively small scale participation of forced migrants in higher education, this group represents an estimated

1% of the 150 million global student population, the higher education needs of which present a growing concern amongst higher education institutions within the European Union (UNHCR, 2016b). In 2015 the European Universities Association called for institutions across the continent to minimise the barriers preventing or deterring access for forced migrants seeking asylum within their territorial borders. The motivation to embark on this thesis came directly from the aspirations of forced migrants based in the UK to resist the barriers preventing them from continuing their educational journeys, the direct result of a lack of settled immigration status and the resulting financial impediments preventing their progress. The Preface to this thesis introduced the context within which the idea to deliver a campaign on access to higher education was conceived. In short this campaign led to changes in the UK higher education sector that enabled not just the instigators of the campaign, but significant numbers of forced migrants to become university graduates.

This study was embarked upon during a period of growth in terms of opportunities in higher education for forced migrants, with a view to exploring in greater depth the relationship between the management of migration and higher education. As noted in the Preface, the foundations of this doctoral research lie in the Article 26 project, but the scope is much broader as it aims to explore and develop a more complex and nuanced understanding around access and participation in higher education of both unsettled and settled forced migrants in a familiar (England) and unfamiliar (Sweden) context (Murray, 2016). Chapter 4 provides a detailed analysis regarding the selection of Sweden as a country comparison.

Challenges accessing higher education can primarily be located in legislation. The body of research in this area discussed in section 2.9, reflects that although small in scale, studies date back to 1999, further demonstrating that issues around forced migrants' access to higher education are not a new phenomenon and nor do they relate specifically to the needs and aspirations of Syrian forced migrants, as is the dominant rhetoric across Europe, but across a broad spectrum of forced migrants from around the world, and predates the current challenges faced by Syrians. The *Teaching and Higher Education Act (1998)* reclassified forced migrants in the UK with unsettled immigration status as international students. This was coupled with the introduction of university

tuition fees for all students and from this point onwards the legislative exclusion of this student cohort. In Sweden the *Swedish Higher Education Act (1992)* was amended in 2008 to introduce tuition fees for the first time, but only for students from outside the European Union. This thesis is concerned with issues beyond those created by legislation, but legislative changes provide important indicators in terms of the development of increasingly exclusionary practices in relation to forced migrants' access to higher education.

The most restrictive legislation pertaining to forced migrants' access to higher education is in operation in England; this is also the location of the three case study institutions. England has the largest population of the four home countries and is subject to the vast majority of uncontrolled migration. The emphasis within the forced migrant populations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is on those dispersed by the Home Office after having initially arrived in England. In 2016 England had a population of 55.3 million, representing 84% of the total UK population of 65.65 million (ONS, 2016). In addition, England hosts 103 of the 130 UK universities, the remaining 27 being spread out across Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The UK is referred to throughout this thesis, but the research took place in England: this is not intended to ignore the subtle yet important differences between the four countries of the UK and their respective responses to support forced migrants' access to higher education (Murray et al, 2014).

'Forced migrant' and 'higher education' are the two main concepts around which this study revolves. The term forced migrant is used as a non-legal definition, which embraces the full spectrum of immigration categories used in Sweden and the UK. The forced migrant category represents both those for whom their asylum application has been resolved resulting in settled immigration status and those for whom a decision is pending and whose status is subsequently unresolved. This research adopts an equally broad definition in respect to what constitutes higher education, concurring with Hannah (1999): 'Post-compulsory education is precisely that: not compulsory, and can take many forms' (p.155).

In this research I undertook a cross-national comparison of the experiences of forced migrants and the higher education institutions in which they sought access in the course

of their displacement. The research was conducted across six universities situated in the UK and Sweden; the individual countries and institutions represent case studies, the method utilised to operationalise a situated epistemological approach. This facilitated the holistic exploration of these issues not only from the forced migrant but the institutional and individual perspective of higher education agents. The social, historical and political importance of the construction of forced migration cannot be underestimated nor the positioning of forced migrants at the very bottom of global, European, national and institutional hierarchies. In order to understand the impact of the global mass movement of people, it is vital to consider the lives of individual forced migrants in the local contexts in which they endeavour to reclaim agency and exercise power, in terms of how these perspectives can be extrapolated to the global level to highlight the challenges posed by forced migration.

## 1.2 Research Aim & Questions

This study is a departure from the existing body of international research in this area for several key reasons. The emphasis within the existing body of research in this area is predominantly on descriptive analysis or almost exclusively theoretically underpinned by Bourdieu. An investigation at the three societal levels: the state (Swedish and British government), the institutional (university) and individual (forced migrant and higher education agents), is informed by the theories of Foucault, Giddens and Bourdieu, which overlap and intersect to develop a more conceptual understanding of the major themes emerging from this research.

One challenge this research aimed to address was the invisibility of forced migrants and issues pertaining to recognition outside of the immigration sphere. The body of existing research on forced migrants and higher education contributes to this debate: however a deficit lies in explicit connections between the management of migration and forced migrants' experiences of HE studies. This could in part be related to the fact that only research produced by Stevenson & Willott (2007; 2008) considers the challenges encountered by forced migrants with unsettled immigration status. This research explores the full spectrum of perceived deficits in the habitus and capital held by forced migrants, encompassing those who have settled and those for whom their immigration

status is unsettled, all of whom are pursuing opportunities in higher education. Underrepresented within this field are studies which explore the perspectives of actors other than forced migrant actors. In doing so such past research forgoes the opportunity to explore not only wider contributions to conceptual framing, but also the potential for other actors to participate in shaping realistic solutions to move the findings from the conceptual to changes in policy and practice directly informed by a wide range of participants.

The cross national comparison is a central component of this research, which is again distinctly different to previous research in this area, where there is a palpable absence in attempts to transcend territorial borders. This thesis moves beyond the different legislation and structures which frame immigration and higher education to explore not just differences but similarities between the experiences of forced migrant and higher education agents. In addition to focusing on two different countries, this study scrutinises the two dominant initiatives targeting forced migrants: in the UK, the provision of primarily financial scholarships delivered under the auspices of the Article 26 project, and in Sweden the provision of intensive language programmes aimed at expediting access to the Swedish labour market.

The overarching aim of this study is to explore the impact of managed migration regimes on forced migrants' access, participation and success in higher education as well as the response and resistance to these regimes from agents operating in higher education institutions and forced migrants.

The following research questions provide a framework which in the context of a significant lack of academic studies in this area, support an investigation that considers both the breadth and depth of these issues:

**RQ1.** To critically examine the role of higher education institutions in managed migration regimes and their impact on the higher education experiences of forced migrants.

**RQ2.** To explore the role of higher education in the lives of forced migrants as they navigate the limbo induced by their displacement.

**RQ3.** To critically compare and analyse the forced migrant higher education journey in the UK & Sweden

**RQ4.** To identify the extent to which forced migrants reclaim agency and shape their own definition of belonging through higher education.

### 1.3 Thesis Structure

Chapter 2 establishes a contextual framework for the research. Analysis of legislation and policy at the international, European, national and local level reveal two dominant themes across these scales: the first relates to the invisibility of forced migrants from mainstream legislation and systems, through the creation of parallel and often inferior processes within which to meet their needs. The second theme occurring across these scales relates to the social and economic exclusion of forced migrants from mainstream society, replicated within higher education.

Chapter 3 presents the conceptual framework in which the relationship between forced migration and higher education is situated. Key concepts include: the application of neoliberal governmentality within higher education; the construction and implementation of forced migrant discourse; the autonomous or compliant character of universities; and the mechanisms utilised to enact the border between forced migrants and higher education. The fluidity of the higher education border is considered in the context of the relationships between the structures comprising higher education and the agents operating within it, and the potential for restructuring to include as opposed to exclude forced migrants. The chapter then moves on to introduce the concept of forced migrant habitus and how it serves to both enable and restrict forced migrants in their attempts to reclaim agency in a context of overwhelming adversity and loss. This research is conceptualised through the lenses of Foucault, Giddens and Bourdieu, none of whom focus on managed migration, but in this chapter I demonstrate how I have extended their ideas to the arenas of higher education and managed migration.

Chapters 2 and 3 lay the philosophical and epistemological foundations for the development of the research design detailed in Chapter 4. The importance of social, historical and political context influenced the adoption of a situated epistemological

design utilising a case study methodology. This directly informed the selection of appropriate research methods with which to operationalise this research project and maximise opportunities to produce in depth detailed findings. Key issues arising during time spent in the field relating to the significance of language, power dynamics within higher education structures and challenges were reflected in the research findings. Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8, present the findings and contributions made by this research whilst also responding to the four research questions.

Chapter 5 responds to **RQ1**, primarily focusing on the inherent tensions in the connection between the state and universities; the relationship between political ideology and practice; and the construction of universities as autonomous or compliant institutions. This chapter discusses the exclusion of forced migrants from widening participation structures, as well as initiatives aimed at countering exclusionary practices. Chapter 6 switches to the forced migrant perspective, through introducing key themes that are built upon in Chapters 7 and 8. The forced migrants' experiences of displacement are characterised by limbo: this is explored through their previous educational histories and future ambitions. This chapter contributes to a nuanced yet comprehensive understanding of limbo as an intangible concept, which needs to explore the full spectrum of experience. A spectrum is introduced in Chapter 6 commencing at the point of displacement and the ensuing limbo and extending in Chapter 8 to the point at which the forced migrants perceive themselves to 'belong' in the destination country. These chapters provide answers to **RQ2** and **RQ4**.

Chapter 7 extends the discussion around the marginalisation of forced migrants in higher education through the analysis of their endeavours to traverse the higher education border, explored through the lens of social capital and its integral role in minimising or exacerbating the impact of the various other forms of capital deficit which are used to construct their encounters with this specific border. This penultimate chapter further develops the response to **RQ2**, as well as providing comprehensive answers to **RQ3**. Whilst Chapter 7 introduces comparative findings pertaining to the differing constructions of barriers at different points in the forced migrants' respective journeys through university in Sweden and the UK, Chapter 8 centres on the explicit roles played by the two initiatives aimed at forced migrants in the respective countries.

The chapter also questions whether current provision replicates existing structural inequalities or contributes to long term structural changes. The spectrum introduced in Chapter 6 effectively concludes in Chapter 8 through the forced migrants' shaping of what it means to belong, and contributes to **RQ1, RQ2, RQ3** and **RQ4**.

Chapter 9 discusses the five concepts central to this thesis: the *(in) visibility* of forced migrants in the UK and Sweden; the construction of a *forced migrant habitus*, which transcends the two case study countries; the construction, as well as the potential to deconstruct the *higher education border*; the *spectrum of limbo*  $\leftrightarrow$  *belonging* upon which forced migrants decide their position, shaped by their own perceptions. These concepts are interwoven by the *everyday* interactions and experiences within which repressive and emancipatory practices are enacted. Multiple perspectives facilitate the analysis moving beyond research contributions to tangible policy and practice contributions, effectively enabling the study to return to its original grass roots.



## Chapter 2

### Global to the Local: Legislation & Policy Context

#### 2.1. Introduction: Legislative and Policy Frameworks

The term 'forced migration' refers to the displacement of people both within and across geographical borders due to forces beyond their personal control. Nation states need to defend their populations from international threats and forced migrants are increasingly perceived as a threat to national security (Valentine et al, 2009; Walters, 2011; Mountz & Hiemstra, 2014). Salt et al (2004) and Hannah (2006), argue that this is the basis upon which the identity of forced migrants is increasingly aligned with criminals and terrorists. This research utilises the non-legal term 'forced migrant' in an attempt to transcend the pejorative stereotypes associated with specific immigration statuses (Zetter, 1991 & 2007; Moore, 2013; Scheel & Squire, 2014). In the context of this research a simple binary is adopted, which identifies forced migrants as either having 'settled' or 'unsettled' immigration status, without explicitly referring to the legal immigration categories assigned to the research participants. This binary also facilitates discussion across two different country contexts, whose states employ different legal terminology to categorise forced migrants.

Chapter 3 explores issues pertaining to the construction of terminology used in relation to forced migration and its role in producing and reproducing forced migrant discourses in greater depth. Chapter 1 explored the definition of, and decision to use, the term 'forced migrant', as a means to describe and, albeit reluctantly, categorise the individuals located at the centre of this research. The forced displacement and subsequent migratory experiences of these individuals, as well as the higher education institutions' (HEIs) response to their pursuit of opportunities in higher education (HE), need to be understood in relation to the law as well as its interpretation and application through policy.

This chapter locates this research in relevant legislative frameworks, to identify where forced migrants are explicitly included, and where this group are notably absent. International, European and domestic law all contribute to shaping the rights and

entitlements afforded to forced migrants. However, legislation does not just determine legal rights. A further consequence is the role it plays in constructing pejorative 'forced migrant' discourses, and stereotypes which subsequently shape public perceptions. In order to be effective, legislation needs to be enacted, which is dependent upon agents of the state and non-state actors, who also act in reverse, to influence changes to existing and new legislation. The aim of this chapter is to describe the legislative and policy frameworks, which define and connect the global (international), regional (European) domestic (UK and Sweden) and local HEI contexts within which this research is situated.

This analysis commences with an overview of key statistics pertinent to forced migration and reflects upon the challenges inherent in relying on statistics to fully comprehend the spectrum of qualitative issues pertaining to people who are forcibly displaced. The examination of international law, protocols, and global governance, is followed by EU law and policy directives relating to the management of forced migration. An investigation into the impact of domestic law and policy relating to both immigration and higher education, moving beyond fair access to the sector, is undertaken in order to understand how these challenges pertaining to immigration status, student funding, language, and the recognition of prior qualifications and experience, affect not just access but full participation and ultimately success in higher education.

Chapter 2 then moves away from the legislative frameworks to provide an introduction to the different initiatives adopted by higher education institutions in response to the higher education challenges encountered by forced migrants explored in the context of the wider environment in the UK and Sweden. Seismic geopolitical shifts directly correlate to the increased movement of people seeking asylum into Europe, which took place during the period in which the field work was undertaken. Seismic political shifts in the UK and Sweden contribute to the contextual understanding of the increasingly hostile and inhospitable environment within which this research was conducted and very few studies have been undertaken to explore the relationship between forced migration and higher education. A summary of the legislation referenced in this chapter: from the international to the national level is presented in Appendix 8.

## 2.2 Forced Migration: Statistical Overview

The UNHCR (2016) estimated that there are 65.6 million forcibly displaced people in the world. This equates to 1 in every 122 people having been displaced from their 'home'. Within the global population of migrants experiencing forced displacement, just 6% enter Europe to submit a claim for asylum. This percentage does not account for those individuals whose displacement was forced but who chose an alternative route of entry, either clandestinely or through securing a visa to work, study or as a tourist. In 2015, there were 169,500 forcibly displaced people in Sweden out of a total population of 9.79 million and 123,100 in the UK out of a total population of 65.14 million (ONS, 2015; UNHCR, 2015). Globally forced migrants (described by the UNHCR as refugees) comprise only 1% of the 150 million students engaged in higher education (UNHCR, 2016b). There are no statistics available which reflect the percentage of forced migrants engaged in higher education across Europe or within the two case study countries. However, in correlation with the global statistic, 51% of the forced migrants entering Europe are children (UNHCR, 2016a), which is indicative that opportunities at university will be in demand in the future. A key point of consideration is the extent to which global statistics are useful at the national and local level: especially in contexts where data collected in relation to forced migration are minimal or non-existent.

The UK and Sweden both have a history of working with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) to accept an annual quota of forced migrants who have successfully claimed asylum and been afforded settled immigration status: Sweden since 1950, and the UK more recently from 2004. These quotas do not include the various responses by both countries to specific events throughout history: for example, in 1962, the UK agreed to admit over 60,000 people expelled from Uganda (Mamdani, 2011). Decisions on the annual quota of forced migrants resettled in the UK and Sweden are typically made external to both countries by the UNHCR, or in some cases the respective countries' embassies. The majority of applicants are usually resident within a refugee camp. The most recent country chapter report on the UK was published in 2014 and stated that the UK agreed to and subsequently admitted 750 forced migrants via this route (UNHCR, 2014). Sweden's report from 2016, reflects that the country admitted 1,900 forced migrants (UNHCR, 2016a) under this programme. The UK figure does not include the specific commitment to forced migrants fleeing Syria. A recent

parliamentary report indicated that between October 2015 and December 2016, 5,454 Syrians were granted refugee status in the UK, from a commitment to resettle 20,000 Syrian forced migrants in the country (McGuinness, 2017).

The most recent available data shows that in 2016, 30,747 people sought asylum in the UK (Refugee Council, August 2017). In 2016, 28,939 people sought asylum in Sweden compared with 162,877 in the same year. These figures reflect people entering either Sweden or the UK clandestinely, as opposed to via official routes such as the UNHCR quotas described above, to explicitly seek asylum. These statistics also reflect individuals who had been living 'under the radar', their presence undocumented, who subsequently sought to secure their legal right to remain through the asylum process. Finally, there are documented individuals, who entered the country with a valid visa but who were unable to return due to the changed situation in their country of origin and who therefore sought asylum (Day & White, 2002).

Data collection in relation to forced migrants is focused on: the point of arrival into the destination country, when and by whom an application for asylum is submitted, and the outcome of this application. The emphasis is on a macro as opposed to a micro understanding: it is only in the past few years that UK statistics have included dependents (spouses and children), and not just the details of the main claimant (Blinder, 2016). Forced migration statistics only tell part of the story. In the UK, statistics are limited by the fact they either lack specificity or are too focused on a particular issue to be more broadly representative (Stewart, 2004). In Sweden the most reliable statistics also focus on the 'front end' of the asylum process and not the progression of forced migrants in different areas of civil society (Liden & Nyhlen, 2013). Neither country collects data which identifies individuals as forced migrants once their immigration status has been resolved. By not collecting information beyond the decision made on an application for asylum, the opportunity to develop a broader understanding of the micro processes, which impact upon the onward social mobility of forced migrants is lost (Stewart, 2011). However, with the ongoing identification of individuals as forced migrants, given the pejorative stereotypes and racism conveyed through immigration discourse, there are powerful arguments against recording such information in statistics (Andersson, 1999; Fraser, 2007).

Sweden and the UK differ significantly in their respective approaches to collecting statistical information relating to their wider populations. The UK collects highly detailed and specific information, whilst Swedish society is tightly governed in respect to the collection and retention of data pertaining to individuals. Unreliable data on forced migration could according to some be advantageous for political reasons. Castles (2014) argues that statistical estimates as opposed to accurate data have the potential to be more easily manipulated to support negative positions in relation to forced migration. Hannah (1999) asserts that the lack of recording and monitoring of this group prevents the collection of data highlighting the successes or challenges forced migrants encounter accessing education and employment. Issues pertaining to the lack of statistical data gathered, and how this contributes to the invisibility of forced migrants within civil society which is subsequently reflected within the higher education sector, are investigated in Chapter 5.

### 2.3 International Law and Policy

It is important to commence a discussion around legislation at the global level through an exploration of international law in order to understand how this connects to the experiences of forced migrants based in the UK and Sweden who wish to pursue opportunities in higher education. The *Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees* (1951) enshrined the definitions of the five 'refugee' categories: race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. This underpins domestic law in terms of identifying who constitutes a 'refugee' within the 145 country signatories. The *Geneva Convention* was initially only intended to serve European countries: however in 1967 its application was extended internationally via the *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (New York Protocol)*. Signatories are not legally bound by the convention, retaining individual state responsibility for the design and implementation of immigration legislation. The *Geneva Convention* (1951) encourages signatories to be guided by, and their practice underpinned by, a humanitarian approach (Betts, 2010). Whilst the *Geneva Convention* (1951) is often considered to connect the global to the local context and reflect a shared approach by countries to both recognising and managing forced migration (Kalm, 2010), critics argue that the inherent

inequalities evident in the Convention have been in place since its inception (Mayblin, 2014).

In the aftermath of the Second World War, it was deemed necessary to afford protection to those that had experienced persecution within a legal framework. Mayblin (2016) asserts that it is important to recognise the colonial histories of the states which led to the development of the Convention. In addition to responding to the needs of people displaced during the Second World War, there were concerns about managing the migratory flows of people displaced in the process of decolonisation (Mayblin, 2016). It is significant that this was a time when the UK was devising processes by which to manage immigrants entering the country from Commonwealth countries (Hollifield, 2004). It plays an important part in legislative history, as the *Geneva Convention* reflects the point from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century onwards, when forced migrants from outside Europe were constructed as 'other' in relation to people forcibly displaced within European borders.

The *Universal Declaration on Human Rights* (1948) (UNDHR) is widely recognised as laying the foundations for laws which protect the rights of individuals. The most pertinent section to this research is article 26, schedule 1, which states:

'Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit' (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948)

The majority of countries across the world are signatories to the UNDHR (only 8 abstain), however it is important to note that it is not legally binding. Two separate pieces of legislation descend from the UNDHR, which are legally binding if ratified by signatories and secondly reflect the fact that global agreement could not be reached in respect to one piece of binding legislation. Instead there are the *International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR, 1966), and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR, 1966). Contained within the ICESCR is article 13, schedule 1:

‘Higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education’ (International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966)

The UK and Sweden have ratified the *ICESCR* (1966), which means that it is legally binding in both countries, but neither country have ratified an additional protocol required to ensure it is legally enforceable along with the majority of countries. This means that individuals living within the borders of the UK and Sweden, do not have the right to mount a legal challenge to assert their right to higher education or any other rights outlined within the UNDHR. This is the basis for scepticism and concern regarding the true extent of the influence of the UNDHR on European law and domestic legislation, as well as beyond the powerful Western states from which this law emanated.

The universal human rights framework is based upon the assumption of the equal inclusion of all groups in society (Sen, 2006; Whiteside & Mah, 2012). However, it does not account for the different capabilities of individuals and groups to realise the rights that may or may not be afforded to them (Sen, 2006). Ignatieff describes human rights as a ‘cunning exercise in Western moral imperialism’ (2001:102). Human rights are not universally recognised, accepted or applied and seriously ‘under ratified’ (Geiger & Pecoud, 2010; Kalm, 2010). The strength of human rights at the international level is heavily diluted in the local context (Habermas, 2001), which is evident within the qualification of human rights enabling the pejorative treatment afforded not just to forced migrants but also to other marginalised groups (Morris, 2009).

The *European Convention on Human Rights* (1953) article 2, protocol one, states that: ‘No person shall be denied the right to education’. This right is distinctly different from the article 26, *UNDHR* (1948) and article 13, *ICESCR* in that there is no reference to ensuring that higher education is made accessible, that merit or capacity are key to entry, or that it should be free. Ratification of The *European Convention of Human Rights* (1953) by EU member states results in the articles being both legally binding and enforceable. Unlike at the international level, states do not have the option to partially consent to this legislation.

There is clear evidence in Sweden and the UK in respect to what constitutes the reshaping of human rights law, in the process of its application to domestic law (Morris, 2009). The UK *Human Rights Act* (1998), article 2, protocol 1, states that no person shall be denied access to education: however, no specific reference is made to higher education. The Act contains many qualifications, which mean that restrictions can be placed upon the application of human rights to members of the population. Forced migrants with unsettled immigration status are categorised as international students. This group is not explicitly denied access to university, but are noticeably absent from regulations which afford this group access to financial support required to study at this level. Article 21 of the *Swedish Constitution* provides the right to basic education free of charge (1974). The constitution also clearly states that higher education should be made available, but it is noteworthy that it is not written into the constitution that access should be free. This is discussed further in section 2.6.

McCowan (2012) presents a neoliberal view of higher education concentrated on the benefits to the individual rather than wider civil society. This analysis questions whether access to a university education constitutes a right or a privilege, in the context of the advantages associated with acquiring university qualifications, yet it also reflects upon the inherent challenges:

'The task of ensuring equitable access is highly challenging in contemporary societies given the entrenched inequalities stemming from educational experiences prior to university entry' (McCowan, 2012:125)

The inequalities referred to relate to the specific country in question, yet this concept needs to be extended to consider the inequalities experienced by people arriving from a different societal context who wish to participate in higher education in a new country. At every level, from international to domestic law, education is clearly identified as a human right: but what remains unclear is how to realise and enforce this right for forced migrants who wish to pursue degree level qualifications.

In addition to international law, it is important to also recognise, from the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, the development of initiatives under the auspices of global governance to 'manage migration'. Managed migration is a broad term utilised internationally and by individual states, as a means to describe legislation, policy and practice adopted in order



to control migration (Kalm, 2010; Menz, 2010). Managed migration has primarily embraced strategies to prevent and deter the flow of migrants (Boswell, 2003; Cardwell, 2013; Castles, 2014); secondly, designed procedures to process and categorise forced migrants upon arrival in the destination country (Scheel & Squire, 2014; Morrice, 2016) and thirdly, control migrants' rights and entitlements once residing within the country's borders (Brekke, 2004a; Geddes, 2005; Menz, 2010). Gill (2010) asserts that it is imperative that the state is perceived to be in control of migration and by default its territorial borders.

The IOM (International Organisation for Migration) was established with three central aims: i) that states adopt a consistent approach to migration, albeit one focused on state endeavours to exclude undesirable migrants (Lahav, 2010; Morrice, 2013), ii) a strategy for migrant social mobility, and iii) a strategy for the involvement of non-state actors in the management of migration regimes (Kalm, 2010; Geiger & Pecoud, 2010; Castles, 2014). To date, global governance forums have failed to develop an appropriate and rights-based response to migration (Castles, 2014). They have refused to adopt long term strategies, instead focusing on the short term needs of states. The IOM is one example of an organisation focused on migration management operating at the international as well as the national level: this provides tangible evidence of the interconnections between global and local managed migration regimes (Geiger & Pecoud, 2010).

International law and global governance regimes are not legally binding (Kalm, 2010) yet their influence is evident throughout the European Union and national domestic legislation and governance. Mountz (2011b) and Kalm (2010) describe the creation and implementation of policies aimed at managing migration, as defining features of liberal democracies. Managed migration initiatives are also a fundamental concern of the European Union (EU); earning it the nickname 'Fortress Europe' (Cardwell, 2013:57).

International protocols such as the *Geneva Convention* (1951) and the *UNDHR* (1948) are better conceptualised as legislative 'guides', connecting countries and suggesting frameworks within which to operate. Powerful states, as opposed to the global regimes themselves, set global precedents for 'best practice' in relation to the management of

migration (Boswell, 2003; Geiger & Pecoud, 2010). International law lays the foundations for the exclusion of categories of people deemed less deserving of the protection the law endeavours to afford individuals within the wider population. The 'othering' of forced migrants translates at the EU law and policy level into an, albeit untidy, 'citizen: non-citizen binary' that functions to exclude and marginalise forced migrants.

## 2.4. European Law and Policy

This research focuses exclusively on the movement of forced migrants into Europe. This is not to ignore the fact that forced migration affects countries across the world, but reflects the greatest immigration concern within Europe being that which impacts directly or indirectly upon member states. This section explores how the perceived 'problem' of forced migration has stimulated a collective and reinforced response within law and policy directives at the level of the European Union. Global events occurring from the late 1980's onwards, including the end of the Cold War and conflict within and external to Europe, resulted in a substantial increase in the number of forced migrants fleeing persecution and seeking sanctuary in stable European countries (Hollifield, 2004; Khosravi, 2009). Applications for refugee status under the terms of the *Geneva Convention* (1951) peaked in 2002 however ongoing global conflicts have resulted in a continuous influx of forced migrants applying for refugee status across Europe, including in the UK and Sweden (Brekke, 2004a; Blinder, 2013).

At present the significant increase in forced migrants entering Europe as a result of the ongoing crisis in Syria and neighbouring countries is yet to be accurately reflected in statistics. It will inevitably create another peak in the number of asylum applications within both countries. Interwoven within the immigration 'threat' is the danger from terror attacks. This fear increased substantially after the 9/11 attack in New York, and has been fuelled by the rise in terrorist incidents across Europe (Kalm; 2010, Boswell; 2013, Castle; 2014). The management of migration at the EU level is required due to the perceived inadequacy of national domestic legislation to tackle issues pertaining to security and in order to achieve greater efficacy in the management of migratory flows into Europe.

The UK and Sweden are both currently members of the European Union. In 1973, the UK became a member of the European Communities, which developed into the European Union (EU), as a result of the *Maastricht Treaty* (1992). The EU represents the political union of 28 countries, who aim to develop shared policies in respect to economics, foreign affairs, security and justice. In 1995, Sweden joined the EU over 20 years after the UK (Liden & Nyhlen, 2013). However in June 2016, a referendum was held in the UK, which triggered the decision to begin the process of withdrawal from the EU. European policy is central to this study, as EU countries have traditionally and collectively sought to open their internal borders to encourage the flow of trade, as well as the movement of EU migrants to work and study within the member countries, whilst creating a 'fortress' around the perimeter of the continent to manage external movement into Europe (Zetter, 2007; Geddes, 2008; Lahav, 2010). Legislation is deemed necessary, to manage migratory flows and identify legitimate as opposed to bogus forced migrants (Boswell, 2013).

'Fortress Europe' was enacted by the *Treaty of Rome* (1985) and the *Schengen Treaty* (1995), which sought to remove borders between EU states. It is important to note that Sweden is a signatory to the Schengen Treaty but the UK is not. The *Bologna Declaration* (1999) sought to facilitate the possibility that EU citizens could study anywhere within any EU member state. The *Amsterdam Treaty* (1997) promoted common foreign and security policies, as well as aiming to address the root causes of external migration (Lahav, 1998; Castles, 2004; Hollifield, 2004). The *Dublin Convention* (1990) endeavoured to control the movement of forced migrants within the EU, by legislating that an asylum claim must be submitted in the first 'safe' country the applicant entered. The submission of an asylum claim in a second or third EU country by a forced migrant whose presence had been recorded in the first country they entered would result in the removal of the applicant to the first country. The aim is to prevent and effectively deter forced migrants from 'shopping' for the most attractive country in which to seek asylum and hopefully secure the permanent right to remain (Hollifield, 2004; Moore, 2013).

A range of EU legislation was implemented to tackle the flow of forced migrants entering into Europe. The mechanisms adopted included the: '. . . externalisation of border controls, restrictive asylum systems, and inter-country cooperation to combat migrant

smuggling and trafficking' (Boswell, 2003:623). A further tactic was to employ preventative measures to curb the stimuli for forced migration such as conflict and the persecution of particular groups. The intention was for this to take place in parallel with collaborative efforts to stem the physical flow of displaced people, however EU states were ultimately uninterested in prevention and subsequent activities to mitigate underlying triggers were minimal (Boswell, 2003). Restrictions limiting the influx of forced migrants into Europe serve not only to maximise the physical exclusion of this migrant group, but reinforce pejorative immigration discourse, which constructs forced migrants as the most undesirable migrants, confirming their position at the bottom of the global social hierarchy (Berry, 2012; Castles, 2014).

The Common European Asylum System established a series of common EU directives including *The Reception Conditions Directive* (2003), *The Asylum Qualification Directive* (2004 & 2001) and *The Asylum Procedures Directive* (2005), which seek to ensure the fair and equal treatment of forced migrants. These directives endeavour to ensure parity of treatment and experience for forced migrants regardless of which EU country they seek asylum within. *The Carrier Liability Directive* (2001) places responsibility for border controls onto transport carriers, who risk having to meet the cost of returning individuals to the place from which they departed if they do not possess a valid visa to enter the country. The sharp rise in asylum applications following the 'refugee crisis' (during summer 2015) led the European Asylum Support Office to advocate for a review of existing reception conditions, however the outcome is as yet unknown (EASO, 2016).

Only forced migrants who have successfully secured settled immigration status are eligible to travel via official routes. A group once considered worthy of international protection are now under increasing pressure to enter Europe clandestinely via trafficking and smuggling routes. This also strengthens the 'criminal' aspect of the identity frequently afforded to this group (Lahav, 2010; Moore, 2013; Scheel & Squire, 2014). This stereotype is reinforced through the EuroDac database containing fingerprints of every individual seeking asylum in Europe. This database tracks applicants and supports the implementation of the Dublin Convention (1990), recognising when forced migrants have travelled through one or more safe European countries to seek asylum in another.

EU legislation and its manifestation within specific legal directives demonstrates intergovernmental agreement in terms of the shared commitment of EU member states in respect to the care and treatment afforded forced migrants entering Europe as well as steps to protect the borders of the EU (Lahav, 2010). This collective response is reflected in the global business of migration management, designed by powerful states and implemented via the operation of non-state actors in the countries forced migrants are displaced from, within Europe and at the borders of destination countries (Lahav, 2010).

‘European regional integration represents a prevalent supranational order which consist of strong states committed to pooling sovereignty, based on restrictive migration policies and more effective control’ (Lahav, 2010:690)

EU asylum directives are legally enforceable and aim to provide EU legislation with ‘extra teeth’ (Kaunert, 2009). However these directives remain broad, open to interpretation and focus on meeting the ‘bare life’ needs of forced migrants, as opposed to facilitating the fulfilment of aspirations (Agamben, 2005). There is no provision in any of the directives covering access to university. The *Bologna Declaration* (1999) includes a social dimension focusing on the needs of groups under-represented in higher education yet the inclusion of forced migrants is unclear. In the aftermath of the ‘Refugee Crisis’ (summer 2015) the European Universities Association called upon universities to remove all obstacles to facilitate access to their institutions for forced migrants (EUA, 2015). This set of directives is specific to forced migrants who submit a claim for asylum: it does not apply to anyone not pursuing this specific route to establishing the right to remain in the EU state in which they are living. The existence of a separate set of directives means that this group is absent from, and unaccounted for, within other EU directives, such as the *Race Equality Directive* (2003 & 2004), the aim of which is to promote equality and reduce discrimination.

The absence of forced migrants from wider directives results in a dearth of pressure applied through governance to afford them the benefits or entitlements contained within these wider policies. This affords forced migrants reduced rights and entitlements compared with EU citizens and establishes them, from a policy perspective, as being ‘other’ to the wider population. The separate set of directives focused on the reception and care of forced migrants seeking asylum is replicated at the national domestic level

in Sweden and in the UK. Both countries have established a separate system of welfare explicitly designed to meet the needs of the forced migrant population and one which affords this group fewer rights than the general population. In 2000, the UK established NASS (National Asylum Support Service) to meet the essential support needs for asylum applicants. In Sweden, the accommodation and subsistence support needs of forced migrants are met by the Migration Agency. These systems result in the effective demarcation of forced migrants as non-citizens: a label imposed upon entry into Europe.

EU legislation demonstrates to EU citizens that steps are being taken to protect and police European borders, which also reinforces the overarching pejorative stereotype of forced migrants and the 'threat' they pose to the safety and security of the EU (McNevin, 2006). It is important to establish the detail and context of the EU policy environment, especially in relation to free movement for EU citizens and restricted movement for non-citizens, in order to understand the ramifications of different EU member countries' responses to the 'refugee crisis', and their interpretation and application of EU legislation.

The increased influx of forced migrants into Europe resulted in some countries actively ignoring the *Dublin Convention* (1990) and encouraging forced migrants to transit through countries deemed safe in order to seek asylum within their borders. However, other EU member states were less prepared to offer sanctuary to unprecedented numbers of forced migrants, or some EU states' active encouragement resulted in numbers they felt unable to sustain, and they reintroduced and reinforced internal border controls previously open under the *Schengen Treaty* (1995). In the longer term, more EU countries have reinforced their internal borders and countries receiving large numbers of forced migrants are struggling to not only contain these individuals and families but to support them. The impact of EU legislation on decision making by forced migrants and the rationale behind their decisions to transit through countries to the place wherein they choose to seek asylum are discussed in depth in Chapter 6.

## 2.5 Domestic Law and Policy

Sweden and the UK are influenced by, and operate under, the same international and EU legislation. However, in order to understand the everyday experiences and challenges encountered by forced migrants living in these countries, it is vital to both explore and understand the national domestic legislative context in terms of the freedoms and limitations this imposes upon the lives of forced migrants. This research is focused on the impact of forced migrants' rights and entitlements in relation to access to higher education. Yet it is imperative to contextualise these rights within connections between different immigration statuses and the support received in relation to securing the legal right to remain, accommodation and subsistence, health and education. The construction of different immigration status categories, and the associated, or lack of, rights and entitlements, influences the perception of forced migrants within wider civil society. This subsequently reinforces the hostile and inhospitable environment in which forced migrants have to live and, supports the state's distinct and continued marginalisation of this group - discussed in depth in Chapter 3.

The history of forced migration to the UK and Sweden has been affected by the same crises around the world, as outlined earlier in this chapter, and at similar points in time both countries have witnessed increases and reductions in the number of forced migrants seeking asylum. However, there are significant differences in terms of the numbers of forced migrants seeking sanctuary in the UK and Sweden in terms of formal quotas and clandestine entry. Variances are also evident in each respective country's response and how this has shaped their managed migration legislation, policy and practice.

The UK first began to manage the flow of migrants via legislation at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Two aims underpinned the *Aliens Act (1905)*: the first was to maintain racial harmony and the second to avoid the country being overwhelmed by migrants (Gibney, 2004). These two aims have continued to characterise immigration legislation in the UK. Up until the late 1960's the UK's geographical borders were defined by and included Commonwealth countries. The economic downturn during this period ultimately led to the *Commonwealth Immigration Act (1968)*, which provided the state with the power to place restrictions on migration to the UK from Commonwealth countries. This was

distinctly different to the previous active encouragement of citizens from the Commonwealth to augment the UK labour market (Gibney, 2004). The UK effectively legislated to limit its territory primarily to the shores of Great Britain. 1968 marked a significant point in UK immigration history, as restrictions on access to the UK for Commonwealth citizens initiated the subsequent development of an increasingly restrictive and punitive immigration regime (Gibney, 2004).

The regulation of immigration in Sweden began to appear in legislation in 1975 with the *Immigrant Policy*: this reflected the country's desire to embrace migrants by striving to create parity between them and the Swedish born population (Ring, 1995; Valenta & Bunar, 2010; Castles, 2014). During the 1970's, immigration (both forced and labour) began to play a significant role in the economic development of, and ethnic diversity, in Sweden (Andersson & Fejes, 2010). Sweden was selected for this research in comparison with the UK due to its immigration regime being founded upon the desire to create an integrated and inclusive regime, as opposed to the punitive and exclusionary regime adopted by the UK: this is discussed further in section 4.5. Swedish policy pertaining to immigration was more positive in the 1970's at a time when the UK was actively imposing restrictions on immigration.

The 1980's signalled the point at which European countries started to align their approach to managing migration, a trajectory that the UK had already been following for over a decade: this, coupled with the economic downturn, contributed to a change in attitudes towards forced migration in Sweden (Andersson & Fejes, 2010). Sweden increasingly sought to exclude and marginalise forced migrants from national policy as migration was increasingly conceptualised as an international issue, requiring solutions external to the national context. Over the course of the past 25 years in the UK and 15 years in Sweden, a situation reflected across Europe, managed migration policies have grown in volume and diversity in order to reflect and respond to the complex make-up of the migrant population (Ring, 1995; Brekke, 2004a; McNevin, 2006; Menz, 2010; Mayblin, 2014). Whilst the rationale behind both countries internal approach to managing migration differs, the policies which comprise the regimes themselves in Sweden and the UK share common characteristics in respect to both the manner and the extent to which they marginalise forced migrants. Fundamental to understanding



how this marginalisation is manifest in practices lies in an understanding of their respective approaches to integration.

The critical difference between the two countries at the centre of this research is not just the UK's shrinking versus the substantial Swedish welfare state but initiatives designed to facilitate the integration of forced migrants into society. Valenta & Bunar (2010) declare that integration is a key feature of managed migration regimes across the Scandinavian region:

'Welfare policy, generous economic assistance, and extensive state sponsored language training provided to refugees, produced an expectation that Scandinavia's highly developed public system would equalize out any initial differences' (Valenta & Bunar, 2010: 471)

The pan European norm outside of Scandinavia in respect to managed migration, Valenta & Bunar (2010) claim, is characterised by: 'low degrees of welfare and an absence of integration assistance' (2010: 479). Berry (2012) provides an alternative perspective asserting that the long history of immigration to the UK has resulted in a 'well-developed integration policy', whilst Sweden's approach to integration is described as 'functional' (2012:8).

The UK and Sweden provide integration support to forced migrants upon their legal recognition as a refugee. The UK's Gateway Programme is limited both in terms of eligibility (only forced migrants resettled after having been awarded refugee status outside the UK) and the fact that this support is only provided for 12 months. There is a palpable absence of integration initiatives in the UK for anyone who has sought asylum within UK borders. In contrast Sweden delivers a two-year voluntary integration initiative known as the Establishment Plan. This programme is accessible to all forced migrants upon the award of a Residence Permit and is financially incentivised, ensuring that forced migrants don't have to work in parallel with their participation (Soininen, 2010). Notably absent from integration programmes across both countries is the provision of support and guidance prior to the positive resolution of an asylum application and a lack of focus on higher education as a route to integration.

Earlier in this chapter emphasis was placed on recording information pertaining to forced migrants during the asylum application process. This stage of a forced migrant's

journey from unsettled to settled immigration status is also characterised by monitoring and surveillance via contact management arrangements, which aim to limit their physical movement as well as access to opportunities in wider civil society. The remainder of this section explicitly focuses on how the physical and symbolic exclusion of forced migrants is practiced in the period prior to the settlement of immigration status and the instigation (if at all) of the integration process.

#### 2.5.1 Securing the Legal Right to Remain

It is important not just to reflect on the multiple immigration status categories, but what these categories reflect and contribute towards shaping a forced migrant discourse. For the purpose of this research the terms 'settled' and 'unsettled' status are used to adopt a simple binary. Those for whom their immigration application has been 'settled' have secured the right to remain in the destination country. This is in direct contrast with those for whom their status is 'unsettled' owing to the fact they are still in the process of securing the right to remain in the country in which they have sought asylum, or are in the process of appealing a negative decision on an application, or have been granted the temporary right to remain in the UK or Sweden. The use of a simple binary is not intended to ignore the complex process involved in seeking asylum or the full range of different immigration statuses, but this level of detail detracts from the main issue that this research seeks to address: the impact of immigration status on access to and participation within higher education.

In the UK, the successful 'settled' outcome of an asylum claim usually results in an award of indefinite leave to remain (ILR) for a period of 5 years. The 'safe return review' was recently introduced, which aims to establish whether at the end of the five-year period it is now deemed safe for an individual and their family to be returned to their country of origin (2017, The Guardian). Therefore, in the UK settled status, as something akin to permanent settlement, is no longer afforded to any forced migrant who has sought asylum.

The Refugee Council (2016) reported that 64% of asylum applications submitted by forced migrants in the UK were refused asylum and only 32% were granted ILR, settled immigration status and therefore formally recognised as a refugee. 35% of forced

migrants who appealed a refusal of their asylum application had it overturned upon appeal. There has been a marked increase in awards of limited leave to remain (LLR), granted when an asylum application does not have merit under the definitions provided within the Geneva Convention (1951). Forced migrants awarded LLR are categorised for the purpose of this research as having unsettled immigration status. This is due to the typical duration of an award being for a maximum 2.5 years and which has to be renewed up to four times, prior to securing eligibility to submit an application for ILR, resulting in settled immigration status. The challenges inherent in securing settled immigration status include the quality of legal representation, increased limitations placed upon eligibility and the allocation of time available if legal aid assistance is successfully secured, alongside the substantial rise in the cost of renewing awards of LLR and submitting an application for ILR.

In Sweden the Migration Agency reported that 47.4% of forced migrants who submitted a claim for asylum were granted a Residence Permit, which equates to settled immigration status. Only 34.7% of applications were refused: however there are no statistics available on the number of refusals that were overturned on appeal. In July 2016, Sweden introduced a new law, whereby a forced migrant recognised as a refugee will only be granted a Residence Permit for three years. At the end of this period a review is undertaken to establish if the Residence Permit will be extended. The decision is predicated upon one of the following outcomes: i) the individual or family require ongoing protection or ii) the individual or family is able to independently support themselves financially (Migration Agency, 2016).

Sweden and the UK both determine asylum applications based on the assumption that forced migrants' presence in either country is transient, as opposed to settled and secure. There is an increasing trend towards a preference of offering only temporary, as opposed to permanent, protection across Europe (Day & White, 2002; Berry, 2012). Decisions on asylum applications minimise the legitimacy of forced migrants' requests for safety and sanctuary and reduce the pressure to provide durable and sustainable solutions to their situations. Unsettled status for fixed and relatively short periods of time contributes to states of uncertainty and liminality, and reinforce experiences of not belonging amongst forced migrants (Yuval-Davis, 2007; Atosich, 2010). This impacts

upon perceptions held by the wider citizen population and ultimately discourages their 'welcome' into society.

### 2.5.2 Accommodation and Subsistence

The prolific production of immigration legislation not only serves to create insecurity as opposed to permanence in relation to the legal basis upon which forced migrants can remain in the destination country, but also places increasing restrictions upon access to services and opportunities that are available to the wider population. These changes focus on creating increasingly punitive and repressive immigration regimes, as opposed to affording greater freedom and facilitating more generous care for forced migrants (Brekke, 2004a; Bloch, 2010; Allsop et al, 2014a).

Frequent changes to basic entitlements such as the provision of accommodation and subsistence during the asylum application and appeals process are enshrined in immigration legislation. This ensures that there is a strong legal basis upon which the state can respond to any challenges or appeals. The *Immigration Act (2014)* served to reinforce a hostile environment in the UK for people residing unlawfully in the country. Forced migrants who seek asylum are lawfully resident: however Allsop et al (2014) state that the hostile context has been extended to those seeking asylum, through enforced poverty, both material and of opportunity. Increasing responsibility has been placed upon a range of non-state actors operating within civil society including bank staff, health care professionals, landlords and employers to deny access to services or opportunities for anyone not deemed lawfully present within the UK (*Immigration Act, 2014*) – discussed in depth in Chapter 3.

The priority, once forced migrants have applied for asylum, is that their basic needs are met in terms of accommodation and subsistence whilst they await a decision on their submission. Both the UK and Sweden operate a forced migrant focused system of welfare support that is separate from the provision available to the wider population. If welfare is conceptualised as a privilege of citizenship then denial of access to this specific provision further reinforces forced migrants' non-citizen status (Bloch & Schuster, 2005; Bloch, 2010; Mayblin, 2015). The physical separation of forced migrants from the wider population through the provision of alternative accommodation also reduces their

contact with mainstream services. An alternative forced migrant welfare system enables the level at which support is provided to be considerably reduced. In terms of subsistence support, the amount received in the UK is equivalent to 50 – 65% of the amount received if in receipt of means-tested welfare benefits. This currently amounts to only £36.95 per week for a single adult to meet the entirety of their subsistence needs.

A similar regime operates in Sweden, where the equivalent of only £31.15 per week is paid to a single adult asylum applicant. Across both countries, responsibility for the provision of support is negotiated between central and local government (UK) and the municipalities (Sweden) (Stewart, 2011, Liden & Nyhlen, 2013). This results in the provision of accommodation on a 'no choice' basis (*Immigration & Asylum Act, 1999*). This effectively results in the dispersal of forced migrants to areas in the country where housing is available and arrangements have been agreed between the state and different localities (Valenta & Bunar, 2010). These arrangements infrequently account for wider needs in relation to health care and employment. The geographical location of accommodation places limitations on the movement of forced migrants around the country, which subsequently limits access to opportunities, specific to this research, in higher education.

A critical difference between the two countries is that in Sweden people have the right to work whilst awaiting the outcome of a claim for asylum (Migration Agency, 2016). In the UK asylum seekers have to wait 12 months before they are eligible to apply for a work permit and then are restricted to specific positions of employment identified by the Home Office on the Shortage Occupation List. The aim is to prevent forced migrants who are still in the process of seeking or appealing an asylum application from undertaking employment at a perceived detriment to a UK citizen (Home Office, 2014; Mayblin, 2015). There is an extensive literature which discusses the inadequacy of support and indignity forced migrants have to endure whilst waiting or appealing a decision on a claim for asylum. The enforced destitution of forced migrants who have been refused asylum and exhausted their rights to appeal is considered acceptable practice in Sweden and the UK (Morris, 2009; Mayblin, 2015). The UK *Immigration Act* (2002) incorporated the practice of destitution, as a means to deter forced migrants

from entering the country and in order to expedite their departure (Bloch & Schuster, 2006; Allsop et al, 2014a). Sweden adopted enforced destitution relatively recently in June 2016, motivated by similar aims, to encourage the voluntary return of forced migrants to their country of origin (Khosravi, 2016).

Health care is free across the UK and Sweden regardless of whether forced migrants have settled or unsettled immigration status. Limitations are placed in the UK and Sweden on adult forced migrants who have exhausted appeal rights on their application for asylum: in practice this group can only access health care in the event of an emergency. However due to this, all forced migrants encounter immigration barriers at the point of access to health services. *The National Health Service (charges to overseas visitors)* (2017) imposes financial costs on NHS services to those deemed ineligible (included in which are adults who have exhausted appeal rights on their asylum applications). It is the responsibility of staff working for the NHS to verify that forced migrants accessing services are eligible. This is an example of increasing immigration barriers positioned throughout civil society and the expectation that staff from a diverse range of organisations will police these barriers in the guise of quasi border officials. These individuals are unlikely to have received comprehensive training to enable them to clearly recognise and differentiate between specific immigration statuses and understand the associated rights and entitlements.

Dependent children of forced migrants included on an asylum application are entitled to access compulsory education in Sweden and the UK. The right to education is explicit within the UK *Human Rights Act* (1998) and the Swedish constitution and is discussed in section 2.6 below. However, this is potentially subject to change in the UK, as the Prime Minister Theresa May recently called for the education of migrant children not to be prioritised in the allocation of school places (The Guardian, 2017b,). It was evident within the research findings that the provision of language education during the period when forced migrants are actively trying to resolve their immigration status in the UK and Sweden is largely provided within informal settings, for example by volunteers, voluntary organisations or unofficially provided within formal settings such as higher education institutions.

The separation of forced migrants from mainstream civil society and their demarcation as non-citizens, in part through their denial of access to traditional forms of welfare, facilitates an environment wherein even the most basic human rights can be rescinded (Kalm, 2010). This is particularly pertinent in relation to the ongoing debate in relation to whether welfare provision in the UK and Sweden acts as a 'pull' factor, influencing decisions made by forced migrants on where to seek asylum (Giorgi & Pellizzari, 2009). Forced migrants often face restrictions on their access to the labour market: this is considered by Schulzek (2012) to result in forced migrants' preference and subsequent selection of countries with a history of generous welfare provision. Crawley (2010) and Mayblin (2016) assert that welfare and education as pull factors have been discredited within academic analysis, but as imaginary factors they continue to dominate policy discourse.

In the UK and Sweden, the lives of forced migrants are heavily regulated through immigration legislation, yet the absence of this group from domestic legislation is noticeable owing to the fact that the needs of forced migrants have not been integrated. Forced migrants are thus recognised group within the population yet absent from domestic legislation such as legislation pertaining to equality and anti-discrimination (Soininen, 2010; Berry, 2012). This arguably results from the lack of direction from the EU in respect to the inclusion of forced migrants into existing policies which serve to protect the citizen population at the European and national level. The notable absence of forced migrants is also evident in legislation governing higher education.

## **2.6 Domestic Higher Education Law and Policy**

Enshrined in International law is the right to access higher education on the basis of merit (UNDHR, 1948: article 26) however neither the UK nor Sweden adopted the international protocols required to ensure the enforceability of this legislation. Domestic law in both countries relating to the right to education descends directly from the European Convention of Human Rights. Article 2 states that no one shall be denied access to education, and is legally enforceable both within national and European Courts. Understanding how forced migrants can be excluded from university requires further investigation of domestic law and policy.

Multiple regulatory frameworks serve to monitor and support the provision of higher education in both the UK and Sweden: focusing on teaching, research, students, financial management, academic performance, as well as on individual bodies regulating specific disciplines. The legislative frameworks central to this research are those which regulate university tuition fees, the provision of financial support to fund HE costs incurred by students (tuition fees and maintenance) and finally legislation which supports fair access to higher education for groups considered to be under-represented in the sector. Forced migrants are in the main absent from these legislative frameworks and it is through their absence that their exclusion is enacted.

### 2.6.1 Tuition Fees and Student Funding

The terms 'settled' and 'unsettled' are used in this research to reflect immigration status and the associated rights and entitlements specific to studying in higher education. In both Sweden and the UK, a forced migrant with settled immigration status is classified as a 'home' student: this means they are afforded the same support to access and study at degree level as the citizen population. If their immigration status is unsettled, then they are classified as 'international' students and are either charged a higher rate of tuition fees than home students (UK) or are the only students eligible to pay tuition fees (Sweden). In 1998 the UK established separate welfare provision for forced migrants awaiting or appealing a decision on their asylum application. The decision was also taken to reclassify forced migrants with unsettled status as international students in respect to higher education, which rendered them ineligible for student support and funding typically afforded to home students. This change took place at the same time as the introduction of the *Teaching and Higher Education Act (1998)*, which introduced for the first time tuition fees for home students. Over the course of the past 17 years the rate of tuition fees charged to home students has risen considerably from £1,000 to £9,250 per annum. Maintenance grants and local authority support have also been replaced with maintenance loans, which have to be repaid in full after graduation.

In Sweden the situation is much less complicated than the UK. University tuition is free in Sweden, funding is provided for maintenance, and student loans are relatively small as the expectation lies on the state to fund higher education. In 2008, an amendment to the *Swedish Higher Education Act (1992)*, introduced tuition fees for the first time, but



only for students from outside of the European Union (European Migration Network, 2012). Forced migrants living in Sweden awaiting a decision on their asylum application and who therefore do not have a residence permit are, akin to the UK, afforded international student status. This has resulted in this group being denied access to student funding required to meet the cost of tuition fees and maintenance.

International student status is by default and forced migrants placed in this category are not typical of the international student population who enter into the respective countries explicitly to study and bring with them, or are supported with, funds to pay a higher rate of tuition fees. Neither the UK nor Sweden deny forced migrants (regardless of status) the right to education, instead they deny access to the funding required to study in higher education, therefore indirectly as opposed to directly compromising their human rights (Murray, 2017).

International students who enter the UK with the explicit purpose of studying have to be issued with a Tier 4 visa by the Home Office, universities must also be issued with a license by the Home Office in order to accept an international student onto a degree programme. Forced migrants constitute international students but are not subject to the Tier 4 visa regime, due to their presence in the UK being primarily based on the need to regularise their right to remain and studying in higher education constitutes a secondary activity. In Sweden, international students require a residence permit in order to be able to study; this is awarded by the Migration Agency. Forced migrants with unsettled status are in a similar position to those in the UK, in that they are pursuing a Residence Permit based on their right to remain, not explicitly regarding their right to study in the country. Audits take place in the UK and Sweden in respect to a university's international student population, which can present issues in respect to students present within the population who don't neatly fit into the 'home' or the 'international' student category.

### 2.6.2 Widening Access and Participation

Widening participation initiatives in the UK were established in order to ensure that university remained accessible to the wider population in spite of the introduction of tuition fees. The Office of Fair Access (OFFA) was established in 2004 and is due to be

subsumed in 2018 into the Office for Students (OFS). OFFA is responsible for monitoring universities' widening participation initiatives through the approval of Access Agreements. The aim is to reinvest a proportion of the income generated through tuition fees into ensuring groups categorised as under-represented in UK higher education institutions are supported in terms of not only their access but the successful completion of their HE studies.

In Sweden, a legal requirement is placed upon universities to widen access, but there is no provision or expectation to widen the participation of under-represented groups (*Higher Education Act, 1992*). This is a key difference between the two countries. The development of widening access initiatives in Sweden has been interrupted by changes in the political party in power, who have placed differing emphasis on this area of higher education. In 2015 fresh impetus was placed on the need to widen access and the state instructed the Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHR) to map widening access initiatives across HEIs in the country, in order to highlight good practice and stimulate new practice (UHR, 2016).

The UK clearly defines (as determined by OFFA) who and how to recognise groups within the population categorised as under-represented in higher education. Forced migrants awarded refugee status (settled status) have only been included in this definition since 2017: however unlike other groups listed by OFFA there is no further qualification as to how their inclusion should be interpreted or applied (OFFA, 2017). In Sweden there is a strong reluctance to identify individuals on the basis of difference and the current categories considered under-represented are much more broadly defined. However, a recent report produced by The Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHR, 2016) clearly advocates for universities to explore the challenges faced by a much wider range of groups and seek solutions to increase their participation in higher education.

An increased focus within higher education institutions is income generation. As state funding declines they have had to explore alternative sources of funding and this has increased their need to compete within the HE 'market place'. An ongoing tension results from the neoliberal impact on their traditional role as educators and producers of knowledge. The growing marketisation of higher education reflects similar changes

that have occurred within other sectors of civil society (McNevin, 2006; Schram, 2015). The marketisation of higher education is a global issue, the effects of which have been reported on in universities located in the USA, and Australia as well as the UK (Bullough, 2014; Hamer & Lang, 2015; Clare et al, 2017). In Sweden the introduction of tuition fees to international students in 2008 is evidence of the need for higher education institutions to generate income, as this marked the end of universal free access to higher education in Sweden.

A vital issue in the context of exploring the access and participation of forced migrants in higher education is finance due to the fact this often constitute one of the biggest barriers. A recent report by the European Students Union (2017) also identified a lack of information & advice, recognition of prior qualifications and experience, especially concerning prospective students with no physical evidence of prior education, and inadequate language support as key challenges to overcome. The connection between human rights determined at the international level and the reality of the lived experiences of forced migrants at the local level is integral to framing this discussion.

## **2.7 Higher Education Initiatives: Forced Migrants**

Since 2010, there exists tangible evidence within the UK of higher education institutions providing scholarships for forced migrants to study on a wide range of degree programmes within their institutions, in the absence of these students being able to access mainstream funding to meet the cost of tuition fees or maintenance. However, these scholarships are not always reflected in universities individual institutional policies nor their reports to OFFA in relation to their widening participation activities. In 2009, Sweden began to develop and deliver initiatives that were not explicitly targeted at forced migrants, but migrants coming to the country who had an academic background, described as 'foreign academics'. Their purpose was to provide intensive language support for this group, in order to accelerate their transition into the labour market. The purpose of this section is to provide contextual information in relation to the two most prominent schemes identified in the course of this doctoral research: the UK-based Article 26 project, a collaborative partner in this doctoral research project, and the Swedish Korta Vagen programme, which translates as the 'Short Path'.

### 2.7.1 Article 26 Project

The majority of universities in the UK offering scholarships to enable forced migrants to access higher education work in partnership with the Article 26 project, hosted by the Helena Kennedy Foundation and operating in the third sector. The scholarships provided by 60+ universities across the UK typically afford recipients a full tuition fee waiver and access to financial support or 'in kind' contributions, such as free accommodation. The Article 26 project was established in 2010 as the result of a successful campaign led by young forced migrants who wanted to access higher education. For the first three years, the project managed scholarships on behalf of universities, as an external agency. In 2013, higher education institutions began to facilitate this process themselves. The ongoing role of the project has been to provide support through the coordination of a higher education network, provide advice and guidance to establish and sustain scholarships as well as develop resources to support the implementation of high quality institutional practice in relation to the processes underpinning universities schemes.

### 2.7.2 Korta Vagen Programme

The Swedish initiatives were not focused explicitly on supporting forced migrants, but on the creation of opportunities for foreign academics. The aim of Korta Vagen is to reduce the time taken to learn to speak Swedish to the level required to study in higher education or secure employment in the country. Additional components of the course include supporting students to apply for the validation of qualifications gained outside Sweden and a work placement in their field. The work placement serves two purposes, the first is to gain experience and the second to support the establishment of a network of relevant contacts, in order to secure a Swedish referee willing to support future employment applications.

Korta Vagen began as a pilot programme in higher education institutions in the West of Sweden and was led by the Swedish Employment Agency. It was eventually rolled out across the country. However, as the programme has expanded, the Swedish Employment Agency no longer exclusively commission universities to deliver Korta Vagen. A contract to commission the programme is open to all education providers including private contractors. As the numbers of forced migrants entering Sweden with academic qualifications and experience has grown exponentially, so has the number

engaging on Korta Vagen programmes. This has resulted in the agency petitioning the Swedish government for sizeable funds to increase the volume of programmes to meet the increasing demand.

## 2.8 Political Context: UK and Sweden

The UK and Sweden are both experiencing rapidly shifting social, political and economic changes, affected both by significant external international and internal political shifts. The situation in Syria has created one of the largest humanitarian crises of our era, causing a huge increase in displaced people. This has built upon existing and entrenched negative attitudes towards forced migrants, and influenced changes in relation to both higher education and immigration. The response from the higher education sector in both countries has manifested in a surge of interest in providing support to forced migrants within their institutions. This is a theme occurring across Europe. However, the largely positive welcome offered in the higher education sector has not been mirrored in other areas of civil society and in particular within the political sphere.

Europe has witnessed a significant growth in populist politics across the continent, which some directly connect to the rise in austerity politics in the aftermath of the 2008 global financial crisis (Castles, 2014; Gill et al, 2014). Chakeklian (2017) considers populist politics to be a direct response to the rise in immigration. In Sweden immigration policy has begun to play a central role in political debate and used to mobilise votes. The Swedish Democrats were established in 1988: a political party founded within a white supremacist movement. Their popularity has risen dramatically, and in 2014 they won a significant number of seats in the Swedish parliament. In early 2017 they polled as the most popular political party in Sweden.

In the UK, there are multiple right wing movements, such as the English Defence League: however UKIP (UK Independence Party) is the right wing political party perceived to have had the most influence within mainstream politics. UKIP campaigned heavily for a UK referendum on whether or not the country should leave the European Union. The subsequent decision to exit the EU is commonly referred to as Brexit. Political debates and campaigning prior to and following the decision to leave the EU centered on

immigration, dominated by a political narrative which sought to exclude migrants from the UK. However, this is not simply rhetoric, as the government's hostile immigration policy, evident in the *Immigration Act* (2014 & 2016) (Bolt, 2016), renders it increasingly challenging for people from any migrant background, not just forced migrants, to build lives in the UK. Immigration has taken centre stage in not just political debate but in the manifestos of political parties across Europe. The focus on immigration also serves as a set of diversionary politics, as immigrants are used as a legitimate channel for the fears of the wider population and scapegoats for a wide range of issues across society – from disruptions to education to pressure on health services, responsibility for shortages in housing, as well as jobs and crime, in particular terrorist acts carried out by extremists (Boswell, 2012).

Berry (2012) claims that the media is not overtly racist, yet directly connects the increasing discrimination experienced by forced migrants to expressions of racism at the state level. This is challenged by other commentators who directly attribute the role of the media to driving public debates and fueling concerns about the threat posed by forced migrants (Klocker & Dunn, 2003; Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008; Moore, 2013; Philo et al, 2013). The media, legislation and policy all contribute to the public's imagination of the forced migrant community within the nation, as opposed to their actual understanding of the reality of their impact or even contribution to society (Morris, 2009; Maillet et al, 2016). Research situated within the fields of forced migration and higher education is palpably lacking. It is imperative that this deficit is addressed in order to produce research, which provides a counter perspective and explores the higher education needs and aspirations of forced migrants'.

## 2.9 Research Overview: Forced Migration and Higher Education

Balaz & Williams (2004) highlight that research concerned with international students' acquisition of capital is an under explored area. Gill (2010) uses the term 'voluminous' to describes studies in the field of forced migration (pp:627), however this description does not reflect the deficit in research exploring the experiences of forced migrants who aspire to and actively pursue opportunities in higher education. Federe (2010) declared it imperative to undertake research with an explicit focus on the needs and challenges

faced by forced migrants in higher education. Mangan & Winter (2017) developed a meta-ethnographic framework within which to comprehensively explore literature pertaining to the experiences of forced migrants with settled immigration status in HE, through which they identified 10 academic articles. Mangan & Winter's (2017) analysis highlights structural barriers experienced in higher education such as race and gender, alongside pedagogical challenges inherent in adapting to a new mode of education. Absent from this analysis is the direct impact of immigration regimes on experience in university, which reflected the fact that all the research articles focused on the experiences of individuals who had settled immigration status and not those whose claims for asylum remained unsettled and their futures in the destination country uncertain.

In addition to the ten academic articles identified by Mangan & Winter (2017), an additional eight studies have been identified which explored the experiences and aspirations of forced migrants in higher education, within what Gladwell et al (2016) define as 'high resource environments'. The majority of international research in this area has taken place in Australia (Hannah, 1999; Onsando & Billet, 2009; Earnest et al, 2010; Harris & Marlowe, 2011; Harris, 2013 & Harris et al, 2015; Naidoo, 2015; Wilkinson & Lloyd-Zantiotis, 2017) and Canada (Federe, 2010; Bajwa et al, 2017). Within Europe the majority of research has taken place in the UK (Stevenson & Willott, 2007 & 2008; Morrice, 2009 & 2013; Burke, 2010; Lyall & Bowerman, 2013; Alberts & Atherton, 2017) and one study based in Malta (Spiteri, 2015).

The majority of academic research either fails clearly to differentiate between immigration statuses or omits the university aspirations of forced migrants with unsettled status. Stevenson & Willott (2007 & 2008) are the only scholars addressing the aspirations of unsettled forced migrants seeking opportunities in higher education. More recent research conducted outside academia (Lyall & Bowerman, 2013; Alberts & Atherton, 2017) focuses on the challenges experienced by forced migrants with unsettled immigration status who aspire to study in, but not the experiences of, these students as participants within higher education. The remaining research either makes explicit or implicit reference to the settled status of the research participants, including

two articles wherein the participants include those with citizenship (Harris, 2013; Harris et al, 2015).

Four out of the 18 studies were conducted across more than one site, for example, multiple higher education institutions or providers of further education (Earnest et al, 2010; Burke, 2010; Naidoo, 2015; Alberts & Atherton, 2017) but none undertook comparative research with another country. The focus in respect to research participants was predominantly on forced migrants; however two studies included interviews with higher education agents (Harris & Marlowe, 2011; Naidoo, 2015) and Alberts & Atherton (2017) expanded the locus of their enquiry to include higher education agents and key informants. The two academic articles produced by Harris (2013) and Harris et al (2015) are based on the same group of 10 research participants studying within one university. Both the publications by Morrice (2009 & 2013) are based upon the experiences of the same cohort of seven forced migrant participants. A final issue is the age of the articles in relation to peaks in forced migration patterns – the majority of this research was produced after the 2002 peak but only three articles have been written since the sharp increase recorded in 2015. It is timely that further research is undertaken in this area, which explores issues pertaining to the access, participation and success of a broad spectrum of forced migrants holding a variety of different immigration statuses.

In spite of the methodological disparities evident in this small body of research, analysis of the collective findings reveals dominant themes. Issues pertaining to access to higher education focus on the *mis-recognition of qualifications* (Hannah, 1999; Stevenson & Willott, 2008; Morrice, 2009; Bajwa et al, 2017) by higher education institutions' in the UK and Australia, as well as the challenges created by an interrupted or *incomplete prior education* (Stevenson & Willott, 2007 & 2008 & Alberts & Atherton, 2017; Wilkinson & Lloyd-Zantiotis, 2017).

The participation of forced migrants in university life was overshadowed and characterised by a *lack of inclusivity* and belonging (Hannah, 1999; Morrice, 2009; Onsando & Billet, 2009; Earnest et al, 2010; Harris & Marlowe, 2011; Burke, 2010; Harris, 2013; Harris et al, 2015; Naidoo, 2015; Alberts & Atherton, 2017). This was reflected in



the lack of *pedagogical adaptation* or consideration of forced migrant students prior educational experiences (Stevenson & Willott, 2008; Morrice, 2009; Onsando & Billet, 2009; Earnest et al, 2010; Nadiou, 2015; Spiteri, 2015; Gladwell et al, 2016; Bajwa, 2017; Wilkinson & Lloyd-Zantiotis, 2017) alongside a palpable lack of investment in the *training* and time available to higher education agents to facilitate access and manage the needs of forced migrant students studying within their institutions (Onsando & Billet, 2009; Earnest et al, 2010; Harris & Marlowe, 2011; Spiteri, 2015; Gladwell et al, 2016; Alberts & Atherton, 2017; Bajwa, 2017; Wilkinson & Lloyd-Zantiotis, 2017).

Comparative analysis of the 18 articles highlighted far greater similarities in the findings as opposed to differences. This was in spite of the different geographical contexts in which the research was undertaken.

## 2.10 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that state sovereignty and protectionist agendas operating within a neoliberal market-driven context are embedded at the international level. The dominant discourse in relation to forced migrants is one of exclusion, which is highlighted by the absent presence of this group:

‘State power can be served either by the absence of state apparatuses or, perhaps more insidiously, by their purported absence’ (Gill, 2010:639)

This is evident in the international context in legislation and not only manifests but is reinforced and strengthened at the level of the European Union and national level. It is here that there is evidence of increased contraction as opposed to stretching of state imposed regimes to accommodate the needs of forced migrants (Betts, 2010). Non-Europeans are constructed as the ‘other’ in international legislation, and this manifests itself in the fact that forced migrants are constructed as non-citizens within Europe and within individual member states. The separation of forced migrants from mainstream welfare support, education and employment opportunities, as exemplified in Sweden and the UK, serves to further reinforce their inferior status and facilitate their marginalisation in society.

A detailed overview and analysis of existing research in this area highlighted the imperative need for new research which explores the explicit higher education needs and experiences of both settled and unsettled members of the forced migrant population. There is a palpable lack of research exploring how the structures of higher education institutions and the agents working within them interact to include or exclude forced migrants with aspirations to study. The limited research in this area focuses on the challenges of accessing higher education but largely neglects the role of immigration borders or the impact of subsequent immigration-specific structural inequalities upon the experiences of forced migrants, specifically those seeking to access or studying within university. By situating these issues in a macro contextual and conceptual framework, this thesis explores the multiple manifestations of immobility and the complex ways in which the state impacts on this at the micro institutional and individual level (Mavroudi & Warren, 2013).

The discussion in this chapter has led to the emergence of three significant themes. The first relates to the governance of forced migrants and how from the international, through the European to the local national context, the exclusion of this group is enacted through legislation and policy. The second theme to emerge is that higher education is a key sector within civil society from which forced migrants experience social and economic barriers, often resulting in their physical and symbolic exclusion, but one wherein opportunities have also been created, the aim of which is inclusion. A critical question is *how* this is possible and *why* higher education institutions engage in initiatives to include these students. The final key theme to emerge is that in order to take up opportunities in higher education, forced migrants must be motivated to fight the forces of exclusion and reclaim agency often lost in the process of displacement. The context established in this chapter acts as the precursor to Chapter 3 which situates this research in an appropriate conceptual framework for the exploration the relationship between forced migration and higher education.

## Chapter 3

### Framing the Relationship between Forced Migration & Higher Education

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter will build on the contextual framework established in Chapter 2, to develop a conceptual framework within which to locate this research. In doing so, it will explain how this research will subsequently contribute to current theoretical and conceptual debates. The authors of the relatively small body of research in this area, discussed in section 2.9, present limited (if any) conceptual framing of their research findings. Only research produced by Stevenson & Willott (2007 & 2008), Morrice (2009 & 2013), Burke (2010) Wilkinson & Lloyd-Zantiotis (2017) draw upon Bourdieu to explore issues pertaining to forced migrant access to higher education in the context of the participants' capital and habitus.

In her most recent study, Morrice (2013) argues that higher education institutions have a role to play in reducing or removing institutional barriers for forced migrants with settled immigration status, in order for them to access and participate in higher education, but this analysis is not extended to forced migrants with unsettled status. Morrice (2009) utilises a Bourdieusian framework to explore structure and agency to better understand the impact of governance regimes on forced migrant students, stating:

‘It is not sufficient to focus only on individuals’ actions and understanding (micro-level), but also the wider societal and institutional processes (macro-level) in which they are embedded’ (Morrice, 2009:663)

However, there is no in-depth investigation or analysis of the impact of structural inequalities in relation to access to university. This conceptual framework reflects the different scales in society: it seeks to explain issues relating to forced migration and higher education at the state level (macro), the institutional level (HEI) and the micro level of individual agents (higher education staff and forced migrants).

This chapter commences by both drawing on and subsequently contributing to applications of Foucauldian governmentality to investigate how the physical and

symbolic marginalisation of forced migrants is orchestrated by the state, and implemented within the higher education sector. Closer inspection of the operation of higher education institutions using Giddens' theory of structure and agency is the second major focus of this chapter. The application of Giddens' theory reveals what could be conceived of as the contradictory institutional capacity of universities: acting as both an extended arm of the state to perpetuate practices of exclusion, as well as the potential to resist these practices and foster the inclusion of forced migrants through the creation of opportunities in higher education.

The final focus of the chapter employs Bourdieu's work as a theoretical lens through which to analyse how higher education agents utilise existing capital and their habitus, in a context of hostility and exclusion to create higher education opportunities for forced migrants. The habitus specific to forced migrants is also analysed in terms of how it supports these individuals to overcome the considerable loss of varied forms of capital in the process of displacement, as well as find the motivation and resilience to pursue the reclamation of agency through higher education. The work of Foucault, Giddens and Bourdieu is used to explore the three different societal scales with which this research is concerned. However, the contributions made by these three theories are not limited to a discussion pertaining to a specific societal scale, but are interwoven throughout the conceptual framework.

### **3.2 Governance Regimes**

Theories of governance are central to understanding the systems and processes which serve to manage states, institutions and individuals. Foucault's theory of governmentality is drawn upon to comprehend how the governance of forced migrants differs from the wider population, as well as how the marginalisation of this group is perpetuated and tolerated by the wider population (Foucault, 1991; Faubion, 1994; Salter, 2006; Walter, 2011). The Swedish and the UK population have been directly affected by socio-political shifts at the international level resulting in the mass movement of people, including significant numbers of forced migrants (Geiger & Pecoud, 2010; Rygiel, 2011; Castles, 2014). The treatment afforded to forced migrants provides a useful insight into how states have had to re-conceptualise their use of

'discipline' in order to maintain control of increasingly heterogeneous populations (Foucault, 1991; Foucault, 1997; Kalm, 2010; Menz, 2010; Lemke 2012). Managed migration regimes play a central role in governance systems in both Sweden and the UK, which is evident in the legislative and policy structures resulting from their endeavours to control the forced migrant element of their respective populations.

McNevin (2006) and Nyers (2010) assert that territorial borders play a central role in the broader theoretical constructions of the state. The state determines who within the population is deserving of citizenship, as residing within territorial borders does not equate to belonging within them. This represents a paradigmatic shift from the concept of controlling territory to the control of the population, but with the same aim, which is to manage the economic functions of the state (Foucault, 1984; 1991). Bourdieu (1998) supports this view by describing this shift in governance as sovereign power being substituted by the power of economics.

A priority endeavour of managed migration regimes is to control territorial borders in order to prevent and deter undesirable migration into the country. This is reflected in Rose & Miller's (1992) description of the analysis and planning aspect of governance which serves to predict and respond to changes occurring within the population. Migration borders according to Gill (2010) and Mountz (2011a & 2011b) no longer solely rely on tangible physical barriers, but in new technologies and bio political practices. State-led strategies intended to manage the population are concerned first of all with the discipline of the individual body through self-governance and secondly, the bio politics of the population (Osborne, 1996; Rose, 1996, Foucault, 1997; 2009).

The scales at which bio political strategies are enacted in relation to the subject matter of this thesis include: *subjectification* wherein members of the population position themselves in specific discourses, such as forced migrant; *information collection and territorialisation* represents the collection and utilisation of data to create and reinforce borders throughout civil society; *geopolitical imaginations* focuses on the presentation of information create political spaces of identification, evident in the increasingly hostile environment encountered by forced migrants; *state technologies* are used to influence population trajectories and pertinent to this research the state aim to reduce the forced

migrant population across civil society and specifically within the higher education student population; *international comparisons* are evident within the culture on categorisation; the UK and Sweden position forced migrants at the bottom of their social hierarchies, which reflects the global position of this specific group (Legg, 2005:145 -6). A successful bio political strategy produces the outcomes both desired by and constructed by the state, whilst supposedly respecting autonomy, in the context of this research, respecting the autonomy of, in this case, HEIs – see section 3.4.

Rose (1996) assert that the key to the success of bio political strategies lies in their overarching aim: ‘to govern people as populations to be known, measured and monitored’ (pp.92). Whilst Kalm (2010) and Menz (2010) highlight the irony underpinning all managed migration regimes, be they global or local, in that what they attempt to measure and monitor is inherently unmanageable, due to the unpredictability of migratory flows stimulated by events across the globe. This stance is particularly relevant in the context of forcibly displaced migrants, many of whom are unable to anticipate their migration journey or are already residing within the population, but their migration status changes to ‘forced’ when return to their country of origin is blocked (Day & White, 2002:12). One response to the unmanageability of the forced migrant population is, according to Walters (2011), the extension of bordering practices, an example of *information collection and territorialisation*, from the political sphere of the state to civil society. This is exemplified in the context of this research in the construction of the higher education border, which is operationalised by higher education institutions and plays an important role in immigration status determining who ‘can’ and who ‘can’t’ access university.

Members of the population define themselves according to the *identities* prescribed by the state (Legg, 2005; Brown & Knopp, 2006). In order to select appropriate *identities* the population must have the relevant *episteme*, which is knowledge produced by the state to inform decisions around *identities*. This is not an individual decision, but the rest of the population must also afford the individual the same *identity* (Valentine, Sporton & Nielsen, 2009). *Visibility* is the state’s presentation of the world; often configured through the selection of features that promote their view and conceal those aspects which don’t.

'Population' is a term which is increasingly being used to describe smaller groups or cohorts of people and the accompanying *state technologies* are becoming increasingly specialised. This is in order to effectively target specific populations, such as the HE student population within individual HEIs. The UK and Sweden operate similar bio political strategies, which serve to exclude forced migrants from higher education through their classification as 'international' students and exclusion from financial support – as discussed in section 2.6.1. Section 3.3 develops a discussion centred on the construction of forced migrants through the process of categorisation.

This research adopts Foucault's position in respect to the relationship between the state and civil society, in addition to his conceptualisation of power. Foucault determined that the state had to evolve its use of discipline in order to maintain control of the population (1991; 1997), whereas the traditional neoliberal perspective would interpret this as the state rescinding control and therefore fostering a greater disconnection, as opposed to connection, between the state and civil society. Fundamental to this discussion is identifying the location and flow of power. Bourdieu et al (2004) perceive the state to exercise power over the population, whilst Ferguson & Gupta (2002) assert that power is exercised through the medium of civil society, although both acknowledge the flow of power is not uni-directional. Foucault (1991) conceived of power as a fluid entity flowing freely between the state and civil society. This is supported by Gill (2010) who conceptualises the state and civil society to be mutually dependent, interlinked and enmeshed.

The concept of the non-hierarchical flow of power introduced by Gill, proclaims that the state influences civil society, and that non-state actors and agents operating within it, through their interpretation and reproduction of actions, in return influence the state (2010). Giddens argues that in order for democracy to be successful it requires more as opposed to less government intervention: evident in the growing connections as opposed to disconnection between the state and civil society (2010). In addition to Foucault's conceptualisation of power as a fluid entity, evident within relations and interactions between people, Foucault also described conditions in which power becomes concentrated and stagnates. What Foucault refers to as 'states of domination', are the result of power not moving freely and a limited range of individuals and groups

not engaging in power relations (Foucault, 1984:114). Forced migrants are one group within society that the state endeavours to render powerless through placing multiple impositions upon their physical and social mobility.

Schram (2015) and Darling (2016) both argue that neoliberalism explains the connections conceptualised as pathways of power between the state and civil society. Neoliberal governmentality is considered by several scholars to be the dominant theory in managed migration: underpinning new forms of state-led governance, the implementation of which is the responsibility of civil society (Ferguson & Gupta, 2002; Menz, 2009; Geiger & Pecoud, 2010). This study develops this debate through providing valuable insight into the intimate connections between the state and higher education institutions in respect to the management of forced migrants.

### 3.3 Constructing Forced Migrants

This section explores how the state utilises governmental technologies such as the production of discourse to marginalise forced migrants within the wider population. Key tenets of Foucauldian governmentality are central to developing a discussion pertaining to the discursive construction of the 'forced migrant subject' in the national imaginary. Rose & Miller (1992) attest that the composition and function of individual states lies in the production of knowledge, through which discourse is constructed and implemented through governmental technologies at different scales. The state produces forced migrant discourse which shapes legislation, policy and its implementation: this discourse not only impacts the categorisation of the student population but also higher education initiatives, such as those concerned with widening the participation of specific categories identified as under-represented in the sector.

The focus in the UK is on the role of higher education in promoting the social mobility of students. Social mobility is centred on creating opportunities for specific groups considered to be underrepresented, who are clearly categorised by the state and targeted through initiatives intended to widening the participation of underrepresented groups. Bordering practices in the UK create a contradiction in higher education practice, as managed migration regimes aim to reduce the social mobility of forced



migrants, which is perpetuated by universities in the exclusion of the majority of forced migrants from activities aimed at widening participation. A second fundamental concern in UK HE is the outcome of a student's tuition fee assessment, which determines if they are categorised as 'home' or 'international'. The rate of tuition fees payable and eligibility for student funding is dependent upon the outcome of this assessment.

In Sweden an egalitarian ideology is manifest in an antipathy towards recognising people based on differences between them and other members of the population, in which equality of opportunity is thought to render the need to account for and accommodate differences between people redundant. In 2016, a widening access report acknowledged the specific needs of foreign academics educated outside of Sweden to validate their existing university qualifications: this is the only official recognition of the needs of forced migrants. Therefore, in Sweden, the construction of forced migrant discourse is built upon the absence of this group from higher education policy and legislation. Swedish universities receive far greater financial investment from the state in comparison with their British counterparts. However akin to the UK, bordering practices in Sweden result in the erection of financial barriers between forced migrants with unsettled status and higher education: this is achieved through the denial of access to student funding. These examples support an understanding as to how state led discourse is enacted at the level of the higher education institution.

Foucault identified three central functions of governance: the construction of an imagined ideal state, an active regulatory framework and the production of academic knowledge (Foucault, 1998:154). The academic function of the state is responsible for producing specialist knowledge in relation to all aspects of life (McKee, 2009; Dean, 2010). This specialist knowledge produced by the state constructs discourse which Moore (2013) & Philo et al (2014) claim is subsequently reproduced by the media, other sectors of civil society and members of the population. Rose et al (2006) and Legg (2005) describe how the totalising sovereign power of the state has evolved into technologies of governance to facilitate the extended reach of the state.

'It is free individuals' who try to control, to determine, to delimit the liberty of others and, in order to do that, they dispose of certain instruments to govern others' (Foucault, 1984:131)

Foucault (1991) identified 'labelling' as a particular technology of governance, in which individuals are subject to relations of power mediated through discourse. Legg (2005), Brown & Knopp (2006) and Valentine et al (2009) claim that members of the population define themselves and recognise other members of the population according to *identities* prescribed by the state. The labels ascribed to different groups within the population are utilised to exercise control over social and economic processes, which is evident within the construction and subsequent labels assigned to forced migrants (Zetter, 1991 & 2007; Scheel & Squire, 2014).

Mountz & Hiemstra (2014) discuss the construction of the forced migrant binary either as vulnerable victims, a label used to describe refugees awarded the right to remain; or as predatory criminals, a label frequently applied asylum seekers still in the pursuit of settled immigration status. Zetter (1991 & 2007), Betts (2010) and Scheel & Squire (2014) explore the complexity of labels afforded to different migrant groups, attesting to the inherent fluidity of both the categories and forced migrants' membership of them, thus rendering clearly defined binaries both impractical and redundant. Burke (2010) states that the overarching subjective interpretation of discourse renders all identities as fluid as opposed to static entities (pp: 170).

Burrige (2014) dislikes fixed immigration categories on the basis that they inevitably create hierarchies, or according to Morrice (2016) 'civic stratification' (pp: 4), within which certain immigration categories are prioritised over others. This view is in direct opposition to Hathaway (2007) who advocates for the reification of the refugee category over the forced migrant category. Brown & Knopp (2006), Zetter (2007), and Scheel & Squire (2014) discuss the prolific coupling of terms such as 'failed', 'spontaneous', 'illegal', 'bogus', 'unplanned', 'economic', and 'undocumented' with the category asylum seeker, all of which serve to reinforce pejorative forced migrant discourses. The term 'forced migrant' is used, albeit imperfectly, within this research and is intended to attempt to transcend the stereotypes associated with specific legal immigration categories. However, as Scheel & Squire (2014) acknowledge, despite the inherent problems assigning categories to groups subject to immigration control, they are required in order to conduct and discuss research. The influence of the researcher on

the production of forced migrant discourse is discussed in relation to my own positionality in section 4.12.

Van Dijk (1993) argues that civil society is the 'interface' between the state and the population at which discourse is accepted and adopted and subsequently results in the pejorative treatment of the forced migrant population. This is vital to understand the ongoing marginalisation of this group that Every & Augustinous (2008) and Bloch (2010) claim is enacted through punitive immigration legislation, which seeks practically to deter and reduce the number of forced migrants, as well as discredit them and their pursuit of safety within the destination country.

'Rigid control policies, rather than alleviating tensions, may serve to legitimate fears about immigration, fears that inform attitudes to migrants and minority communities' Bloch & Schuster, 2002:407

Bloch & Schuster (2002) make an explicit connection between immigration legislation, as a mode of governance that serves a practical purpose in that it places physical limitations upon the lives of forced migrants. However, this legislation also serves to reproduce pejorative forced migrant discourse through exacerbating public concerns, which when reproduced reinforce the environment of exclusion. Darling (2016) develops this argument by stating that:

' . . . framing asylum seekers as a burden enables the lives of vulnerable individuals to be positioned as commodities for marketization and legitimates their exclusion' (pp: 11).

The construction of forced migrants as a burden is perpetuated and rendered powerful in a myriad of representations in legislation, policy, language, the media and the management of forced migrants (Gill, 2009 & 2010; Bloch, 2010; Moore, 2013). This is replicated and reproduced across civil society and different forms of media, increasingly through social media wherein lies evidence of the overt xenophobia directed at forced migrants (Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008; Philo et al, 2013; Philo et al, 2014). This renders the state, civil society and wider population complicit in the marginalisation of forced migrants, as well as reinforcing, reproducing and subsequently ensuring the continuation of the state's position.

The state-led production and the reproduction within civil society of forced migrant discourse mediated through technologies of governance have the power to exclude forced migrants from higher education, which serves to subordinate and prevent the most undesirable members of the population from accessing privileged knowledge and opportunities for social mobility (Morrice, 2013). Forced migrant discourse constructs a context wherein it is socially acceptable and positively encouraged to punitively interpret state legislation, with minimal reproach from the state or civil society (Foucault, 1991; Youdell, 2004). The frequent production of immigration legislation creates a condition of chaos, which cannot be clearly mitigated through existing higher education structures: even if staff working within universities wanted to act, this uncertainty can cause anxiety and can result in the suppression of any alternative positive action (Earnest et al, 2010; Mountz & Hiemstra, 2014). The next section explores how forced migrant discourse and governmental technologies influence and impact upon the tangible and intangible borders forced migrants encounter in their pursuit of higher education.

### 3.4 The Quasi Autonomy of Higher Education

Higher education institutions are frequently presented by the state as autonomous bodies, yet they are subject to intensive state surveillance and monitoring: specific to this research in respect to the implementation of managed migration policies. However higher education institutions have the opportunity to use their discretion in respect to how they apply managed migration policies; wherein lies the potential for universities to exercise resistance and create a context of inclusion as opposed to exclusion for forced migrants.

The 'art of governing' represents the evolution in governance regimes focused on the successful management of the 'governable subject' or, specific to this study, the 'governable forced migrant' subject (McKee, 2009). The forced migrant subject is constructed through discourse and the discursive categories it produces are founded upon rational 'truths' or 'knowledge', which underpin governmental technologies such as legislation, policy and practice (Foucault, 1991; 2001). Dean (2010) applies Foucault's theory to conceptualise members of the population located on a spectrum commencing

at the centre of society and extended to the periphery. The failure of members of the population to secure their position or affiliation at the centre of society results in their experiencing differing degrees of marginalisation. 'Affiliated' citizens earn their autonomy (or freedom) through compliance with the state and effective management of the 'self': examples of this include financial independence and maintaining good physical and mental health (Rose et al, 2006; Dean, 2010).

The societal spectrum of the 'affiliated' to the 'marginalised' subject is mirrored in the barriers forced migrants with settled and unsettled immigration status encounter in the HE context. Neither the UK nor Sweden directly exclude forced migrants based on their immigration status, but impose often insurmountable legislative and administrative challenges to access university. This results in barriers to opportunities in higher education, opportunities which facilitate outcomes extending beyond the acquisition of a qualification, to provide the cultural capital required to successfully navigate society and increase social mobility. Earnest et al (2010) claim that 'issues of student diversity have moved from the periphery to become central concerns of higher education institutions' (2010:155). This is contradicted by evidence of the marginalisation of forced migrants in HE in the UK by Burke (2010), Morrice (2009 & 2013), and in Sweden by Andersson & Gou (2009) and internationally by Naidoo (2015), and Tobenkin (2006).

Certain groups within the population are 'marginalised' due to the perception that they are less compliant, for example criminals' and substance abusers, or individuals with reduced capacity to comply due to issues pertaining to their health or wide-ranging disabilities. Schram (2015) states that marginalised groups incapable of, or unwilling to cooperate with the demands of civil society are further marginalised through disciplinary practices of the state. The 'marginalised' are subject to more restrictive and repressive technologies of domination, as opposed to the technologies of autonomy reserved for the 'affiliated'. Foucault (1991) claimed that only members of the population who refused to comply with democratic processes had restrictions and limitations placed upon them: however research in this area clearly demonstrates forced migrants' compliance with democratic processes in respect to pursuing opportunities in higher education (Stevenson & Willott, 2007 & 2008; Albert & Atherton, 2017; Gladwell et al, 2017). Further research also evidences the distinct marginalisation

experienced by members of the forced migrant population, which is not extended to the wider population (Lyall & Bowerman, 2013; Albert & Atherton, 2017; Gill et al, 2014).

The societal spectrum along which members of the population can be located, and are to varying degrees 'affiliated' to or 'marginalised' by the state, can be extended to understand the position of institutions within civil society. Higher education institutions maintain their autonomy from the state through compliance with legislation and policy. Universities provide an excellent example of institutions constructed as operating with autonomy from the state, yet are subject to an excess of regulation and monitoring. This is evident within their role in the implementation of managed migration policies and widening access and the participation of underrepresented groups in the sector.

Universities are effectively governed from a distance by the state through networks of power: defined as 'paths of connection' between the state, civil society and the population (Dean, 2010:45), which allow power to be exercised in a 'distant and calculative manner' (Legg, 2005:139). These paths of connections are the basis upon which McKee (2009) rejects the notion of the state rescinding control to facilitate a market driven civil society. The operation of the Home Office (UK) and Migration Agency (Sweden) creates opportunities to further explore how power is exercised, as both rely upon non-state actors including private contractors, local government or municipalities, non-statutory agencies and, specific to this research, higher education institutions, to implement legislation and policy aimed at managing the daily lives of forced migrants (Ring, 1995; Gill, 2009; McKee, 2009).

'These shifts in implementation to private, local or international arrangements reflect less an abdication of state sovereignty, than an experiment in which national states involve agents as part of rational attempts to diminish the costs of migration' (Lahav, 2010:690)

Menz describes advantages of governing migration at a distance:

'Migration control by remote control offers the advantages of shifting the financial burden – and also the blame in cases of non-compliance or accidents – on to third party actors' (Menz, 2009: 317)

Governance at a distance allows the state to remain one or multiple steps removed from the pejorative and abusive treatment of forced migrants (Rose & Miller, 1992; Mountz

& Hiemstra, 2014). Technologies which facilitate governance at a distance include budgets, audits, as well as dispersing autonomy and responsibility to non-state actors (Rose et al, 2006). This is evident in respect to the extent to which the Home Office expects UK HEIs to monitor international students including forced migrants with unsettled status, for the duration of their degree programme. The Office for Students (formerly Office for Fair Access) operates a reporting system for tracking under-represented students' access to and completion of HE studies. International students who wish to study at a Swedish university must be issued with a visa (Student Residence Permit) from the Migration Agency, however after enrolment there is no ongoing duty for the HEI to monitor these individuals as part of the managed migration regime.

Tensions exist within higher education institutions operating in civil society due to the expectation that they reproduce managed migration policies. These serve to exclude forced migrants, contrary to an increasing number of initiatives delivered by them to resist these policies by including forced migrant students. Key questions arise in terms of how these paths of connection between the state, higher education institutions and higher education agents working within them reproduce existing structures which are derived from the dominant political ideology, or exercise the autonomy they do have, and create new structures which serve the aspirations of forced migrants.

Foucault's theory of governmentality provides a macro approach to understanding how legislation produced by the state translates into policy, which then develops into practice implemented by non-state actors working in higher education. The paths of connection between the state and universities offer junctures at which both senior management and operational staff (agents) have the power to punitively or positively impact upon the implementation of managed migration policies (structures) through their practice. It is therefore important to acknowledge the potential for the emancipatory, as well as the repressive, exercise of power (Foucault, 1991). This research aims to locate higher education institutions in the context of civil society, as institutions directly connected to, and acting as the extended arm of the state through the adoption and implementation of, or resistance to, managed migration policies and practice. The following section draws on Giddens' theory of structuration to develop a

more nuanced understanding of the junctures where societal structures connect to agents.

### 3.5 Higher Education Border

Giddens' theory of structuration provides a framework for exploring in greater depth the relationship between societal structures and the agency of individuals (1984; 1991). Structuration theory provides a useful framework through which to analyse the role of higher education structures and agents in respect to the role they play in placing constraints upon or facilitating access for forced migrants with the skill and determination to engage in degree studies. The most deeply embedded structural properties are constructed over the course of time into institutions, which inhabit their own space within civil society. The 'duality of structure' describes the interplay between structures and agents: evidenced in the context of this research within the structures and agents comprising higher education institutions and explores how legislation aimed at the exclusion of forced migrants is interpreted, enacted, and also resisted (Giddens, 1984).

Mechanisms are a product of structures, which are operationalised by agents across civil society. Higher education structures are comprised of tangible visible mechanism such as legislation which forms the basis of rules, processes and procedures. Within these same structures there exists powerful and pervasive invisible mechanisms such as habits and behaviours which play an equally important role in governing the population (Dean, 2010; Gill, 2014). The higher education border encountered by forced migrants is an example of a mechanism, within which there are multiple other mechanisms which impact upon the higher education experiences of this group.

Neoliberal governmentality manifests itself within the higher education border: a direct result of indirect regulatory structures facilitated by paths of connections between the state and higher education institutions. Universities are subject to and responsible for responding to state legislation as well as good economic management, central to which is income generation and maintaining their position in the HE market (Whitehead & Cranshaw, 2012; Schram, 2015). Giddens' theory of structuration further supports the



development of this conceptual framework at the institutional level. Universities have a dual role to play in respect to their relationship with forced migrants, acting in the capacity of the extended reach of the state through compliance with managed migration regimes, yet also utilising their legal autonomy to create opportunities. Naidoo (2010) asserts that research in the higher education field often presents higher education institutions as 'closed systems' detached from civil society and the inherent power relations within (pp.466).

The construction of the higher education border, the tangible barriers it produces and their impact on the everyday experiences of forced migrants are key to comprehending the broader consequences of state led managed migration regimes.

'The importance of the mundane rituals and routines of state spatialization is easily recognized where the regulation and surveillance of the borders of nation-states is concerned. But the policing of the border is intimately tied to the policing of the Main Street in that they are acts that represent the repressive power of the state as both extensive with the territorial boundaries of the nation and intensively permeating every square inch of that territory respectively' (Ferguson & Gupta, 2002:984)

Mountz (2011b) claims that the different societal spaces and domains in which institutions are located are to varying degrees 'sites of exclusion' for forced migrants (2011b:384). The diversification and intensification of bordering practices constitute a key activity of managed migration (Mountz & Himestra, 2014), as discussed earlier. Borders are integral to understanding how the political priorities of the state in respect to imposing limitations upon forced migrants are replicated in HE (Morrice, 2013). This is reinforced by Jenkins' (2014) who articulates that the borders present in higher education mirror those protecting the territorial border which he describes as 'pervasive', as they increasingly seep into and impact upon every area of forced migrants' lives. Whilst Clare et al (2017) recognise the increased restrictions and pressures imposed upon universities, they also conceive of them as ideal sites of resistance.

Maillet et al (2016) contrast the mobility of the immigration border with the immobility it imposes upon forced migrants with unsettled immigration status. Forced migrants effectively carry the immigration border with them in their navigation of civil society and

pursuit of opportunities perceived to increase social mobility, for example, higher education. Context is crucial to understanding the impact of immobility, as it is used as a technology of governance to differentiate between members of the population. Limbo can also be conceptualised as a relational experience, in respect to how immobility compares and contrasts with other members of the population (Harker, 2009). The pace at which individuals become socially mobile and move freely from one 'place' to another reflects the extent of their privilege – the greater an individual's privilege, the fewer the impediments imposed upon their ability to access opportunities and travel unhindered (Cresswell, 2006). Technologies of governance utilised to limit the mobility of forced migrants are not confined to imposing physical restrictions such as immigration detention (Gill, 2009). These restrictions manifest themselves in the construction of a multitude of economic and social barriers designed to impose limitations upon social mobility (Cresswell, 2006). This is evident in legislation designed to create financial obstructions to restrict access to higher education for forced migrants, as detailed in section 2.6.

Mavroudi & Warren (2013) and Andersson & Gou (2009) state that the construction of the mechanisms comprising the higher education border are done so in the context of neoliberal governmentality, as economic concerns are interwoven with issues pertaining to the administration and the management of the student population. Higher education is widely believed to have been subject to intense commodification and marketisation due to the influence of neoliberalism, which is also held accountable for growing inequalities within the sector (Youdell, 2004; Naidoo, 2010; Bullough, 2014; Schram, 2015; Clare et al, 2017). Bullough (2014) identified that the significant and continued decrease in state funding, has resulted in one of the key functions of universities being to generate income required to both sustain and grow their institutions. The commodification of higher education is evident in the rise in practices aimed at generating tuition fees, which is a prevalent issue in the UK and of growing importance in Sweden. The disinvestment in the sector is evident in the increasing transposition of financial responsibility for HE studies from the state to the individual student (Whitehead & Cranshaw, 2012).

The structures comprising higher education have not only been affected by economic concerns and challenges. Jenkins (2014) asserts that the administration of managed migration within universities is responsible for changes to the structures of higher education institutions, evident within new systems and employment duties. One example relating to this research is increased administrative duties placed upon UK universities to monitor international students studying within their institutions, including forced migrants with unsettled immigration status. Failure to do so risks the imposition of sanctions such as the suspension of a license to admit international students (UKBA, 2012), which poses a considerable economic risk. The Migration Agency does not utilise the same technologies of domination to control the international student population within Swedish universities, however considering the growing climate of xenophobia there exists significant potential for this to change.

In the absence of financial and administrative incentives for higher education institutions to support forced migrants, it is necessary to conceive of higher education as more than just a border for forced migrants to navigate. Higher education need not only be constructed in financial and administrative terms: both of these premises ignore its function in respect to public good, the growth of knowledge and the development of research. Universities create opportunities for students to accumulate cultural as well as institutional capital to increase their social mobility, which in turn impacts positively on wider society. Graduates make considerable contributions to the state, just two of a multitude of examples include: economic capital through the payment of taxes and knowledge capital through their employment (Balaz & Williams, 2004; Erel, 2010; Bullough, 2014). It is important to consider what these alternative conceptualisations of HE reveal in relation to HEIs motivations to create opportunities in HE for forced migrants.

### **3.6 Connecting Structures to Agents**

Fundamental to this research is an exploration of the central issues in respect to two key concepts: first of all how existing structures create and sustain the border between higher education and forced migrants, alongside how these structures can be restructured to break down barriers and open up access to the sector; and secondly how

and why the consciousness of agents is raised, and they subsequently exercise their agency to both create (higher education agents) as well as pursue and subsequently engage (forced migrants) in opportunities.

Social activities according to Giddens (1984) are not:

‘... brought into being by social actors but continually recreated by them via the very means whereby they continually express themselves as actors’ (pp: 2).

Giddens (1984) used the term ‘duality of structure’ to explain how structures and agents connect, and in the context of this research provides a valuable contribution to the conceptual framework: duality of structure underpins an analysis of the less visible habits and behaviours of higher education agents and their relationship and interactions with forced migrants in the context of everyday activities (Depelteau, 2008).

The focus of this research is to explore issues in the context in which they take place, which requires significant emphasis on the study of actions and interactions between agents. Goffman (1983) attributed the repetitive reproduction of routines to homogenising the behaviour of heterogeneous individuals and groups. Giddens (1984) states that individual agency is stimulated not by the intention but the capability of agents to act, and is therefore visible in the tangible production of an agent’s activities. Barley & Tolbert (1997) argue that the duality of structure presents the potential for structures to both constrain and enable activities.

Giddens considers the reproduction of activities to be predominantly unconscious (1984), supported by Bourdieu who argues that compliance with state ‘norms’ constitutes unconscious activity (2004). The unconscious reproduction of structural inequalities can be conceptualised as ‘unconscious bias’ (Walters et al, 2016). In the context of higher education this results in the pejorative treatment of many groups including forced migrants. Activities are subject to change and evolve over time: fluid institutional principles in the form of higher education policy and practice, interweave with interactional episodes, for example, between HEI staff and forced migrants. The reproduction of ‘practices of the state’ such as managed migration policy and practice, through their implementation become embodied in the everyday practices of higher

education agents. Routine activities perpetuate social practices which over the course of time, result in these practices becoming embedded in daily life and afforded the description 'structural properties'. Some structural properties are deemed responsible for the perpetuation of inequality and are thus described as structural inequalities (Depelteau, 2008).

The barriers born out of structural inequalities encountered by forced migrants are directly connected to their immigration status. However, many other barriers affecting the engagement of forced migrants' in higher education are also experienced by groups marginalised on the basis of their social class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality or a multitude of other factors. Within the small body of research focused on forced migration and higher education, structural inequalities are described by Harris & Marlowe as a 'structural squeeze' (2011:192). Evidence of higher education institutions as structures which impose constraints upon, as opposed to enabling, forced migrants (agents) to engage with opportunities, are represented in findings which reflect overt examples of the impact of a wide range of structural inequalities: systemic racism, gender inequalities, class bias and poverty (Morrice, 2009; Onsando & Billet, 2009; Stevenson & Willott 2007; Stevenson & Willott, 2008; Burke, 2010; Earnest et al, 2010; Harris, 2013; Harris et al, 2015; Spiteri, 2015; Wilkinson & Lloyd-Zantiotis, 2017). Naidoo (2010) asserts that HE is responsible for reproducing structural inequalities 'under the cloak of academic neutrality' (2010:460).

Various scholars have questioned the adequacy of Giddens' theory of duality of structure, as it omits to explain how power is exercised between structures and agents (Cantwell & Maldonado-Maldonado, 2009; Marginson & Rhoades, 2002). Marginson & Rhoades (2002) & Archer (2010) believe that agency and structure do not need to be delineated as separate entities, but that agents and structures collaborate in the exercise of power and influence, an analysis which would appear to concur with Giddens' concept of the duality of structure. Naidoo (2010) supports this view and describes Giddens' explanation of the interaction between policies determined by the state, the agency of non-state actors and individuals whom they impact upon, as 'arbitrary' and claims that it fails to convincingly connect the two (pp:467).

Bourdieu's theory pertaining to capital and habitus provides the foundations for understanding these research issues on the micro individual level (Bourdieu, 1990; 2004; Wilkinson & Lloyd-Zantiotis, 2017). This component of the conceptual framework is utilised to critique the approaches adopted by higher education institutions, higher education agents and forced migrants to resist, and overcome, artificially imposed states of limbo on the access of this group to higher education. Capital adopts multiple different yet interconnected forms. Bourdieu identified distinct types of cultural capital attained through education: institutionalised cultural capital is acquired through formal education and objective cultural capital through informal education (Bourdieu, 1990; Erel, 2010), and both are required to qualify for and navigate the systems, processes and culture of higher education, be it as a student or member of staff.

Erel (2010) and Stevenson & Willott (2007 & 8) believe that habitus represents the embodiment of cultural capital, and is unique to every individual and accumulated from early childhood. Habitus reflects the development of an intrinsic understanding of the invisible structures within society, which form habits, customs and practices, absent from formal legislation, policy and practice (Stevenson & Willott, 2008; Said, 2000). Bourdieu identifies a clear alignment between the structures comprising society and their impact on the development of an individual's habitus.

'The conditioning associated with a particular class of conditions of existence produce habitus, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures' (Bourdieu, 1990:53)

The habitus of higher education agents working in positions across the sector are influenced by the political ideologies of the state, which underpin societal structures. Individual agents' subjective interpretation of embodied structural norms are mediated through their own personal histories and biographies (Youdell, 2004). Forced migrants' habitus is hugely varied due to the diverse countries from which they originate, transit through and their experiences upon arrival in the country in which they claim asylum. The diverse habitus held by forced migrants impacts upon their navigation and negotiation of structures in civil society and specific to this study the structures, as well as the agents regulating higher education – discussed in later sections in this chapter. Both individuals and universities, akin to other institutions operating in civil society, hold

their own institutional habitus. This represents their embodied cultural capital, evident in their organisational values and ethos: this is explored in depth in Chapter 5.

### 3.7 Restructuring the Higher Education Border

The construction and function of the higher education border provides the context in which to present the tangible and intangible structural mechanisms forced migrants are expected to navigate. The specific initiatives outlined in Chapter 2 provide tangible evidence of the resistance of the higher education border by institutions and agents operating within them to exercise their agency to support the aspirations of this group. It is within this context of resistance that the relationships between higher education structures, agents and forced migrants can be subject to further analysis through the lens of Giddens' theory pertaining to duality of structure and Bourdieu's in relation to habitus. The combined strength of higher education structures and agents is infinitely more powerful than the agency available to forced migrants fighting to secure access (Giddens, 1984). It is the manifestation of these explicit power relations, which require further exploration, as Youdell (2004) argues that an analysis of the opportunities and challenges students face in education need to be considered in the context of 'structural constraints', as well as 'institutional responses' alongside the 'day-to-day practices' carried out by institutions (pp:408).

Resistance, according to Bourdieu (1998), centres on the need to reinvent political ideology and practice, whereas Giddens' (1984; 1991) states that changes in the reproduction of practices could eventually result in changes in political ideologies of the state. Giddens' theory pertaining to the duality of structure and the interaction between structure and agency, and Foucault's relating to the exercise of power by non-state actors (agents) via paths of connection, contribute to a framework which seeks to explore the potential and tangible exercise of resistance from within as opposed to external to higher education structures.

Haughton et al (2013) identify the soft spaces of governance wherein change can be negotiated, so long as the change does not disrupt the overarching structure. Mckee (2009) defines resistance as exploring alternatives to governance practices and not

'liberation from an oppressor' (2009:471). Gill et al (2014) advise caution in respect to activities which seek to reconfigure instead of abandoning existing systems, as they could result in strengthening the authority of the state, as opposed to challenging it. In the context of the initiatives developed, which directly or indirectly benefit forced migrants, they are all focused on the restructuring of higher education, for example, through the inclusion of forced migrants into existing programmes.

Changes in context are required for higher education agents to try and instigate change to current institutional modes of policy and practice (Barley & Tolbert, 1997). This is especially pertinent in respect to Bourdieu's (2004) analysis of higher education, as a sector resistant to change. Gill (2010) argues that non-state actors operating within civil society have the power to restructure existing structures through reconfiguring their own production of embedded and established activities. A critical question lies in what motivates individuals to act, and the context required for restructuring to occur. In the higher education context described by Clare et al (2017) and Bullough (2014), increasing workloads in conjunction with insecure employment place individuals in positions where they experience spatial and temporal limitations in relation to their ability to exercise power, lobby and advocate for change (McKee, 2009). Bullough (2014) acknowledges the potential for these collective pressures to result in a 'moral blindness' in respect to seeking to support students and the development of activities beyond the boundaries of an employment contract (pp:29). This raises important questions about the ability of some higher education agents to engage in initiatives that could result in the restructuring of their own institution or wider structures across the sector.

Clare et al (2017) therefore call for engagement, activism, and resistance beyond the structures of higher education: however only one of their suggestions is located 'outside' higher education, which specifically calls for engagement with NGO's and activist organisations unaffiliated with the sector. Their focus is on internal resistance through dialogue, abusing and subverting structural hierarchies and connecting to national organisations – resistance clearly defined within, albeit pushing at the boundaries, of existing higher education structures. Betts' (2010) introduction of the concept at the state level of 'regime stretching' (pp.363), can be applied to an institution's capacity to stretch and find space within their existing structures to



accommodate 'difference' through the provision of support to, forced migrant students or to, maintain the status quo through the exclusion of this group.

'In many contexts of social life there occur processes of selective 'information filtering' whereby strategically placed actors seek reflexively to regulate the overall conditions of system reproduction either to keep things as they are or to change them' (Giddens, 1984:28)

Cantwell & Maldonado – Maldonado (2009) build on Giddens' assertion and concur with Foucault in their description of power that 'flows as reciprocal, in a feedback loop in which structure orders agency but agents, in turn influence structure' (2009:292). Bourdieu argues that to resist unconscious compliance, or the conscious reproduction of state ideologies, social actors need to subject their actions to critical scrutiny. The process of scrutiny and reflection does not always result in, but is the starting point for, social action, often manifest in changes to activities which constitute daily working practices.

In the UK context, this has revolved around the creation of scholarship programmes for forced migrants, which require an administrative process to ensure their facilitation. The Korta Vagen programme in Sweden is aimed at foreign academic not explicitly forced migrants, yet the high numbers of forced migrants requiring access to this initiative have seen it undergo exponential growth over the past three years. Swedish higher education agents have played a leading role in fostering this growth. Burrige (2014) acknowledges the actions of everyday resistance in fighting the impact of border controls, such as those imposed on forced migrants in the context of the higher education border. However, Burrige (2014) advocates for long term solutions to these challenges in the form of the dissolution of border controls. Gill (2010) suggests that the impact or power to disrupt state practices situated in every day routines should not be underestimated. Schram (2015) believes that 'a politics of radical incrementalism needs to be given serious consideration even if it is fraught with all kinds of pitfalls' (pp.4): the creation of opportunities for forced migrants can have a transformational impact on individual lives as well as lay the foundations for more substantial change.

The orchestration of resistance within existing structures, as opposed to attempts to usurp them, is explored at the micro level drawing on Goffman's theory pertaining to

social interactions (Goffman, 1983). Higher education agents utilise technologies of domination to impose limitations upon forced migrants pursuing increased social mobility via university: they stimulate interactions which are vital points of observation to understand how marginalisation is enacted, and how managed migration policies impact upon this group (Ferguson & Gupta, 2002).

The connections between structure and agency are evident within the most marginalised groups in society. Goffman (1983) emphasised that social interactions, even if they fail primarily to serve the interests of marginalised individuals, and even if the interactions constitute acts of resistance, adhere to the rules underpinning interactions and are enacted within existing frameworks. Foucault (1984) believed that the conclusions drawn from micro interactions could be extrapolated from the micro to the macro scale. Specific to this research, analysis of interactions between institutional agents and forced migrants can facilitate a better understanding as to how power is exercised and provide evidence of their multiple connections to the state.

Foucault (1984) conceptualised power as a fluid entity with the potential to be exercised by anyone, present everywhere and in every activity; a position supported by Bourdieu (1984) and Giddens (1984). This is very important in terms of the potential held by everyone of concern to this research, to create positive or punitive change through the exercise of agency. This concept is central to understanding the potential for the restructuring of the higher education border. All three authors acknowledge the role played by daily routines in the reproduction of existing, and the creation of new, structures which have the potential to impact directly as well as resonate beyond the immediate locus of concern. An individual, according to Foucault (1984) is only unable to exercise resistance, if they are in a position where they are unable to either end their own life or the life of the person exercising power over them. This is because power is conceived of, as a totalising force and therefore, cannot be exercised in contexts where there is no opportunity for individuals to exercise resistance (McKee, 2009). Gill (2009) and Mountz (2011a & 2011b) provide evidence on how forced migrants, subject to state sanctioned detention, exercise agency and in doing so demonstrate that their incarceration does not render them powerless. It would be easy to conceive of forced migrants as being powerless, positioned at the bottom of the social hierarchy and, for

many with unsettled immigration status, beyond the periphery of civil society. The next section explores the potential for forced migrants to exercise power, and the challenges inherent in exercising their agency and utilising existing capital in a new context.

### 3.8 Forced Migrant Habitus

‘Key to transforming organisational attitudes and behaviours is to understand the experience of marginalised individuals and to recognise the unconscious thoughts and actions that caused the marginalisation in the first place’ (Walter et al, 2006:219)

Morrice (2013:652) adopts the term ‘refugee habitus’ to describe the embodied cultural capital of those forcibly displaced: this term will be expanded in this research to develop the context of ‘forced migrant habitus’. Forced migrant habitus is shaped by knowledge and capital accrued over the course of lives characterised by sometimes multiple experiences of displacement across different countries and contexts. Neither Morrice (2013) nor Reay et al (2001) account within these descriptions for the heterogeneity evident within the forced migrant population (Maillet et al, 2016). The range of forced migrants’ experiences include individuals who arrive as children and enter compulsory education in the destination country or those arriving as adults with university qualifications accompanied by years of professional experience in their country of origin. Habitus is constantly reshaped by the social context in which individuals live. Some forced migrants, will more quickly than others acquire the necessary cultural capital to reshape their existing habitus which will assist in the navigation of higher education (Erel, 2010).

Bourdieu’s theory has been extended and adapted in this study to conceptualise multiple different manifestations of capital. Putnam’s theory of social capital (1995) also provides a useful perspective within which to understand the value and importance of social networks. Informal social networks provide essential sources of information and support in respect to higher education, which cannot be found, for example, in a university prospectus. Forced migrants are less likely to have the economic capital required to engage in HE studies. Foucault conceptualised economic capital as financial and material assets which he believed were essential to advance personal political

economy (England, 1994). The pursuit of economic capital by forced migrants is interwoven with the desire to increase their social mobility. The key to their success in both of these endeavours is the acquisition of the qualifications or the accreditation required to secure professional employment. This study will adopt a holistic perspective in regard to the benefits of higher education in line with Balaz & Williams (2004) 'total capital' theory: this encompasses the full extent of capital accumulation that can be realised by any foreign-born international student studying in university. The five points of Balaz & Williams (2004) 'starfish' model focus on the development of competencies, which extend beyond the acquisition of a degree qualification.

Bourdieu's theory has influenced research exploring forced migrants' experiences of compulsory education (Devine, 2009; Reay et al, 2001 & Madood, 2004) and in relation to forced migration and higher (Stevenson & Willott, 2007 & 2008; Morrice, 2013; Morrice, 2009; Burke, 2010; Wilkinson & Lloyd-Zantiotis, 2017). Harris & Marlowe (2011) conceive of forced migrants' experiences of education, outside the destination country, to 'differ starkly' not only from indigenous but also international students (2011:187), due to feelings of exclusion and a lack of belonging. Wilkinson & Lloyd-Zantiotis (2017) criticise Bourdieu's theory, due to the fact it fails to account for the translation of capital across contexts. An example of this would be the knowledge which forced migrants bring with them from their country of origin to the destination country.

In the UK context, the forced migrant higher education journey is, according to Morrice (2009 & 2013), Stevenson & Willott (2008 & 2007) and Burke (2010), characterised by a shortfall in embodied cultural capital. Morrice (2013) describes the 'refugee habitus' as essentially being in deficit, unlikely to equip prospective students with the capability to navigate university. This is predicated upon their distance, as opposed to their proximity along the higher education student spectrum in comparison to the: '... normalised ideal student-subject, who not only takes on but also embodies middle-class, Eurocentric and white racialised ways of being' (Burke, 2010:181). Reay et al (2001) describe the complicated process of 'deciphering the British higher education field' and the challenges forced migrants must overcome to 'decode an unfamiliar field' (pp. 870-871).

To be valid, the capital held by forced migrants must be recognised within the higher education field. Lingard et al (2005) determine that habitus plays a central role in determining the behaviour required to maximise the acquisition of further capital, to increase social mobility and progression through the different 'fields' (sectors) within civil society. The recognition required could pertain to qualifications needed to access a degree programme or approval for qualifications to be utilised in a professional field such as Dentistry or Engineering. The state, according to Bourdieu (2004), plays a pivotal role in assigning value to and legitimising the different forms of capital and habitus held by individuals. The next section investigates the gulf between the capital held by forced migrants and the recognition of this capital within the destination country: this gulf is the source of multiple challenges encountered by forced migrants in the pursuit of opportunities in higher education.

### **3.9 Immobility and the Mis-Recognition of Capital**

The foundations of this conceptual framework are built upon the increasing concern regarding technologies of migration governance imposing increased controls upon the mobility of forced migrants. Creswell (2006) and Gill (2009) assert that the mobility afforded to individuals is active in structuring the social world, evident in the use of technologies of compliance and domination to manage mobility. Mountz's research (2011a; 2011b) focuses on migration limbo: forced migrants effectively trapped in between the territory they were displaced from and the territory they attempted to migrate to. This experience manifests itself in being caught in immigration status limbo, a constant condition of stasis characterised by the 'certainty of uncertainty' (Creswell, 2006).

Forced migrants who wish to access higher education endure a dual deficit: the first relates to the perceived inadequacy of their existing habitus and capital and the second lies in a deficit of opportunities to accrue the necessary capital to meet the shortfall in their existing capital. Gill (2009) constructs mobility as an enduring process, which serves to characterise the reality of everyday life. This concept can be utilised to conceptualise immobility as a process which disproportionately impacts upon and characterises the everyday lives of forced migrants. In the context of higher education, this immobility

places forced migrants at a distinct disadvantage compared with the wider population, including within groups categorised as underrepresented, due to their lack of presence in universities. The absent presence of 'forced migrants' in higher education policy has only very recently been conceptualised as a potential problem. In the past 18 months, the UK has acknowledged refugees as an underrepresented group, as has Sweden through their inclusion of foreign academics (which includes forced migrant academics) in the country's newly developing widening access initiatives.

Limbo and belonging are both fluid constructs, conceptualised in multiple configurations (Morrice, 2016), a set of emotions (Yuval-Davis et al, 2005), a process (Ralph & Staeheli, 2011; Yuval-Davis, 2007), identity in both public and private places (Atonsich, 2010), ways of being, as well as ways of acting and participating in civil society (Isin, 2007; 2008; McNevin, 2006). Devine (2009) highlights the key role played by the state in respect to the impact of immigration and welfare legislation on the rights of forced migrant children and implications on their capacity to experience a sense of belonging and acceptance within the sphere of education. Devine's (2009) research acknowledges the certainty provided by education in the context of the pervasive uncertainty, which characterised the lives of the children in the study. There is the potential for the mobility that compulsory education affords to forced migrant children to be extended to generate an understanding of the impact of higher education, which can provide a similar degree of certainty.

Many, but not all, forced migrants leave their country of origin with a considerable cache of capital, in terms of their position held in society (social capital), education (institutional and objective cultural capital) and wealth (economic capital) (Stevenson & Willott 2007 & 2008; Erel, 2010; Wilkinson & Lloyd-Zantiotis, 2017). The majority of this capital is rendered redundant at the point of displacement from their country of origin and once they have traversed the border of the destination country, wherein they enter the asylum determination process (Stevenson & Willott, 2007; Burke, 2010; Morrice, 2009; Morrice, 2013). Recognition of the capital held by individuals, within all areas of civil society is derived from knowledge produced by and the power of the state:

'It is the state, acting in the manner of a bank of symbolic capital, that guarantees all acts of authority – acts at once arbitrary and misrecognized as such' (Bourdieu et al, 2004:12)

Forced migrant discourse in the destination country creates a context wherein the process of displacement may serve to significantly reduce the value of prior education and professional employment. Issues faced by forced migrants in respect to accessing higher education are perpetuated in further education, as evidenced by Doyle & O'Toole (2013) in a report published by the Refugee Council, Walker (2011) and Lyall & Bowerman (2013). In addition to highlighting issues of access, Doyle & O'Toole (2013) also reported that the majority of research participants were engaged in further education, with a view to access higher education, motivated by the desire to increase their social and economic prospects (2013). Harris et al (2015) argue that the de-skilling of forced migrants and their perceived lack of capital, are challenges which this group are expected to personally overcome, as opposed to this being the responsibility of the state, HE sector or universities. The process of translating forced migrants' existing qualifications and experience into acceptable forms is fraught with challenges. The basis of these challenges is rooted in the fact that these forms of capital must be acknowledged by higher education agents with the power of recognition – be they admissions staff or programme leaders (Bullough, 2014).

There exists widespread (mis)recognition of the existing capital of forced migrants in respect to prior qualifications and experience both internationally and specific to this study across Europe (European Students Union, 2017). UK higher education institutions host significantly larger numbers of international students than Sweden, as this is an area of student recruitment in which they have heavily invested. The context of xenophilia created for international students who are primarily in the UK to study, is in sharp contrast to the context of xenophobia experienced by international students whose primary reason for being in the UK is to seek sanctuary after having been forcibly displaced from their country of origin.

In Sweden, large numbers of highly qualified forced migrants have sought asylum, with Andersson & Fejes (2010), Andersson & Gou (2009) & Gou (2010) reporting a demonstrable lack of recognition of the qualifications secured by forced migrants

outside Sweden. The challenges this poses are twofold: firstly, the utilisation of this capital in the pursuit of professional employment; and secondly securing access to commence or continue previously incomplete or interrupted studies. This reinforces Bourdieu's view that capital is worthless if not recognised by the state or society in which the individual endeavours to utilise it (2004). The lack of recognition of educational qualifications and experience is one example of the 'delicate line between recognition versus rejection' that forced migrants are obliged to navigate in all aspects of social life in the destination country (Devine, 2009:526).

The perceived deficit in capital experienced by forced migrants often extends to a lack not just of cultural but also economic capital. State funding for higher education has been reduced in both the UK and Sweden: this has resulted in higher education institutions being forced to increase their reliance on income generated through tuition fees. This has placed growing pressure on individual students, as consumers, to take personal responsibility for financing their university ambitions (Dearden et al, 2008; Burke, 2010). The need for students to meet the costs incurred through higher education is immensely challenging for forced migrants with unsettled immigration status, who not only lack economic capital, in terms of what they 'bring with them', but also their access to economic capital in the destination country (Stevenson & Willott, 2007 & 2008; Lyall & Bowerman, 2013).

Ferede (2010) presents segmented assimilation theory, which posits that 'immigrant groups with high human capital' (such as degree qualifications) are well received by the destination country and are increasingly likely to follow a path of 'upward mobility' (pp. 81). Ferede's (2010) assertion ignores the heterogeneous composition of the forced migrant population, in terms of the greater or lesser negative value placed on qualifications, according to the country in which they were secured. Erel (2010) rejects the frequently used concept of a 'rucksack', as a metaphor for habitus, as it implies the mobile nature of capital, devoid of the context in which it was acquired and in which attempts are subsequently made to utilise it (pp.4). The production and value of capital is 'place specific' (Balaz & Williams, 2004; Gladwell et al, 2016).



### 3.10 The Reclamation of Agency in Adversity

Existing research provides evidence that forced migrants are successful in securing institutional capital, as the result of their engagement with higher education. This then stimulates the potential for the accumulation of further forms of capital such as social networks and greater employability (Morrice, 2009 & 2013; Burke, 2010). HE also provides opportunities for the acquisition of objective cultural capital, for example, the development of behavioural workplace norms (Alberts & Atherton, 2017; Lyall & Bowerman, 2013; Gladwell et al, 2016; Wilkinson & Lloyd-Zantiotis, 2017). The small body of research in this area reflects the barriers faced by forced migrants as well as their successes in overcoming these challenges. However, the vast majority of the existing research focuses exclusively on forced migrants with settled as opposed to unsettled immigration status.

Despite the potential for higher education to stimulate feelings of belonging or facilitate mobility for these students, multiple studies of forced migration convey that confirmation of belonging to the state, by the state, was and is privileged over the emotional and other multi-faceted interpretations and constructions of belonging (Yuval-Davis et al, 2005; Jackson, 2008; Morrice, 2016). In this context belonging to and recognition by the state is achieved through settled immigration status, leading to identification as a citizen of the destination country. If the resolution of immigration status by the state is privileged over other constructions of belonging, then forced migrants must overcome the challenges in not belonging or never having experienced a sense of belonging within higher education. The issue then is why and how do forced migrants exercise agency to pursue opportunities in the context of such overwhelming adversity.

The exercise of reflexivity by higher education agents to raise consciousness of everyday activities, their impact and the potential to undertake restructuring through incremental changes to activities, as discussed earlier in this chapter, can also be applied to forced migrants in respect of the ways in which they exercise agency. Devine (2009) explored the tactics employed by forced migrant school children adapting to a new educational context and reported that the children actively explored 'who am I' and 'who do I want to be' in order to determine their own agency. This was alongside the question 'how am

I defined and understood', in relation to the education structures in which they wished to exercise agency (2009:523). Once again Devine's theory can be extended to the higher education context.

Bourdieu presented the notion that individuals actively exclude themselves from places in which they are not actively included (2004). This is evidenced within Reay et al's (2001) study in the exercise of choice in higher education, wherein students' university choices were predominantly determined and limited by their social class. Erel (2010) states that the exercise of agency is essential in the process of forced migrants transforming and adapting existing cultural capital to attempt to belong within civil society. However, as Burke (2010) observes, the exercise of agency by forced migrants occurs in a context of xenophobia, which 'names and positions him/her' in pejorative terms and on the lowest rung of the social hierarchy (2010:170).

Said (2000) reflects on the experiences of individuals he describes as 'exiles'. His concepts are applicable in this research to a discussion around forced migrants' ability to exercise their agency to navigate the higher education border.

'The exile knows that in a secular and contingent world, homes are always provisional. Borders and barriers, enclose us within the safety of familiar territory, can also become prisons, and are often defended beyond reason or necessity. Exiles cross borders, break barriers of thought and experience' (Said, 2000:147)

From Said's perspective, forced migrants living in exile are positioned as individuals who have already broken through borders, barriers and the constraints imposed by the structures of the society from which they were displaced. Therefore, the challenge in repeating this process in an unfamiliar context, where they are not so intimately connected to societal structures, could be perceived to place them at an advantage. Reay et al's (2001) study also reported that students from a migrant background were more likely to overcome the disadvantages imposed by their ethnicity, which intersected with other structural disadvantages such as gender to excel in education; viewed by Harris & Marlowe as a strategy also adopted by forced migrants to 'redress their marginalisation' (2011:188).

Jackson (2008) described how migrants sustained themselves in exile in the UK, whilst awaiting an award of settled immigration status, which could also be conceived of as the capacity for what Joseph et al (1993) describe as 'adaptive adversity' (pp:278). Scheper-Hughes (2008) advocate that resilience and the potential for individuals to exercise agency should look beyond the narrow Western constructions and consider individuals' capacity for resilience as somethings that is 'historically situated, and culturally elaborated' (pp.52). The experiences responsible for shaping forced migrant habitus would appear to afford some individuals greater freedom, as their histories have resulted in their essentially having nothing to lose by attempting to counter and overcome the limitations imposed by limbo and structural inequalities as detailed earlier.

### 3.11 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to interconnect the different scales within society and through their collective exploration develop a holistic perspective on the relationship between higher education and forced migration. Neither Foucault, Giddens nor Bourdieu focus explicitly on forced migration, or on the relationship between forced migration and higher education. However, the application of their theories by other contributors in the field of forced migration and / or HE studies, demonstrates that all three should play a significant role in contemporary debates centring on these issues. The different societal scales are key to understanding how the global and the local are connected. The impact of global migration needs to be explored at the local level – neoliberal governmentality is vital to understand how global governance relates to local governance. Structure and agency subsequently support an exploration of how agents or non-state actors interact with structures to reproduce or restructure them. Finally, the role of capital and habitus is central to understanding the resilience and acts of resistance undertaken by both forced migrants and higher education agents in the context of everyday practices. As Bourdieu (2004) writes:

'The most neglected zones of history have been border zones, as for instance the borders between specialities' (pp: 4)

The higher education border, as experienced by forced migrants, is an important site at which to explore state practices, as higher education and forced migration are two

research fields which rarely intersect. They are important because forced migrant status serves to exclude and render individuals immobile on the periphery of society, whereas higher education plays a key function in mobilising individuals, equipping and propelling them towards the centre of society. In this context, it becomes clear why a multitude of technologies of governance are utilised to exclude forced migrants from university, therefore demonstrating the urgency for further research in this area.

This thesis responds to Burridge's (2014) call for more research, focusing on the extrapolation of the immigration border located at the territorial point of entry to country to the everyday borders existing within society. This is reinforced by Gupta & Ferguson (2002:984) who call for more research on and Gill et al (2014) who evidence the power transmitted through seemingly 'mundane' state practices exercised in relation to forced migrants. New areas of research according to Gill (2010) need to:

'. . . attend more closely to the sites at which state practices are executed, the powers that precipitate these practices and the people that both mobilize and experience these powers' (pp.640).

This thesis meets the criteria established by Gill and addresses the deficit in this area if 'sites' are interpreted as higher education institutions; 'state practices' as legislation and policy pertaining to forced migrants and their access to university; 'powers that precipitate' as the technologies used to govern higher education and the institutions within the sector; 'the people that mobilize' as agents operating within higher education institutions and forced migrants as both mobilizers and those that 'experience' this power.

Foucault used the term 'realist governmentality' to describe and encourage empirical research which facilitated the tangible application of Foucauldian governmentality, which this study aims to do (McKee, 2009). The design of this research centres around a comparative approach, which focuses on the policy and operational practice of universities in the UK and Sweden. The impacts of global forces (migration) are explored at the different scales at which they occur (national, institutional and individual higher education agents and forced migrants), in conjunction with developing an understanding as to how these forces can be resisted at the different scales. Herbert (2010) believes that these relationships and the bi-directional flow of power between

the 'global' and the 'local' are most effectively investigated through the process of comparison. Chapter 4 will demonstrate how the concepts at the centre of Chapter 3 have been translated into the philosophical approach and operational methods required to collect data with which to develop findings that answer key questions in relation to these issues.



## Chapter 4

### Research Design & Methodology

#### 4.1 Introduction

A detailed exploration of the legislative and policy frameworks within which the UK and Sweden operate, presented in Chapter 2, served to both situate and provide a contextual basis for this research. The conceptual framework presented in Chapter 3 investigated macro theories pertaining to the governance of forced migration and how this is reflected within the higher education sector before explicitly focusing on the micro institutional (HEI) level and the individual (forced migrant) level. These chapters laid the foundations for the development of an appropriate research design and methodology to collect data and generate findings relevant to this investigation (Flyvberg, 2006; Mason, 2006; Hay, 2016). The overarching aim of this research and accompanying questions were introduced in Chapter 1.

Chapter 4 adopts a chronological approach to explore the rationale for the design and delivery of this study. This research is located within a situated epistemological framework utilising case study design. This design was operationalised using mixed research methods: this included a survey, conducting semi structured interviews and recording ethnographic observations. The research process is explained and reflected upon in respect to how challenges were negotiated and overcome during the course of 'being' in the field. The chapter concludes with details as to how, once the data had been collected, it was analysed to develop the material presented in chapters 5 – 8, which report detailed findings in the context of key emergent themes.

#### 4.2 Research Design

'So tell me Rebecca exactly what is the hypothesis you're testing? Surely you must be testing a hypothesis in your research?'

Executive Board member, University D, HEISE\_D\_EB54

This research design is grounded in a situated epistemological approach, which is inductive due to it being both concerned with, and located in, the multiple contexts

integral to understanding the issues at the centre of this research (Harding, 1986; Hall & Hall; 1996; Mason, 2002), as opposed to establishing and testing a hypothesis (Denscombe, 2010). Situated methodologies are afforded feminine characteristics, perceived to be the subjective 'other' to inherently masculine, objective and scientific research methodologies (Harding, 1986; McDowell, 2010). The design and methods utilised in this research are underpinned by an interpretative, as opposed to a positivist, approach (Mason, 2006; Denscombe, 2010). Research methodologies are inherently problematic: mixed methods help overcome these issues by approaching the research problem from multiple perspectives (Bloor, 1978; Darling, 2014), and in doing so record the inherent messiness of everyday life (Hyndman, 2001; Maillet et al, 2016; Benzon, 2017).

The impetus to undertake this study was initiated by my own personal history of working in this field as discussed in the Preface and in section 4.12. Both the 'knowledge' I sought to access and produce into written research, and I the 'researcher', were situated in the wider societal context: the impact of managed migration policy and practice on the higher education sector in Sweden and the UK. This wider contextual understanding was imperative to investigate the institutional practice of universities', in order to understand the environment and conditions within which resistance to managed migration policies could develop into tangible initiatives for forced migrants. In respect to the forced migrant participants it was important to explore the multiple different contexts within which they had fled, transited, and sought asylum (Hyndman, 2001), as well understanding the lives they had lived in these different contexts through the lens of experiences and aspirations in education.

Governance regimes determine discourse which develop social structures: structures produce socially constructed categories that are then replicated throughout society (Foucault, 1991 & 2001; Giddens, 1984). The socially constructed 'forced migrant' is afforded a lowly position in global and local social hierarchies (Berry, 2012; Boswell, 2013; Hyndman, 2001). These constructions are reinforced by the forced migrant discourse they produce and subsequently reproduce (Maillet et al, 2016; Waitt, 2016). Forced migrant discourse is discussed further in Chapter 3. This discourse is relevant to the design and delivery of this project, as it is important to acknowledge the implications



of the hierarchical position of forced migrants on this research (Hyndman, 2001; Chacko, 2004). The production of knowledge is embedded within the multiple inequalities evident in the hierarchical structures in society, such as class, gender and ethnicity evident across Western Europe – wherein forced migrants represent one of the most undesirable groups, as presented in Chapters 2 and 3. I was committed throughout this research process to minimising the impact of the inequalities inherent in forced migrants' experiences, in the process of collecting, interpreting and producing this research.

The decision to utilise mixed methods was influenced by the research questions as well as the limitations resulting from a lack of existing research and available data (Buckingham, & Saunders, 2004; Maillet et al, 2016). Whilst it was imperative to maintain a narrow focus in respect to the issues under investigation, it was necessary to generate data from a broad range of sources, to explore these issues in depth and validate the knowledge produced in the pursuit of answers to this particular set of research questions (Mason, 2006; Elwood, 2010).

Chapter 3 explored the different societal levels with which this research is concerned and provided the rationale for a mixed methods approach to both the design and implementation of this research project:

‘Using mixed methods and multi-dimensional approaches, we can frame questions whose aim is precisely to focus on how different dimensions and scales of social existence intersect or relate’ (Mason, 2006:15)

The use of case studies in research design favours the use of mixed research methods in order to explore and attempt to find solutions to tangible problems. This approach was particularly appropriate for this research as there is limited existing data and an in depth exploratory study of different sources and perspectives was required: this facilitated the uncovering of complex activities and interactions in the context in which they took place (Simon, 2009:21).

### 4.3 Case Study

Case study research is an effective operational method for a situated epistemological approach (Arksey & Knight, 1999; Flyvberg, 2006; Herbert, 2010). In this study a higher education institution represents a single unit of study, therefore constituting a 'case' (Baxter, 2016). Case study research employing qualitatively driven methods facilitates comparisons between non-standardised cases: specific to this research, comparisons were made between HEIs, operating in different countries and legislative contexts, which was rendered possible due to this design being able to accommodate difference and not just similarities between cases (Mason, 2006; Herbert, 2010).

A mixed methods approach utilising case study design was effective in supporting the triangulation of data collected from a variety of perspectives and sources: however this did not guarantee the validity of the findings generated (Bloor, 1978). A single 'case' is not considered sufficient to produce findings which can be generalised: Giddens (1984) argues that: 'they [case studies] can easily become so if carried out in some numbers, so that judgments of their typicality can justifiably be made' (pp.328): this perspective is supported by Baxter (2016) who argues that generalisations can potentially be made from two or more cases. Case studies help illuminate what happens not only within, but beyond, the case/s in question.

The process of triangulation ensures a more rigorous approach to research that also supports the development of multiple positions across different scales (Maillet et al, 2016). Stratford & Bradshaw (2016) identify different methods of triangulation utilised to ensure rigour: these include multiple sources of information (accessed by a diverse range of forced migrant and higher education research participants), methods (survey, semi-structured interviews and ethnographic observations) and theories (governmentality, structuration and capital and habitus – covered in depth in Chapter 3). In this study the scales range from governance regimes to the viewpoints of individuals within both case study countries. Both the 'tensions' and 'commonalities' can be uncovered in relation to and in order to find answers to all the research questions (Crang, 2007:12): equal attention is given to the perspectives of university decision makers, operational staff and the forced migrants upon whom the impact of decisions and their implementation is experienced (Smith, 2006).

#### 4.4 Comparative Research

Comparative analysis is central to the design of this research, primarily in respect to the two country research sites, but also in relation to making comparisons between higher education institutions: within and across Sweden and the UK. Qualitatively-driven comparative research facilitates: ‘opportunities to generate and modify concepts and theory so that they explain commonalities across cases despite being embedded in different contexts’ (Baxter, 2016:141). Qualitative methods are particularly effective in comparative research, as sensitivity to context supports the meaningful exploration of phenomena, as opposed to a quantitative approach resulting in superficial and crude comparisons which would be ineffective in answering these specific research questions (Mason, 2002:175).

Marginson & Rhoades (2002) argue for more country-based comparative research into higher education, and Castles (2003) supports this view, as he perceives there to be a deficit of cross country comparative research in migration studies. In direct contrast Federe (2010) argues that cross national comparisons are impossible owing to systemic differences between countries:

‘Although these countries are also Western English-speaking refugee resettlement countries, they have widely different immigration policy, historical context, and post-secondary education systems’ (Federe, 2010:82)

Mason (2006) disputes Federe’s stance and advises that:

‘. . . strategic and theoretically driven comparisons with similar processes in other contexts or similar contexts where different processes occur . . . generate explanations’ (pp.16).

The same phenomena in research may present itself similarly or very differently across different sites (Baxter, 2016): comparative research allows the effective recording and mapping of these similarities and differences (Herbert, 2010). In Chapter 2 it was noted that whilst none of the studies in the existing body of research undertook comparisons between countries, these research projects took place in four countries across three different continents, and far greater similarities were identified within the findings, as opposed to differences.

#### 4.5 Case Study: Countries

An overview of the different state approaches to managing migration within the Scandinavian region led to the conclusion that Sweden operated the most liberal regime (Valenta & Bunar, 2010). The rationale behind comparing the UK with Sweden, rested upon the identification of three key differences between the two countries:

- **Welfare state** – whilst the UK attempts to limit and place new restrictions on access to and ongoing support from the welfare state, Sweden continues to operate a strong welfare state.
- **Managed migration** - the UK's approach to managed migration is characterised by the imposition of restrictions upon the lives of specific categories of forced migrants and employs punitive regulatory measures. Since the 1970's, Sweden in contrast to the UK has embraced multiculturalism and endeavoured historically to create parity between Swedish and foreign born members of the population. However since the 1990's there is perceived to have been a backlash against multiculturalism that has spread throughout Europe (Castles, 2014).
- **Higher education** – new legislation has resulted in significant changes to higher education in the UK, which has resulted in increased financial barriers as a direct consequence of the continual increase in university tuition fees accompanied by reduced state support. In contrast access to university in Sweden remains free for anyone living within the EU and tuition fees for international students were only introduced in 2008.

Key similarities rendered Sweden and the UK to be worthy of comparison: their classification as liberal democracies, located in Western Europe, subject to the same international and European legislation and policy, as well as their being countries which forced migrants sought to reach and seek asylum within (Bloor, 1978; Castles, 2014). The comparative aspect of the research process was intended to help set the contextual scene in each country (Laver et al, 2003; Mulvey, 2010), in order to facilitate the identification and comprehension of issues not just internal to specific institutions, but external and evident within the specific country context. The interwoven findings from both countries and the case study universities have the potential to develop a broader

perspective, which can be extrapolated to the experiences of forced migrants and higher education regimes in other countries in Europe.

#### 4.6 Survey

Surveys are traditionally categorised as a quantitative research method and in spite of the fact that this research was qualitatively driven, in this context the inclusion of a survey supported a mixed methods approach to this research (Mason, 2006; McDowell, 2010). The aim of the survey was not to discern attitudes or a nuanced understanding of the research problem, but an endeavour in the absence of a reliable population frame for forced migrants in higher education, to generate baseline information (Balaz & Williams, 2004; Denscombe, 2010).

The survey was designed to collect data to ascertain the engagement of universities in initiatives to attract, and the impact of subsequent support for, forced migrants in higher education across the UK and Sweden (Denscombe, 2010; Appendix 1.1 & 1.2). The survey sought to collect demographic information about individual higher education institutions, numbers of forced migrant students, formal initiatives and informal activities to support this group (Arksey & Knight, 1999). Following a successful pilot in both countries the survey was disseminated through established networks in the UK (AMOSSHE, FACE & Article 26) and Sweden (INCLUDE).

In the UK, 26 universities responded to the survey and on average the respondents completed 73% of the survey questions. Only 4 Swedish universities responded to the survey. The aim was to undertake analysis to produce descriptive statistics, but the low response rate rendered this impossible (Arksey & Knight, 1999; Buckingham & Saunders, 2004). The survey was unsuccessful at generating data across both countries, but did provide a critical platform upon which to access information, recruit case study HEIs and deepen my understanding of both the UK and Swedish context.

The survey reinforced the gaps in existing data and the respective countries approaches to the collection (or lack) of data relating to forced migrants as covered in Chapter 2. This outcome resonated with Maillet et al's (2016) experience of undertaking research

in challenging migration research settings. Akin to this group of researchers, I was determined not to be deterred, as Hyndman (2001) concurs that challenges encountered in the field do not have to dictate the end of the research process, but that some degree of reconfiguration might be required. The survey served to reinforce and resonate strongly with the analysis of the context and existing literature in Chapters 2 and 3. The challenges exposed in the process of undertaking this research reinforced the invisibility and exclusion of forced migrants from higher education.

#### 4.7 Case Study: Higher Education Institutions

The process of piloting and disseminating, as well as the responses generated by the survey, resulted in this method playing an essential role in the recruitment of HEIs in both the UK and Sweden. UK HEIs indicated their interest, via the survey, in participating as a case study in the research. In Sweden, I approached each of the three HEIs and requested that they participate after having developed relationships with key members of staff within these institutions through the promotion of the survey. My role as the Director of the Article 26 project, is unique in the UK, as there is no other external agency directly involved in the implementation and delivery of scholarships for forced migrants in higher education. The three UK HEI case studies had through their delivery of a scholarship scheme, existing affiliations with the Article 26 project. I engaged in detailed negotiations with HEIs unaffiliated with the project, however I was unsuccessful in recruiting them. From a pragmatic perspective, regardless of whether a university had an existing connection with the Article 26 project, it was impossible to divorce my position from the research context and the potential expectations of universities, that this research was a vehicle through which to lobby them to develop initiatives for this student group. My positionality in relation to this research is reflected on in greater depth in section 4.12.

In the UK, University A was located in the West of England and classed as a 'post 1992' institution. University B was part of the elite Russell Group of universities based in the North of England. The third UK case study University C was a 'pre 1992' non-aligned university located in the Midlands. In Sweden, University D had only recently received university status (summer 2016) and was located in the South of Sweden. University E

was in the process of being awarded full university status and was based in the West of Sweden. The final case study University F was one of the oldest in Sweden and located in the far North of the country. The higher education institutions were strategically selected in order to try and reflect the diversity of universities in the sector. I used my existing knowledge and position to identify HEIs that I envisaged could contribute to this research (Mason, 2002; Flyvberg, 2006; Crang, 2007; Denscombe, 2010). The six areas in which the universities were located all hosted significant populations of forced migrants, either due to their arrival into or dispersal within the UK or Sweden. In addition to their different geographical locations, the case studies represented different types of universities within the HE sector. All ran initiatives which either directly or indirectly supported forced migrants to access higher education (Arksey & Knight, 1999; Denscombe, 2010). The three UK case studies all ran an Article 26 scholarship programme. In Sweden every university delivered a Korta Vagen style Swedish language programme – introduced in section 2.7.

#### 4.8 Interviews

‘Reality’ is no longer assumed to be ‘out there’, waiting to be discovered, named and described by social researchers but is itself constituted in and by discourse, and embodied interactions, as are the representations we choose to construct from field-work and interviewing’ (McDowell, 2010:160)

Interview was considered to be the most effective method to produce findings which answer the research questions specific to this study. The utilisation of interview as a research method facilitates a ‘thorough examination of experiences, feelings and opinions that closed questions could never hope to capture’ (Kitchin & Tate, 2000:213). A post-structuralist approach presents the view that no research method can ensure objectivity, as the application of any method is influenced by the subjective interpretation of the researcher. The findings generated through undertaking research interviews were not intended to be representative of the issues under investigation but to explore the individual experiences of research participants as well as identify commonality and difference between the stories shared.

A situated methodological approach translates into an operational methodology in an interview situation, through asking open questions and providing information about the nature of the researchers own position in relation to it (Oakley, 1981; Finch, 1984; Lieber & Shah, 2001). Thrift (2003) likens an interview situation to colonial rule – the powerful questioner dominating the oppressed interviewee. An interview is a contested social encounter characterised by power dynamics, however it is not always the interviewer who is perceived to be powerful (McDowell, 2010). Dowling (2016) described three different scenarios in which power relations intersect during research interviews: *asymmetrical* where the interviewer is perceived to have much greater power, *reciprocal* where power is relatively equal and *potentially exploitative* where the research participant is perceived to have considerably less power (pp.36). I encountered all three scenarios during research interviews undertaken in the course of this study. I endeavoured to redress power imbalances by allowing the participants to determine the research process to the greatest extent possible – see section 4.11.

I designed a semi-structured, as opposed to unstructured, interview schedule due to my recognition of structure as an inherent feature of research interviews, arranged for the purpose of and to discuss the subject of the research (Scourfield, 2001). A semi-structured schedule allows the participant greater control over what they say and facilitates opportunities to raise issues not on the schedule (Arksey & Knight, 1999; McDowell, 2010). The interview schedules were designed to encourage research participants to share a biographical narrative account of their experiences – in the context of their professional life or personal life through the lens of higher education. This style of interviewing also facilitated the in-depth exploration of themes and topics, as questions could be followed up by appropriate prompts to generate further explanations.

A chronological approach also enabled me to steer (if needed) participants through events in order to ensure comparability with other transcripts. The establishment of chronological links to sequences of events supported this process and often created a situation where the participant led the conversation, one from which they could opt to omit or include information (Harding, 2006; Gateley, 2015). The narratives produced were representative of the ‘particular subjectivities’ (Smith & Jenkins, 2017:964) and



'selective narratives' (Said, 2000) of the participants: however, the findings were not replicable, but produced in the 'here and now, never to be repeated' (Darling, 2014:211).

I conducted semi structured interviews with three key groups of research participants:

1. Forced migrants – the forced migrant participants were selected on the basis that they had sought asylum in the UK or Sweden and were engaged in or actively pursuing opportunities at one of the six case study institutions. They needed to be able to communicate confidently in English and have the emotional resilience required to discuss the issues under investigation.
2. Higher education agents – participants ranged from members of the executive board, to academics, individuals involved in the delivery of student services and widening participation initiatives, who were interviewed across the six HEI case study institutions.
3. Key informants – representatives from organisations and individual experts in respect to forced migration and /or HE working within Sweden and the UK.

Appendix 4 – 4.3 indicate the diversity of research participants contributing to this study.

The interview schedule for research participants adhered to the same agenda and covered the same themes: however the presentation varied according to the specific group of research participants (Kvale, 1996; Arksey & Knight, 1999; Appendix 3. – 3.3). Every interview commenced with a question to which the participant could easily respond – What does education mean to you (forced migrant participants)? What are your roles and main responsibilities in your current position (higher education agents & key informants)? The themes which framed the schedules included: the personal experiences and expertise of all participants in relation to the issues, whether as a forced migrant trying to access higher education or an individual working for a university utilising (or not) their expertise to create opportunities; the existence, creation and sustaining of opportunities in higher education for forced migrants; barriers and solutions to forced migrants accessing and succeeding in higher education; impact and effect of opportunities on forced migrants, HEIs, the wider sector, and civil society. Thematic similarity between the interview schedules was important in order to compare and contrast responses in relation to specific issues, yet the schedules were broad

enough to allow for spontaneity and to accommodate sometimes significant differences between individuals, institutions and countries (Arksey & Knight, 1999; Mason, 2002).

#### 4.9 Ethnographic Observations

The time spent within universities during the course of field work also involved interactions and observations taking place outside formal research settings (Dowling, 2016). The observation of social interactions occurring within the field facilitated the development of a much more holistic understanding of the issues under investigation and in particular how an exclusionary context for forced migrants is enacted in everyday practices:

‘Ethnographic observations of, and interactions with, others highlighted how bodies interact, meld, and constituted social spaces, and thereby create inclusions and exclusions’ (Watson & Till, 2010).

Informal opportunities for data collection were necessary in order to broaden my exposure to and understanding of Swedish culture. My lack of knowledge in the Swedish context was heightened by my comparative knowledge, personal capital and habitus: I am indigenous to the UK where I am also regarded as an expert in this field. I assumed there to be significant similarities between the UK and Sweden, such as their geographical proximity, respective positions in Western Europe as wealthy liberal democratic states and the fact that the vast majority of Swedish citizens speak English. These similarities initially disguised substantial cultural differences that I would only comprehend by embedding myself in the country context through my working and living arrangements during multiple trips to the country.

Recording notes in a field work diary facilitated the recording of iterative detail in relation to critical reflections on the individual interviews, as well as an overview of the research process: this was particularly valuable in relation to the challenges encountered in undertaking the survey and negotiating access to higher education institutions and the lives of individual forced migrants (Cook, 2005; Dowling, 2016). Field notes also played an essential role and made an important contribution to the data analysis process.

Informal interactions in the work place (HEIs) and the home (I lived with Swedish students or higher education agents) deepened my understanding in ways which would not have been possible if I relied solely on data collected during research interviews (Hyndman, 2001; Chacko, 2004; Cook, 2005). Whilst at University E, a member of staff delivering the institution's version of Korta Vagen took it upon himself to induct me into Swedish work culture. This included ensuring I met with staff working in the department a minimum of three times per day, as I took fika with them. Fika is a Swedish word whose literal translation is 'coffee break', but I soon began to understand it as a cultural practice. After this instruction and guidance at University E, I ensured that I regularly participated in fika during field work and during visits to other Swedish universities. I once started a conversation in the fika room at University F that began at 8.00am and continued until lunch time, as different staff members would enter and leave the conversation as they made, drank and finished their coffee. This discussion was significantly more informative in respect to attitudes towards forced migrants in Sweden than was revealed in any of the interviews.

In Sweden, owing to my regular participation in fika, I would meet many of the university participants multiple times and it was rare for me to only meet them once when they were interviewed. I was often approached and given valuable and important perspectives, which were not raised during the participant's interview. These incidences didn't constitute casual conversation; I was nearly always directly approached. Sometimes the contributors had not always participated in an interview, but had learned about my research through colleagues or my speaking at meetings. The majority of these conversations involved criticism of the Swedish system and colleagues in respect to their treatment of forced migrants, views which they did not feel comfortable voicing 'on the research record' or in conversation during fika.

My experiences in relation to the informal contributions to the research in Sweden were not replicated in the UK. There were no opportunities during which I spent additional time with research participants, in my role as a researcher, although as a practitioner these opportunities were plentiful. I reflect in greater depth on the complex and shifting dual roles I played as both a researcher and practitioner, and how my doctoral research impacted on the policy and practice of the Article 26 project in, Chapter 9.

#### 4.10 Data Analysis

It was important to recognise prior to analysis that the data collected and, findings generated during the research process, would only ever form a partial representation of the research context as well as interactions that occurred in the field (Hyndman 2001; Chacko, 2004). Neither did this knowledge constitute authorised accounts but that which was constructed through my own subjective interpretations (Hyndman, 2001). This stance of partiality acknowledges that research participants controlled their own accounts and no participant presented a complete picture of their life and experiences (Harding, 2006).

A systematic approach is one not always closely associated with the analysis of qualitative data (Bloor, 1978; Jacobsen & Landau, 2003). The (fairly) exclusive focus on one university case study at a time, meant that whilst conducting field work it was much easier to recognise the point at which saturation was reached in terms of the data collected (Bajwa et al, 2017). The university case studies supplied 'empirical guide posts' (Barley & Tolbert, 1997:303), a point around which contradictions, inconsistencies and similarities in the findings could be explored from multiple perspectives, collected using a range of research methods and through interactions with a diverse cohort of research participants.

In the course of conducting this research 93 of the 95 interviews were recorded using a Dictaphone. Two of the forced migrant participants based in Sweden opted to be interviewed via email. Data collected in the form of audio recordings and the resulting transcripts were saved in password protected files. Intelligent verbatim transcription was utilised, as the focus was on maintaining the context of every interview and developing a narrative understanding. The finer details often recorded for verbatim transcription were deemed non-essential to this project (Cope, 2016). Two thirds of the research participants spoke English as a second or even third language. Multiple different forms of expression and word order were used in the interviews, therefore it was necessary to reorder and add joining words in order to render quotes more intelligible (Kvale; 1996).

Each research participant was emailed a copy of their interview transcript and afforded 14 days to respond with amendments to the substantive content, ensure identifying information was omitted thus ensuring their anonymity, or alert me to the fact they needed more time to respond (Kvale, 1996; Arksey & Knight, 1999; Mason, 2002). A small number of participants revised their transcripts – either from the perspective of accuracy, for example, several key informants based in the UK or because they felt that they had been too harsh in respect to their comments regarding Home Office practice, for example, a forced migrant living in the UK. I did not extend participants' involvement or power in the research process to validate my interpretation of their interview transcript.

Due to the wide range and volume of participants, it was imperative that I was meticulous in identifying dominant themes arising from research interviews, recorded in my research diary prior to in depth analysis of the interview transcripts. The forced migrant participants' transcripts were the first to be analysed, as I felt it was important that the experiences of the most marginalised were prioritised: this also laid the foundations upon which to analyse transcripts produced secondly with the higher education participants, and finally with the key informants (Smith & Jenkins, 2017). The data was manually coded, as opposed to using software such as NVIVO: this strategy was adopted to avoid losing the context in which opinions or information were shared and because it was deemed important to retain a close connection to the transcripts (Basit, 2010; Spiteri, 2015).

Qualitative data analysis was undertaken in multiple and sometimes overlapping stages: the initial process involved identifying descriptive themes or 'emic' categories emerging from the data. The identification of emic categories laid the foundations for further analysis and the production of 'etic' categories. The concept of limbo was a dominant emic category within this research, which was subsequently divided into multiple etic categories, which reflected a more nuanced analysis of the different contexts characterised by experiences of limbo (Crang, 2005; Cope, 2016). The next stage involved linking categories and concepts to each other to support and identify the strongest themes: this is sometimes described as axial coding (Kitchin & Tate, 2000).

Bajwa et al (2017) claim that in the context of their research focused on higher education and forced migrants, axial coding facilitated multi-dimensional data analysis: this was reflected in the diversity of forced migrants' experiences, identification of challenges and barriers to access university, as well as the identification of potential solutions. The final stage of my data analysis involved presenting the categories and themes developed as the result of these processes visually through production of large scale mind maps. This produced a comprehensive overview of all the relationships between categories, concepts and themes generated via the findings (Basit, 2010; Seymour & Wolch, 2010; Baxter, 2016). It was impossible to avoid my own subjectivity impressing upon the presentation of the findings generated, as they were filtered through my own academic and personal perspective (McDowell, 2010; Hyndman, 2001; Chacko, 2004). Data analysis was a dynamic and constantly evolving process, but one which ultimately resulted in the structural development and content of chapters 5 - 8.

#### 4.11 Ethics

In order to conduct this research, I prioritised securing the approval of my institution (Darling, 2016). I achieved this through compliance with the ethical procedures of the University of Sheffield and the project received consent from the University Research Ethics Committee. A commitment to ethics was embedded in my approach. The research process commenced once I began to make connections in the field in my role as a researcher.

Research centring on the lives and experiences of forced migrants has been criticised by Jacobsen & Landau (2003) for a perceived lack of rigour and validity in methodological approach and ethical practice. Hyndman (2001) expressed concerns that interviewing forced migrants replicated 'neo-colonial power relations', which rendered the power differentials between someone such as myself, a white non-migrant, too onerous for the process to ever be considered ethical (2001:263). Similar concerns were shared by hooks (2002:17) regarding the potential for exploitation and a neo-colonial approach when an 'outsider' conducts research: however empirical studies undertaken by Bloch et al (2011) and Hintjens (2006) demonstrate that forced migrants even in the most vulnerable circumstances are keen to participate in research.

An alternative perspective presented by Maillet et al (2016) asserts that the exclusion of forced migrants from research results in only a partial understanding of issues pertaining directly to them. Research in this area which omits the forced migrant perspective could be perceived to contribute to the forced migrant discourse of exclusion and (in) visibility, discussed in Chapters 2 & 3. I would argue that the research findings presented in Chapters 5 - 8, constitute my subjective interpretation of the voices recorded in this research, as opposed to 'giving voice' to the research participants (Bloom, 2010). I agree with Bloom (2010) that forced migrants should be included in research as long as the aim is to positively influence policy and practice and the actual process avoids the objectification of the research participants. Smith (2006) also attests that researchers have a moral obligation to maximise the use and impact of the findings when they relate to marginalised individuals and groups. The policy and practice implications resulting from these research findings are presented in section 9.4.

The onus is on the researcher to minimise harm and distress to the inherently vulnerable forced migrant participants (Harding, 2006; Dowling, 2016): this vulnerability manifests itself in the perpetual precarity of the circumstances of this group, as opposed to a generalised comment on the personalities of forced migrants (Darling, 2014; Maillet et al, 2016). It was imperative to be sensitive to and prioritise the well-being of the forced migrant participants in the research process and in doing so avoid reproducing the vulnerabilities resulting from their displacement (Smith & Jenkins, 2017).

The ethical approach adopted in respect to the forced migrant participants was extended to the entire research cohort. The higher education agents and key informants all required anonymity in order to promote trust and the sharing of confidential information (Dowling, 2016). Confidentiality and maintaining the anonymity of all participants was a priority to promote trust and the methods employed were discussed and agreed directly before the start of every interview. This included methods used to record interviews and extending an invitation to all participants to verify their transcript, and select an appropriate pseudonym (this applied only to the forced migrant cohort, the higher education participants were identified by anonymised generic job titles) (Kvale, 1996; Arksey & Knight, 1999; Dowling, 2016).

Steps to ensure the anonymity of not just the research participants but the university case studies were carried out in negotiation with individual participants. I chose to omit certain information on the basis that it didn't assist in answering the research questions. Individual participants across the research cohort divulged highly sensitive information (pertaining to their experiences of forced migration, personal identity and experiences within higher education, as students or staff), which on some occasions I considered too personal to include and / or had the potential to jeopardise their anonymity or that of the higher education institution: therefore, I judiciously decided what to include and exclude (Hyndman, 2001:264).

I ensured that every participant signed a form, eliciting their consent to participate and expectations in respect to our mutual roles, as researcher and research participant (Appendix 2.1 & 2.2). The practice of acquiring informed consent is associated with formal research situations, often as a precursor to a research interview. I sought to continually remind all the participants of my status as a researcher prior to and during interviews, but also in the context of observations and interactions with individuals who contributed during less formal encounters (Darling, 2014; Benzon, 2017). In the context of my relationships with research participants I endeavoured to be clear on my position, partiality in relation to the research and accountability to everyone contributing to the project (Bhavnani, 1993; Dowling, 2016): the research relationships which shaped this study began long before the recording device was switched on and didn't cease when it was switched off.

#### 4.12 Positionality

'You have to be neutral and objective and in my experience you're very much involved in your research and you really fight for it . . . you have two kind of roles there, one is the research, one is the activist'

Senior Student Support Officer, University F, HEISE\_F\_SS73

I never claimed to be neutral or impartial in the context of this research: it would have been disingenuous to claim to be detached and to deny my own personal role, as detailed in the Preface (England, 1994; Smith, 2006). Chacko (2004) defines positionality as: 'aspects of identity in terms of race, class, gender, caste, sexuality and other

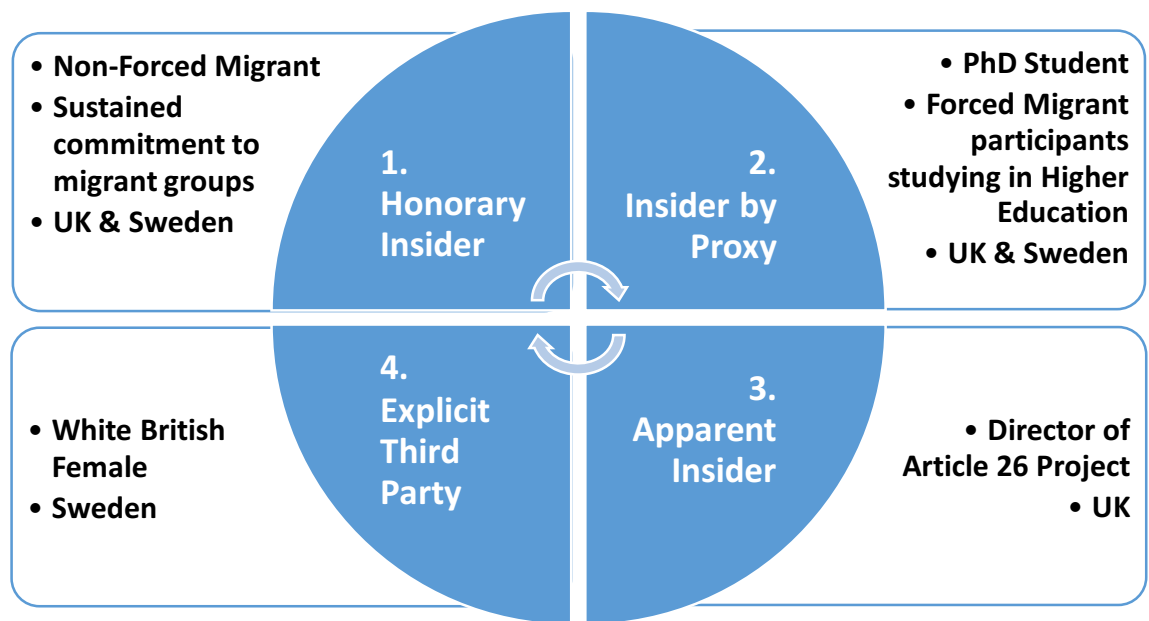


attributes that are markers of *relational* positions in society, rather than intrinsic qualities' (pp:52). Whilst I agree with this list, embedded within this research context lay my own politics and priorities as a practitioner and campaigner that I considered crucial aspects of my identity and therefore positionality.

Multiple identities have the potential to either 'mesh well or tangle awkwardly', depending on and according to the research context and encounters with research participants (Chacko, 2004:53). Shared identity between the researcher and the participant does not guarantee a connection between the two individuals (Valentine, 2005). The different aspects of individual identity are fluid, as opposed to static, intersecting and overlapping with each other (Rose, 1997; Chacko, 2004; Carling et al, 2013). The 'overlaps' between myself and the research participants were evidence of the inherent challenges in acting as a 'detached' researcher conducting an investigation with the 'pure subject' research participant (Crang, 2007:6-7).

Aspects of my identity were closely tied to the extent to which my positionality rendered me an 'outsider' or 'insider'. Carling et al (2013) explore the traditional 'insider' / 'outside' binary employed when discussing positionality in relation to migration research. The model employed by Carling et al (2013) reflects the complexity and multiplicity of identity in respect to the researcher and research participants. Their model provides a platform upon which to explore ways the boundaries of identity can be traversed in the research context (hooks, 2002; Chacko, 2004).

Figure 1 Personal Positionality in Multiple Research Contexts (Carling et al, 2013)



### 1. Honorary Insider

My position was not informed by my status as migrant. I was born in and have never lived outside the UK. However, for nearly two decades I have worked with forced migrants in multiple capacities. Since early 2005, I have engaged in advocacy and lobbying to create and sustain opportunities for forced migrants in higher education. I believe my extensive experience warranted *honorary insider* status, in respect to the practical issues encountered by the forced migrant participants and the higher education agents. This reflects my commitment to work in this area and is not an assertion of an intrinsic understanding of the experiences of forced migrants.

### 2. Insider by Proxy

Higher education was a priority for all the forced migrant participants who contributed to this research. My status as a PhD student shifted the power held by participants during the research interviews. On several occasions the research participant who was also a student conceptualised their participation as a valuable means through which to support me, a fellow student, in the pursuit of a doctorate degree.

### 3. Apparent Insider

The ongoing partnership work with UK-based universities delivering scholarships for forced migrants, could be perceived to render me an *apparent insider* within the case study institutions. My role afforded me in depth knowledge, understanding and the

ability to navigate the higher education field, yet my position in relation to the Article 26 project has always been external to universities. Prior to conducting field work, I had not previously met the vast majority of higher education agents who participated in the research and therefore had very few pre-existing relationships with these members of the research cohort.

#### 4. Explicit Third Party

My identity as a white British woman rendered me an *explicit third party* in Sweden, as I neither fulfilled the category of forced migrant nor Swedish national. No one involved in the research questioned my nationality in the context of my conducting field work in the UK.

The traditional insider / outsider binary utilised in migration research is unhelpful, as it risks essentialising specific aspects of the identity of the migrant (participant) or non-migrant (researcher). There was incredible diversity amongst the 95 research participants: I indirectly recorded 14 different nationalities during the process (this was not a direct question but information provided by many of the participants). It would have been impossible for one individual researcher to hold such far reaching cultural competency amongst such a heterogeneous research cohort: however, it was vital to recognise my own privilege in relation to the research participants in the process of undertaking this research.

#### 4.13 Access

	Sweden	UK
HEI Staff	25	27
Forced Migrants	14	12
Key Informants	13	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>43</b>

Table 1. Number of Research Participants in the UK & Sweden

<b>Country</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>Direct</b>	<b>Indirect</b>
<b>UK</b>	University A	6	0
	University B	0	3
	University C	2	1
<b>Sweden</b>	University D	0	4
	University E	2	5
	University F	0	3
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>16</b>

Table 2. Recruitment of Forced Migrant Research Participants

Table 1. ‘Number of Research Participants’ in the UK & Sweden details the number of research participants I engaged in this project within each of these three categories. Appendix 4 – 4.3 provides comprehensive information pertaining to all the research participants.

The power held by higher education institutions to permit or deny the opportunity to undertake this research placed me in a vulnerable position (Maillet et al, 2016) and rendered the process challenging (Smith, 2006). Chacko (2004) argues that it is important to acknowledge and explore the power of existing hierarchies embedded in all research settings. England (1994) agrees that it is a useful exercise in reflection to consider the power dynamics present in research settings, but that in recognising these hierarchies, as researchers we do not remove them or their influence from our work.

Permission to recruit a university case study was granted by a senior decision maker within the institution and it was these individuals whom I identified as the primary ‘gatekeepers’ in respect to gaining access. Only once a case study site had been secured, did the process of negotiating access to different participants and an external (as well as internal) drive to recruit forced migrant research participants begin. The identification of a supportive or interested individual within the university (usually located in student services) was key to securing access and providing direction in terms of developing an internal institutional network.

Internal HEI gatekeepers proved to be problematic, at points questioning the value or purpose of the research (Benzon, 2017). I was advised, mainly by academics working within and external to the UK case studies, that no one would speak to me, whilst other institutions reported that they were keen to participate but I was unable to make any practical progress in terms of undertaking actual research. In Sweden, higher education agents stated that it was impossible to identify forced migrants and even if I could, I wouldn't be able to collect findings on any of the research issues within their institution. These experiences felt at times akin to individuals 'playing a game' in respect to whether they actually intended to participate or simply disparage the project's chances of success (Benit & Gaffou, 2010).

The recruitment of forced migrant participants presented a different set of challenges. A key decision from the outset was not to interview anyone with whom I had an existing relationship, or who was directly dependent on the Article 26 project for support. I endeavoured to avoid any forced migrant participant feeling obligated to contribute to the research. Table 2. 'Recruitment Forced Migrant Research Participants' details whether the HEI case study directly supported me to connect with forced migrants studying within their institution or whether I had to adopt alternative recruitment strategies. Direct recruitment reflected a successful referral from the university department or individual responsible for the delivery of scholarships or a Korta Vagen programme.

I invested a considerable amount of time, energy and creativity in gaining access to and recruiting forced migrant research participants (McDowell, 2010; Stratford & Bradshaw, 2016). Posters were produced and disseminated throughout the student population in all six universities – see Appendix 2. Not one research participant responded to this 'cold' recruitment drive and I quickly realised the need to focus on 'warm' contacts that individuals were more likely to trust (Valentine, 2005). The forced migrant participants recruited indirectly and sometimes completely independently of the case study HEI, involved a diverse range of approaches.

I pursued multiple leads during interviews, wherein higher education agents referred to forced migrants studying within their institution. The Swedish Institute, which provides

scholarships for international students, was particularly helpful in respect to contacting their scholarship beneficiaries and I secured five interviews (including snowballing) as a result of their support. I identified two people through social media, who subsequently agreed to participate. I also delivered short presentations during Korta Vagen student sessions. A significant amount of time was invested in negotiating and preparing the forced migrant participants to be interviewed. Five participants engaged in 2 – 3 types of contact (including face to face meetings) prior to agreeing to a recorded interview. There were several other prospective participants who following significant discussions and negotiations felt that they weren't able to contribute.

The inherent power embedded within structural hierarchies was palpable in this process and issues pertaining to access were present for the duration of my time spent in the field. My role was essentially that of a guest within each university, which rendered my position precarious. I was acutely aware that an institution's participation in the research could have been withdrawn at any point (Benzon, 2017; Smith & Jenkins, 2017) and that this course of action would have rendered all the data collected at that site redundant. The indirect recruitment of forced migrant participants was time consuming and a delicate endeavour, as I was acutely aware of the potential for them to feel powerless in respect to their participation in the research process. The unsettled immigration status of some of the forced migrant participants added to their vulnerability, as individuals were under threat of detention and deportation by the immigration authorities. This vulnerability was evident in the fact that one participant waited until his asylum application had been accepted by the Swedish Migration Agency before agreeing to an interview.

My ongoing work as a practitioner in the UK, in conjunction with extensive contact with Swedish and UK HEIs to pilot and subsequently undertake the survey and recruit case study universities, provided multiple occasions when I could provide in depth explanations of the research project. Negotiating access to forced migrant participants, prior to embarking on recorded interviews, created more opportunities to ensure the research aims and the involvement of this group was clearly communicated.

#### 4.14 Research Process

Hyndman (2001:263) defines the field as a 'network of power relations', which reflects one of the central themes in this chapter – the dynamics of power and the manner in which they shifted and flowed throughout the research process (Smith, 2006). This research constitutes one of few projects undertaken in this area, as highlighted in section 2.9. As such this study draws parallels with Mountz's (2001) work, which provides: 'a feminist counter-topography that locates excluded populations and the states implicated in their containment, disappearance and marginalisation' (pp: 393). In this context it is challenging to produce claims to knowledge considered to be both valid and representative, when the likelihood is they will only ever be partial and incomplete (Hyndman, 2001).

The vast majority of research participants contributing to this project (88 out of 99 participants) were interviewed during a face to face meeting, the duration of which ranged from 30 minutes to over two hours. Field work was undertaken in consecutive case study universities, in order to focus on one institution at a time: however this schedule did not always result in all the interviews taking place within the allotted period of time. In Sweden, one higher education agent and three of the key informant interviews were conducted via skype. In the UK, only one interview was conducted via skype with a higher education agent. Venues for the meetings were often in and around the university campuses – this ranged from offices, to the library or an available seminar room. The research participants were invited to select their preferred location: more often than not they opted for convenience i.e. their office or the university library. However, some of the forced migrant participants specifically requested that I meet them in their home, which whilst not always my preferred choice suited the participants (Darling, 2014).

Whilst the preferred mode of interview was a face to face meeting, this wasn't always practical in terms of aligning a participant's availability with my presence and geographical location in Sweden or the UK. Two forced migrant participants requested that I interview them via email. The first was living in a refugee camp in Sweden and did not have the privacy he required to respond to questions over the phone or via skype.

The second participant responded via email in order to minimise the distress she anticipated experiencing during a direct interview.

Foucault (1984; 1991) defined power as a fluid as opposed to static entity, which was evident throughout the time I spent in the field and in the context of multiple research interviews (Faubion, 1994). Neither the 'powerful / powerless' nor the 'elite / vulnerable' binaries provided an applicable framework for predicting or understanding the interactions which took place during the interviews. The framing of participants as 'elite' or 'vulnerable' assumed that structural hierarchies of power were replicated in the research interviews (Harding, 2006; Smith, 2006). The manifestations of power during interviews did not always directly translate from the structures dominating society and the higher education institutions. It was in this context that socially constructed identities (both mine and the participants) were shaped by 'intersecting social determinants' (Gately, 2015:32).

It was through the relational encounters during interviews that I was able to engage in and observe interesting power dynamics. I describe these encounters as relational interactions to account for the impact of my role as the 'questioner' on the responses received (Harding, 2006; Smith & Jenkins, 2017). My primary concern in relation to minimising harm lay with the forced migrant participants, as I was aware of the perpetual and embodied precarity experienced by these particular members of the research cohort (Darling, 2015; Maillet et al, 2016). The decision was taken to exclude any questions relating to the reasons for their displacement, the journey undertaken to Sweden or the UK, or the basis upon which individual asylum applications were predicated – see Appendix 3. – 3.3. The questions were centred on education but many participants shared intimate and rich accounts of their experiences, including those relating to topics I chose to omit from the interview schedule (Harding, 2006). This was the result of a supplicatory approach to interviewing based upon respect for and an empathetic attitude towards the participants (England, 1994).

It was imperative that my position as a practitioner in the UK context, did not impede the revelation of important information and perspectives from the higher education research participants. I endeavoured to emphasise my lack of understanding, and for



participants to assume no prior knowledge (England, 1994). It quickly became apparent during an interview with a member of the executive board interviewed at University A, that he had very little knowledge of the scholarship scheme delivered by his institution, advising me: 'I'm going to disappoint you in terms of the informality of the process'. This university's scholarships scheme was far from informal: it was well established and had undergone substantial growth in a very short period of time.

The Head of Student Support at University C, was in a less senior position but in spite of my never having met him before, was quick to attribute the success of the scheme to the Article 26 project:

'I think it's very positive, we are very proud of it and we have also benefitted a lot from your support and your guidance because we are still learning a lot along the way. We couldn't have done it without you, because it is a minefield, we are not immigration specialists'.

Director Student Support, University C, HEIUK\_C\_DSS53

My concern in the context of this interview was the extent to which he would be critical of the scheme or related practice during the discussion taking place.

The use of imagination over facts described by Mailliet et al, as 'imagined landscapes' (2016:945), was apparent in several of the interviews with higher education agents. This group of research participants provided me with opinions on issues relating to forced migrants, yet I ascertained that these views were not the result of direct contact or involvement with the forced migrants studying within their institution or elsewhere in society, but the reproduction of forced migrant discourse produced by the media.

During some interviews with forced migrant participants, I recognised that in my responses as a researcher I had to suspend my disbelief. This was counter intuitive to how I would respond as a practitioner in my quest for the 'truth'. It was my role to explore the participants' interpretations of events that had occurred and situate them in the institutional, HE sector and country context. Every participant exercised power in that they controlled the information they shared in the interview process (Chacko, 2004), yet I remained concerned about the extent to which they used this power effectively. I had limited options beyond those already applied in the preparation to

interview (informed consent, confidentiality, interview schedule design): I was committed to my decision not to pursue lines of enquiry not directly relevant to my research.

The research interviews provided me with a rare opportunity to question and reflect in depth on the issues and challenges faced by forced migrants in the context of higher education. Over the course of the past 15 years I have engaged with multiple different groups of forced migrants in diverse contexts, including undertaking research. However, in spite of this prior experience and knowledge I overestimated my own resilience and was deeply moved by the experiences and perspectives research participants shared and entrusted me with. Harding (2006) described the rich and highly detailed accounts provided by care leavers in research interviews, when direct questions about sensitive topics were avoided. I was afforded similar intimate access to research participants' lives during conversations and discussions not just with the forced migrant but all participants.

Even though I endeavoured to minimise distress, some participants did convey signs of anguish during their interview. For some this was part of the emotional journey of the interview and they said it felt cathartic: however, on two occasions (during interviews with forced migrant participants) I decided to prematurely terminate the discussion. Demonstrations of distress were acknowledged during the interview with a view to prioritise the participant and not the research (Maillet et al, 2016). If it was temporary, I witnessed a change in emotions and with the participant's agreement, we would carry on; if not the recording device would be switched off and the interview ceased.

Darling (2014) and Maillet et al (2016) discuss the impact of the emotional labour and the vicarious trauma that can be experienced in interview settings. My own emotional response was not confined to interviews with forced migrant participants. One of the most memorable interviews was with a member of staff at University F. By the end of the interview we were both crying and every time I listened to the interview or reviewed the transcript, I inevitably experienced the same emotional response. It is important to acknowledge that my field work in Sweden predominantly took place during 2015, during which the country witnessed an enormous influx of forced migrants, prior to the

government's strategy to close the country's borders. Issues pertaining to forced migrants were highly topical and were the focus of conversations within Swedish universities, as discussed earlier. My responses to individual participants' distress and other challenges raised during the interview process are covered in detail in the next section.

#### 4.15 Reciprocity in the Research Process

'Now I will tell you why I left my country'  
Forced Migrant Participant (various), Field Diary

Interviews, especially with the forced migrant participants, rarely concluded when the recording ceased. This quote was typical of multiple research interviews with forced migrant participants. I initially questioned if they thought they couldn't provide details of their reasons for seeking asylum in the interview, but on reflection and in the analysis of the 26 transcripts, many individuals did provide details pertaining to their displacement and the journeys they had endured. When these topics were raised by the participants during interviews I afforded them the time and space to share whatever they wished. I didn't prompt more detailed descriptions, as I rejected the voyeuristic urge to learn more about experiences which did not directly relate to the foci of my research (Hyndman, 2001). I reached the conclusion that some of the forced migrant participants deliberately chose to embark on sharing aspects of their lives only once the recording device was switched off and they were confident that I was no longer documenting their responses. Participants chose to share this information with me as an individual not as a researcher. I recorded these incidents in my field diary but not the detail of what was said, as I didn't have participants' consent to use this material.

Debriefing research participants was an important aspect of the research process. A concern amongst some researchers is that they are wrongly perceived to be experts in their field of study (Darling, 2014). I was fortunate to have expert knowledge and recognised that I extracted considerably more from the field than I contributed to it (Chacko, 2004): I therefore considered it appropriate, when the need or opportunity arose, to provide support and information to research participants. In the UK context I frequently delivered information at the end of an interview pertaining to the Article 26

project. In this respect I inadvertently reduced the (in) visibility of scholarship schemes to members of staff who had no prior knowledge of these activities taking place within their institution.

In respect to the forced migrant participants, I noted issues raised during the interview, wherein I felt I could be of practical or emotional assistance. This allowed me to suspend my practitioner focus and return to these issues at the end of the process. This varied from encouraging individuals to access counselling support within their university, to advising one participant based in a UK institution who was experiencing multiple issues in relation to moving from a foundation to an undergraduate degree programme. We developed a comprehensive plan to address his most significant issues, which included referrals to different organisations. I was clear that I couldn't support him beyond the meeting and that he would have to seek additional help elsewhere: given that he had devoted time to participate in the interview, it was only fair that I utilised my practitioner insight. These represent just a few examples of the relatively minor ways in which I was able to 'give back' to the forced migrants at the centre of this research.

The approach to sharing power (where possible) with participants in preparation for, during, and directly after the interviews and in maintaining contact over the duration of the research reduced the objectification of all the contributors (England, 1994; Maillet et al, 2016). I never considered myself to have left the field, as I invited all the research participants to remain in contact, which they did with differing results, which I discuss in greater depth in Chapter 9.

#### **4.16 Language**

Issues pertaining to language played a significant role in this research from its inception. The selection of a country to compare with the UK was limited by my inability to communicate fluently in another European language: my focus was on the identification of a suitable country in the Scandinavian region with which to compare policy and practice in the UK. 33 out of 95 research participants, (UK based higher education agents and key informants) spoke English as their first language. The remaining 66 participants varied considerably in respect to their English language ability – some individuals were

communicating in their fifth language. Appendix 6. presents the English and Swedish language ability of all the forced migrant participants upon entry to the respective destination country. The resources required to recruit interpreters to support interviews were not available and I had to depend upon the recruitment of research participants who could communicate in English. I was quick to realise that being a native English language speaker increased my status and placed me at a considerable advantage during a significant proportion of the research interviews (Smith & Jenkins, 2017).

I overestimated the English language skills of the indigenous Swedish participants: some individuals communicated well in conversation, but struggled in an interview situation. In spite of the 'linguistic capability' of Swedes, I also quickly learnt that this did not 'translate into cultural fluency' (Chacko, 2004:54). The extent of the challenges faced by research participants for whom English was not their first language was conveyed to me by a member of staff based at University F in Sweden. They asked me to write my name with my left hand, when I typically write with my right hand. Their aim was to demonstrate the frustration in communicating in another language: your brain knows exactly what it wants to do, but struggles to translate it into the action required. This was reflected in the perpetual struggle for self-expression during the process of having to constantly translate ideas and opinions from one language into another during a research interview.

Two forced migrant research participants in Sweden were interviewed shortly after having completed advanced Swedish oral exams. The research participants automatically responded to questions (asked in English) in Swedish. They were given the opportunity to end the interview, but opted to continue and I adjusted to this situation by agreeing to their terms. I anticipated that agreeing to them answering questions in Swedish would result in more detailed responses, albeit responses that I couldn't fully comprehend until I received the transcript, which I had translated by a specialist company based in the UK (Chacko, 2004; Maillet et al, 2016). The language barrier did result in interview transcripts wherein the use of language was not always precise. However, I was interested in producing narrative accounts of participants' experiences and perspectives on the issues under investigation, as opposed to analysing their exact use of words and phrases.

#### 4.17 Conclusion

This chapter explored the situated methodological approach which underpinned this research, as well as the practical methods utilised to collect the data from which the findings presented in the subsequent chapters were derived. Situated methodology in the context of this research laid the foundations for a research project that was designed using a mixed methods case study approach; operationalised through the employment of a survey, semi-structured interviews and ethnographic observations. The commonality between the philosophy, design and research methods used focused on the importance and significance of context: this allowed the collection of in depth, detailed information to facilitate the exploration of similarities and differences between the phenomena under investigation, across different countries and societal scales (Mason, 2006; Baxter, 2016).

Significant themes arising from Chapters 2 and 3, were perpetuated in the design and implementation of this research. It was interesting to reflect on the roles played by issues such as language, power and the capacity of structures to constrain and enable the process of conducting this research. These contextual issues resulted in being central to the findings presented in the subsequent chapters. The arguments presented in the four following chapters were driven by the data collected (Basit, 2010) – key quotes and examples derived from the data are used as representative examples of emic themes and etic categories that arose from the interview transcripts and analysis of my field work diary. There are also instances in which the data highlighted an exceptional situation, which is clearly identified as such within the accompanying text.

A situated methodological approach strongly influenced the analysis and presentation of the research findings within the following chapters. Chapter 5 focuses on the invisibility of forced migrants in higher education and the construction of borders and mechanisms design to deter or prevent access for this group. Chapter 6 introduces the forced migrant perspective in relation to their experiences of limbo and belonging, which are located on a continuum and viewed through the lens of higher education. The interwoven experiences of forced migrants in the UK and Sweden are interwoven in Chapter 7 to explore the role of social capital in the process of overcoming perceived deficits in the capital required to traverse the higher education border. Chapter 8

explores the impact of initiatives targeting forced migrants and the importance of everyday activities in creating incremental change to higher education structures: in addition to their role in providing opportunities for forced migrants to reclaim agency lost in the process of displacement.

## Chapter 5

### The (In) Visibility of Forced Migrants in Higher Education

#### 5.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 is the first of four empirical chapters. A detailed analysis of the economic, social and political factors influencing higher education in Sweden and the UK serves to contextualise the experiences of forced migrants who seek asylum, whilst also endeavouring to continue, validate existing, or commence new studies in higher education. More importantly, the findings generated from in depth interviews and ethnographic observations within the six case study higher education institutions provide the foundations for an in depth understanding of their 'inclusionary' and 'exclusionary' approaches to forced migrant students. The findings presented in this chapter build on the small number of existing studies which incorporate the views of higher education agents in their research on the experiences of forced migrants in university (Harris & Marlowe, 2011; Naidoo, 2015; Alberts & Atherton, 2017).

In order to build on the existing body of research, an imperative starting point for this analysis involved connecting ideology to practice in the countries which were the focus of this research. An egalitarian ideology in Sweden and multicultural ideology in the UK, proved integral to applying theories of governmentality and structuration to the issues at the centre of this research. Whilst this thesis is not concerned with a detailed exploration and discussion of political ideology, it is through understanding ideology, its connections to discourse and categorisation, that the differences and similarities between practice in the UK and Sweden can be determined.

Forced migrants are rendered visible through the production of forced migrant discourse that serves to produce tangible categories (structural mechanisms): these groups are then clearly visible within immigration legislation. The juxtaposition of these categories in the context of mainstream legislation ensures their exclusion and subsequent invisibility. This achieves two goals: firstly, physical and social restrictions placed on mobility, which create for many forced migrants' situations characterised by enduring limbo. The second is to stimulate fear, uncertainty and anxiety within the wider



population in respect to forced migrants, predicated upon the multiple perceived threats they pose to the security of the nation state. These discursive constructions are important in understanding how forced migrants are rendered invisible within the structures of higher education. The construction of pejorative forced migrant discourse is also challenged by what could be conceived of as the positive activities forced migrants engage in, in their pursuit of opportunities in higher education.

The chapter begins by establishing the ideological frameworks within Sweden and the UK, before progressing to explore the institutional habitus held by universities. An analysis of the structures of higher education and the challenges in positioning forced migrant within them, lays the foundations for the construction of the higher education border. The chapter proceeds to discuss how categories of 'home' and 'international' students act as mechanisms which contribute to the reproduction and governance of the higher education border. The chapter concludes with an exploration of formal and informal initiatives developed across two countries and six higher education institutions - initiatives which aim to assist forced migrants to successfully navigate the higher education border and in doing so reduce the impact of the stasis imposed by limbo.

## 5.2 Ideological Frameworks

In order to establish the relationship between state-led ideology, forced migrant discourses, HE structures and the higher education agents who reproduce them in the context of their everyday activities, it is important to recognise the overarching ideological similarities and differences between the UK and Sweden. Both countries can be broadly conceptualised as liberal democracies, however as Odmalm (2012) states, liberal ideology often fails to manifest itself in managed migration policies and practice. Mountz & Hiemstra (2014) claim that Western liberal ideals prioritise the rights of citizens over 'other' sections of the population. The rise of populist politics across Europe is reflected in the development across both countries of repressive and restrictive managed migration regimes – discussed in depth in Chapter 2.

An egalitarian ideology in Sweden is rooted in socialism and the principle of equality in respect to the rights and entitlements afforded to all citizens. This ideological approach

is reflected in a social-democratic welfare state, reliant on high taxes and full employment. Essential to successful governance in Sweden is citizens' dependence upon, as opposed to freedom from, the state (Peter et al, 2010; Koenig, 2012). The same principle of equality is not universally applied in the UK, nor recognised, in the inherently unequal social hierarchy rooted in a deeply embedded class system. A liberal welfare state aims to provide an equality of opportunity to prosper financially in a capitalist economy, supposedly independent of the state (Peter et al, 2010). Modood & Meer (2012) describe the multicultural ideology in the UK as:

'A political orientation that is able to recognise that social life consists of individuals and groups, and that both need to be provided for in the formal and informal distribution of powers' (pp.192).

Multiculturalism as an ideology aims to facilitate different groups living, working and participating in the UK whilst retaining their identity: equality premised on neither individualism nor assimilation (Modood, 2005). The ideological differences identified between Sweden and the UK are deliberately simplified for the purpose of comparison in this research. The fundamental difference between both countries lies in their respective approaches to recognise individuals based on differences between them: the UK is focused on integration, whilst in Sweden the focus is on assimilation, manifest in: 'the adoption of the host community by migrants, thus depriving themselves (Swedes) of the richness that cultural diversity brings' (Spiteri, 2015:162).

The rhetoric of equality in Swedish society is evident in the absence of social hierarchies. One Swedish academic claimed forced migrants had difficulty comprehending Swedish society due to the fact that everyone was 'equal in every way'. This view was reinforced by a student counsellor at University F, who migrated to Sweden and compared the transparent hierarchies in her country of origin to the 'flat hierarchies' in Sweden. This was directly contradicted by a member of the Executive Board at University E, who adopted an opposing position:

'Sweden is a small country, so there is class without class, you can never see it, but there is class in Sweden'  
Executive Board, University E, HEISE\_E\_EB61

The notion of an (in) visible social hierarchy in Sweden symbolises the challenges faced by forced migrants. The lack of recognition of forced migrants as a social group was accompanied by a failure to acknowledge the challenges they faced in Sweden, and specific to this study within higher education.

Discussions with higher education agents and key informants working within the UK higher education sector were based upon a widely held presupposition that British society was inherently unequal: evident within multiple inequalities pertaining to, class, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and migrant background. The state-led agenda to address social inequality was highly visible within widening participation strategies implemented by universities throughout the UK. Wilkins & Burke (2015) assert that the massification of people engaged in higher education is evidence of the fact that it is widely accessed by people from across society. This position was corroborated by a key informant from the higher education sector:

‘I think over time the UK has gone from a fairly elitist higher education system through to one now, certainly in terms of size and in terms of composition, which has changed quite dramatically. Think of gender or social class, think of those issues in terms of who gets access to higher education, it has changed quite dramatically over time’

Key Informant, higher education, KIUK\_HE82

Sweden and the UK are heavily bureaucratised: according to Goffman (1983) bureaucracy promotes greater equality in society. Rose & Miller (1992) assert that discourse is deployed to produce categories, and to render certain groups ‘visible’ or ‘invisible’ throughout civil society. This argument is reinforced by Foucault’s (1984; 1991) articulation of categories as the product of knowledge, created by the state, exemplified by Zetter (2007) in the context of immigration:

‘The concept of labelling reveals how seemingly essential bureaucratic practices to manage the influx of refugees, and thus manage an image, in fact produce highly discriminatory labels designed to mediate the interests of the state to control immigration’ (pp.184)

Education has a pivotal role to play in the reproduction of identity categories created by the state (Youdell, 2004). UK universities collect detailed data in relation to individual students studying within their institutions. The UK’s widening participation strategy clearly defines groups considered to be underrepresented in higher education,

effectively demarcating members of the population deemed to be in deficit of the capital required to access and succeed (Wilkins & Burke, 2015). In a context of carefully designed and defined categories, the minimal presence of forced migrants within the labels used in higher education played a significant role in their exclusion.

In the Swedish context, forced migrants were equally difficult to identify based on their immigration status within higher education. However, this reflected Sweden's wider policy, descending from the country's egalitarian ideology, to not categorise and label groups in society and by extension higher education. Non-recognition of groups in Sweden was directly linked to maintaining equality between different groups. This sentiment expressed by a Swedish academic was repeated throughout interviews and informal discussions during field work:

‘I just want to say that we don't have the forced migrants as fully defined as you seem to have in the UK, I mean you seem to have many groups I have never heard of before, I didn't know they existed . . . not defining them may mean that we push them out in oblivion somehow. At the same time defining everyone all the time may actually lock them into a category which they can't leave’  
Academic, University E, HEISE\_E\_AD64

In the context of the UK, different identities are supposedly welcomed: however categories of difference often provide the basis for inequalities evident within the structures of society, in addition to being evident in activities to positively discriminate, a philosophy underpinning widening participation strategies. In the context of both immigration and higher education, the process of creating highly defined categories and labels is integral to understanding the rights and entitlements of different groups. However, in spite of the UK's skill in differentiation, forced migrants are rarely visible outside of managed migration structures, hence their invisibility in many areas of civil society.

The politics of recognising groups based on difference is widely contested. Andersson (1999) presents his case for an egalitarian based 'democratic equality', which argues against presumptions about the varying abilities of groups to participate in society and therefore the need to recognise differences between them. Fraser (2012; 2007) states that when exploring the politics of recognition, it is important to separate aspects of an individual's identity from their status within the social order. The critical point of

recognition for the forced migrant research participants was their immigration status and the impact this had on their position in both global and local hierarchies. Fraser also argues that the deconstruction of pejorative categories is only ever possible if the categories can be identified. Maillet et al (2016) claim that discourse 'similarly values and devalues' (pp.930). The recognition or non-recognition of hierarchies and in/equality is central to understanding the foundations upon which legislative frameworks are constructed, and the paths that connect legislation to practice. This research is concerned with the combined impact of these structures on the lived experiences of forced migrants, navigating their way through an unfamiliar higher education context in the destination country.

### 5.3 Institutional Habitus in Higher Education

The rationale behind the selection of the six case study universities was to ensure that the research was undertaken across a range of institutions - discussed further in section 4.7. Higher education institutions are frequently presented as independent bodies operating with minimal state intervention. This research questions the extent to which institutions are state-led or free to operate in a neoliberal higher education market economy. This discussion is foregrounded in the ideologies which connect the state to the higher education sector: this is in spite of the presentation of universities as autonomous institutions (Naidoo, 2010; Jenkins, 2014).

The six universities participating in this study shared information pertaining to the individual economic, social and political capital responsible for shaping their institutional habitus. University B in the UK was part of the elite Russell Group, University F was the most comparable, as one of the largest and most established institutions in Sweden. University C in the UK was a non-aligned institution, positioned in between the Russell group and Post 1992 universities and bore greatest similarity with University D, a relatively young Swedish university but one that had experienced exponential growth. University A in the UK estimated that 80% of its students originated from a widening participation background, which they claimed increased their reliance on tuition fee income and dependence upon state funding, as opposed to other external sources such as research grants. University E in Sweden had the least control over its affairs: it lacked

comparable powers with the other Swedish universities, in the absence of University E's freedom to create new academic programmes and independently examine doctoral theses.

The individual institutional habitus (embodied cultural capital) held by universities, did not reflect the universities' autonomy from, but relationship with, the state. Rose et al (2006) extended Foucauldian theory to universities and their position on the higher education spectrum, positions dictated by the extent to which they were governed through technologies of freedom or compliance by the state. Cantwell & Maldonado-Maldonado (2009) argue that even the most powerful universities are subject to governance structures at the global, European and local level. The discussion in section 3.4 foregrounded the notion that autonomy is a myth and a myriad of connections exist between universities and the state. These connections relate to economic and administrative expectations imposed upon universities by the state, which are investigated in this thesis through the lens of neoliberal governmentality.

State surveillance and the regulation of the institutions' political economy, administrative practices, research and teaching was evident in discussions across all the case studies. This clearly demonstrated that the challenges facing universities extended beyond economic concerns: clarified by a member of the Executive Board at University C:

'We are endlessly audited. So, academics are endlessly audited. So, you know, obviously our teaching qualities are audited, our research qualities are audited, we have financial audits, almost everything we do is examined in some way or another'

Executive Board Member, University C, HEIUK\_C\_EB04315

In Sweden, like the UK, higher education is governed by legislation that provides a framework, but institutions are granted a significant amount of freedom in terms of their practice:

'If you want to think bigger and deeply, the structure is decided from up [above], you can dance any dance you want but here is the boundary, you decide if it's the tango or the flamenco'

Student Support staff, University E, HEISE\_E\_SS68

The greatest concern expressed by agents working in higher education within Sweden was whether there was a strong legal foundation upon which to act. Universities searched for the evidence of comparable practice or policy within other institutions:

‘In Sweden we are not very brave for setting the rules, we are still very careful and everyone is supposed to do what everyone else does’  
Executive Board member, University D, HEISE\_D\_EB54

Swedish universities were much more conservative in their approach to self-regulation than the UK: they were afforded far greater freedom than they were prepared to use. UK universities participating in this study were prepared to push the boundaries in terms of what was possible within the freedom afforded to them. However, risks taken by UK universities were carefully calculated, as they didn’t want to jeopardise their freedom through the exercise of autonomy:

‘Thus they run the risk of losing their autonomy from the state, unless they are prepared to use against the state the (relative) freedom that it grants’ (Bourdieu et al, 2004:3)

The state is perceived to hold the highest capital and has a powerful role to play in relation to recognising the capital of individuals and institutions. The first question is whether universities hold the capital required to successfully support forced migrants to gain access to their institutions, recognise their qualifications and provide them with the necessary support to succeed. The second is managing their relationship with the state in the context of repressive managed migration regimes, to assist students who would typically be excluded.

#### **5.4 (In) Visible Structures: Widening Participation**

The ideologies used to construct forced migrant discourse are integral to understanding societal structures within which forced migrants are rendered both visible and invisible. Widening participation is a structure within the overarching system of higher education, the purpose of which is to promote social mobility and the ‘inclusion’ of members of the population who are otherwise excluded or underrepresented in higher education. As previously discussed in section 2.6.2., the UK focus is on widening participation, which means the provision of support to students from the point of recruitment until graduation (Council of Deans, 2015). Whilst in Sweden the emphasis is on universities’

legal obligation to widen access, and practice in relation to participation has only recently returned to the higher education agenda determined by the state (UHR, 2016). This thesis acknowledges this difference between the two countries: however for the purpose of this research I use the term widening participation to collectively describe the activities undertaken across both countries. This also reflects widespread use of the term 'widening participation' as opposed to 'widening access' by research participants based Sweden.

Widening participation strategies were state-led in both the UK and Sweden: however this manifested itself in very different approaches. The UK introduced university tuition fees in 1998 – OFFA was subsequently established in 2004, primarily as a regulatory body to mitigate the impact of tuition fees on socio-economically deprived members of the population. OFFA has three aims: i) remove barriers to underrepresented groups accessing HE, ii) support the successful completion of HE studies and iii) support students' transition to the labour market or further studies (<https://www.offa.org.uk/about/>). OFFA has the regulatory authority to refuse a UK university the right to charge the highest rate of tuition fees, however to date, it has never exercised its power in the full. In the UK, widening participation strategies have developed exponentially over the course of the past 20 years. This has become an area of significant financial investment and expertise within universities: playing a central role in initiatives to improve social mobility and promote public good (Wilkins & Burke, 2015).

In contrast in Sweden, a recent change in government, led many universities to re-engage with issues pertaining to widening participation following a change in political party:

'The previous (conservative) government, they said we should be responsible for following widening participation, but they never gave us any specific tasks to work with, they only gave us the framework'

Key Informant, higher education, KISE\_HE83

The conservative party pursued an agenda focused on the quality of higher education. Upon election the Social Democrats reinstated widening participation as a priority issue: evident in their instruction to the Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHR) to



undertake a detailed scoping of widening participation policy and practice. The subsequent report advocated that Swedish universities develop institutional strategies to address issues pertaining to widening access and participation (UHR, 2016). The Swedish context reflects their egalitarian ideology, practiced through dependency on the state, in that the political party in power determines the practice of universities (Koenig, 2012). Activities which serve to widen the participation of underrepresented groups in higher education reinforce Schram's (2015) assertion that education is no longer the 'great equalizer' (pp:17): however higher education retains a central role to play in facilitating an upward trajectory for groups and individuals in the social hierarchy (Madood, 2004).

Appendix 6. reflects the fact that the forced migrant participants entered higher education at a variety of different levels, whereas widening participation programmes in the UK were primarily focused on access to undergraduate degree programmes, whilst in Sweden policy and practice was less well defined. Widening participation was identified as the most appropriate framework in which to attempt to situate forced migrants, due to its location at the heart of universities social mobility agendas.

OFFA (2017) defines 13 categories of students deemed underrepresented in higher education, included in which are 'refugees': this category was only introduced in 2016 and unlike the majority of categories includes no further definition or practice recommendations. Swedish legislation defines underrepresented students as having needs relating to either their social or foreign background (*Higher Education Act, 1992*). The Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHR, 2016) recently encouraged universities to consider students who experience challenges accessing higher education due to issues pertaining to: gender, geographical location, religion, sexual orientation or disability: this report also clearly identify foreign academics, which includes forced migrants. This reflects the number of forced migrants who have entered Sweden to seek asylum and who are exploring how they can apply their existing skills and qualifications in the Swedish context.

Forced migrants are widely underrepresented in widening participation structures in the UK and Sweden: in the absence of comprehensive quantitative and qualitative data, this

assertion could appear presumptuous. Information detailing the lack of data in section 2.2, a palpable deficit of research in this area presented in 2.9 and the challenges detailed in Chapters 3 and 4, support this assertion. The notion that forced migrants are present and succeeding in higher education, whilst their immigration status remains undetected and the barriers described easily surmounted, is a far less likely scenario.

An Executive Board member at University D in Sweden, described widening participation as being in the 'DNA' of the university and their counterpart at University E in Sweden believed it to be integral to the university's overarching vision focused on creating a sustainable institution. University F in Sweden was distinctly different in that there was a palpable deficit in widening participation activity, owing to the decline of state interest in this area during the Conservative party's rule. University D and University E continued to work on widening participation owing to the commitment of senior management within both institutions. In spite of the 'top down' approach to widening participation, my research highlighted the lack of a common definition and widening participation practice within and between the Swedish universities. The majority of university staff across all three institutions were reluctant to acknowledge the need for widening participation and the activities taking place were concentrated in the efforts of one or two individual members of staff or a specific department.

Multiple Swedish higher education agents expressed concerns or were reluctant to accept that a 'norm' existed in terms of the Swedish student population; acknowledgement of a norm was the precursor to recognising difference. The absence of initiatives to identify and support forced migrants within the student population was seen to reflect positively on the university's commitment to democratic equality (Andersson, 1999):

'I mean I see students with different backgrounds absolutely but I don't see any formal approach from the university towards refugees or immigrants whatsoever. In that sense I think that the university treats everyone alike'  
Student Support staff, University E, HEISE\_F\_SS72

Members of staff operating within Swedish universities clearly communicated that it was beyond their power and control to attract people on 'special terms', because to do so was illegal. Higher education agents working on widening participation all identified

the same student group, which they considered to be underrepresented – young Swedish men, which could, according to Ahmed's (2008) theory, reflect their 'institutional whiteness'.

Widening participation practices within the three university case studies located in the UK, were informed by a central strategy implemented by both professional services teams and academic departments. An access agreement was submitted to OFFA on an annual basis by each university to fulfil two duties: to report on how they had met their widening participation targets and to identify future goals. The forced migrant students studying within the case study institutions were only ever informally acknowledged as recipients of widening participation support if they were classified as 'international', as the result of a tuition fee assessment.

Stevenson & Willott (2007) analysed 124 access agreements produced by universities across the UK and reported that only six referenced forced migrant students. This statistic, albeit over ten years old, reflects the invisibility of this student group from key monitoring processes and that the needs of forced migrants are effectively located on the periphery of widening participation activity, because the fact the majority of these students are not assessed as 'home' students. This is in sharp contrast to the highly defined labels applied to all 'other' underrepresented students in the sector. The Head of Widening Participation at University B stated that the institution's access agreement was a 'regulatory piece of paper; it's not everything we do'. This statement demonstrates the fact that widening participation strategies focus on a narrow section of the student population: undergraduate 'home' students and exclude anyone engaged on a postgraduate programme or categorised as 'international'.

## 5.5 (In) Visible Mechanisms in Higher Education: Governing 'Home' and 'International' Students

The normative binary in higher education classifies 'home' students as citizens belonging to a country within the European Union – 'international' students constitutes anyone hailing from outside the European Union. International students are constructed as temporarily resident for the duration of their studies, their principal purpose being to study. Home students are permanently settled and have the right to remain. These

constructions provide the rationale for the rates at which tuition fees are charged. International students pay for the privilege of studying in the UK and Sweden: neither state chooses to invest in the education of those without the permanent right to remain. In 1998, the UK Labour government introduced university tuition fees for 'home' students: the tuition fee rate has increased incrementally and now averages £9,250 p.a. for an undergraduate degree programme. However, this is considerably less expensive than the comparable rate for an international student, which varies between £16,000 - £20,470 p.a. In Sweden, home students do not pay tuition fees, however students categorised as international pay between £7,000 - £11,500 p.a. for an undergraduate degree programme.

Members of staff working across the three universities in the UK expressed confusion as to where students from a forced migrant background should be located within the institution: confusion stemmed from the absence of an associated funding stream to meet the cost of their participation on a programme of study:

'At all three institutions that I have worked at, it seems to be that forced migrants are shunned, it never comes under the remit of international student support. I would be curious to see not where responsibility sits, but who really takes the lead in supporting these students? Should they be separated out? I don't know. They fall between the cracks: they are neither led by home teams, nor international, it's a grey area'

Student Support staff, University C, HEIUK\_C\_SS46

Forced migrants have no clear 'place' in the tuition fee structure, their positioning is linked to their immigration status, determined primarily by their fee status. Harris (2013) asserts that categories don't always serve to exclude, but force people into categories to which they don't really belong, owing to the absence of an appropriate alternative. Giddens (2010) described the impact of neoliberal processes which sought to apply a quantitative value to human qualities, in this case the need to place a 'price tag' on students (Whitehead & Cranshaw, 2012). In the absence of a clear 'fit' within the higher education market logic, Schram (2015) states that heightened disciplinary powers are exercised which serve to increase the marginalisation of groups, evident in the absence of forced migrants within existing structures.

In the UK, eight of the participants had secured the qualifications required to access higher education during time spent in UK compulsory and further education. In spite of living in the UK for extended periods, ranging between five and 13 years, seven participants were categorised as international students due to the fact their immigration status remained unresolved. The forced migrant participants who had spent their formative years in the UK compulsory education system, expressed considerable frustration that due to an inconsistency in terms of their immigration status they were not allowed to proceed to university. The five years Nathan had waited for a decision, as a dependent on his father's claim for asylum, were discounted, as during this time, he had not officially 'belonged' in the UK:

'I think the way that government is dealing with international students is ridiculous, I'm getting the same treatment as someone who arrived in the UK two hours ago and I've been studying here for five years. I feel that should make a difference'

Nathan, Iranian living in the UK, FMUK\_IR05

The frustrations expressed by Nathan were reinforced by agents working in higher education:

'What I can't understand is why we accept these people, these young people into school, into college, no questions asked. Then why when it becomes university does their status change? Why can't they just carry on their education like a home student? I can't get my head around it. If they can go to school, then why can't they go into higher education?'

Student Support staff, University C, HEIUK\_C\_SS49

The habitus held by the cohort of eight participants educated in the UK, bore greater similarity to the categories of students considered underrepresented, for example, in relation to their socio-economic circumstances or status as care leavers. Two of the UK based participants who sought asylum in the UK as adults received settled immigration status within a few months and were categorised as home students: however, their habitus bore greater similarity with the traditional notion of an international student, whose prior education was undertaken outside of the UK.

None the cohort of 14 forced migrant participants based in Sweden arrived as a child: 11 held a residence permit affording them settled immigration status and the remaining three participants were awaiting the resolution of their asylum submission. Everyone

had experience of higher education in their country of origin and their collective experiences bore greater similarity to traditional constructions of international rather than home students. In Sweden, staff working in the case study institutions only used tuition fee status definitions to differentiate between students - forced migrants were never identified as an explicit group or category.

This analysis of the 26 research participants' highlights that categorisation as a 'home' or 'international' student bore little relation to the reality of their circumstances: every participant had sought or been granted asylum, this was indicative of their desire to secure the permanent right to remain, no one was seeking a temporary resolution to their situation. In the course of recruiting forced migrant participants, I encountered individuals who held student visas and chose not to seek asylum. These individuals were hoping to be able to return to their country of origin upon completing their studies and wanted to avoid the asylum process if at all possible – the role of higher education in decision making and the asylum process is discussed in depth in Chapter 6.

The UK has a much more clearly defined widening participation structure and mechanisms through which university agents implement the structure. Widening participation strategies focus on the student lifecycle including: fostering aspirations, recruitment, supporting access and transition onto degree programmes, participation, graduation and transition to further studies or employment – yet within the structures forced migrants are largely invisible.

In the Swedish context higher education agents endeavoured to create widening participation strategies and associated activities within a legal framework, which did not translate into explicit guidance – beyond the legal requirement to widen access for two broad student groups. This resulted in the absence of a clear and commonly understood definition of widening participation along with a palpable lack of mechanisms to support the implementation and monitoring of activities. The invisibility of forced migrant students in Swedish universities was reinforced by the strict governance measures in relation to the collection and more importantly retention of statistics. Universities collect data, which identify if students 'fit' one of the two broad widening participation categories.

The 'non-Swedish' category (the student or both parents were born outside Sweden) could assist in recognising forced migrants: however universities don't retain this data, it is centrally held by Statistics Sweden, a central government agency. At university D, the Executive Board member advised that on average the institution could access the information held by Statistics Sweden three years after its collection: she explained the challenges this presented in respect to measuring the success of widening participation activity. One member of staff working on widening participation at University D reflected that you only had to 'look around' in order to evidence the diversity within the student population. It could be argued that this is further evidence of the 'institutional whiteness', described by Ahmed (2008) where: 'Bodies stand out when they are out of place. Such standing re-confirms the whiteness of the space' (pp.159).

Two specific areas in which the Sweden based forced migrant participants experienced significant deficit in their capital were in language owing to their lack of Swedish language skills, and knowledge, which related to the lack of recognition of their prior qualifications. Section 5.4.1 detailed changes in widening participation practice advocated for by the Swedish Higher Education Agency. The Swedish Higher Education Agency has also invested substantially in programmes aimed at improving the recognition of prior learning for forced migrant students. Whilst the Swedish Employment Agency has invested heavily in the development of the Korta Vagen programme, with a view to expediting the forced migrant population into employment, this activity has taken place post field work. This further supports the view that integral to success is the state-led development of work in this area, as articulated by an Admissions Manager based at University E:

'Big brother sees what you're doing and asks what you're doing, I think if that comes from the government this is how it will work, ok yes we will do it, if it's come from the government from above'

Admissions Manager, University E, HEISE\_E\_AM65

I was advised by a Key Informant from the Swedish Migration Agency that international students are granted a residence permit based on their engagement with the institution directly from the Migration Agency. The relevant institution will be contacted to confirm the student's enrolment and this is typically the extent of the university's involvement in directly policing the higher education border from an immigration perspective. The

Admissions Manager at university E confirmed the response from the Migration Agency in the event they were advised that an international student granted a visa had failed to commence their studies:

‘We can show to the Migration Agency yes the student is here, he or she is a student. If they don’t come the Migration Agency will withdraw the visa and the university is not to blame’

Admissions Manager, University E, HEISE\_E\_AM65

In the UK, technologies of domination were utilised by the state in the governance of higher education institutions’ compliance with Home Office policy and procedure in respect to managing students categorised as international. UK universities are governed by multiple regulatory bodies such as HEFCE, QAA, OIA, OFFA, BIS, however the Home Office was considered to have the ‘furthest reach’, reflected in a statement from the Compliance Manager at University C:

‘I was talking to someone else at another institution who said, no matter what, never forget compliance. I won’t say that’s the tag line I’d put on my t-shirt. I think it’s, it’s being mindful to the damage it can do if you make a mistake . . . You couldn’t get in your UG, PGT students, you couldn’t get any research students. If it’s completely revoked, they are not going to continue. You are then liable for possible action afterwards. You can have staff turnover for failing processes, you can get civil penalties from the Home Office, but also the, the, sort of kicker in the teeth is, you are going to lose your home market, because who wants a degree if it’s bad-mouthed in the press. Who wants a degree from there?’

Compliance Manager, University C, HEIUK\_C\_CP48

Prior to applying for a Tier Four visa to study in the UK, a university must agree to sponsor an international student by issuing them with a Certificate of Acceptance for Studies (CAS), which validates both their academic and financial suitability to study. The Home Office will then accept or reject the CAS. If the Home Office refuses 10% of CAS’ issued by a higher education institution, an onsite audit of the university’s management of international students will be conducted. Compliance Officers within the three UK case studies imposed even stricter self-regulation endeavouring to maintain a refusal rate below 5%, in order to avoid further attention from the Home Office. Policing of the higher education border by the Compliance Officer has led to what Walters (2011) refers to as the ‘creation of specialized border officials’ (pp.137). This marries with Giddens’ (1984, 1991) assertion that institutions both instigate and embody action (Archer, 2010)



and Bourdieu's (1998) position that structures alone don't work in isolation, but integral to their efficacy is their implementation and reproduction by agents:

'Bracketing off the economic and social conditions of rational dispositions and of the economic and social structures, which are the condition of their exercise or, more precisely, of the production and reproduction of those dispositions and those structures' (pp: 94)

The focus on the reproduction of structures acts as a precursor to the presentation of findings which convey not just the reproduction of structures, but the potential for higher education agents and forced migrants to exercise power in relation to the restructuring higher education structures.

## 5.6 Restructuring the Higher Education Border

It is within the reproduction of activities by higher education agents that evidence was uncovered not of the reproduction of existing structures of exclusion, but of restructuring with a view to including forced migrants in higher education. Changes to policy and practices of restructuring do not just take place at the global or national level – they also take place at the local level and the potential exists for reciprocity of change that can impact on the global level (Marginson & Rhoades, 2002). This next section explores the process of restructuring that was taking place within the six case study institutions – the actions of institutions and agents to create recognised opportunities, in addition to the covert activities undertaken by agents operating within existing university structures.

Higher education institutions are located in the centre of society: nexuses of learning and knowledge creation. Access and success in HE is widely reported to have immeasurable impact on individuals' life chances, transform habitus and provide numerous and diverse opportunities for capital acquisition (Balaz & Williams, 2004; Wilkins & Burke, 2015; Wilkinson & Lloyd-Zantiotis, 2017). Within an inhospitable context focused on exclusion and repression, this section explores how opportunities were created that attempted to relocate forced migrants from the periphery to the centre of society. Why do some universities resist managed migration practices and transform from sites of exclusion into inclusion for students from a forced migrant

background? How does this resistance manifest itself and does it succeed in rendering invisible forced migrant students visible?

### 5.61 Formal Forced Migrant Initiatives

The three case study institutions in the UK were engaged in the delivery of 1 – 4 scholarships per annum and all were affiliated to the Article 26 project. The scholarship package comprised a full tuition fee waiver and a financial grant to meet the cost of studying (varying amounts). The development of the initiatives varied: all three scholarship schemes were instigated by an individual agent working in the institution, but were either established by the individual, a department or in cooperation with the university Executive Board.

The initiative at University A was led by a staff member based in student support who led on the development and practical implementation of the programme: from her perspective the process was straightforward in that she repeatedly received positive response to her requests for support from senior management. The scheme at University A underwent significant growth, which included securing substantial external funding, predominantly due to this lone member of student support, who was able to pursue this agenda without any challenge. The problems she encountered were not in making progress, but how the evolution of the scholarships scheme and her success was acknowledged by and acted upon by other agents working within the institution.

‘I can’t remember how the decision was made, but informally and it went through no committees. It was a straight forward case of public good with insignificant cost implications’

Executive Board member, University A, HEIUK\_A\_EB027

Public good was cited as the motivation behind the scholarship scheme by every senior manager interviewed, yet the invisibility of the scheme was reinforced by a palpable lack of knowledge relating to the scheme.

At University C, a member of student support staff introduced the concept of supporting forced migrants to her department (Student Services), from where a coordinated

approach to developing an initiative was developed. The Director of Widening Participation articulated their strategy:

‘It was a bottom up approach, it was a decision that was made within the department, based upon the finances and budgets that we had available to us, with the clear intention from an early point that we would make a case to the university to take this on wholesale and run with it on an annual basis and take the financial responsibility, the year after our first student came through the door’

Director of Widening Participation, University C, HEIUK\_C\_DWP044

This investment of funding at the departmental level covered the tuition fee waiver for one student with no funding for additional costs: their aim was to demonstrate to the Executive Board a ‘tried and tested’ approach to delivering an initiative aimed at forced migrants. Agents working with student services at University C reflected on their presumption that the biggest barrier was persuading the Executive Board to agree to this decision taken at the departmental level. They realised that the tacit agreement of the Executive Board was not the barrier they needed to overcome, but support in the implementation and continuation funding to ensure the sustainability of the scheme. The problems encountered by University C were rooted in the fact that the scholarship scheme was not developed in collaboration and cooperation with other departments.

At University A and University C, within 3 - 4 months of the decision to develop a scholarship scheme a forced migrant student had been engaged on a degree programme at both institutions. University B took a distinctly different approach. The Director of Student Services at University B advised that an awareness of access issues experienced by forced migrants in pursuit of higher education opportunities, had grown in the institution since the imposition of restrictions on access for forced migrants with unsettled immigration status in 1998. Over a period of three – four years a group of academic staff had been pursuing the university to take action to support forced migrants. The Director of Student Services acknowledged that previous attempts to develop a response had been ‘buried in bureaucracy’; none of the proposals had not progressed through the university’s administrative committees. The Executive Board member at University B attributed the institutional decision to develop an initiative to internal (Students Union and a research student) and external pressures (NUS) to take action. The proposal was endorsed by several university committees prior to approval

by the Executive Board. In University B the Executive Board took greatest ownership, which resulted in the most financially generous scholarship scheme.

A discussion took place with all university agents in respect to the financial impact of the initiatives in place. The member of the Executive Board in University A claimed that any member of staff expressing financial concerns would be 'laughed at' by both him and the VC.

'It was an easy sell. It was as easy as that, what will it cost us, it will be a fee waiver, which actually doesn't cost us, and it's not a cost to the University because they are not actually getting that money in, but it's a number that we can absorb'

Executive Board Member, University A, HEIUK\_A\_EB028

A critical difference between the two countries was that the UK-based institutions were absorbing the costs and forgoing tuition fee income, whilst in Sweden initiatives were unlikely to take place in the absence of state funding. The three UK universities invested differing amounts of financial capital into their scholarship schemes and had different perspectives on the inherent risks associated with investing resources in students with unsettled immigration status.

However, in spite of his ambivalence he was the only person to discuss the actual cost of a scholarship, beyond absorbing the loss of tuition fee income: teaching, examinations, access to academic and professional support services. It was impossible to predict the full extent or cost of the additional resources required by a forced migrant student awarded a scholarship. Discussions with members of the Executive Board based at University C and University B focused on the immediate and very tangible costs incurred through non-payment of tuition fees and a lack of external funding sources to supplement the support provided. University B offered financial support that equated to a full maintenance loan from student finance. The costs incurred were shared throughout every 'income generating area' of the institution. A member of the University B's Executive Board and the Director of Widening Participation anticipated that this level of financial investment would impact directly on the retention of these students (the scholarship had recently launched and was less than a year old).

University A and University C had to place restrictions on scholarship eligibility criteria based on the limited availability of funds to cover living costs: prospective students needed to have secure living arrangements in the locality of the university. When I discussed the potential for the expansion of the scholarship scheme at University C with a member the Executive Board, they were unclear on the current funding arrangements, but very clear that the onus was on the state as opposed to the institution to finance further work in this area:

‘The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak . . . if the only way we could have asylum seekers is for us to pay their fees, then that would stop us having many of them’  
Executive Board Member, University C, HEIUK\_C\_EB043

In contrast the Director of Student Services at University C had a different perspective on the perceived ‘loss’ of tuition fee income: he compared it to the 30 – 50 students leaving University C within the first six months of their degree programme, which had a greater impact on the institution’s income and retention statistics. The Director of Student Services advocated for the cost of the scholarship scheme to be shared centrally akin to practice at University B. He also explained the challenges in persuading other departments to assist in absorbing the costs and supplied this specific example:

‘There is someone in charge of top-level accommodation and facilities, so their role is about income generation . . . there are part of the university senior management team. They have got to be convinced that it’s worth taking a financial loss. But if the university as a whole can be persuaded to waive tuition fees, then that’s a financial loss essentially isn’t it. It comes from a central pot’  
Director Student Services, University C, HEIUK\_C\_SS045

The university case studies in the UK were taking financial, regulatory and reputational risks in respect to establishing and delivering initiatives to support forced migrant students – however the difference lay in whether a specific department or the institution as a whole was sharing these risks.

In Sweden there was no evidence within the three case study universities that they targeted support at forced migrant students with either settled or unsettled immigration status. Whilst the activities undertaken by their UK counterparts could be seen to contribute to the restructuring of broader scholarship initiatives, forced migrants engaged in Swedish higher education were even less visible than they were in

the UK. The development of Korta Vagen practice took place within higher education, however it was not imperative that it was delivered by a university. The programme targeted foreign academics, however in the absence of any other provision, this became the focus of many of the forced migrant research participants. Korta Vagen provided the framework within which the Swedish case studies, to differing extents, exercised their autonomy through restructuring this type of support.

In 2007, the Swedish Employment Agency piloted Korta Vagen in the Western region of Sweden, where University E was located. Prior to the Korta Vagen pilot University E had been delivering their own version of support to immigrant academics to improve their Swedish language skills, assimilating their existing capital for use in the Swedish labour market. Up until 2014, University E was commissioned by the Swedish Employment Agency to deliver Korta Vagen: however, this relationship concluded at the end of a three-year cycle, due to a reduction in funding. University E had serious concerns about how they would maintain the quality of the programme, therefore they withdrew from Korta Vagen and resumed an independent programme of education for immigrant academics. The local Folk University (equivalent of a further education college) took over delivery of Korta Vagen and in spite of requests for University E to remain involved, they maintained their position and opted out of the programme. As such University E asserted their independence to deliver a programme, which they felt offered a consistent and high quality education. This new programme was funded by the Swedish state.

In contrast with University E, University D's programme for immigrant academics was relatively short, only 10 weeks long. The focus was Swedish language and accessing the labour market but no work placement was included in the programme, which was originally born out of a state-led initiative. In 2005, the national government developed an initiative called 'Aspiration Building', the focus of which was to support immigrant academics into the Swedish labour market. It was also acknowledged and accepted that skills and experience gained in Sweden could be utilised elsewhere if the students did not settle in Sweden and it was intended that this programme would help bridge the cultural divide. One year later funding for the Aspiration Building programme ceased,

the funding and framework in which this work took place was effectively removed, however University D decided to retain it:

‘He [VC] wanted to make it clear that this was something that didn’t have to do with the politicians for the moment, but even if the political trends went elsewhere, he said it’s important for the University to be consistent in the belief of widening participation’

Widening Participation staff, University D, HEISE\_D\_WP55

University F had the most traditional and collaborative approach in respect to Korta Vagen, in that the programme was commissioned by the Swedish Employment Agency and delivered in partnership with the local Folk University. The Folk University had recently switched places with University F, in that they were now receiving funding directly from the Swedish Employment Agency, and sub-contracting the delivery of the project to University F. The programme funding had changed and this was a necessary step in order to accommodate the changes brought in by the Swedish Employment Agency whilst having minimal impact on the delivery of Korta Vagen. The likelihood that Korta Vagen would become permanent as opposed to a temporary project was welcomed by staff at University F. The annual recommissioning of Korta Vagen affected its delivery and whilst they believed it would be better located within University F instead of Folk University, this was preferable to the perceived threat posed by private education providers focused on generating profit instead of delivery high quality language education.

### 5.6.2 Informal Forced Migrant Initiatives

The forced migrant initiatives described so far were a formal component of the universities’ structures. The opportunities were publicly available and promoted, in spite of the relative invisibility of this student group. In this context of (in) visibility, it became apparent that there was another layer of support provided to forced migrants, broadly and loosely described here as informal initiatives. Given the hyper invisibility of the activities described in this section and the small proportion of university staff I interviewed during the course of this research (53 participants across six institutions), this serves to scratch the surface of a potentially wide range of different activities.

An academic based at University B reflected on the greater ease with which forced migrants could access higher education as part-time students, prior to changes to the

tuition fee regime and the introduction of the scholarship scheme. Tuition fees could be paid on a modular basis and different payment bands existed, which meant a module could cost as little as £30.00: this offered considerable flexibility to the department and students:

‘Part time studies were still based on a pay up front model rather than a fee / loan model so you could be a little bit cannier. So, as I say, that landscape has changed. I think the advantage of the formal scholarship scheme is putting it into the institution’s structures and I hope ethos. I hope it kind of translates into a value commitment the university holds as well and therefore makes it much bigger, much more sustainable than anything any individuals could develop’  
Academic, University B, HEIUK\_B\_AD40

Changes to the part time tuition fee regime rather than the formal scholarship scheme were responsible for usurping the alternative payment arrangements for part time courses. This raises an important issue in that the implementation of a formal scholarship scheme has the potential to ‘close down’ alternative sites of resistance within an institution.

The student support teams located in Universities A and C discussed the fact that withdrawal of state funding provided them with greater freedom in terms of the operation of student hardship funds. The demise of state funding also resulted in the withdrawal of the mechanisms previously used to govern hardship funds. This facilitated the opportunity to develop broader eligibility criteria, which included underrepresented groups ‘outside’ widening participation definitions and international students. This is a further example of the UK case study institutions positively exercising discretion to support students who had previously been excluded from this type of financial support.

This use of discretion was exemplified through the approach adopted to meet the remaining costs involved in Nala completing her doctorate degree at University C. The funding of Nala’s degree programme was disrupted by the civil war in Syria. Negotiations between her academic supervisor and the student services team resulted in the swift resolution of the funding deficit with very little input from Nala. A member of the student services team commented that Nala’s experience was not unusual, as it reflected the responsibility staff within the university adopted towards students: they



anticipated that this type of assistance was being provided to students by members of staff throughout the institution, often without their knowledge.

It was challenging to uncover evidence of the exercise of discretion within Swedish universities, as discretion in respect to the application and admissions process was underutilised. Fairness was perceived to be achieved in the application process by narrowing the representation of academic ability to a single number. Qualitative information was only collected if a student asked for their application to be judged on their 'real competence': wherein lay the opportunity for forced migrants to relay information pertaining to academic and professional qualifications gained outside the Swedish system – discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

The barriers presented by the central university admissions process in Sweden led an academic at University D to invite a forced migrant student with unsettled immigration status to informally access her lectures and seminars. This scheme was in the earliest stages of its development, the ultimate aim being to develop a system whereby students without settled status immigration status could study and accumulate, in tandem with the process of waiting for their asylum submission to be determined. Once they had received settled status and been awarded a residence permit, they could then formally enrol onto the degree programme they were already studying on. The academic responsible for instigating the scheme felt that it would have a more secure future if universities across Sweden exercised their discretion and established a similar initiative. The Executive Board at University D was supportive in principle, but had provided no tangible support in relation to the implementation or advancement of the scheme to benefit more forced migrants.

The state-led Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) programme was only accessible to forced migrants who had received a positive decision on their claim for asylum and had been awarded a residence permit. It was evident through observations made during various conferences and informal conversations that Swedish universities, external to the cohort of case studies, were increasing their provision and range of Swedish language support. When asked how they verified the status of forced migrants wanting to access the programme, there appeared to be a consensus to actively ignore or not recognise

participants' immigration status – one academic simply said 'how will we know if we don't ask'. This also constituted the positive interpretation of an egalitarian ideology and Foucault's (1984; 1991) view that junctures at the paths of connections between the state and civil society, non-state actors have the power to implement policy and practice which impact positively or punitively on forced migrants. This support was often vital for those who didn't want to wait for a residence permit and to engage in activities which would expedite their participation in Swedish society. These examples provide evidence of the agency exercised by university agents and forced migrants to reject their structural exclusion and, as Fraser (2007) would assert, lead to their having a place in the structure, albeit a subordinated position but nevertheless an improvement on outright exclusion.

The best example of formal and coordinated resistance was evident in the Swedish INCLUDE network, which focused on promoting the widening participation agenda across the country. The network was formed of representatives from universities across Sweden who would attend meetings and actively participate, they would then nominate members from their institution to receive direct information and updates, in order that knowledge was not 'held' by just one person. INCLUDE was established in 2009, during a period in which there was no direction from the Swedish government to focus on widening participation. The only non-university members of INCLUDE are representatives from the Swedish NUS. The universities and NUS work collaboratively to influence widening participation practice internal and external to higher education institutions.

One particular focus of INCLUDE was to lobby the Swedish government to impose widening participation reporting requirements on universities, which whilst not directly attributed to INCLUDE is a recommendation a recent report – discussed above. Members of staff at University D and University E were heavily involved in establishing and delivering INCLUDE: I was unable to access anyone at University F that was involved with the network. In the absence of a clearly defined widening participation framework this initiative was modelled upon and influenced by close ties to UK networks. As I was approaching the end of my field work, university membership and activity within INCLUDE had increased considerably, given the change in government and renewed

focus on widening participation. Preparations were being made for the bi-annual INCLUDE conference, appropriately focused on refugees in higher education. An Executive Board member at University D likened INCLUDE to evidence of the 'extreme autonomy' Swedish universities could exercise if they chose to utilise the full extent of their powers.

In the UK, issues pertaining to forced migrants with settled or unsettled immigration status were not only noticeably absent from widening participation frameworks and from national organisations involved in lobbying and campaigning around access to higher education. In the UK there exists a coalition of NGO's who share information and good practice called AHEWG (Access to Higher Education Working Group), whose sole focus is on improving access to higher education for forced migrants. Diversity exists within the group in terms of organisational size, focus and approach to this issue, however its members have collectively and singularly had a significant impact on policy and practice at the institutional level, as well as at the national level. AHEWG was established at a time when, similar to the Swedish context, there was very little interest or impetus to focus on this issue, yet like Sweden interest has intensified following the response from universities and NGO's in the wake of the refugee crisis.

Initiatives undertaken by UK and Swedish universities take place within the context of, and against the growing tide of, marketisation within higher education. All of the initiatives to support forced migrants, formal and informal, can be situated within existing frameworks. The activities resulting from these initiatives to differing extents constitute acts of resistance, which serve to incrementally restructure instead of reproduce existing structures.

## 5.7 The Reproduction of Managed Migration in Higher Education

The absence of forced migrants from mainstream legislation constituted within the European Union, British and Swedish domestic legislation see sections 2.4 and 2.5 – represents the successful structural exclusion of forced migrants. Managed migration policies often succeed in positioning forced migrants at the periphery of civil society – the political exclusion of this group is the basis upon which to justify their physical and

subsequent social exclusion. It is problematic outside the structures governing immigration to render forced migrants visible, as there is rarely space within existing frameworks to situate and address the needs of this group. Managed migration policies are designed to provide tangible alternatives to the application of domestic legislation to forced migrants.

Walker's (2011) research focusing on forced migrants' experiences of further education, and concludes that structural barriers lead to the absence of forced migrants from statutory policy. This analysis is applicable to the structural barriers built into the higher education border. These barriers thwart the inclusion of forced migrants in higher education policy: evident in the absent presence of this group within widening participation and compliance frameworks. The concept of the higher education border is an extension of Youdell's (2004) conceptualisation of the practice of 'educational triage' employed by schools to exclude challenging students. The triage method operationalised within the higher education border creates layers of exclusion: practices of deterrence to promote self-exclusion; failure to recognise existing qualifications and skills; exclusion from higher education state-led social mobility agendas; ineligibility for student funding. Educational triage and the impact of forced migrants' capital in their pursuit of access to university is the focus of Chapter 7. Chapter 8 discusses in depth the tensions evident within the university case studies, between the replication of managed migration regimes within the higher education border and endeavours to restructure these structures.

A politics of exclusion was evident in practices of exclusion evident throughout the cohort of universities, which is not to negate the positive steps towards inclusion evident within initiatives to support forced migrants, but to acknowledge a dominant hegemony of invisibility in relation to forced migrant students and their needs. In the UK, it was apparent through multiple interviews that the visibility of the forced migrant students was based upon imaginings and expectations of university staff, rather than situated within experiences and interactions with these students; noticeably absent from both their knowledge and working practice (Maillet et al, 2016). This was made explicit from a senior management perspective by a member of the Executive Board at University A:

'I have no doubt, if you go to every single member of the executive board and ask them about this, I think there's a high chance that many won't even realise we do it'

Executive Board Member, University A, HEIUK\_A\_EB027

At University F in Sweden, I was advised that it was impossible to identify forced migrants within the Korta Vagen programme they delivered, this was in spite of recent and significant increases in recently arrived Syrians engaged on the programme. In the process of recruiting forced migrant participants I presented my research to both Korta Vagen groups and successfully recruited three participants. The university agents were reluctant to recognise the forced migrant students, which was in direct contrast to the students who were not reluctant to be identified – either by me or their student peers.

## 5.8 Conclusion

The evidence presented in this chapter reveals that higher education institutions are governed by a state-led normative agenda, which directly impacts upon the higher education structures within which the universities operate. These structures render and reinforce the invisibility of forced migrants as members of the student population. However, this chapter has also demonstrated that the overarching higher education and individual institutional structures were malleable and subject to forces which resulted in shifts and changes in practice. External forces included the state, university regulating bodies, charities and forced migrants wishing to access higher education. Internal forces included higher education staff and students (both forced migrants and the wider student population).

The university case studies all demonstrated their potential to transform from sites of exclusion to create sites of resistance (to differing extents), from which opportunities swimming against the tide of the traditional normative higher education and widening participation agenda were created that directly benefitted this group. This chapter makes explicit links between higher education structures and managed migration. This external inhospitable and exclusionary context threatens these sites of resistance and poses direct threats to the continuing growth of opportunities, their sustainability, and visibility within and beyond the higher education sector.

These findings are important because they contribute to an empirical understanding of the manifestation of neoliberal governmentality (McKee, 2009; Walters, 2011). This is evidenced in the context of the tensions between the universities' autonomy to act and the restrictions placed upon them in respect of their support of forced migrant students. These tensions and the invisibility of forced migrants are rooted in ideology, constructed in discourse and manifest within structures and governance mechanisms. This chapter contributes to debates around the structural exclusion of forced migrants from the social equality agenda and their default categorisation as international students (Morrice, 2013; Stevenson & Willott, 2007; 2008). This thesis contributes to a discussion around how universities exercise their autonomy to support forced migrants, to access opportunities within their institutions and in doing so restructure higher education.

This analysis laid important foundations upon which to not only understand the complex and multi-faceted challenges universities must overcome to support this student group, but critically foregrounds an understanding in respect to how these challenges are subsequently encountered by forced migrants in their attempts to navigate higher education. The everyday activities and interactions taking place between agents (higher education staff and forced migrants) in the context of higher education structures and individual institutions are the focus of Chapters 7 & 8. The role of Chapter 6 is to present the complex and diverse experiences of the forced migrant participants. The narratives produced through these research participants were constructed in the context of the limbo induced by their displacement interwoven with their higher education aspirations: these two threads connected the individual and collective experiences throughout their displacement journeys.

## Chapter 6

### Navigating Limbo through Higher Education

#### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter examines how the forced migrant participants' experiences of limbo were interwoven with the desire to pursue opportunities in higher education; investigating how these individual narratives improve our understanding of the relationship between belonging and higher education, in the lives of forcibly displaced migrants on a national, European or global scale. Higher education and the pursuit of opportunities within, serves to both mitigate and exacerbate the stasis and sense of exclusion imposed by limbo: a condition characterised by a 'certainty of uncertainty' whilst awaiting a decision or action that is beyond the control of the individual to resolve (Antonsich, 2010; Mountz, 2011a; Mountz, 2011b; Rotter, 2015).

Limbo plays a powerful role in blocking feelings of belonging and inclusion – evident in the lives of the forced migrants participating in this study, in their pursuit of opportunities in higher education. This thesis employs the experiences of the forced migrants to build on the work of Brun (2015) to develop new approaches to measuring the losses incurred through limbo. In doing so, limbo is predominantly conceptualised here as a linear process, which reflects the chronology in the narratives shared by the research participants, however this chapter also reflects upon limbo as a non-linear experience.

Chapter 6 explores the exercise of agency in the narratives of forced displacement and in doing so first of all identifies the pursuit of sanctuary, as the primary factor motivating the migration of this group. However, this chapter also recognises that dreams and ambitions held prior to displacement, are not necessarily diminished during the process of displacement. In this context, the potential multiple benefits derived from accessing university act as a powerful incentive in terms of stimulating the exercise of agency to overcome physical, social and economic immobility. This can be conceived of, as a secondary factor motivating the migration of some of the forced migrant participants engaged in this research. Higher education was not an 'end goal'; it was perceived by

the forced migrant participants to be a vital conduit to acquire the necessary capital to rebuild their lives and create new sustainable futures in the destination country.

Whilst the chapter commences by identifying a diversity of experience, it concludes with developing a better understanding as to what we can learn collectively from the experiences of forced migrants who aspire to access and succeed in higher education. The framework of shared characteristics, devised from the 26 participants' narratives, presents seven similarities in the participants' experiences of forced migration and aspirations in higher education. The purpose of this framework is not to present a homogenous 'forced migrant experience' or deny individual narratives, but to explore how an analysis of multiple experiences can inform and transform the response from the higher education sector to identified needs and aspirations.

## 6.2 Experiences of Limbo in Higher Education

The concept of 'limbo' reflects the certainty of uncertainty, which characterises the circumstances of forced migrants who have experienced multiple losses, including agency, as the result of displacement. Forced migrants are kept in unresolved positions (stasis induced by limbo) for (often) considerable periods of time, which manifests itself in seemingly insurmountable challenges, in their struggle to reclaim agency in the country in which they have sought asylum. There are strong parallels between Catholicism's conceptualisation of limbo and migrants who are forcibly displaced. For the Catholic faith, limbo constitutes a region situated on the border of hell, habituated by unbaptized infants and 'just' people who died prior to the birth, coming, and resurrection of Christ (Oxford English Dictionary; 1986). Forced migrants living in limbo could be construed as existing on the periphery of 'heaven' also known as the destination country, as they are often marginalised and located on the periphery of mainstream society and 'hell' their country of origin and the inherent problems that forced them to leave (Salter, 2006; Dona, 2015). Forced migrants are effectively stuck between two places, one they desperately want to enter, the other a place to which they are fearful to return. The limbo they experience is perceived to have been both initiated and perpetuated by external forces beyond their control. External forces are also perceived to have the power to end periods of limbo.



The forced migrant participants shared diverse experiences, all of which were characterised by limbo, which supported and contradicted the notion that settled immigration status resolves positions of stasis. Bana's experience of limbo commenced in Syria, where she was unable to proceed to study a postgraduate degree: this sense of stasis continued in Turkey, wherein she repeatedly attempted to transition out of the country. The eventual successful arrival and granting of settled immigration status in Sweden did not result in the dissipation of Bana's limbo, as she strove unsuccessfully to access a suitable postgraduate degree programme. It is estimated that 1.55 million of the 6.4 million Syrians displaced by the end of 2014 were not just fleeing the conflict but were also motivated by the pursuit of professional opportunities outside the country (Verme et al, 2015:39). This analysis is reinforced by the fact that the 11 forced migrant participants originating from Syria who sought asylum in Sweden, and the one Syrian participant in the UK cohort, all had prior experience of higher education and in some cases extensive professional experience gained prior to their displacement – see Appendix 6. Section 6.4 engages in a detailed discussion regarding the exercise of choice in forced displacement.

The mixed migratory motivations identified amongst the Syrian forced migrant participants were also evident within the Zimbabwean cohort. Bloch (2006) and Mupakati (2012) both attest to the fact that displaced Zimbabwean's motivations to leave the country are the result of complex social, political and economic forces resulting from ongoing conflict and societal upheaval since the 1980s (Day & White, 2002; Betts, 2010). Zimbabwean nationals with degree qualifications are more likely to flee to the UK, whilst people with no or few qualifications typically travel to South Africa (Bloch, 2006; Mupakati, 2012): this analysis resonated with the experiences of the four Zimbabwean forced migrant participants based in the UK.

Nesta's mum decided it was unsafe for them to return to Zimbabwe after her UK employment visa expired. By this point Nesta had spent five years (now aged 17) in compulsory and further education. Nesta successfully applied to and commenced a degree programme, however after three months was forced to withdraw because she couldn't afford to pay tuition fees at the international rate. This was a direct consequence of her mother not having received a decision on her asylum submission.

Nesta spent her formative years in the UK and had met all the other criteria required by the university, but unsettled immigration status, whilst not preventing her initial access, ultimately led to her exclusion.

Three of the four UK based forced migrant participants also originated from Zimbabwe. Rose, John and Victor were all located at different points on the spectrum of immigration status: Rose was quickly awarded settled status, John's status was unsettled yet, as the result of a decision on his asylum claim he had been granted the temporary right to remain, which placed him in a less precarious position than Victor who was still awaiting a decision on his initial claim for asylum. The prior higher education experience and qualifications secured by Rose, John and Victor in Zimbabwe were not accounted for when they applied to study at university in the UK.

For Rose, the lack of recognition of her qualifications within the higher education sector was further reflected in her attempts to access the labour market and secure professional employment. Rose spent two years underemployed and her experience was not dissimilar to an estimated 1.2 million Zimbabwean nationals living in the UK, 24% of whom hold an undergraduate degree yet are employed in unskilled positions, which denotes 'underemployment and downward occupational mobility' (Bloch, 2006: 83). Sections 7.4 – 7.6 focus on a detailed discussion of the challenges in recognising and accrediting the prior professional employment and qualifications held by forced migrants in the UK and Sweden and the impact on experiences of limbo.

The experience of limbo is not necessarily mitigated by access to higher education, especially when an asylum submission is still being determined. Joseph registered on a distance learning master's programme with University D whilst living in Ethiopia. Joseph sought to continue and complete his degree programme after seeking asylum in the country. The further individuals and groups are located from the centre of the society, the greater the marginalisation they experience, evident in the technologies of domination used to physically exclude Joseph from Swedish society through his location in a refugee camp (Foucault, 2001; Dean, 2010).

Forced migrants with unsettled immigration status in the UK and Sweden are located at a physical distance from wider society in specific accommodation, 'camps' or in detention centres with limited access and opportunities to generate income through employment or access any level of education. The strategic marginalisation of forced migrants often renders them immobile and invisible and creates: 'geographical and emotional distance between citizens and non-citizens' (Maillet et al, 2016:945). The limbo induced by life in a refugee camp compounded Joseph's exclusion from wider Swedish society, yet he remained determined to complete his degree programme.

'It is not easy to study for a degree while staying in a camp. It takes a lot of courage, willingness, persistence, and commitment to do a degree while waiting for your asylum case to be decided . . . I would have liked to live in the vicinity of University D and attended lectures and studied in a safe and quiet environment'  
Joseph, Ethiopian living in Sweden, FMSE\_ET16

In direct contrast, Elias sought asylum in Sweden from Syria, after having secured safe passage into the country with a scholarship for international students awarded by the Swedish Institute. Whilst awaiting the outcome from his asylum claim (submitted upon arrival in the country), Elias continued with his master's degree programme and the student stipend element of his scholarship covered his living costs. Elias's circumstances appear to be better than the majority of the other participants; he was able to continue with his education and live safely within Swedish society whilst awaiting an outcome on his asylum application. Elias described his situation as 'excruciating': not knowing the outcome of his asylum application was affecting his ability to engage with and focus on his studies:

'Whenever I'm thinking in a lecture, it will be 50% of what is actually happening in the lecture and 50% of when I'm getting my decision. You can't focus on anything while you have something very, very big you are waiting for which can determine how your life will go'  
Elias, Syrian living in Sweden FMSE\_SY23

Elias and Joseph demonstrated how the effects of their unsettled immigration status were not minimised by their respective positions in Swedish higher education institutions.

The diverse examples represented in this section demonstrate the differing degrees to which the forced migrant participants were marginalised in civil society in the context

of their access and participation in higher education: this ranged from withdrawal from a degree programme due to non-payment of tuition fees, studying for a degree but experiencing physical exclusion in a refugee camp, to engaging in higher education whilst living in civil society but feeling overwhelmed by the anxiety associated with awaiting the resolution of an asylum application. Whether actively studying or pursuing HE studies, the forced migrant participants' experienced physical, social and economic exclusion, mirroring the wider marginalisation imposed upon them within civil society (Andersson & Gou, 2009; Burke, 2010). The circumstances endured by these individuals, whilst seemingly disparate, remain interconnected by the direct impact that their immigration status had on experiences of limbo both within and whilst on the periphery of higher education.

### 6.3 Forced Migrant Habitus and Higher Education

Section 3.8 introduced the concept of a forced migrant habitus, as a point of departure from Morrice's (2013) 'refugee habitus', which she argues is 'shaped by the negativity in both public and policy discourses' (pp.666). Forced migrant habitus is shaped by life changing experiences across multiple places and perceived to be in deficit in respect to individuals' ability to become socially mobile in the destination country. This section connects the educational habitus developed in the country of origin with the habitus that is reshaped through the process of displacement. The information conveyed in Appendix 6., and expanded on in section 7.5, demonstrates the significant role education played in the lives of 25 out of 26 forced migrant participants prior to displacement, wherein lies the roots of their collective desire to pursue and achieve in higher education. Education played a key role in shaping their habitus: habitus being their embodied cultural capital, acquired from birth (Bourdieu, 2004; 1991; Stevenson & Willott, 2008). An exploration of the habitus held by the cohort of forced migrants provides an insight into the value placed on education and how it helped facilitate or limit opportunities in the destination country.

The forced migrant research participants frequently referenced their parents in discussions focused on their motivations to succeed at university. Rose described growing up in a poor family, wherein the desire and the determination to pursue success

through education was fundamental to her upbringing. In Rose's current financial position, she believed the most important inheritance she could pass onto her own children was the same legacy of education. Esther arrived in the UK as a teenager: she described her life in Kenya through the lens of material poverty and the enormity of meeting challenges such as having enough food. In spite of this, education was always the most important priority, described by Esther as being as 'important as life'. The belief had been instilled in the forced migrant participants from an early age that a good education was integral not only to success but to earn respect. Devine (2009) asserts that there is a direct correlation between the education habitus held by parents and their children, which is further supported by Jackson's (2008) research wherein participants described inheriting a 'belief' in education from their parents.

Moha and Halil were both of Palestinian origin, born and raised in refugee camps in Syria. Immobility, coupled with the ability and determination to live through the challenges it brought, had characterised their lives from birth.

'We as Palestinians don't have the same assets as many people, for example, Syrian people have assets because they are the indigenous people living in the country, so they have assets, they have shops, they have flats they can rent, and they can circulate money. . . that's why basically education is very important for us, you can move it everywhere, not as a fixed asset that can stay in just one place like a shop or a car or whatever, but with a certificate of education you can move it where ever you go, you can make the best of it'  
Moha, Palestinian-Syrian, living in Sweden, FMSE\_SY15

The experiences of these young men and their pursuit of education resonated with Harker's (2009) research detailing the lives of Palestinians living on the West Bank endangering their lives on a daily basis to battle through check points to access university: hoping that a university education would one day create new opportunities and lives elsewhere. The notion that education provided knowledge capable of traversing borders was reinforced by Peter and Layal from Syria who also described education in tangible terms. Peter conceived of his prior education as his 'crown', whilst Layal's father advocated for her to pursue education, advising her that it was a 'good weapon to fight with in the future'. This finding is further supported by Harris' (2013) research, which reports on the impact of parental influence on educational habitus. Each of these forced migrant participants discussed at length the challenges they faced in

terms of their prior education being recognised within the destination country, yet no one expressed any regrets in respect to the prior education undertaken in their country of origin. Chapter 7 explores issues around recognition and accreditation of prior learning in the specific context of the forced migrant student higher education journey.

The habitus of the forced migrants was shaped not only by experiences in their country of origin but the destination country. The eight UK based forced migrant participants who arrived as children accrued cultural capital in the UK through their experiences in compulsory education. In addition to securing institutional capital in the form of academic qualifications required to undertake a degree programme, they also acquired cultural capital, resulting in the development of an intrinsic understanding of the UK university system (Erel, 2010). Kirsty from South East Asia and Zahed from Iran entered the UK education system at primary level. Neither Kirsty nor Zahed experienced problems submitting a UCAS university application: the concerns they expressed were more akin to their citizen rather than their forced migrant peers, for example, selecting the best university for their chosen degree. Where Kirsty and Zahed differed from their citizen peers was not a deficit in their cultural but their economic capital (Stevenson, 2008), as they were ineligible for student funding due to their unsettled immigration status. The weight of this challenge was articulated by Kirsty:

‘Stressing out about grades, I want to get the right grades and things like that, but I think what stressed me out the most was my [immigration] paperwork without a doubt’

Kirsty, South East Asian, living in the UK, FMUK\_SEA09

The habitus held by forced migrants is unlikely to equip them to successfully navigate the full extent of their capital deficit in higher education in either case study country. Navigation of the higher education border is predicated upon the proximity of the participants to the norm of the ‘affiliated’ citizen (Dean, 2010; Burke, 2010). Multiple authors identify the diversity of the deficit in the capital held by forced migrants with both settled and unsettled immigration status (Stevenson & Willott, 2007; 2008; Burke, 2010; Morrice, 2013; Wilkinson & Lloyd-Zantiotis, 2017). The importance of education in shaping the habitus held by the research participants provided crucial context in comprehending the role played by higher education in the decision-making processes during displacement and settlement in the destination country. The next section details

how choices were made over the course of the forced migratory journey and what these choices highlighted about seeking sanctuary whilst not foregoing ambition.

#### 6.4 Destination 'Choices' during Displacement

The widely held assumption is that the sole focus of forced migrants fleeing persecution and seeking sanctuary within the borders of another country should be on mitigating the immediate dangers they face. This perception has provided the basis of widespread criticism, as to why forced migrants do not always seek asylum in the first country they arrive in deemed 'safe'. In reality, the majority of forced migrants reside in countries bordering their country of origin (UNHCR, 2016). However, the focus of considerable debate, discussion, and concern is upon forced migrants who, akin to some members of this research cohort, set out with the intention of reaching and seeking asylum in Western Europe. The displacement journey of the forced migrant participants was important, in that it was informed by and responsible for shaping their habitus. Forced migrant habitus and the desire to achieve in education and build a new future were integral to decisions made, the opportunity to exercise agency permitting, by the research participants during the process of displacement. Analysis of the different displacement journeys also helped document the impact of experiences of limbo along with the accompanying trauma and frustrations accrued prior to the participants' arrival in the destination country.

Day & White (2002) identified three categories which reflect the situation in which forced migrants leave their country of origin: either in response to i) an acute situation, ii) because their return has been blocked or iii) in anticipation of a situation becoming acute. 12 forced migrants from the cohort of 26 came from Syria and fled in response to acute dangers or fears in relation to the escalating conflict. Several participants cited forced conscription to the army as an anticipatory concern compelling them to flee. The four forced migrants from Zimbabwe based in the UK spanned all three categories. The three participants from Afghanistan, two from Iran, and one from Ethiopia left due to political instability and threats to their lives. The remaining countries or regions from which the forced migrants originated were Malawi, Kenya, South Africa and South East

Asia. The individuals from these areas were all minors and their claims for asylum were linked to trafficking or undocumented displacement.

The journey from a forced migrant's country of origin to the destination country could be prolonged over weeks, months and even years, during which access to or progress in higher education is highly improbable. Journeys involve crossing multiple borders, using multiple modes or at times no mode of transport, and forced migrants are often at the mercy of smugglers and people traffickers (Crawley, 2010). 16 of the 26 forced migrant participants entered the destination country by dangerous clandestine routes facilitated by smugglers: representative of the majority of forced migrants (Scheel & Squire, 2014). Layal described travelling from Syria to Sweden, as the 'death journey': Mountz (2011a) reinforced Layal's description with her use of the term 'terror journey' (pp.121) to describe the illicit, circuitous and dangerous journeys undertaken by those who are forcibly displaced. The illegality of the journey is compounded by European Union legislation – see section 2.4 – this adds to the complexity and increases the challenges in accessing Western Europe (Scheel & Squire, 2014).

Ali was only 16 years old when he was forced to flee Afghanistan when his parents feared that his life was in danger. Ali endured a protracted physically and emotionally traumatic journey. He persevered in the hope that he would eventually be safe, his future would be secure, and he could access opportunities in education not available to him in Afghanistan:

'They [forced migrants] want to come to this country and want to stay here forever and plan their future and if they can't, if they don't have that, they have no hope. Because we suffer a lot to come to this country, put our life in danger, you know, come by lorry . . . not many of us survive, but we survive, we come here and if they don't give us a visa to stay forever, then that could be a big problem for us in the future'

Ali, Afghani living in the UK, FMUK\_AF01

Ali had no opportunity to prepare for his departure from Afghanistan and his expectations of life in the UK were based predominantly upon his imagination, due to a lack of tangible information upon which to shape his understanding. A dangerous journey undertaken with smugglers is indicative of two key factors. The first is the risks forced migrants are prepared to undergo to reach Western Europe. The second is the



excessively long and dangerous 'death' journeys that many of the forced migrant participants endured when they sought not just sanctuary but the potential to build a new life in a new country. The journey reflected their revised position at the bottom of the social hierarchy, as soon as their status changed to 'forced migrant' (Cresswell, 2006).

An anticipatory departure did not always prevent a 'death journey'. Marwan's desire to continue his university studies outside of Syria played a central role in his anticipatory plans to leave the country due to the escalating conflict. However, Marwan was shocked when his plan did not automatically alleviate the limbo he experienced in relation to HE:

'I'd tried to apply for university in Canada, but it was always rejection, rejection, and it was so much [money] also to go to Canada. Really costly. I tried to apply to British universities but it's really hard requirements [admissions criteria]. I think about it, ok this move will cost me 10,000 dollars [fees to a smuggler]. I was thinking I'm going go to Sweden and apply for asylum and take the residency and then applying for one of the universities there. I was thinking it's going be easy, it's going to be nice. But when I hit the ground and in reality, shit, a lot of time and a lot of work and it's hard'

Marwan, forced migrant based in Sweden, FMSE\_SY26

The forced migrant participants demonstrated the incredible lengths they went to avoid departing in acute circumstances: indicative of their ability to exercise power over their migration trajectories in the most adverse of circumstances. These behaviours provide empirical evidence of Foucault's conceptualisation of power as a fluid entity, exercised by anyone in any circumstances, as discussed in section 3.7. Ten of the forced migrant participants utilised visas (or were listed as a dependent on their parent's visa), such as those awarded to visitors or to facilitate taking up employment or education-related opportunities, as a means to escape the country of origin or transit country and travel via a safer route to the destination country. Elias was on the cusp of succumbing to leaving with the aid of a smuggler when he was awarded a scholarship by the Swedish Institute:

'I thought that it's a very stupid thing to do at that time, because a lot of people are dying in the sea. But I was getting to the point that I don't have a choice, when I got the choice'

Elias, Syrian living in Sweden, FMSE\_SY23

Elias' situation reflects the fact that the capacity to secure a visa was often dependent on being able to utilise existing capital in terms of employment or education. Peter described how he gained time to plan an exit route from Syria, which he believed would enable him to live safely in Western Europe and continue his HE studies. Peter explained that he planned to fail the final year of his Dentistry degree in order that he would have to retake his exams and thus avoid forced conscription to the Syrian army. When asked why he dedicated his re-take year to learning English and German in order to try and access a university in Western Europe, Peter explained:

'Because you can get like residency, there is like also like the social way, like the social atmosphere is slightly better to live and, there are many universities, or you can say that many countries, they are almost free to study in France and Germany. There are many programmes in English and there is a system which is clear, how to apply'

Peter, Syrian living in Sweden, FMSE\_SY25

Peter successfully obtained a place on a postgraduate programme at University F and a scholarship from the Swedish Institute: this meant he was granted a student visa and safe passage to travel to Sweden. The successful acquisition of a place on a degree programme coupled with a scholarship to cover the cost of living, was an approach also undertaken by Elias (above) and Abdullah, also from Syria. All three participants sought asylum in Sweden shortly after arriving and once they had registered on their respective degree programmes.

Increased media reporting from Summer 2015 onwards has successfully drawn attention to the inherent precarity in the journeys made by thousands of forced migrants trying to enter Western Europe, as well as the protracted precarity induced by 'waiting' behind newly erected barriers, in the process of trying to move through the borders of less welcoming European countries. EU legislation, mainly the Dublin Convention (European Union 1997) determines that people seeking asylum should do so in the first EU state that they enter. Legislation coupled with EU directives in respect of the reception of asylum seekers, are aimed at creating parity across EU member states in terms of the rights and entitlements afforded to this group. However, these directives do not extend to higher education. The immobility that European Union legislation imposes on forced migrants, is in sharp contrast to the freedom of movement afforded to EU citizens to travel, work and study across the continent.

In Omid's situation, that of an Afghani forced migrant, EU law worked both for and against him in his desire to seek asylum in Western Europe. As a Linguistics graduate working at Kabul University, Omid was offered the opportunity to study for a postgraduate degree in France. Omid utilised this opportunity to secure a Schengen visa that allowed him to travel from France to Sweden, where he tried unsuccessfully to seek asylum. Under the rules set out in the Dublin Convention, Omid's asylum application was refused by the Swedish Migration Agency. Omid opted to live in hiding in Sweden for 18 months until the point at which his asylum application would be accepted: he chose not to give explicit reasons for his desire to seek asylum in Sweden, simply stating that: 'some European states are very anti- migrant and their policies are failing everyone'. Omid's desire to continue his university education was temporarily superseded by his need to seek asylum in a country where he felt comfortable. The desire to move on to seek sanctuary in a country perceived to offer a warmer welcome and greater opportunities for long term settlement, often centred around the perceived potential for individuals to playing a meaningful role in society.

Moore (2013) asserts that asylum shopping, a process through which forced migrants supposedly select a destination country based on the availability of resources and opportunities, is reflective of 'an advanced industrial democratic nation-state conditioned by political and cultural forces of neoliberalism' (pp.349). The genealogy of asylum shopping is rooted in its function as part of a pejorative discourse developed primarily to justify the application of the *Dublin Convention* (1990), reproduced by the mass media, which ultimately negatively portrays the exercise of agency by forced migrants (Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008; Moore, 2013). Asylum shopping focuses on resources forced migrants receive *from*, as opposed to contribute *to* the state. This research endeavours to move beyond the construction of forced migrants as scroungers intent on maximising their access to state resources and reconstruct this group as potential contributors to the state and civil society in the destination country (Augoustinos, 2008; Mountz & Hiemstra, 2014).

This research highlighted the fact that *some* of the forced migrants who participated in this research who anticipated their displacement, or for whom their return was blocked, actively investigated the country of destination in which they hoped to seek asylum and

their research centred on opportunities in higher education. This was in direct contrast to other participants who left an acute situation and exercised considerably less agency in terms of their destination due to their reliance on people traffickers. The forced migrant experiences presented not only contradict commentary (often with the media) which presents these individuals as aggressors and to be feared, but also research which claims forced migrants exercise little agency regarding their asylum destination (Crawley, 2010).

The exercise of agency by forced migrants during the displacement journey needs to be understood in the context of researching options to avoid or at best minimise the inherent dangers and reduced mobility endured as a forced migrant, compared with other migrant groups, as well as the desire not to *take* from but to *contribute* to the new context in which they seek sanctuary and the chance to rebuild their lives. This research effectively disrupts the binary of the villain / victim forced migrant through recognising that safety is a priority, and that existing knowledge capital can, in some instances, be utilised to secure safe passage. Finally, forced migrants don't surrender all ambition or hope for their life to continue when they become displaced and enter into situations which necessitate that they seek asylum.

Regardless of whether the forced migrant participants departed their country of origin in an acute or anticipatory situation they employed what Horst (2006) describes as 'buufis': the dream of resettlement. The research participants spent a considerable amount of time visualising and imagining life beyond the situations they endured in their country of origin, in transit and even on arrival in the destination country. Aspirations for the future were reported on in Gladwell et al's (2016) research which focused on forced migrants living in refugee camps who wanted to engage in education opportunities that provided them with qualifications that would be recognised in a 'high resource' environment, i.e. a country in which they hoped to eventually be resettled.

The prospect of, and opportunities within higher education were a means through which the forced migrant participants could re-establish themselves, first of all in their imagination, as they planned or visualised their future and second upon arrival when they endeavoured to transform the imaginary into reality. Bourdieu extended this

notion of the imaginary to the education context: 'a large part of social suffering stems from the poverty of people's relationships to the educational system, which not only shapes social destinies but also the image they have of their destiny' (Bourdieu, 1998:43). Success in accessing higher education validated decisions and risks taken in respect to individual displacement journeys. It also served as an expression of autonomy, disrupting stereotypes produced by both sides of the binary presenting forced migrants as passive victims, or as aggressive scroungers seeking to drain the resources of the state (Scheel & Squire, 2014; Gateley, 2015).

The journey from the country of origin to the destination country supports an understanding of the context in which the forced migrant participants, where possible, utilised their power to exercise agency to achieve both their primary and secondary migratory motivations. The exercise of agency manifested itself in decisions regarding the country in which they submitted a claim for asylum and pursued their higher education goals. The displacement journey provides an important framework within which to begin exploring the different ways of measuring and determining the extent of forced migrants' 'losses' in the process of forced displacement.

## 6.5 Measuring Loss in Forced Displacement

The forced migrant experience of limbo is a condition that is experienced in multiple ways, in multiple places. Limbo is not the responsibility of one state, neither does it occur in one 'place' but across numerous sites and represents a condition that impacted upon every aspect of the forced migrant participants' existence: triggered by their birth, internal displacement within, or displacement from their country of origin. Brun (2015) is one of the few academics who have provided a tangible measure of limbo. Akin to many of the forced migrant participants, Brun (2015) uses time as a tangible measure of limbo: protracted displacement equates to five years and whilst she does not use a definitive measure of time to determine chronic displacement, frequent references are made to people who have endured periods of limbo spanning 15 years. This measure was developed as the result of research focused on individuals internally displaced within their country of origin and the measurement of time in limbo is often based upon one alternate location to their primary 'home' or place of origin.

Time was the most frequently used measure to both calculate and to articulate everything lost as the result of the limbo imposed in the process of displacement, reflected in this research and multiple other studies (Gateley, 2015; Naidoo, 2015; Earnest et al, 2010). Time was used by the forced migrant participants to calculate academic years lost due to interruptions to their studies or that were no longer recognised as part of their education when transferring to a new higher education system; or time spent acquiring the language skills required to study.

John from Zimbabwe sought asylum in the UK where he endeavoured to establish a new life for himself. John waited six years to resume his university career, he considered this his greatest loss, choosing to describe the time spent waiting as ‘donkey years’ wasted sitting at home doing nothing. Victor, from Zimbabwe, calculated losses in terms of time, in respect to his perceived lack of achievements in comparison with his peers:

‘I look at my age and I think wow I am 24 and most of the people I learned with have graduated and it really bothers me a lot because I am a competitive guy in a good sense and I just feel like I am losing you know, losing ground [time]’  
Victor, Zimbabwean living in the UK, FMUK\_ZM03

Moha was of Palestinian origin and sought asylum in Sweden from Syria. Moha was focused on the acquisition of Swedish language skills in order that he could study at postgraduate level on a degree programme taught in Swedish. Time spent studying in Syria and learning Swedish were conceptualised as lost years. However, Moha positioned his personal loss in relation to other Syrians experiencing far greater immobility than his:

‘At a certain point you have to accept that three years have been wasted . . . I should have been studying for my master’s degree. So that was the thing I feel sad for, but I still had the opportunity to start all over again, not as so many people living disparately in neighbouring countries or internally displaced in Syria’  
Moha, Syrian living in Sweden, FMSE\_SY15

Immobility needs to be understood relative to the time and space within which it is experienced – in this sense as a relative experience: relative to other people and the mobility they are afforded in the same space and relative to the mobility previously experienced in their country of origin (Harker, 2009). Abdullah did not leave Syria with a view to travel to Sweden and seek asylum. Abdullah’s arrival in Sweden marked his

fifth 'move' to seek security and sanctuary. The first time he moved was due to being internally displaced within Syria to escape the conflict, the second to India to join his uncle and to avoid conscription to the Syrian army. However, the absence of education and work opportunities in India led to his third move; Abdullah joined his family who by this stage were living in exile in Egypt, where Abdullah supported them to establish a small business. In pursuit of his own goals, he took up a position of employment in Saudi Arabia. During this time restrictions were imposed on Syrians entering Egypt – his family could not return if they left and he could no longer enter the country. Restrictions on Syrians in Saudi Arabia forced Abdullah to once again explore options in a new 'place'.

The Swedish Institute awarded Abdullah a full scholarship that granted him a residence permit enabling him to live and study in Sweden. Abdullah is an example of a forced migrant who fled Syria for his own safety and was forced to keep moving owing to increasing restrictions placed upon him in the countries in which he attempted to 'settle'. A critical motivation interwoven with the need for sanctuary was Abdullah's continued ambitions to complete his HE studies. His experience also reflects the fluidity of limbo, as opposed to a fixed status, which he managed to suspend for periods of time following his initial displacement from Syria.

This thesis seeks to extend Brun's (2015) application of time to measure the limbo experienced, as the result of internal displacement to forced migrants traversing international borders. This research contributes an alternative approach to gauge the extent of the losses endured through limbo. Firstly, time spent in limbo should not be perceived conceptually, as commencing at the point a claim for asylum is submitted in the destination country. The application of time to calculate displacement should commence at the first point at which a forced migrant becomes displaced. If this method is used to 'count' the period of displacement, it would substantially alter the length of time forced migrants in Sweden and the UK have been waiting to settle, belong through access to opportunities to rebuild their lives. Wilkinson & Lloyd-Zantiotis (2017) reinforce the fact that trauma, experiences of exclusion and limbo do not necessarily cease when immigration status is settled.

In Abdullah's case his displacement was not only the result of the civil war in Syria, but the responses from Egypt and Saudi Arabia to Syrian forced migrants, who perpetuated the restrictions imposed upon him in his country of origin. The responsibility for Abdullah's ongoing displacement needs to be shared across multiple sites. This approach supports the development of a more nuanced understanding in regard to the full extent of experiences of displacement, one that does not just focus on time but in Abdullah's case the chronicity of repeatedly having to physically move and re-establish his life in a new 'place'. Brun's (2015) theory of time as a measure of the losses incurred through displacement, is more effectively applied to forced migrants, when time accrued in limbo commences at the point of displacement and ceases at the point at which forced migrants achieve a sense of belonging in the destination country. Wilkinson & Lloyd-Zantiotis (2017) and Harris (2013) (Australia) reported on the increasing number of forced migrants who sought opportunities in higher education who had endured repeated attempts to resettle and in the process experienced reoccurring disruptions to their education.

The second point of departure from Brun's theory, relates to the consideration of factors beyond time reflecting the extent of losses endured as the result of displacement. Omid attempted to articulate the full extent of his personal losses in displacement and reflected upon what it meant to begin life again in a new country:

'What I lost – lost the whole back life, I lost my friends that I could easily talk and have conversations with. I don't have any access to them and they don't have any access to me, I don't have any access to my family, my siblings, to my parents. I had a lot of chances, career opportunities to get improved in Afghanistan I was doing well and I could have used the knowledge that I had in Afghanistan in a better way and keep going, but I lost that opportunity'  
Omid, Afghani living in Sweden, FMSE\_AF14

Time as a tactic is exemplified by the state's control of time spent 'waiting' to access opportunities, deployed as a technology of governance, as well as tactics utilised by forced migrant participants to resist limbo through endeavours to accelerate time (Allsop et al, 2014b). Whilst time is frequently mapped out using chronological markers, the passage of time for forced migrants in the asylum process is sometimes more akin to 'snakes and ladders', as progress can quickly be superseded by a backward move



(Rotter, 2015:90). Limbo rendered the forced participants' hopes and dreams temporally and spatially inaccessible, yet their narratives reflected what Rotter (2015) describes as the 'complex lived experience of waiting as affective, active and productive' (pp: 81). The accounts shared by Abdullah and Omid reflect the non-linear manifestation of limbo, as an experience at times suspended by settled periods, often the result of employment opportunities.

The chronic impact of limbo can be collectively understood, across the diverse experience of the forced migrant participants, in terms of opportunities lost and the time spent trying to rebuild a life (at least) commensurate with the one that the forced migrant research participants were forced to leave behind. Evidence of the acceleration of time was most palpable in the desire to pursue opportunities in higher education in parallel with settled immigration status. Higher education as a variable was integral to calculating loss and the conduit through which time lost could potentially be reclaimed. A holistic measure of the losses endured in the limbo induced by forced displacement serves to further contextualise the forced migrant participants' rationale behind the dual strategies to demarcate their own perceptions of belonging.

## 6.6 Dimensions of Forced Migrant Belonging

The focus of this chapter has been on the role of limbo and its connection to experiences and aspirations in relation to higher education. This section expands the discussion to explore what constitutes an 'end' or the mitigation of experiences of limbo, through an exploration of how the forced migrant participants constituted their own notions of 'belonging' in the context of the destination country. Belonging is explored from the perspective of immigration status and the impact of living a 'settled' or an 'unsettled' existence in the destination country, before exploring the forced migrant participants' more holistic conceptualisations of belonging.

It is almost impossible to disentangle a discussion centred on belonging from citizenship. Citizenship is the legal manifestation of belonging and the outcome of locating it within a legislative framework (Yuval-Davis, 2007). Within the citizen/non-citizen binary, citizenship can be seen as a static and tangible entity embodied in settled status, i.e. the

accepted and recognised right to belong within specific territorial borders (Salter, 2006; Yuval-Davis, 2007; Jackson, 2008). Citizenship can also be seen as a process, which transcends the stasis invoked by the either or binary and is instead viewed, as a fluid and multi-faceted entity, practiced by individuals regardless of whether or not they sit within the correct legal category with the associated rights and responsibilities (McNevin, 2006; Yuval-Davis, 2007; Ralph & Staeheli, 2011). These varying constructions of citizenship are in direct opposition to the legal definition upon which government regulations are based, and within which this particular group are clearly demarcated as non- citizens by virtue of their status as forced migrants.

One of the key points, evolving from the previous discussion in this chapter is the fixed association between settled legal status (either citizenship or embarking on a secure legal route to acquire it) and belonging. This is not to ignore or discount discussions around different representations of citizenship, but to highlight the fact that *not* belonging to a particular legal status in the context or place within which an individual strives to belong, has a huge impact on their day to day lived reality. Ultimately the power to grant legal status, leading to the recognised 'membership' within the destination country lies not in the hands of forced migrants but in the state – forcing many people to live in limbo, which Atonsich (2010) constructs as a 'longing to belong' (pp.20).

In the majority of countries (albeit with some notable exceptions), citizenship is a right of birth. The denial or revocation of citizenship serves as a strategy, which Foucault described as a technology of domination, used to govern the most marginalised members of the population (1991; 1997). This is one example, which reflects the fluid as opposed to static construction of the 'citizen' category; a status which can be awarded and is also subject to revocation. This is evident historically within legislation wherein the removal of citizenship, delay or denial of an award was used as a punishment and to marginalise the most undesirable members of society. Until 1918 in the UK, the Poor Law revoked certain citizen rights for those incapable of self-governing, identified by their inability to support themselves financially due to the extent of their poverty. Admittance to the work house meant that citizens relinquished amongst other rights, their political right as a citizen to vote (Marshall, 1949).

This can also be seen more recently in the context of forced migrants. In 2000, the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) was established to provide a separate system of welfare support in the UK, for asylum seekers for whom no decision had been reached in relation to their leave to remain in the country and those appealing negative decisions on asylum applications. The Swedish Migration Agency administers a similar separate system of welfare support to people seeking asylum in Sweden. Forced migrants in these positions often have no choice (unless they are supported by friends or family in the destination country) to live in what Agamben (2005) describes as 'bare life': a situation wherein the most minimal support required to survive is provided. In both countries when asylum has been refused and the state wishes to undertake deportations, forced migrants are forcibly rendered destitute through the denial of accommodation and subsistence. In thinking about state power to include and exclude certain people, Agamben's (2005) 'state of exception' also speaks to the ways in which non-citizens, in this case some forced migrants, are placed outside the protection of the law, and therefore increasing their precarity and the barriers they encounter.

The right to access higher education is not explicitly denied to forced migrants with unresolved status in either country, however rules pertaining to eligibility and subsequent access to student funding create barriers that are often only surmountable once immigration status has been resolved. There is a direct relationship between citizenship and potential access to all aspects of civil, political and social life – wherein higher education can be located (Marshall, 1949). It is not just the denial of citizen status, but the fact that it supports a clear citizen / non-citizen binary, demarcating who is and who isn't eligible to access support, services and opportunities in civil society.

The state also imposes rights and responsibilities on citizens (Yuval-Davis, 2007), which the state isn't technically able to expect from non-citizens. Non-citizens are governed by technologies of domination and explicit controls are exercised over their lives (Foucault, 1991; 1997; Agamben, 2005), as opposed to the implicit controls exercised over the most 'affiliated' members of the population. In spite of this there is clear evidence that many forced migrants resist what Agamben (2005) calls 'bare life' and 'state of exception', and not only endeavour to, but successfully act as good citizens, guided by the rights and responsibilities shaped by the state; evidence of which includes abiding

by formal laws and adopting cultural 'norms' (McNevin, 2006; Nyers, 2010). The denial of citizen rights and the associated privileges to forced migrants is predicated upon the fact that they were forced to either surrender their citizenship at the point of displacement or in the case of Moha and Halil, Palestinian-Syrians, they had never previously held citizenship. Upon entering the destination country forced migrants are not immediately awarded status but are expected to earn it.

The rights associated with citizenship are important and are placed under increasing protection, as they are applied by the state and exert greater power than international, European and national human rights law in determining the rights and entitlements of forced migrants. This is indicative of the strength of sovereign power (Agamben, 2005), especially in relation to managed migration regimes and their impact on forced migration. There is evidence in both the UK and Sweden of tightened controls on the borders closest to the locus of state power, as well increasing challenges and prolonged delays to acquire status as citizens, which acts as an ongoing border between forced migrants, full access to, participation within and a secure future in the destination country.

Within the cohort of forced migrant participants, I encountered, and through multiple studies around forced migration, confirmation of belonging to the state, by the state, was and is privileged over the emotional and other multi-faceted interpretations and constructions of belonging (Day & White, 2002; Yuval-Davis et al, 2005; Yuval-Davis, 2007). Limbo was a condition into which Halil, Peter and Moha were born: descendants of Palestinian refugees born and raised in Syrian refugee camps, ineligible for Syrian citizenship and effectively stateless since birth. At the age of 23, Halil was recognised, for the first time, as a legal resident of a country, when Sweden granted him a residence permit, which equated to settled immigration status:

'So suddenly I am a legal resident of a country where I will not be asked to leave under any circumstances . . . the idea by itself is very exhausting because it's just very uncommon for somebody who lived 22, 23 years of his life with the pre-assumption that he might be hurt any moment, whether by the political regime or by the limbo he was born into'

Halil, Syrian living in Sweden, FMSE\_SY13

The historical context in which the Palestinian population experiences acute marginalisation is evident in the fact that Syria and other Gulf states resist affording Palestinians citizenship, which places serious restrictions on their physical, social and economic mobility (Shiblak, 1996). Counter to the relief upon an award of status described by Halil, Emmanuel from South Africa, was awarded settled immigration status in the UK but on a temporary basis, which caused him ongoing anxiety in respect to whether he would be awarded a further term of temporary status and the ongoing insecurity about his long term right to remain in the UK. He lived in fear of the revocation of his status for even the most minor misdemeanour, a concern shared not just by forced migrants but by members of the wider migrant population in the UK (Jackson; 2008). Elias, from Syria, studying in higher education as an international student whilst awaiting a decision on his asylum claim, articulated these same concerns:

‘Even if I’m settled, which I’m not, I don’t know when I’m going to get a decision, but even if some miracle happen and I’m settled, am I settled for long? Or for one year? Or for three years? Am I settled for like one year, then some right wing (political party) will come and tell you, go back to Syria?’  
Elias, Syrian living in Sweden, FMSE\_SY23

Elias’ fears were not unfounded, as following the end of my field research, the Swedish government introduced temporary residence permits (Migration Agency, 2016). If citizenship is not conceived of as a fixed static entity, but characterised by fluidity, membership is not fixed, acceptance into the category can be subsequently rejected. Securing permanent status is increasingly difficult, as states within the European Union seek to grant forced migrants’ the temporary as opposed to the permanent right to remain (Koser & Black, 1999). Even if refugee status is granted, Yuval-Davis contests that there is huge uncertainty as to whether it will be withdrawn by the state (2007).

However, within this broad analysis of forced migrants’ priority in respect to belonging, there are examples of belonging in smaller spaces – such as neighbourhoods in which they live (Jackson, 2008) and within universities affording them opportunities to study both with, and in spite of, their lack of settled immigration status. Omid from Afghanistan spent two years living undocumented prior to being able to submit a claim for asylum, which affected his experience of belonging. Omid was a direct beneficiary of

an informal forced migrant initiative discussed in section 5.6.2, when a Swedish academic informally included him in lectures at University D.

'I met a lecturer somewhere who was teaching at University D then we talked and she was interested in my background . . . she tried to get me into the system, but that didn't work even though she tried really hard, but she said you can always come to my lectures. You can just sit in the class, you won't be able to get grades and stuff but if you're interested in being educated you're more than welcome to come to my lecture and we have seminars you can participate in'  
Omid, Afghani living in Sweden, FMSE\_AF14

Omid described how the experience was both incredibly positive, as it completely changed his academic interests, yet he felt uncomfortable in lectures and seminars and avoided developing relationships with other students. Omid's involvement in university life mirrored his status in wider society, existing in a 'state of exception' (Agamben, 2005; Dona, 2015), allowed to exist in the university through his presence, but his lack of 'belonging' was apparent in his absence as an enrolled student and lack of academic accreditation.

Integration is arguably easier to measure than belonging: however this research is concerned with the research participant's subjective interpretation of belonging, as opposed to measures based upon educational attainment, employment and language ability. The two continuous threads connecting the forced migrants' individual journeys are the pursuit of sanctuary, and opportunities to further their education. The forced migrant participants helped paint a picture of how they envisioned their futures; all of which were predicated upon the desire to belong and be included within, as opposed to excluded from, society. If we return to the conceptualisation of limbo in Catholic doctrine, the alleviation of limbo or release from purgatory is facilitated by the intervention of another. The alleviation of limbo in respect to both immigration status and access to higher education, whilst it can be improved by the individual forced migrant, ultimately requires the intervention of other agents.

## 6.7 Building a Collective Narrative

An important advance in this research was the opportunity to develop a collective understanding and create a framework of characteristics shared by the forced migrant

participants, which was in direct contrast to my previous position and one shared by Scheel & Squire (2014) that forced migrants did not present a distinct social group. In my role as a practitioner, I only ever identified two characteristics which were shared by the Article 26 scholarship beneficiaries: firstly, they had all sought asylum at some stage in their immigration journey, and secondly they not only had the desire but the capability to undertake a degree programme. The idea was not to deny the heterogeneity or, as Morrice (2013) implores, the avoidance of 'universalising the needs of refugee subjects or over generalising experience with notions or trauma' (pp.667). The aim was to explore the homogeneity evident within and derive thematic similarity between the lived experiences of the forced migrant participants, which married with Earnest et al's (2010) and Morrice's (2013) research aims.

Yuval-Davis et al (2005) discusses the need to transcend country of origin and nationality to identify shared aspects of migrant identity. One example of this is that forced migrants experience prejudice on the basis of their migrant status, as well as their race and ethnicity. There are groups and individuals who identify as forced migrants but who are also ethnically white (Day & White, 2002). Yuval-Davis et al (2005) argue that forced migrants can be collectively classified as a racialized group based upon their migrant categorisation. This is not to deny the plural prejudices experienced on the basis of non-white ethnicity, but to acknowledge the extent of the pejorative forced migrant discourse and positioning of this group within social hierarchies. Section 8.8 focuses on the implications of race and ethnicity following the successful resolution of challenges pertaining to immigration status.

Analysis of the data collected from interviews with 26 forced migrants living in the UK and Sweden informed the development of a new framework of shared characteristics. Harding (2006) argues that for 'accounts to be epistemologically significant, they must link and illuminate connections between the individual and society, personal and public, individual experiences and social patterns and change' (pp.9). It was possible to identify the existence of greater homogeneity (than previously thought) in the heterogeneous identities and experiences of the 26 students:

- i. They were aiming for, and envisioned, a 'better life': constructed differently by individual forced migrants. However the desire to resume family life and engage in professional employment were central to the aims of the majority of participants.
- ii. They research participants viewed higher education as a vehicle or conduit through which a 'better life' could be achieved; albeit with a diverse range of educational 'needs'. In spite of having no formal education in his country of origin, Ali was intent, in spite of the challenges faced, on succeeding at university in order to maximise the opportunities available in the UK and in order to make a meaningful contribution to society:

'This country helped me a lot and I don't want to let this country down. I want to help them as well. I can help with education; I will be able to pay tax'  
Ali, Afghani living in the UK, FMUK\_AF01

- iii. They had been forced to leave, or forced into a position where they were unable to return to, their country of origin. The reasons varied but the connection between the individual narratives was the lack of choice and/or responsibility – as evidenced in section 6.4.
- iv. They had sought asylum – yet there is a huge variation in their personal circumstances and the point in their displacement at which they or their parent/guardian chose to submit an application for asylum – see Appendix 5.
- v. They were in limbo – 'waiting', induced by forces beyond their personal control: the direct result of technologies of domination exercised over their lives, which began for many in their country of origin. This fear manifested itself for Maria in concerns around losing the opportunity to continue her degree programme, which had been facilitated by her Article 26 scholarship:

'I fear if say I get response from the Home Office and it's a 'no' and I am in the middle of my scholarship, and they have to remove me and me not getting my degree'  
Maria, Malawian living in the UK, FMUK\_MA11



- vi. They faced challenges that were the tangible result of 'limbo', but were determined to overcome what could be perceived as insurmountable odds – see Chapter 7 for an in depth discussion.
- vii. They frequently experienced trauma due to the challenges they faced. Ali described the trauma that haunted him during the indefinite 'wait' for the Home Office to respond and inform him if his future was secure in the UK or if he faced a terrifying return to Afghanistan:

'When my visa ran out, when I turned 18, I had to wait four years for my visa to be extended, and that four years was hell for me. Every night I was having bad dreams that they send me back, because I was checking the news every day, how many Afghan immigrants were they were sending back. My friends they were in the same situation as me, and they've been arrested, they've been deported back to Afghanistan and they've been killed'

Ali, Afghani living in the UK, FMUK\_AF01

The two pre-existing and unifying characteristics remained central to the identity of this group, in that they have all experienced forced displacement and aspire to succeed in and utilise qualifications obtained through opportunities in higher education. The development of this framework facilitates a more nuanced understanding, critically in respect to the challenges faced as the result of their forced displacement, and how university acts as the medium through which they actively resisted the limitations imposed upon them through limbo. Resistance and the exercise of agency in the context of higher education were key to overriding and overcoming the challenges presented by, and the trauma resulting from the experience of 'limbo' with the view to shape their own version of a secure, sustainable and successful future.

## 6.8 Conclusion

'If one accepts that refugees have a certain level of power and choice in determining their lives and livelihood, this surely also includes the power and choice to create knowledge about and give meaning to their own situation . . . people with a strongly mobile past, hoping to move towards a future . . . their links with and dreams of that future elsewhere shape their current lives' (Horst, 2006:144-155)

This chapter has contributed to shaping a new discourse with which to frame forced migrants' motivations and choices when they are forcibly displaced and seek asylum. This thesis is concerned with the development of a forced migrant discourse that reflects the ability of this group to exercise agency, even in the most challenging of circumstances and in this chapter, I move beyond the unhelpful binary wherein, the act of exercising choice is constructed and therefore perceived as a threat. 'Choices' made in adverse circumstances by forced migrants are often construed negatively within the media and turned into an alarmist call for concern within wider society. However, the opposite side of the binary wherein forced migrants are constructed as having no 'choice', minimising their ability to exercise power and agency, serves to further victimise them. This equally inaccurate representation is unhelpful; forced migrants are people, who don't necessarily lose their hopes, dreams and aspirations when they lose their home and future in their country of origin.

The findings presented in this chapter have been derived from the unique life experiences of the 26 individual forced migrant research participants, which shape a collective understanding of the challenges experienced and aspirations of these individuals in their pursuit of higher education. These unique life stories, comprised of personal histories, qualifications, experiences and emotions, are at points closely aligned with the country from which they were displaced so as to provide a more situated and nuanced understanding. However, this research seeks to transcend multiple individual stories to uncover their subsequent similarities, evident in prior educational attainment and experience; the forced nature of their displacement; the desire to access university to overcome limbo; 'good' citizen behaviour - in order to encapsulate a collective understanding of forced migrants pursuing university, as a strategy not only for survival but success in the destination country.

This chapter also contributes to a more nuanced yet comprehensive understanding of limbo and the explicit and distinct impact it has on the lives of forced migrants. Limbo is an intangible concept: tangible measures fail to reflect its full impact on the lives of forced migrants. Limbo can occur at any or all stages of a forced migrant's journey from displacement within and from their country of origin, up to and beyond the borders of their final destination country as well as an award of settled immigration status: this

calls for a holistic and nuanced method for measuring limbo, which reflects the full spectrum of experience. Many forced migrants conceptualise their emancipation from the constraints imposed by limbo with becoming economically and socially independent through embarking on a professional career. Higher education is perceived by many forced migrants to be integral to the process of securing new, validating existing ones and ensuring that qualifications are recognised and commensurate with the requirements of the destination country.

The analysis of higher education's relationship with forced migration and the context awaiting people seeking asylum (Chapter 5) and the development of a collective understanding of the enmeshed experiences of limbo and higher education (Chapter 6) – intersect in Chapter 7. Chapter 7 acts as the juncture wherein the interactions between the 26 forced migrant participants either studying or endeavouring to study, play out across the six higher education institutions, under investigation.

## Chapter 7

### Traversing the Higher Education Border

#### 7.1 Introduction

Key findings presented in Chapters 5 and 6 argued the importance of access to university to mitigate the limbo induced by forced displacement and laid the foundations for Chapter 7. Foucault (1984) asserted that power is best understood in the context of interactions between individuals. This chapter interrogates the importance of the interactions between forced migrant agents, and not only higher education structures, but across integration and advice services. This supports a more nuanced understanding of the reproduction and restructuring of higher education structures in Sweden and the UK. These interactions are situated in the 'everyday' activities wherein agents interpret and enact legislative restrictions imposed on forced migrants, which create multiple barriers resulting in the higher education border. This chapter explores in depth the student journey undertaken by forced migrants, by building on Chapter 6 in respect to how the habitus developed in their country of origin and capital accumulated informs and impacts upon their navigation and negotiation of the higher education border.

Chapter 7 presents findings which support a more detailed understanding of the construction, reproduction and restructuring of the higher education border. This is comprised of the perceived deficit in four key areas of forced migrants' capital: knowledge, linguistic, immigration status and economic. Higher education is often essential to overcome these deficits in capital: however, issues which could be remedied by higher education, also serve to restrict access to this sector of civil society. The four areas of capital deficit differ in accordance with the history and experience of the individual forced migrant; the country context in which they are seeking asylum; and the higher education institutional context within which they are pursuing the acquisition or validation of qualifications. Analysis in this chapter argues that the success of the forced migrant participants in traversing the higher education border directly relates to their ability to accrue new social capital and adapt to the Western 'white' norms of higher education in the UK and Sweden (Reay et al, 2001; Ahmed, 2008; Wilkinson & Lloyd-Zantiotis, 2017).

This chapter commences by determining that forced migrants encounter an additional layer of challenges in their higher education journey, as a direct result of their immigration status. The authoritarian ideologies underpinning some of the countries from which the forced migrant participants originate played a significant role in shaping their prior experiences of education: this provided vital context in understanding their perspective on higher education in a new place. The higher education border extends beyond the higher education sector, and issues in traversing it are embedded in the palpable absence of higher education from advice and integration provision for forced migrants across both countries.

The second half of the chapter focuses on the perceived deficit in forced migrants' habitus, and how this manifests itself in the higher education journey. This analysis does not separate experiences in the UK and Sweden, but presents four key areas of capital deficit: knowledge, linguistic, immigration status and economic, to demonstrate how these deficits could also be perceived as constructed barriers and in doing so extends Youdell's (2004) educational triage theory to forced migrants in higher education. The overarching thread running through this chapter is the expectation on the forced migrant participants to adapt to the destination country: instead of the structures stretching to accommodate the habitus held by the forced migrants (Betts, 2010; Berry, 2012).

## 7.2 Forced Migrant Student Journey

This research identifies a triple layer of challenges facing forced migrants in respect to accessing, fully participating and ultimately succeeding in HE: i) immigration status, ii) issues akin to students categorised as underrepresented and / or international – see section 5.4 and iii) issues akin to the wider student population. The forced migrant participants faced barriers that inextricably linked to their immigration status: these challenges intensified if their status was unsettled but the barriers were not necessarily mitigated by the resolution of their immigration status (Harris, 2013). Morrice (2013) recognised that forced migrants with settled immigration status experienced a deficit in their refugee habitus and capital as they navigated higher education: Morrice's (2013) analysis is extended in this research to shape forced migrant habitus, which includes

individuals with unsettled status and concurs that this particular habitus 'generated distinction and exclusion' within higher education (pp:665).

In spite of not being officially recognised as 'underrepresented' in HE, some forced migrant students fall into categories identified as such by the state (OFFA, 2017; UHR, 2016). Regardless of the participants' categorisation as home or international (in the context of a tuition fees assessment), they frequently discussed the challenges and differences encountered in studying in the UK or Sweden compared to their country of origin: challenges included comprehending the culture of higher education, and pedagogical styles of teaching and learning. The experiences described bore strong similarities to those encountered by international students entering the UK or Sweden for the sole purpose of studying - discussed further in 7.3.

The final and third layer of challenges relate to the generic issues affecting students studying at university: time management, academic challenges, relationships with student peers and coping with stress. The challenges identified within these three explicit areas also intersect with issues of identity, which are rooted in structural inequalities, for example, ethnicity, gender, age, disability and sexuality (Fraser, 2007; Earnest et al, 2010; Harris et al, 2015). An exploration of the links between forced migration and higher education needs to focus on a student-centred approach at the individual level: however, the student-centred understanding must be located in the social, historic and political context in which their needs are being assessed and aim to be met (Balaz & Williams, 2004; Youdell, 2004; Erel, 2010).

The contributions to knowledge made by this research relate to the first layer of challenges pertaining to the participants' status as forced migrants, yet seeks to situate these experiences within the wider context. Whilst this study is interested in the access, participation and success of forced migrants in higher education, issues pertaining to access emerged as a dominant theme within the findings, reflected in this chapter and in the wider body of research (Earnest et al, 2010; Naidoo, 2015).

### 7.3 Impact of Ideology on Education Experiences

Political ideologies of the state directly influence the design of higher education structures as well as daily practices within the sector and individual higher education institutions, as outlined in section 5.2. This rhetoric also applies to the countries from which the forced migrant participants originated. The impact of ideology on the context/s in which prior experiences in education were undertaken facilitates a greater understanding of the forced migrant higher education journey. This analysis builds upon section 6.3 through an exploration of how forced migrant habitus and capital influences the navigating higher education.

Morrice (2013) identified that both pre and post migration experiences shape forced migrants' encounters with higher education in the destination country, an experience which Earnest et al (2010) described as 'culturally alienating' (pp:155). Many of the forced migrant participants discussed the contrast between their country of origin and the destination country through the lens of their educational experiences. Halil from Syria described the punishment-based regime he experienced in school: he explained that corporal punishment was frequently used in Syria yet absent in the Swedish education system; Halil's experience echoed by Nesta from Zimbabwe and Zahed from Iran in respect to their experiences of the practices of discipline used in British schools. Spiteri (2015) believes that the transmission of cultural capital from parents to children affects interactions in education, which manifests itself in different ways. Victor from Zimbabwe would only refer to his lecturers as 'Sir'. Zahed was shocked by the informal and often rude manner in which students spoke to teachers in school, which caused him to reflect:

'Maybe the fact that I saw the two sides made me more motivated to make the best out of it. I'm not sure people here realise how lucky they are to have the resources they have or at least in that school that's how I felt'  
Zahed, Iranian living in the UK, FMUK\_IR07

Emmanuel from South Africa admitted to making a conscious decision not to behave the same way as his new British peers, mirroring Zahed's experience. These comments reflect how the repressive regimes within their respective countries of origin manifested themselves within education structures. In spite of the fact these three forced migrant participants entered into compulsory education in the UK at a young age they were able

to identify tangible differences between this and their previous education system. However, these reflections resonate with Bourdieu et al (2004) theory that outside of the home, education has the most substantial influence on childrens' habitus.

In addition to comparative experiences in compulsory education, 18 of the forced migrant participants had prior experience of university in their country of origin. Halil and Peter from Syria and George from Afghanistan, who all sought asylum in Sweden, and Rose, a Zimbabwean-born forced migrant living in the UK, cited a lack of comparability between education systems in their country of origin and the destination country. Moha, Halil and Tariq from Syria, Omid from Afghanistan and Rose from Zimbabwe identified that their introduction to pedagogical approaches such as critical thinking took place in higher education in Sweden or the UK. This transformative approach to learning resulted in two forced migrant participants completely changing their academic discipline: Halil had previously studied Law in Syria and transferred to International Relations, whilst Omid, a Language & Literature graduate in Afghanistan was informally accessing a Human Rights degree programme. Rose pointed out that whilst the UK is proud of its approach to encouraging students to think critically and creatively, it is important to recognise this is not possible in countries, which do not have the access to the resources available in the UK. Rose reflected on the impact that living under a dictatorship in Zimbabwe had on her ability and opportunities to think critically in her role as both a student and a university lecturer:

'It restricts education, it restricts writers, it restricts critical thinking if you avoid certain subjects because they're going to be too controversial, or they might get you into trouble . . . I had to be mindful in my studies and in my interaction with students because a dictatorship works on fear and suspicion'  
Rose, Zimbabwean living in the UK, FMUK\_ZM08

It is not just within experiences of education wherein the effects of different political ideologies and regimes are evident. Cambridge & Williams (2004) identified the causes and the subsequent extent of the confusion and uncertainty endured by forced migrants in their interactions across civil society:



'Refugees are also likely to be extremely vulnerable people, reluctant to form trusting relationships due to political or social persecution, instability and dislocation in their lives, economic isolation and geographical relocation. They inevitably find themselves in new and unfamiliar cultures with different formal rules and codified behaviours and with sometimes very different legal, social, housing and medical systems. Their self-help and support systems are likely to be fragile or fractured through dispersal policies' (Cambridge & Williams, 2004:109).

Abdullah, a Syrian forced migrant evidenced the analysis provided by Cambridge & Williams (2004), as he endeavoured to explain the fundamental shift in perspective he felt that forced migrants needed to undertake to adapt to life under a new regime, in his case the egalitarian ideology underpinning life in Sweden:

'In our country [Syria] we love the country itself, but we don't love the government so we try to not obey the government in any way that we can, many of the Middle Eastern Arab countries have bad governments, so people don't have the same belonging to their government . . . compared to what I saw in Sweden, they love their country and they respect the government'  
Abdullah, Syrian living in Sweden, FMSE\_SY21

Abdullah discussed at length his belief that the relationship between many forced migrants and the state was problematic, due to a perception that in broad terms a successful life was in spite of, as opposed to with the support of, the state. The observations highlighted in this section are important, as they provide the backdrop against which specific issues of concern to this research are considered. The first point for forced migrants on their journey towards higher education (unless they arrived in the country after having already secured a place on a degree programme) was to seek advice. It is within the dissemination of both formal and informal advice that the duality of structure is explored, as forced migrant agents interact with agents or non-state actors both external and internal to universities.

#### **7.4 The Absence of Higher Education in Advice and Integration**

Whilst some forced migrants utilise their agency and make a conscious decision about the destination country within which they hope to seek asylum, this does not constitute an informed choice (Day & White, 2002). They are unlikely to have any awareness of the structures, processes, habits or customs in the destination country. It is imperative to learn as quickly as possible how the aspirations and capital they arrive with can be

translated into and support their becoming socially mobile. Berry (2012) credits the UK with having a well-developed integration strategy based on its long history of immigration, whilst Sweden's strategy is described as functional. Berry's (2012) analysis provides a more appropriate comparison between ideologies, the multicultural UK and an egalitarian Sweden, as opposed to the availability of advice services to meet the needs of newly arrived forced migrants.

Sweden has an established framework for the integration of forced migrants, which is in keeping with the country's egalitarian ideology and welfare model, aims for full employment. The 'Establishment Plan' in Sweden is aimed at integrating non-Swedes into the country's system and way of life, focused on facilitating access to the labour market. No comparative system operates in the UK: a multicultural ideology results in there being far less imperatives, coupled with a conservative approach resulting in considerably less investment in integration. There is an absence within advice and guidance structures of the provision of information relating to access and opportunities in higher education, therefore creating mutual incomprehensibility for agents delivering, and forced migrants accessing, these services. The absence of higher education advice has resulted in an increased reliance on informal social networks, which enable the acquisition of 'hot' intrinsic knowledge to supplement the 'cold' knowledge derived from, or in the absence of, formal provision (Morrice, 2013).

Both the UK and Sweden focus their integration initiatives on forced migrants with settled immigration status. In the UK, the only formal integration initiatives target the annual quota of 750 forced migrants resettled through the UNHCR and the separate quota of Syrians resettled in the UK. NGO's are responsible for the delivery of a skeleton advice service, in line with significant budget cuts to the refugee sector; a consequence of austerity politics (Darling, 2016). In Sweden, forced migrants awarded a residence permit, following the resolution of their asylum application, embark on a two-year integration programme: the 'Establishment Plan'. Unlike its Scandinavian neighbour Denmark, the Establishment Plan is voluntary in Sweden, albeit financially incentivised (Valentine et al, 2009). The aim of the programme is to assimilate all migrants into Swedish society and teach them how to become 'Swedish'. The emphasis is placed on the acquisition of Swedish language skills and information pertaining to health and social

orientation. A Key Informant facilitating the Establishment Plan, in the region of University D, had also sought asylum in Sweden and conveyed the challenges understanding the country's culture:

'We introduce a picture of Sweden to new immigrants and we discuss cultural differences so they can understand a bit of Sweden, but it will take a long time, decades even to adapt to this system and culture'

Key Informant based in Sweden, working for a municipality delivering social orientation, as part of the Establishment Plan, KISE\_MM92

This reflects the complexity of the information imparted to support the development of even a basic understanding of not just the mechanisms of the heavily bureaucratized Swedish system, but the less visible habits and customs required to successfully navigate it. In contrast an academic at University E explained the necessity to 'undo' cultural differences in order that forced migrants could adapt to life in Sweden, examples of which ranged from improving their timekeeping to women adopting roles beyond those performed in the home. These examples reflected the need for forced migrants to adhere to 'normative' behaviour in Sweden (Ralph & Staehli, 2011).

The bureaucratic systems in Sweden and England are complex to navigate, a personal view derived from my own extensive experience as a welfare rights officer and advocate for forced migrants. Informal discussions about the Swedish welfare system resulted in a Swedish born Professor advising me that he hoped never to have to rely upon health benefits administered by the state, as the prospect of navigating such a complex process was overwhelming. Bureaucratic systems and the knowledge required to understand and negotiate them are informed by individual habitus. Forced migrants entering Sweden or the UK do not have an intrinsic understanding of how higher education systems and processes work.

Higher education can be conceived of as a privilege not a necessity. The forced migrant participants stated that they were not being provided with accurate advice in relation to questions about university and they felt their higher education needs were not considered a priority. Hannah (1999) presented similar findings; in this study, research participants reported that they felt they were being encouraged to participate in unpopular degree programmes at less prestigious institutions.

The complex nature of translating multiple and frequently changing legislation into practical advice requires a specialised and individual approach, an approach that was provided in Sweden, but one that did not always result in the effective communication of information. The delivery of advice had a substantial impact on the forced migrant participants' understanding as well as their subsequent ability to implement the advice given. The emphasis in Sweden is not on advice but the provision of information, upon which the recipient can reach a decision regarding the most appropriate course of action. It is imperative that the advisor maintains a neutral position throughout the process:

'It [lagom] means don't be too happy, don't be too sad, you have to be in the middle of everything and when you explain things, if you are a social worker or a teacher, you don't say, that's the way, you speak around things a lot, instead of being direct'

Academic, University E, HEISE\_E\_AD66

Hannah's (1999) research and a key informant working for the Swedish Employment Agency support this perspective. The key informant advised that in spite of every personal adviser having access to the same sources of information, many forced migrants aspiring to access higher education did not receive the support to do so. This key informant was one of two participants working for the Swedish Employment Agency who originally came to Sweden to seek asylum. This was clearly apparent in this key informant's habitus, as explained by a member of the Student Support staff:

'He's like a leading star; he's always talking warmly about Korta Vagen. His mission is to help refugees to get a job quicker; he often talks about people who helped him to shorten that process when he came to Sweden'

Student Support staff, University F, HEISE\_F\_SS73

The habitus held by all the participants provided insight into their motivations to exercise power and agency. Advice delivered by formal agencies and networks was frequently supplemented, and in some cases substituted by, informal advice and information provided by peers and family members originating from the same country or through personal networks developed with British or Swedish born individuals.

Goffman (1983) credited bureaucracy with equality, but bureaucratic structures are implemented by agents, with different habitus, which affects implementation, as agents have considerable discretion in terms of how they exercise their power to the advantage

or disadvantage of forced migrants accessing or subject to their services. In the same sense the reliance on agents providing support within informal networks also poses risks, in terms of the accuracy of advice and unlike those operating in formal networks, cannot always be held accountable for the guidance given. Members of informal networks perhaps have greater investment in the success of the individual they are supporting, as their motivation is often to help and they are less restricted by professional boundaries, but they may hold or have less access to tangible knowledge

The complexities of the bureaucratic system of higher education were raised much more frequently in Sweden than the UK. In spite of the absence of integration support for the 12 participants who sought asylum in the UK, they did not report extensive problems in respect to advice and guidance in accessing higher education. However, this is reflective of the cohort participating in this study. The UK based participants had successfully accessed the degree programme of their choice: only one student's future at university was tentative, his progression from a foundation degree was dependent on academic success and securing further funding. In contrast, nine of the 14 participants based in Sweden faced considerable uncertainty around their access to the higher education programme they wanted to undertake.

Many of the forced migrant participants left their country of origin with a considerable cache of capital, ranging from positions held in society, networks of support (social capital), qualifications and professional experience (knowledge capital), in addition to financial wealth and material assets (economic capital). It is the application of the label 'forced migrant' at the point of displacement, or when individuals cross the territorial border into the destination country and enter into the asylum process, which often renders forced migrants' existing capital redundant (Stevenson & Willott, 2007; Burke, 2010). This thesis draws upon Bourdieu's theory, as a means to understand the impact of forced migration on habitus and capital. This is in terms of capital lost upon entering the UK or Sweden, but also to identify capital that is 'portable', therefore transferable: which facilitates forced migrants' journey to belonging overcoming seemingly insurmountable barriers (Stevenson & Willott, 2007; Morrice, 2013).

Andersson & Fejes (2010) and Erel (2010) recognise that knowledge does not transfer seamlessly from one context to another and needs to be situated in the destination country and the power to recognise existing qualifications and experience lies with agents operating within universities. The acquisition of language is essential for entry to higher education in both the UK and Sweden. Appendix 6. reports on the language ability of all 26 forced migrant participants on arrival in the destination country and clearly reflects how widely spoken English is compared with the palpable absence of Swedish.

Five different approaches to learning the Swedish language were identified in this research; Langa Vagen, Korta Vagen, bypass Swedish, informal language acquisition and studying language in tandem with work and/or non-linguistic studies. Each approach had implications for the recognition of prior qualifications, as well as options for securing a degree qualification or ensuring existing qualifications were commensurate with Swedish requirements. Unsettled immigration status represents a deficit, in the first instance because the permanent right to remain has not yet been granted, which subsequently renders forced migrants with unsettled status ineligible to access the economic capital required to study in higher education – see section 2.6.1.

The forced migrant participants effectively drew upon their existing capital to overcome the perceived deficits in their habitus. This was necessary in order to counter the approach of the higher education sector, which was to construct a border built predominantly on these capital deficits. Central to overcoming the deficit was their ability to build on existing, and develop new, social capital. Section 3.8 introduced the concept of forced migrant habitus being in deficit due to the ‘whiteness’ of higher education in the UK and Sweden. Multiple authors comment on ‘becoming white’ or ‘being white’ to overcome deeply embedded structural inequalities (Reay et al, 2001; Devine, 2009; Burke, 2010). Ahmed (2008) focuses explicitly on the connection with social mobility: ‘Becoming white as an institutional line is closely related to the vertical promise of class mobility: you can move up only by approximating the habitus of the white bourgeois body’ (pp: 160). Three themes dominated narratives of the forced migrant participants’ success: i) adapting to ‘white’ institutional norms through conforming to the destination country, ii) developing new social networks and iii)

continuing to resist the immobility imposed upon them. All proved crucial to their ability to navigate deficits in their capital to traverse the higher education border.

## 7.5 Conforming to the Destination Country

A priority for the forced migrant participants was to exercise agency within the destination country and move from the periphery to the centre of society. Integral to reducing the marginalisation experienced by the forced migrant participants was the need for 'ethnic self-monitoring' through 'relentless social engagement', in order to conform to the normative whiteness of higher education (Devine, 2009:527). Appendix 6. provides an overview of the forced migrant participants' level of education prior to displacement from their country of origin.

In the UK, eight out of the 12 participants arrived in the country as children. Nesta from Zimbabwe attributed her ease of integration into the UK education system, to her age: 'I was such a young age it was easy for me to transfer or to start over basically'. Of the eight children who sought asylum in the UK, five were dependent on their parents claim for asylum and three were alone either having entered the UK as an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child or having been trafficked for the primary purpose of exploitation. The seven participants who entered the UK as a child had been educated to the highest level commensurate with their age prior to their departure. They had all abandoned their primary or secondary education in order to flee, apart from Ali, a young Afghani man who arrived in the UK aged 16 with no prior experience of formal education.

Section 6.3 presented a discussion about the impact of the destination country on shaping the educational habitus of the participants who arrived in the UK as children. Experiences in compulsory education afforded them the opportunity to acquire the cultural capital and social networks required to develop 'hot' knowledge to complement the 'cold' knowledge available to them. The capital acquired in compulsory education served to resolve any perceived deficit in their knowledge and linguistic capital. Unfortunately, for many of the participants the challenges pertaining to immigration status and economic capital persisted, yet they were often unaware of the impact it

would have on access to university, and the participants were often alone in trying to resolve these specific challenges.

Emmanuel from South Africa was living a seemingly 'normal' life in the UK; he was highly visible within the compulsory education system and mainstream society. Emmanuel regularly visited the UK from South Africa for extended holidays with an aunt. It was during a visit age 14, that he did not return to South Africa but instead entered the UK education system. Unbeknownst to Emmanuel he was living in the UK without any form of legal status, which first became an issue when offered contract work in his school, teaching pupils dance. Emmanuel's aunt did not provide an explanation as to why he could not work, instead saying he needed to focus on his education. It was at this point and for the first time since being in the UK that he started to feel as if he did not belong and questioned how he had managed unknowingly to be invisible within society:

'It made me feel alienated a bit, I felt as if I wasn't as normal as everyone, I started to realise what was going on, in that sense I felt as if why couldn't anything be done . . . surely if I'm at school I must be known by someone or the government . . . it did really affect me, I was confused I thought why isn't anything being done. How can they just allow me to be here?'

Emmanuel, South African living in the UK, FMUK\_SA20

Emmanuel's was not an isolated experience, as Ali, Kirsty, Zahed, Esther, Nesta, Maria and Nathan who all arrived in the UK between the ages of eight and 16, reported upon the discovery, often during further education that they faced financial barriers resulting from their unsettled immigration status in progressing to higher education. None of the forced migrant participants, who experienced compulsory education in the UK, reported any difficulty applying to university through the central UCAS process. This reflected the fact that their applications were supported by qualifications gained in the UK, therefore recognised without question by universities operating in the higher education field. Their experiences bore stark dissimilarity to the four participants who entered the country as adults.

Rose was awarded settled immigration status within four weeks of arriving from Zimbabwe: however, this did not result in her feeling welcome in the UK. In her country of origin, Rose was employed as a university lecturer and was educated to postgraduate level. Rose attempted to secure employment in the UK using her Zimbabwean degree



certificates: however, employers rejected them and she was forced to resort to unskilled work.

‘It's the shock of knowing that back home you had a house, you were your own person, you had a job, you did a really well-paying job and then getting to a different country and realising you haven't got anything. At all’  
Rose, Zimbabwean living in the UK, FMUK\_ZM08

Rose was shocked not just by the loss of economic and social capital, but also by her inability to use her extensive knowledge capital in the UK. After two years of unskilled employment, Rose decided to undertake an Access Course, which led to her successful enrolment onto a postgraduate degree programme. Rose reflected upon this situation:

‘It just needed to be done. I decided if I wanted to be doing the pot washing and the cleaning jobs forever, I would just leave it, but I decided if I needed to get a better job, I better just start wherever. I needed to start’  
Rose, Zimbabwean living in the UK, FMUK\_ZM08

Rose spent two years underemployed and a further two years studying on an Access Course to secure qualifications she already had. John and Victor retained their respective academic disciplines and embarked on the same degree programmes they had undertaken in Zimbabwe. John was on the cusp of graduating and Victor had completed one year of an undergraduate degree. Both men also had considerable work experience in their fields. They commenced their studies in the UK as first year undergraduate students. Victor was still actively seeking asylum, which meant categorisation as an international student and the denial of access to student finance. The lack of decision on his asylum claim meant his future in the UK was uncertain. Whereas John faced the same barriers in terms of access to university, an award of limited leave to remain meant that following a second award he would be eligible to apply for settled immigration status.

These three participants were interesting, as they, each held different immigration status. Rose had settled status, whereas John and Victor held unsettled status, albeit John unlike Victor had received the temporary right to remain. Yet they all experienced similar challenges in the lack of recognition of their prior qualifications. The second key similarity lay in their response. They accepted the lack of recognition and effectively re-started their higher education career. Hannah's (1999) perception is that education plays a central role in assisting forced migrants 'adjust to exile' (Hannah, 1999:155).

However, Morrice (2013) and Burke (2010) interpret this process as adjusting to the 'whiteness' of higher education.

Nala from Syria entered University C, as an international doctoral candidate, applying for asylum towards the end of her studies; she experienced no issues recognising her prior learning. As an international student Nala received sponsorship to undertake her PhD. The main capital deficit she experienced when she sought asylum was economic when her funding ceased. However, University C were quick to use their discretion to fund her remaining study costs – see 5.6.2. Nala's main cause of discomfort along with a fellow Syrian, Abdullah based in Sweden, were the losses incurred conforming to life in a new country:

'Like if somebody sees you again from your country [Syria], they will say like you become British, you are not Syrian anymore, so you have to like give up on things you used to do sometimes and this in itself is difficult'

Nala, Syrian living in the UK, FMUK\_SY12

Prior to seeking asylum in Sweden Abdullah described himself as 'normal random guy'. This changed palpably when he arrived in Sweden where he very clearly affirmed his identity by stating, 'I will always be Syrian, and I will always be Muslim'. Abdullah's sense of feeling 'other' to the wider Swedish population was powerful. He expressed concerns that in secular Swedish society his faith was reason for him to be labelled as 'stupid'. Abdullah was committed to completing his postgraduate degree programme and creating a life for himself in Sweden, actively pursuing political, social and economic independence as a Swedish citizen, but he was not prepared to sacrifice his religious or national identity to conform to what he perceived to be 'Swedish'. Nadifa, a participant in Harris' (2013) study did not feel like she belonged at university owing to the fact that neither her ethnicity, background, nor country of origin had helped shape the institution, its pedagogy or academic disciplines. Nadifa questioned whether she was 'validating this process of invalidating' herself (pp: 191) through conforming to the higher education system in the country.

Tariq and Marwan both sought asylum in Sweden after fleeing Syria. They both lived in the same refugee camp, where they formed a close friendship. When I asked Tariq how he had accessed information to support his pathway to university, he discussed the

influence of Swedish people living in the village close to the camp and Syrians who had already established lives in Sweden:

‘The Swedish people that I meet, I got a lot of good information about being a Dentist from my friend, he’s a Syrian Swedish and he’s lived here for many years’  
Tariq, Syrian living in Sweden, FMSE\_SY24

One of the women in the village hugely supported their progression in speaking Swedish, in addition to which, based on her role at University F, she was able to advise Tariq and Marwan that given their respective academic backgrounds, they should ideally access a Korta Vagen programme. Tariq would not have accessed Korta Vagen if he hadn’t discovered its existence through his social network in Sweden – even then when he was insistent upon pursuing it, Employment Agency staff appeared unaware of its existence due to it not being available in that specific location.

Tariq was fortunate in that he used his social networks to secure the necessary information and advice to self-refer and secure a place on a Korta Vagen programme. Marwan was not as fortunate and was engaged on a protracted Swedish language programme. Marwan was very pragmatic in accepting the fact that he needed to undertake qualifications taught and examined in Swedish in order to place himself in a strong position to secure future employment:

‘When I came here most people said if you’re going to work in a bank or some kind of financial institution, of course they’re not going to be satisfied with your certificates from Syria, they’re going to be more satisfied and you’re going to have a stronger chance to get a job in a Swedish company if you have a Swedish certificate’  
Marwan, Syrian living in Sweden, FMSE\_SY26

‘Langa Vagen’ is an adopted term used in this thesis to describe the traditional route undertaken by forced migrants to translate and adapt their existing capital to the Swedish context. Langa Vagen effectively isolates different aspects of the process in order that they run consecutively, as opposed to concurrently. The traditional route to reach the language competency (SAS3) required to study at degree level is approximately four years. Following the successful language capability assessment, it takes approximately 12 months to verify prior qualifications; after which applications need to be submitted to access university to complete, convert or upgrade (if necessary)

existing qualifications. All of the Swedish-based forced migrant participants began their language journey on a Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) programme, yet everyone worked hard to avoid continuing on the Langa Vagen.

All of the forced migrant participants arriving as adults had either left behind a professional career trajectory or were in the advanced stages of the training required to commence employment in their specialist field. George, a qualified doctor with two decades' experience as a practitioner, nine of them with the international charity *Medicins sans Frontieres*, was frustrated for himself and other forced migrants with a professional background seeking sanctuary in Sweden:

'The supplementary education for immigrants is much cheaper than a full doctor, engineering or teaching programme here in Sweden but the validation process is very, very long... it can take four years, maybe six or seven years. I am a doctor, some people are teachers or engineers, but the validation process is long for all immigrants. I am a doctor and I want to work, but I cannot get a job. There are teachers and engineers out there in the same position, but this system is limited, closed for foreign academics. Not open'  
George, Afghani living in Sweden, FMSE\_AF17

George clearly identified that the validation process for a medical professional can take the same length of time as it does for an unqualified individual to graduate as a licensed Doctor in Sweden. Unlike George and Qamar, an experienced Teacher, neither Tariq nor Peter had extensive professional practice, but they had both successfully completed their Dentistry studies in Syria. All four participants were frustrated by the length of time it took to learn the language and validate their qualifications; expressing concerns that the process deskilled them. The continuation of their previous profession was integral to their construction of belonging in the country, a vital part of playing a useful role in society and reclaiming the social capital, and knowledge capital that they previously held in their country of origin. A member of student support staff delivering Korta Vagen shared the frustrations conveyed by the research cohort:

‘We had a really good girl who came from Syria who had low Swedish (language) experience she had only lived here for 2 or 3 months, she managed to finish SAS3 really quickly, but at the same time they drop the motivation if they see this long distance from when they arrive in Sweden and before they can practice their work. I think that’s really bad because if we have lots of people who are ready and they are screaming for nurses and doctors, but the system is shut down because we have always done it like this and I think we need to see how we can have a quicker way’

Student Support staff, University F, HEISE\_F\_SS77

The focus of the forced migrant participants was on the acquisition of language alongside validation of qualifications, gaining practical experience and becoming familiar with Swedish culture. The day after interviewing a research participant who was in the process of training to deliver Korta Vagen I was drawn into an informal discussion during which she explained the extent of the resistance amongst Swedish language teachers to embrace intensive Swedish language programmes such as Korta Vagen. They saw no reason or justification for accelerating the existing process, perceived as successful in teaching Swedish. The Swedish state invested heavily in language provision, with a view to deconstructing the border to higher education and more importantly the labour market, yet it effectively created a deterrent due to the protracted route involved.

A member of student support staff at University E described the university admissions process as ‘closed’ to anyone who did not meet the requirements to enter university in relation to settled immigration status, qualifications, accreditation or language skills. Staff focused on widening participation at University D, described how prospective students needed to ‘crack the code’ to access university and reflected on how complex this process was due to frequently shifting policy and practice:

‘It [Swedish HE] has been changed and changed and changed and it’s, in a way, been more and more narrow and more and more complicated, so you have to have a degree to understand the system’

Widening Participation staff, University D, HEISE\_D\_WP55

The challenges in recognising knowledge capital documented in this thesis relate to those who were able to travel with documentary evidence. The Swedish system is even more firmly closed evident in an additional series of barriers are encountered in the higher education border by forced migrants who cannot provide any or only partial evidence of their prior qualifications. Zeinah from Syria, described the experience of a

fellow water engineer who was unsuccessful in validating his degree and felt powerless in terms of being able to remedy the situation: 'we [Swedish university] cannot validate because you are missing a transcript and he said okay, but my university is now burned, it's totally destroyed'.

Similar to Nala, based in the UK, only the four forced migrant participants based in Sweden recruited as international students on postgraduate programmes taught in English, avoided issues in respect to the recognition of qualifications when accessing university. Joseph was a distance-learning student on a degree programme delivered by University D, when he sought asylum in Sweden from Ethiopia. Abdullah, Elias and Peter all moved to Sweden with the support of the Swedish Institute to study on a postgraduate programme taught in English. They sought asylum concurrent with their studies. This route granted them safe passage, resolved a deficit in economic capital, and avoided their physical exclusion in a refugee camp, but failed to provide them with the necessary linguistic capital for a future career in Sweden. Abdullah highlighted the importance of fluency in Swedish:

'95% of companies require you to be fluent in Swedish even if during work everything is in English, it's not enough you have to be speaking Swedish. Not only does the degree have to come from Sweden you have to speak Swedish. Many of my friends and classmates many times they try to apply for jobs but one of the company's replied to his job application with two words – 'NO SWEDISH NO JOB''

Abdullah, Syrian living in Sweden, FMSE\_SY21

Eight of the 14 forced migrants in Sweden were fluent in English and the remaining six spoke limited English. None of the participants in Sweden had any existing knowledge of the Swedish language upon arrival in the country. Several people reported that their English language skills had diminished, owing to their need to immerse themselves in learning the Swedish language.

The English language is widely spoken around the world. Many of the research cohort were educated in English, originating from places previously colonised by the British. A critical difference in Sweden is that approximately nine million people speak the language and they are largely contained within the Scandinavian region. It is highly unlikely for an individual to seek asylum in Sweden and communicate to a degree that

would enable them to work and study in the country. Every forced migrant participant based in Sweden had knowledge of another European language (mainly English), and Moha and Marwan from Syria credited their experience of other European languages as essential to successfully learning Swedish, as translating one European language to another was considerably less problematic than direct translations from Arabic to Swedish. English is widely spoken across Sweden, but the Swedish language is integral to successful integration:

‘If you don’t get access to the Swedish language, you’re going to have a terrible time to get integrated into the society and that basically will be a disaster for you’

Executive Board member, University D, HEISE\_D\_EB54

This section has primarily focused on Sweden, due to the critical role that the acquisition of language plays in terms of access to opportunities within Swedish society. Language acquisition is equally important in the UK context, however significantly less of an issue within the research cohort based in the UK and the wider forced migrant population due to the fact that the English language is spoken much more widely.

The UK was consistently poor at providing opportunities for language acquisition, orientation and integration in comparison with the investment of resources in Sweden. Language as a barrier to access higher education was not an issue emerging from this research. Of the eight forced migrant participants who arrived in the UK as children, four had been educated in English in their country of origin and four had no prior knowledge. In the UK, problems around the acquisition of language was discussed in the context of compulsory education. The four participants arriving in the UK as adults were all fluent in English. Victor, from Zimbabwe was the only UK-based participant to have to prove his English language ability at the point of access to university. However, there is a palpable lack of English language provision for forced migrants, as funding has continually shrunk, added to which if a prospective student does not have a recognised English language qualification, there are considerable costs attached to securing one.

## 7.6 Social Networks

Wilkinson & Lloyd-Zantiotis (2017) simply define social capital as 'who you know' (pp.392). The frustration induced by the Langa Vagen route to Swedish competency coupled with the competitive nature and academic requirements to participate in Korta Vagen programmes, led many forced migrant participants to explore and pursue alternative routes to language acquisition and access to higher education, which deviated from the conventional norm established in Sweden. The forced migrant participants' urgency and desire to progress quickly was in conflict with the bureaucratically defined method of integration into Swedish society.

Zeinah originated from Syria, where she completed her higher education goals and acquired considerable work experience in her field of engineering, she effectively built and utilised her social capital to secure a position of employment before securing settled status or verifying her qualifications. Zeinah was very proactive in developing a network of contacts when she arrived in Sweden, despite her physical exclusion from wider society in a refugee camp. The invitation by an academic to access lectures and seminars at University E resulted in Zeinah meeting Swedish professionals working in her field. The interactions resulted in Zeinah being offered a position of employment prior to having acquired settled immigration status, without having her qualifications validated or speaking fluent Swedish. Zeinah's employers recruited her having made their own assessment of her qualifications and experience – without seeking external validation from the state. The only condition of her employment was that she continue to improve her spoken Swedish to ensure good communication with her colleagues.

Zeinah was in the early stages of developing a scheme to connect qualified engineers who had sought asylum in Sweden with prospective employers. Zeinah's speedy transition to employment without formal Swedish language training and no formal verification of her Syrian qualifications provides an excellent example of how language acquisition can take place in tandem with employment; a concept the forced migrant participants wanted to see applied more broadly. For example, the acquisition of language skills in a medical setting would have been beneficial to learn not just technical medical language but also the less tangible habits and routines involved in practising medicine, in a new cultural context.



Zeinah's experience was in sharp contrast to Bana from Syria, who had evidence of her prior education, but had been unsuccessful in pursuing postgraduate studies owing to the challenges in accessing and implementing advice. Bana wanted to continue her studies in English Literature, but was less fortunate, in spite of her repeated endeavours to access an appropriate degree programme. Instead of relying on her Personal Advisor, Bana sought advice directly from universities in the area in which she lived and spoke to a variety of different people, which saw her embark on a variety of different, albeit unsuccessful, routes to university. Bana wanted to receive direct and specific advice, which was not forthcoming, resulting in her feeling incredibly frustrated and increasingly desperate:

'It was not that easy and especially because our system of study in Syria is quite different. I had to know so much detail regarding points, half time study and full time, distance and campus study courses and full programmes. Nobody explains here that for you, if you do not ask. They take for granted that you know such things but the fact is that I knew such things after having problems with almost each one of them and still suffer because of that'

Bana, Syrian living in Sweden, FMSE\_SY19

Bana faced familiar practical challenges to Zeinah and tried to overcome them in a similar fashion: this included becoming active in multiple organisation. Unlike Zeinah, Bana failed to integrate, befriend Swedish people or understand their culture. This was reflected in her struggle to translate her existing social capital into the Swedish context; she expressed confusion about her perception of their perpetual preference 'to be alone'.

The forced migrant participants embraced opportunities for informal language learning. Omid, from Afghanistan was a Linguistics graduate whose unsettled immigration status rendered him ineligible to access Swedish language training. In spite of this he resisted the restrictions imposed by his status and utilised his existing knowledge capital, as a qualified linguist, to teach himself Swedish and practice his skill through developing a social network with Swedes. Tariq and Marwan from Syria lived in a refugee camp in a remote part of Northern Sweden and the two men focused on accruing social capital to not only acquire tangible language skills but also the intangible habits and routines, which comprised Swedish culture. Omid also managed to negotiate a place to study on a Swedish for Immigrants programme and at the time of interview was applying to study

the next level of Swedish. The Swedish Employment Agency commission Swedish language education, therefore relying on non-state actors, who in Omid's case adopted a flexible approach to teaching Swedish to forced migrants who were technically ineligible to enrol.

Experiences of limbo were not restricted to individuals awaiting a decision on their asylum claim, but as demonstrated by Rose, they persisted throughout the immigration process. After five years in the UK, Rose's Indefinite Leave to Remain (settled immigration status) expired and she applied to the Home Office to renew her status. In spite of assurances from her solicitor, the Home Office and the university, her employer refused to allow her to continue in her job and she did not have any documentation with which to secure a new position of employment. This resulted in Rose being destitute for a six-month period during her postgraduate degree programme whilst she waited for the Home Office to issue her with new status documentation. Rose refused to withdraw from her degree programme and found innovative means to survive, relying on informal networks of support, and the social capital she had acquired during her time in the UK:

'People at work collected food from their allotments, odd bits of potatoes and tomatoes and things like that. People from my class at the university put together a collection of short stories and poems into a pamphlet and sold that to other staff members at the university. It was anything and everything. A colleague paid my rent because I was going to be made homeless. It was bits of this and that. . . It is quite a difficult thing to think about how, how I survived for that long'

Rose, Zimbabwean living in the UK, FMUK\_ZM08

Prior to fleeing Syria, Halil was studying on the final year of his Law degree, and Moha had completed three out of four years of a Business Administration degree. Halil and Moha were intent on resuming their higher education studies as quickly as possible. Halil described the frustrations in moving through the Swedish systems, as well as the power he derived from his social networks and capital:

‘It was really, really slow and like everything else in this country, slow but very obscure, very unclear. There are no clear steps. It is here where your social networks and social capital plays its role. The Establishment Plan is interested in teaching you Swedish and in getting you to a proper level of language and skill so you can walk yourself through the country in the system and find a job. I was not interested in any of that. I do not feel as an immigrant and I feel more as an expat and I am choosing the words, how to say, with full consciousness. That is because I feel as an expat; I have access to what any upper middle class or any Swedish student would have access to. I have access to other networks and I have access to other circuits of power that would typically only be accessible to an upper middle class or a high class Swede’

Halil, Syrian-Palestinian living in Sweden, FMSE\_SY13

Both young men decided to pursue an undergraduate degree taught in English and therefore bypass the need to learn Swedish. University D required a certificate demonstrating Halil’s proficiency in English. The emphasis within his Establishment Plan was on learning Swedish; therefore, he had to use his political capital, as an activist, which he claimed ‘established a lot of bridges’ with Swedish activists, who gave him advice and practical support to access evening classes. This meant he avoided jeopardising the financial support he received through the Establishment Plan. Halil also attributed his success to a change in his Personal Advisor (responsible for overseeing his Establishment Plan) who, like Halil, was of Palestinian-Syrian origin. The new Personal Advisor understood Halil’s objectives in Sweden and effectively advised him how to navigate what he described as the ‘Swedish machine of bureaucracy’. Moha was equally determined to access higher education as quickly as possible after having received settled immigration status. Moha achieved this by following the advice of his brother, who had arrived in the country ahead of him, rather than the personal advisor assigned to support him. Halil’s and Moha’s prior higher education experiences were ignored (both were close to completing undergraduate degrees): however, they chose to change their academic discipline once in Sweden.

The challenges Halil encountered within the Swedish system made him reconsider whether or not he wanted to remain in the country (he eventually left and moved to the UK). A member of Student Support staff at University F raised the comparative example of international students who study in Sweden in English, who successfully graduate and then try to access the labour market with a Swedish degree but no Swedish language skills and are surprised when they are unable to secure employment – as reported by

Abdullah above. This is the risk Halil and Moha were taking; minimising their future employment opportunities within the country that afforded them sanctuary and wherein they were on track to secure citizenship. There was a further loss to Sweden, due to the country's investment of economic capital in their education and permanent resettlement. Halil's conscious use of the word exile reflects what Said (2000) described as a determination to present as someone who has exercised choice in their displacement. The decision taken by Moha and Halil to secure qualifications they could use outside of the country, could be interpreted as their resistance to conforming to Sweden's expectations of them and attributed to exercising their: 'right to refuse to belong' (Said, 2000:145).

Zeinah, Halil and Moha all used their existing social capital to build what Putnam (1995) and Devine (2009) describe as bridging capital, with Swedish people who could help and support them achieve their vision for the future. The central difference between the three was that Zeinah used her social capital to create a future in Sweden, whilst the young men were focused on exercising their rights as citizens of the European Union. Reay et al (2001) discusses the self-exclusion by individuals based on their social position in society, which Bourdieu (1990) conceptualises as the enactment of symbolic violence on oneself. I would assert that the self-exclusion Halil and Moha imposed on themselves through their refusal to learn Swedish, did not constitute the exercise of symbolic violence, but the desire to expedite their opportunity to belong, albeit outside the Swedish territory.

### **7.7 Resisting Immobility**

Resisting the immobility imposed by forced displacement was evident within the narratives of every forced migrant participant, yet it manifested itself in diverse ways. Halil and Moha actively resisted the need to speak Swedish; this was their method of defying the immobility created by a deficit in their linguistic capital. In section 6.6. Halil discussed the impact of his award of settled immigration status in Sweden, which reflected the power of recognition by the Swedish state. This was in spite of his intention to use this recognition and subsequent citizenship in other European countries.

In the UK, the challenges forced migrants faced in terms of admission to higher education were rooted in their immigration status: manifest in tangible barriers, which served to deter both the access and participation of this group, resulting in their marginalisation in higher education. Appendix 5. reflects the impact of the asylum process, in terms of the delays the UK-based participants faced in accessing student finance and the economic capital required to study. Ten of the UK based participants, in spite of their having been subject to immigration control for between two and 12 years, did not hold settled immigration status. Eight of the participants had accessed an Article 26 scholarship, which overcame the primary financial hurdle of university tuition fees and to differing extents met the additional student support costs – the impact in terms of the inconsistencies in the additional financial support are discussed in section 8.4.2.

Zahed from Iran and Kirsty from South East Asia both arrived in the UK as children and undertook the majority of their compulsory education in the country. The impediments they encountered in relation to accessing higher education related not to their qualifications or academic ability, but deficits in their economic capital. Kirsty and Zahed faced nearly identical barriers as medical students with unsettled immigration status. Unlike many of their research participant peers, they were ineligible for an Article 26 scholarship due to the fact they wanted to study medicine. The loss of income to an institution from an international tuition fees charged to Medical students was deemed too high to extend the scholarship scheme to these degree programmes discussed further in section 8.4.1. Zahed went to register at University B without a clear plan, as to how he would overcome the economic challenges he faced, he described the painful process of watching other students appear to easily traverse the enormity of the border he faced in order to commence his degree programme.

‘I remember all these students going there and registering getting their university card, then leaving. When I got to university part of me just felt hard done by every stage of the way and I thought all I want to do is study, I don’t want to do anything bad, I just want to study and why do I have to face all these problems’

Zahed, Iranian living in the UK, FMUK\_IR07

Zahed’s experience is symbolic of Ahmed’s (2008) discussion around being ‘stopped’ and questioned by border officials at an airport based on her ethnic identity. However for Zahed the experience of being stopped was not a temporary inconvenience (not to

minimise these experiences but explore how they are exacerbated when you add the additional barriers born out of status inequalities) but symptomatic of being repeatedly 'stopped' and forced to endure, like all of the forced migrants participants, periods of stasis. Eventually with the support of his mum and friends of the family Zahed was able to pay the first instalment of his university tuition fees.

The key differences between Kirsty and Zahed was her status as an unaccompanied child raised by a foster family in the UK and the fact she had a smaller social network within which to fundraise. These two young people experienced ongoing uncertainty in respect to funding their respective degree programmes, as they submitted multiple funding applications to charitable trusts and endured huge ongoing anxiety as to whether or not they would be able to continue their studies. Throughout the enduring challenges Kirsty and Zahed faced, they refused to give up on their collective dream to practice medicine.

In Sweden, a residence permit resulting from a claim for asylum constituted the right to access university, as a home student with access to full financial support. If an asylum claim is undecided, the prospective student is, as in the UK, classified as an international student and ineligible for financial support. In Sweden, no one I interviewed had waited longer than a year to be awarded a residence permit, but I am aware that this is no longer typical. The Swedish forced migrant participants fell into three categories. Of the 14 participants, eight had been granted a residence permit, which entitled them to access higher education (two were engaged on an undergraduate degree programme and six on a Korta Vagen programme). The remaining six participants were still actively seeking asylum. Four of the six forced migrants with unsettled status were enrolled in higher education, as international students. Abdullah and Elias received a residence permit in Sweden based on their scholarship from the Swedish Institute. Of the remaining two participants, Omid was accessing university and Swedish language education on an informal basis, whereas Layal had not yet been able to access any form of education. Both were awaiting a decision on their asylum application.

The lack of economic capital to access higher education proved to be an issue for those with unresolved status in Sweden. Whilst entitled to work during an asylum application, they were unlikely to raise the funds required to cover the cost of attending university.

An academic at University E in Sweden reflected on the fact that the lack of eligibility for funding to access university was exacerbated by the fact that forced migrants often exhausted their financial reserves fleeing their country of origin. Once granted a residence permit in Sweden, forced migrants can engage in a fully funded Establishment Plan. No one in Sweden complained about the level of financial support provided during the Establishment Plan or whilst studying at university. The Swedish Institute played a vital role in providing scholarships to cover the cost of tuition and maintenance for students now categorised as international, to ensure continuing pathways for these students in Swedish higher education.

Peter was a beneficiary of the Swedish Institute and awarded a residence permit based on asylum during his postgraduate degree – see 6.4. Peter then commenced Korta Vagen to accelerate his Swedish language training. Swedish was integral to Peter's future in the country, as he wanted to practice Dentistry, a qualification he secured in Syria. Peter was frustrated studying Korta Vagen, as he felt the progress was too slow and the course completion date conflicted with the application deadline for a dentistry programme. Peter was in week one of a 26 week Korta Vagen programme; however, he was already exploring routes to expedite securing the SAS3 qualification required to study at degree level. In order to progress to university that academic year to update his dentistry qualifications, he needed to submit an application eight weeks prior to his planned completion of Korta Vagen. Bypassing Swedish language training was not an option for Peter, yet he refused to be constrained by Korta Vagen.

John from Zimbabwe felt that higher education was central to future possibilities opening up to him. This was in direct contrast with Victor from Zimbabwe whose frustration had increased during his time at university – first because he realised the extent of what was at stake and what he stood to lose if he was removed from the UK. The second issue was that his lack of status prevented him from responding to invitations to undertake summer placements with IT firms and develop industry contacts. Victor's lack of secure status prevented him from pursuing opportunities such as these, as well as making friends with fellow students and entering into romantic relationships:

‘It kind of weighs in on my ability to socialise and how far I develop friendships with people, I am a chatty guy, I like to talk that kind of thing, but I don’t want to get too close to people because they then start seeing holes in your life and they start noticing,’

Victor, Zimbabwean living in the UK, FMUK\_ZM03

In this sense the ‘holes’ in Victor’s life could be perceived to represent the deficits in his habitus and capital. Victor’s narrative demonstrates that the resilience and agency utilised to navigate the limbo imposed in the context of higher education did not necessarily pervade all areas of a forced migrant’s life. However this was in contrast with John who during the six ‘donkey years’ he spent waiting to go to university, had married and started a family. Victor felt restricted by and unable to reject the immobility imposed upon him. One issue was Victor’s unwillingness to be recognised as a forced migrant, whereas evident within Rose’s and Halil’s respective narratives were examples of how they built social networks and secured capital through sharing details of the challenges imposed by their status.

## 7.8 Conclusion

Education collectively played a central role in the lived experiences of every forced migrant participant. Higher education, in respect to experiences and aspirations, was integral to their habitus and the capital they carried with them to the destination country. The personal higher education histories, which formed the habitus, of the forced migrant participants ranged from one year spent as an undergraduate student to a qualified Doctor with over 20 years’ practitioner experience. Out of the cohort of 26, 18 participants had no experience of education in the destination country prior to pursuing opportunities in university, and as such experienced multiple challenges acquiring new knowledge capital. This included having to firstly learn, and secondly be taught (at degree level) in what was often the participants’ second or third language, whilst trying to comprehend new pedagogical approaches.

Chapter 7 has contributed to a discussion on the marginalisation of forced migrants in higher education, building on Fraser’s (2007) assertion that: ‘exclusion is rooted jointly in all three dimensions of social ordering, as when economic, cultural, and political structures work together to obstruct participation’ (pp:316). The exclusion of the forced



migrant participants was rooted in deficits in their political economy (economic capital), status (immigration) and cultural capital (knowledge and linguistic capital). The layers of challenges relating to these specific areas of capital support Youdell's (2004) 'educational triage' theory, as the different layers sought to both deter and prevent forced migrants from accessing university.

The higher education border and its mechanisms varied in terms of their construction and implementation across Sweden and the UK, yet achieved similar results. The barriers that forced migrants encounter in their navigation and negotiation of the higher education border in Sweden and the UK are constructions, highlighted by the different positions and manifestations of the barriers along the forced migrant student journey, from the point of advice onwards. These barriers take the form of situated 'everyday' practices, reinforced and resisted within interactions between individual agents (forced migrants and university operational staff), situated in the structural inequalities in civil society.

Settled immigration status in both countries was central to all the forced migrants' classification for the purpose of tuition fees and subsequent eligibility to the economic capital (student funding) required to study in university. This research highlights the fact that the overarching barrier to higher education for UK based forced migrants was securing status, which entitled them to student finance. In Sweden, immigration status was not the main issue but realising the rights accompanying status often through securing linguistic capital. The deficits in the forced migrants' capital could not be clearly delineated, and were interwoven and unique to their individual habitus. However, thematic similarities supported the identification of areas in which universities could improve their response to the needs of this student group.

Chapter 7 has focused on the everyday reality of managed migration in the construction of the higher education border, its mechanisms and their impact on the lives of the forced migrant participants. These findings reflect the primary focus in the provision of opportunities for forced migrants in higher education: in Sweden, substantial investment is made by the state into the delivery of Korta Vagen programmes to expedite Swedish language skills for individuals with an academic background. In the UK,

the main initiatives revolve around universities providing scholarships to cover HE costs not met by the state for forced migrants' ineligible for student finance.

Chapter 8 engages in a more detailed analysis of the two key forced migrant initiatives investigated in this research: Korta Vagen and the Article 26 scholarships. The penultimate chapter analyses the initiatives in respect to the wider challenges forced migrants encounter accessing higher education (beyond a lack of linguistic capital and economic capital) and questions their efficacy in restructuring the structures comprising higher education. In addition, it examines the extent to which the success of these initiatives results from the determination of forced migrants to reclaim agency through higher education against seemingly insurmountable odds.

## Chapter 8

### Forced Migrant Initiatives: Reproducing or Restructuring the Higher Education Border

#### 8.1 Introduction

Chapter 7 established a more detailed construction of forced migrant habitus (building on sections 3.8 and 6.3), arguing that the habitus held by forced migrants is characterised by a shortfall in various different types of capital. The capital deficits identified in five key areas not only contribute to the concept of forced migrant habitus, they also enable the construction and enactment of the higher education border. The higher education border is visible within legislative mechanisms, for example in the absence of funding required to meet the cost of studying at university or the absence of settled immigration status required to access formal language training. This border is also apparent in the less tangible habits of agents tasked with advising forced migrants or verifying their prior qualifications - evident in their interactions with the forced migrant participants are the inconsistencies between agents who exercise their power punitively to reinforce the immobility imposed upon forced migrants, and those who foster a more positive application. Forced migrants and higher education agents exercise power and agency in this process: therefore it is vital not simply to conceive of this as a 'forced migrant' but a societal problem and, explicit to this research, a higher education problem.

Chapter 8 commences with a detailed investigation into the two main initiatives aimed at supporting forced migrants to successfully traverse the higher education border. The Article 26 scholarships and the Korta Vagen programme respond to the most significant challenges that forced migrants face in accessing higher education. This chapter questions the extent to which these initiatives reproduce the inequalities manifest in the higher education border, and in doing so, whether they impose a second set of barriers for forced migrants to navigate. The chapter proceeds to consider the future awaiting the forced migrant cohort beyond higher education, to consider whether the challenges they seek to overcome to succeed at university will continue to characterise their experience of life in the UK or Sweden as they venture into the labour market. An

analysis of forced migrant habitus is further extended to facilitate an investigation into the approaches to, and constructions of, belonging. Said's (2000) contrapuntal theory is drawn on to frame both the approach to and construction of belonging – as shaped by the forced migrant participants - and how this casts light upon the motivations and commitment of these individuals to triumph in the face of incredible and ongoing adversity.

## **8.2 Higher Education Interface: Managed Migration and Forced Migrants**

The formal and informal initiatives developed to support forced migrants to access opportunities in university would appear to be inconsistent with the normative structures comprising higher education, as they contradict the dominant construction of the 'neoliberal university'. Section 3.5 drew upon theories of neoliberal governmentality to explore the connection as opposed to the disconnection between the state and higher education institutions. In doing so, this challenges the continued rhetoric around the autonomy of universities. This research asserts that the state is advancing rather than weakening its control of institutions in the HE sector. The increased marketisation of higher education globally has been well documented: however, this thesis argues that universities are not only driven by income generation, but also by the need to meet extensive administrative tasks resulting from auditing and monitoring processes – see section 3.5. The initiatives under scrutiny in this thesis contradict the 'norm' across both case study countries.

In the UK context, the inclusion of forced migrants within the student body often fails to produce income and has the potential to adversely affect an institution's reputation. Scholarships for forced migrants typically target students categorised as 'international', who do not pay tuition fees or for other university services such as accommodation: instead they are reliant on the university meeting the cost of their education. Universities also risk generating negative public opinion if providing opportunities to this student group is deemed unpopular. The scholarships could be constructed as diverting resources from indigenous marginalised groups, which could negatively impact upon future engagement with the institution, especially in the local area. Challenges engaging with and recruiting from the locality were clearly articulated by University B:

‘We do face a difficult position that a lot of people don’t think we are for this city and for this region: that ‘elite place on the hill’ that’s for ‘foreign students’ and advantaged kids from the UK’

Director of Widening Participation, University B, HEIUK\_B\_DWP36

The UK-based university case studies could be perceived to transcend the traditional construction of ‘home’ and ‘international’ student categories through the provision of scholarships which have greater synergy with opportunities situated in the widening participation framework targeting under-represented students. Universities’ willingness to be flexible, as opposed to risk averse, has become increasingly challenging. Universities are subject to extensive state surveillance and regulation in respect of international students (Jenkins, 2014). This has created a risk-averse culture in UK higher education institutions, as they are fearful that poor management of the international student population will lead to increased use of technologies of domination through the imposition of enhanced monitoring by the Home Office, resulting in the loss of economic capital through sanctions, including the suspension of their license to educate international students. In the UK, a significant focus of the Article 26 project has been to demonstrate the legal basis upon which forced migrants can study at university. This has involved lobbying compliance teams and encouraging alternative modes of monitoring students classified as international, yet who are not required to hold a Tier 4 visa.

Whilst economic risks were much lower on the agenda in Sweden, the introduction of university tuition fees in 2008 for international students studying in the country, created an environment in which it was possible to capitalise and generate income from this section of the student population. In Sweden, the forced migrant initiatives served to disrupt the ‘norm’ in respect to administrative functions, as well as creating reputational risks. It was deemed impossible to enrol at university without a Personal Number (awarded with a residence permit). I was unsuccessful in identifying any university agent in Sweden who had tried to register a forced migrant with unsettled immigration status onto a degree programme. This reflected Swedish universities’ focus on the substantive legal definition of citizenship and a lack of flexibility in terms of exploring potential methods to overcome the challenge posed by this structural mechanism. The Swedish higher education sector receives substantial state funding and whilst state technologies

of governance are much more covert in the context of higher education than in the UK, I encountered a much stronger and shared normative approach in respect to their reluctance to deviate from the 'rules'. Considerable concern was expressed over the legality of engaging in activities to facilitate access, as the consensus was that change should be led by and determined by the state, not by higher education institutions.

'It's quite hard for us as a university and the government to have certain groups, to give them access to higher studies on special terms. We can't do that right now, maybe it's going to change but we can't do that. So if you're going to study at the university you have to know that you're going to stay in Sweden permanently'

Widening Participation staff member, University E, HEISE\_E\_WP70

In Sweden, the identification and / or provision of support to enable and encourage specific groups of students to access higher education was neither widely understood nor practised by universities. Many higher education agents in Sweden participating in this research and observed at conferences or engaged in informal discussions, questioned the particular legality of projects or initiatives that targeted specific groups, as they were seen to work against the culture of equality. It was not deemed possible to justify one group, in their view, receiving preferential treatment over another.

Korta Vagen is viewed as a non-traditional route to learn Swedish. Many would question the need and the efficacy of what was considered a 'short cut', when there already existed programmes deemed effective in teaching Swedish. The growth of intensive Swedish language programmes is closely aligned to the influx of forced migrants from 2015 onwards, resulting in the initiative being considered to recognise and respond to the needs of a particular group, which challenges the principle of equality, as programmes such as this shouldn't be required. Swedish universities are not only concerned with their reputation across society, but specifically in comparison with institutions within the higher education sector.

Whilst initiatives, both formal and informal, to support forced migrants acted against the hegemonic 'norm' in the two countries, they were still enacted within existing frameworks and resonated with current practice. Forced migrant lives are often studied and research is conducted in isolation of the responsibilities that could be exercised towards them by universities (Ralph & Staehli, 2011). Regardless of the debate

surrounding the constitution of higher education as a right or a privilege, the sector undoubtedly has an important role to play in realising the human rights, as outlined in international legislation, of forced migrants to participate in university life and subsequently engage in civil society in ways commensurate with their ambition, skills and experience.

### 8.3 Ideology Underpinning Forced Migrant Higher Education Initiatives

A detailed analysis of the implementation of the Korta Vagen and the Article 26 scholarships needs to be preceded by an exploration of the ideological basis upon which these initiatives were founded. Section 5.3 explored the ideology underpinning the institutional habitus held by case study universities, which influenced the individual habitus of agents responsible for operational activities. Public good or equality was cited by every case-study as an incentive to develop initiatives that facilitated forced migrants' aspirations in higher education or supported their access to suitable existing programmes. Of the six institutional case studies only University F did not have an established widening participation agenda – every other university had a strategy in place and valued activities aimed at promoting access to their institution: these activities were largely conceived of as 'public good'.

As previously stated, widening participation activities were embedded in UK universities and the OFFA framework provided clear boundaries to operate within. An Executive Board member at University B reported on a discussion with the Head of OFFA who had confirmed that forced migrants could not be included in the university's 'count' of student beneficiaries of widening participation support: however he was advised that:

'A mention of it [support provided to forced migrants] would show the university's philosophy and the values the institution was upholding'  
Executive Board member, University B, HEIUK\_B\_EB035

University A also reiterated the same message - that facilitating access for forced migrants with unsettled immigration status was in direct contrast to the growing neoliberal norm within higher education:

‘It’s an articulation of some of our values I suppose as an organisation rather than as a marketing tool and that’s why they get included in that agreement’  
Director of Widening Participation, University A, HEIUK\_A\_DWP029

Recognition of activities targeting this student group when reporting to OFFA was a demonstration of the university’s values and did not serve to fulfil the institutions’ agreed widening participation objectives: it also clearly demarcated activities in this area as an expression of autonomy, as opposed to compliance with the state.

In Sweden, education is perceived to be central to overcoming social problems and of central importance to the country’s knowledge-based economy. Reflections of this philosophy included substantial investment in the education of forced migrants through the Establishment Plan, the Korta Vagen programme and, from 2017, commissioning initiatives aimed at improving practice in relation to the recognition of prior education experiences of foreign academics (a category dominated by forced migrants). The widely-held belief presented by research participants was that the university population should mirror Swedish society: the challenge lay in how to implement an ideology which appeared misaligned with the law.

‘I think it is good that the university reflects society because it doesn’t do that today. We are part of society and we have to open up, for all groups of people’  
Widening Participation staff, University E, HEISE\_E\_WP70

Sections 7.4 – 7.6 discussed the value of social capital and its indispensable role in acquiring new, or translating existing, capital into a form which could be both recognised and accepted in a new context. Ansley & Gaventa (1999) question if higher education institutions hold the social capital required to successfully develop alternative activities which directly connect to their core values:

‘No amount of “stuff” (whether the stuff be composed of good ideas, or dollars of grant money, or eager student volunteers, or studies providing answers to important questions) can do much good if there are no pipes or pathways through which it can move’ (Ansley & Gaventa, 1997:51).

The vast social capital held by universities is focused on an upward trajectory, aimed at supporting those marginalised and / or structurally excluded from higher education. Every university case study exhibited a shortfall in the capital required to help forced migrants overcome the perceived deficit in their capital. Whilst Swedish universities



were not equipped to recognise the different needs of forced migrants, invisibility was replicated in UK universities where there was increasing anxiety about supporting students subject to immigration control, especially when they didn't fit the international Tier 4 'norm'. The complexity and confusion which stemmed from the UK immigration process, subject to constant changes resulting from new legislation and guidance, was mirrored in the experiences of the main point of contact for scholarships at University C:

'I don't feel I can provide as much support as I could because of a lack of knowledge and also the confusion of the immigration process that they go through. I think that is a barrier in itself. There's not a lot of information out there about how the immigration process works to make it understandable or to put it into context for a student when you're trying to figure where they're at or what they're doing'

Student Support staff, University C, HEIUK\_C\_SS47

Mountz & Hiemstra (2014) argue that the confusion described above acts as an intentional deterrent to any agency or individual seeking to provide support and guidance. The 'pathways' of connection through which institutional ideology could 'move' and be implemented, were dependent upon higher education agents and how their habitus and social capital intersected with that held by the institution. In all six universities, I was able to identify a member of operational staff, located in a professional services (UK) or Linguistics (Sweden) department, who was integral to developing, establishing and securing support for forced migrants who held aspirations to study. Their individual habitus were diverse but had invariably been shaped by their own non-traditional higher education trajectories, as well as influenced by their interactions with forced migrants and ability as university agents to exercise agency to create tangible solutions.

## 8.4 Implementation of Forced Migrant Higher Education Initiatives

Chapter 7 focused on the construction of the higher education border and this section seeks to extend the discussion around its function beyond the financial and administrative mechanisms which serve to exclude forced migrants. Agamben's (2005) influential 'state of exception' is again applicable, as it highlights the mechanisms through which the state exerts and extends sovereign power into civil society. Whilst Salter (2006) argues that the state of exception can only be applied to the territorial

border, this thesis has presented borders as mobile constructs. In the context of the mobile higher education border accompanied by the state of exception that it produces, its impact is not necessarily mitigated by access to a forced migrant initiative designed to overcome the border.

This section investigates whether or not universities, in the process of deconstructing the higher education border, acted to replace it with, or add, a humanitarian border (Walters, 2011). This thesis extends Mountz's (2001b) theory presented in section 3.5, relating to sites of exclusions, to universities and, in doing so concurs that they have the potential to be reconstructed as sites of resistance: however this is not an either / or, exclusion / inclusion binary, but a process of transformation that needs to be considered along a continuum. This leads to a central question in terms of the implementation of support for forced migrants to access and succeed at university: do initiatives designed to overcome the barriers blocking their access to higher education simply reproduce structural inequalities, or contribute to achieving incremental change leading to the restructuring of the sector.

It is important to note several important points in relation to the focus of this analysis:

- i. Chapters 5 and Chapter 7 highlighted both the existence of informal discretionary, as well as formal, opportunities promoted in the public sphere which were accessible to forced migrants. This chapter focuses on initiatives created through formal channels: the Korta Vagen programme and the Article 26 scholarship scheme.
- ii. These initiatives did not target the full breadth of the definition 'forced migrant', utilised within this research to describe the full spectrum of individuals' subject to immigration control. The Article 26 project focused on advocating for UK universities to support forced migrants with unsettled immigration status. Significant changes have taken place since the field work took place, and these are discussed later in section 9.4. Korta Vagen (as well as other intensive Swedish language provision) targeted all foreign-born academics with settled immigration status.

- iii. The two main initiatives had national presence, profile and coordination, and have grown exponentially, in the aftermath of the 'refugee crisis' (summer 2015).
- iv. Not every forced migrant research participant accessed an Article 26 scholarship or was engaged on an intensive Swedish language programme (such as Korta Vagen): this is clearly documented in Appendix 6.

This is not to deny or devalue the existence of work undertaken by other universities, organisations and agencies within the sector, but they were neither present nor involved in the delivery of the programmes operating within the case study universities.

In the event that these were the only identifiable initiatives that aim to respond to and overcome the higher education border, they provide a tangible basis from which to assess how successful they have been from the perspective of the universities, higher education and forced migrant agents involved. The common thread connecting the different initiatives was that they all endeavored to create opportunities to secure a range of different forms of capital to equip forced migrants to not just navigate higher education but wider society in the UK and Sweden (Balaz & Williams, 2004; Wilkinson & Lloyd-Zantiotis, 2017).

It is important to revisit the different aims of the initiatives. Korta Vagen was commissioned by the Swedish Employment Agency to expedite the transition of foreign academics to the Swedish labour market. The focus of the Article 26 project was to overcome the financial barriers preventing access to higher education for forced migrants with unsettled immigration status. The aims of both projects were consistent, as was the fact that they focused on addressing specific deficits in forced migrants' capital and in doing so created opportunities to increase the social mobility of these individuals. A critical difference between the two initiatives was the location of responsibility for their central coordination, strategic direction and development.

The state played a direct role in Korta Vagen, mediated through the Swedish Employment Agency. However, the state had no involvement in the direction or creation of Article 26 scholarships. These were developed by a non-governmental agency, a

project operating under the umbrella of a small charitable trust (The Helena Kennedy Foundation). The contrast between the roles of the state reflected the ideological differences between the two countries and had an important impact on the delivery of initiatives, as well as the funding structures in place and their vulnerability in terms of ongoing sustainability.

The key similarity between the initiatives is that they were both comparable in business terms to a franchise arrangement. In Sweden, any education provider (private or public) can be commissioned to deliver Korta Vagen. In the UK, any higher education institution can decide to provide scholarships to forced migrant students; they subsequently develop different levels of involvement with the national Article 26 project. Analysis of the implementation of the initiatives is broadly split into issues pertaining to access and participation. Access reflects the eligibility criteria, composition of opportunities and their visibility through promotional activities. Participation focuses on the delivery of these initiatives with specific reference to the impact of a funding deficit in the context of UK-based initiatives, which aimed to overcome a lack of economic capital. In Sweden, the focus was on expediting the acquisition of linguistic capital.

#### 8.4.1 Access

Discussions with staff responsible for delivering Korta Vagen or similar intensive language programmes at the three Swedish case study institutions revealed different eligibility criteria. It became evident that there were a range of Swedish language courses that could be undertaken to qualify for Korta Vagen, and this caused uncertainty amongst applicants as to whether or not they held the correct qualifications. A further cause for confusion related to the constitution of an 'academic background'; this could be interpreted as a previously fully or partially completed undergraduate degree programme.

For example, Marwan was unable to access the same Korta Vagen programme as Tariq, as his Swedish was assessed as being of a lower standard, despite the fact that they studied together. In addition to not meeting the Swedish language criteria, Marwan had not fulfilled the requirements of the final year of his degree in Syria, whereas Tariq had graduated. Marwan had to attend Korta Vagen in a different city with lower entry

requirements. These differences coupled with borders to access information about the programmes – discussed in section 7.5 - demonstrated the level of perseverance needed to participate in the programme and to avoid the ‘Lange Vagen’.

Inconsistent eligibility both in terms of academic and personal criteria, as well as application processes, were features of the UK initiatives, evident in the scholarships available at the three case study universities and across the wider network of higher education institutions connected to the Article 26 project. The ‘forced migrant’ category reflects approximately eight different legal statuses related to different stages in the process of an application for asylum. At the time this research was conducted, none of the case study institutions embraced the full spectrum of immigration statuses. Restrictions were imposed in relation to the applicants’ choice of degree programme at Universities A and C; scholarships were unavailable for Medicine, Dentistry and NHS-related courses due to the costs incurred through forgoing tuition fee income.

The majority of scholarships in the UK required prospective applicants to secure a conditional or unconditional offer of a university place through the central higher education application system (UCAS), and this was the practice within Universities A, B and C. However, owing to the fact that these students were categorised as international, some universities accepted direct applications. The process of establishing eligibility, the availability of the desired degree programme and the application method had to be determined by prospective applicants for each institution they were interested in attending. None of the forced migrant cohort was critical of these inconsistencies, all instead expressing gratitude that the opportunities existed and that they had been successful in securing a scholarship. Yet it was impossible to ignore the potential impact of issues pertaining to access to scholarships.

Inconsistencies in the scholarship schemes were exemplified by a discussion between two university representatives at the annual Article 26 conference. One university presented their new scheme aimed not at providing access to degree opportunities but certificates (intersessional qualifications) that could subsequently qualify students to enter onto a UG or PG degree programme, which could compensate for previously incomplete or interrupted education. Another university responded by stating that no

forced migrant who had studied previously at a university in the UK would be eligible for their scholarship scheme, even in the event he/she was to secure the necessary qualifications to study on one of their programmes.

It was evident within this research that inconsistencies existed in relation to the availability of opportunities within HEIs across the UK and Sweden. The geographical proximity of forced migrants to providers of Korta Vagen or scholarships based upon the Article 26 model played a major role in relation to access. Forced migrants often faced challenges as they often had neither the financial support nor the freedom of movement without also surrendering their right to accommodation and financial support from the state to access opportunities in higher education. Added to which in the UK context, the student support component of the scholarship did not always cover subsistence for accommodation and living costs. A member of Student Support staff described the inherent frustration in the scholarships failing to overcome the challenges encountered by forced migrant students:

‘It does seem very counter intuitive: I basically sat with one student for 2.5 hours, trying to be supportive, trying to find other options, but then there are no options. I had to lay it down in black and white that this is the reality of the situation and there is nothing else that I can do because of external factors. Even within the university we weren’t able to do anything to help, they needed to go away and sort themselves out before we would be able to help them in that situation’

Student Support staff, University C, HEIUK\_C\_SS47

These scholarships excluded students who could not meet these costs or access relevant support from elsewhere for the duration of their degree programme. This was inconsistent with the wider student population, wherein students are not routinely excluded from higher education due to their financial circumstances: it is more likely that increased efforts are taken to try and address deficits in economic capital in order to include them, often in the context of widening participation initiatives.

It was important to explore the role played by these initiatives in terms of their reproducing the invisibility or raising the visibility, not of individuals, but of forced migrants as a sub section of the wider student population. A central consideration was how these initiatives were promoted and effectively marketed to the prospective

applicants. In the UK, the Article 26 project played a central role in creating a national platform from which to promote scholarships. The UK HEI case studies varied considerably in terms of their approach to promotion. The lack of internal communication in relation to scholarships was discussed in section 5.5. University C presented the most effective strategy and commitment to promoting opportunities within their institution for forced migrants. The annual scholarship available to a student from a forced migrant background had been integrated into their outreach and recruitment plan and was actively promoted within local schools and further education colleges. Prospective students had the option on the tuition fee assessment form to indicate that they were from a forced migrant background, which alerted Admissions who signposted the student to a dedicated member of student support. An assessment was then undertaken to investigate whether or not the individual required any additional support in order to study at University C.

The Head of widening participation at University B in the UK expressed concerns about promoting a small number of scholarships targeting forced migrants in outreach activities aimed at widening participation (during the period in which field work was conducted this amounted to two scholarships per annum). His concern centred around raising the aspirations of these students and potentially providing them with false hope in terms of their pathway to higher education if their immigration status remained unresolved:

‘So I think there is a danger that a bright student who is an international fee payer at status, it’s quite dangerous to say, “Look what you could have won”. I think the work of some of the scholarships like we’re putting in place is a really great thing because it does suddenly put that in the reach of those young or older people. But there’s that balance that there’s potentially two scholarships there and, I don’t know, you’ve done the research in this area, the number of potentially academically able students from an asylum background what that pool looks like that’s quite a big... it’s a difficult balance, isn’t it?’  
Head of Widening Participation, University B, HEIUK\_B\_DWP36

The extent of the (in) visibility at University A, resulted in no member of staff working in Recruitment & Outreach having any knowledge of the scholarships available for forced migrants. In the process of conducting interviews during field work, I was acutely aware of my unanticipated role, as an external person coming into the university, sharing information and communicating details of the scholarship scheme to agents working in

the institution. Apart from the two members of professional services staff responsible for establishing and subsequently delivering the scheme – research participants at University A fell into one of two categories: i) senior management who were aware of the existence of the scheme but lacked knowledge in respect to the details and ii) operational staff who were completely unaware of the scholarship scheme, yet appeared genuinely interested in it.

At University A and University B opportunities to raise awareness of the challenges forced migrants encountered and the institutional response were either being missed or ignored by staff. The argument that the small number of scholarships should be reflected in their limited promotion, resulted in the institution forgoing the opportunity to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the scale in terms of who was affected and the potential demand in their local area. The reality was that the lack of promotion reinforced the invisibility of these students and replicated the agenda of exclusion instigated by managed migration. The impact of limited outreach activities focused on the specific needs was reflected in section 7.5. Prospective students from a forced migrant background who were accessing this information first of all had to be aware of the barriers they faced accessing higher education and to be actively seeking ways to overcome them.

The forced migrant initiatives across Sweden and the UK assisted the most determined individuals to discover and pursue a route into higher education. Inconsistencies in the context of 'access' not only affected prospective students, but agents providing advice and guidance, which serves as a deterrent to navigate and challenge the asylum process, reinforcing Mountz & Hiemstra's (2014) concept of confusion introduced in section 8.3. The initiatives also benefitted those individuals able to utilise their social capital to access the correct information and who in many circumstances were fortunate in terms of the existence of opportunities in the locality of where they lived. However, access in respect to finding and correctly interpreting information, meeting the eligibility criteria and completing the application process represented challenges specific to the additional border created by the forced migrant initiatives, and it is important not to forget that they were often preceded by the challenges comprising the higher education border. Naidoo (2010) states that issues accessing university are indicative of those who do, and



those who don't belong in higher education. Barriers created by initiatives intended to deconstruct the border have the potential to act as the final hurdle and one that cannot be cleared – evidenced by Nathan who accessed a Foundation course in the UK, but whose application to receive a scholarship from University A to allow him to progress onto a full degree programme was unconfirmed.

#### 8.4.2 Participation

Forced migrant participation in Korta Vagen was based upon their expectation that they would be able to achieve specific outcomes. However, this was subject to the varying content of the course. Significant changes were the result of a reduction in funding and were reflected in the varying lengths of the programme, the achievable level of Swedish language proficiency and additional teaching components. Higher education agents based at University F in Sweden felt that the removal of IT from the programme was problematic, especially given the number of participants they encountered who had no or little experience of using computers and IT systems. Inconsistencies in content created an extra layer of confusion, as in addition to trying to understand and overcome the barriers created through a lack of information, promotion and differing eligibility criteria, there was uncertainty in terms of what forced migrants could expect to gain as a result of their engagement.

University D and University E were no longer commissioned by the Swedish Employment Agency, instead delivering their own model of intensive Swedish language education. The motivation for University E was to provide a better quality and more comprehensive programme of study, whilst University D's programme, initially developed with the support of the state, had simply continued in the eight-year interlude during which a change in government signaled a shift in focus away from widening participation. It is unknown, as the national profile of Korta Vagen grows, if the disconnection to this central state-led initiative will have any impact on the perception of qualifications secured through the more independent schemes delivered by University D and E.

Once Korta Vagen had been 'rolled out' across Swedish universities, following the successful delivery of a pilot in the Western region, the decision was taken to reduce the funding available for individual programmes. This resulted in University E and University

F in Sweden ceasing delivery of Korta Vagen. Both universities continued their work in this area in different ways - University E established an alternative independent programme and University F was employed by the local Folk University who secured the contract - neither university maintained a direct relationship with the Swedish Employment Agency. The action of all three Swedish universities could be interpreted as acts of autonomy, or argued more specifically as, a reflection of the cautious or partial exercise of autonomy.

‘There is leeway where universities can make a difference and change some policies within a framework we have. This is something that needs to be financed; it needs to fit within the regulations that we are operating under. . . it’s a framework or emphasis, where we have a freedom but we have more freedom than we use’

Admissions Manager, University E, HEISE\_E\_AM65

The Swedish-state held the symbolic capital (Bourdieu et al, 2004), which Swedish institutions’ required the state to grant recognition to the programmes they delivered; the provision of funding was an essential indicator that activities performed by higher education agents and institutions were sanctioned by the state.

Whilst the state funding for Korta Vagen was consistent, there was pressure in the expansion of the programme to reduce costs, which was achieved through inviting education providers to submit a tender to deliver the programme on the open market. The reliance on non-state actors extended to private providers and companies with greater interest in raising profits than education. The marketisation of Korta Vagen led to media reports and discussions around poor delivery by private contractors uninterested in the education and development of opportunities for foreign academics:

‘There have been a lot of writing in papers and on the news about smaller education companies which, well, they have courses and, well, there's no teacher there, the class was alone and we don't know what to do, we have no teacher. The teacher comes in for one hour and then we sit alone for seven hours, things like that, and then . . . quality is very important, which I think the universities could provide’

Student Support staff, University F, HEISE\_F\_SS73

In the UK, individual higher education institutions were responsible for securing funds to cover the cost of their initiatives targeting forced migrants. UK universities are not allowed to spend public funds on the education or engagement of students not

categorised as 'home'. This does not present a problem for forced migrant students with resolved immigration status, but this group is less likely to require the level of financial support required by those with unsettled immigration status. An Executive Board member at University B estimated that one fifth of the institution's income was generated through public funds. Whilst University A and C were likely, due to their institutional habitus, to generate less income, the statement from University B reflected the necessity for university funding streams to diversify due to the continued reduction in state funding. Finance and funding of scholarships for forced migrants in the UK requires consideration of: i) how individual university initiatives were funded, ii) the level of financial support available within individual scholarship schemes and iii) the impact of differentiated support on scholarships beneficiaries.

University A and University B funded their scholarships schemes through central shared costs, whilst University C met these costs at the departmental level (Student Services). Every university was engaged in external fundraising efforts often focused on their alumni to help meet additional cost of supporting this student group. Each UK-based higher education case study waived the tuition fees in full for every student they supported, however the level of additional financial support varied significantly. The scholarships provided by University B provided the financial equivalent to a full maintenance loan from student finance. University A provided a mixture of scholarships, one included university accommodation, whilst the others approximately £500.00 p.a. University C offered no guaranteed financial support to students beyond the tuition fee waiver. Scholarship beneficiaries had to be able to meet these costs independently of the university. These funding arrangements were potentially inconsistent in that they often had to be negotiated on an annual basis.

It was evident that higher education agents employed creative ways to secure funds and access additional university resources, beyond that which officially comprised the scholarship package. The reduction in state funding to the higher education sector had essentially resulted in the roll back of the state along with their withdrawal of student hardship funding. This resulted in universities having greater freedom in respect to how they defined and applied the criteria for their student hardship funds. Prior to the reduction in the state's financial investment, forced migrants with unresolved

immigration status were ineligible for student hardship funds, as they were deemed 'public' and subject to monitoring and auditing by the state. Once this restriction was removed, there was evidence of universities creatively reconfiguring the criteria to positively impact upon and practically support international students who were also experiencing hardship owing to their unresolved immigration status.

Many of the forced migrants based in the UK who were direct beneficiaries of scholarships and opportunities in higher education, had to overcome significant challenges not only to enter but continue in their studies. For example, the student support delivered by University A and University C (as detailed above) was largely inconsistent with that available to the wider student population, whereby the higher education border had been mobilised, moving beyond the periphery to accompany the students in their experience of university life. This was experienced in terms of a financial shortfall, an economic deficit which the students were responsible for filling. In spite of these differences no participant complained about their finances, as a member of staff from University B pointed out, it was often quite the opposite:

'What did strike me was people who had limited leave to remain [temporary immigration status] classing themselves as much more fortunate, than somebody just living off a card that gave them £30.00 a week or something like that [Azure card providing a system of cashless support]. It's amazing that they manage to complete the course, I must admit that struck me as well, people in that scenario that I would say have done amazingly well to get where you have done, whereas they would say that's nothing really look what this person has done'

Student Support staff, University B, HEIUK\_B\_SS38

This highlights how students clearly differentiated between themselves in terms of the support they received and the overwhelming sacrifices made to study in higher education. Harris (2013) and Earnest et al (2010) replicate the finding that forced migrants are prepared to suffer exceptional financial hardship to secure a degree programme in the hope that it will assist them to 'craft a future life of hope and possibility' (pp78).

The UK based initiatives to support forced migrants to acquire a university education could, if viewed through the narrow lens of consumer rights discourse (Clare et al, 2016) be perceived to create an advantage for this group, which is inconsistent with their

student peers surmounting increasing debt in their pursuit of a degree. Forced migrants with unsettled status are ineligible for student finance to fund their degree programme, rendering them incapable of accruing the same level of debt during the course of their studies. A scholarship facilitated the opportunity to complete their university education 'debt free'. When asked to reflect on the financial advantage, Kirsty clearly articulated the cost of participating in higher education for 'free':

'I'd rather have got my paperwork done on time and go through all of that without faff but because, you know, money for me is not ... is never an issue, you know, I don't mind owning that debt if it means having not gone through so much emotional and, you know, mentally draining experiences'  
Kirsty, South East Asian living in the UK, FMUK\_SEA09

Bullough (2014) commented on students' expectations in terms of their future prospects given the extent of their investment in higher education. Kirsty's statement conveys that future expectations are not diminished by the fact their investment was emotional rather than financial.

It is important to consider the predominantly financially-based scholarships provided by the UK case-study universities in the wider context in which they were delivered. If we compare the cost of higher education in the UK with Sweden, anyone categorised as a home student or citizen of the European Union is not liable to pay university tuition fees, thus reducing debts incurred in pursuit of and completion of a degree. Opportunities are available across Europe for UK students to study for free or engage in exchange schemes, if they choose to explore their options the European Union.

In the UK, tuition fee waivers are provided in some circumstances to home students, for example University B annually fund four full tuition fee waivers to students who identify as Care Leavers. If other groups of underrepresented students receive this level of support, yet do not experience the same level of financial need, the same justification applied to this practice can be extended to forced migrants. Very few scholarships provide additional financial support equivalent to that received in the form of a maintenance loan. This results in many scholarship beneficiaries experiencing relative to their student peers, severe financial hardship through the course of their degree programme. Added to the trauma they have had to overcome in the process of

displacement and overcoming the higher education border, it is unlikely that any support received is capable of overcoming the deficit in their privilege.

The forced migrant initiatives subject to scrutiny in Sweden and the UK succeed in achieving their respective core aims, in terms of breaking down barriers relating to deficits in economic and linguistic capital and in doing so create opportunities for some of the most capable and determined forced migrant students. These findings could be presented as evidence of universities' resistance, sites subject to reconfiguration focused on equality, prioritising students' merit over income generation. Yet it is also impossible to ignore the fact that the inclusion of forced migrants who succeed in navigating higher education and access opportunities created by initiatives is, like wider society in the UK and Sweden, differential and demonstrates the persistence and pervasiveness of the barriers encountered (Rygiel, 2011). The need for institutions to expand their focus, to overcome these inconsistencies and embrace a more inclusive approach was evident across all six universities, whose structures needed to further enable, as opposed to continue to constrain, forced migrants in their endeavours to pursue their higher education goals.

These insights contribute to work by Ahmed (2008) who cautions against the rush to implement change, prior to fully exploring the root causes of the issue a university wishes to address through changes in practice. Gill et al (2014) who call for activities which address the technologies of power, deemed more likely to affect real change, as opposed to reinforcing the status quo:

'Foucault's distinction between sovereign and disciplinary power proves useful here. Tactics that rework particular configurations within existing systems of control risk strengthening sovereign power by implicitly shoring up the legitimacy of the sovereign. This is their principle flaw; they contest *the way* that strategies are effected rather than contesting the very right to effect a strategy. This can result in petitioning the sovereign power, which performs its authority' (pp: 6)

There is the potential to conclude from this that acts of resistance are better aimed at the locus of power perceived to be held by those at the 'top' of the hierarchy, as Burrige (2014) asserts the aim should be the eradication of border controls, and not as Mckee (2009) suggests, constitute acts of resistance that grow from the 'bottom' of the social

hierarchy. England (1992) argues that tactics should be utilised over laws, as an instrument of resistance, as tactics are used as disciplinary and governmental technologies embedded in everyday activities. The acts of resistance reported on in this thesis do not focus on one sovereign target, but instead target the everyday activities through which immobility and stasis induced by immigration status are reproduced.

## 8.5 Radical versus Incremental Action

In spite of the inequalities evident within the forced migrant initiatives and the multiple borders encountered within higher education systems and processes, the forced migrant participants based in the UK reflected positively on their experiences. Emmanuel from South Africa credited higher education as being responsible for his attitude of giving everything 100%; Ali from Afghanistan found studying at university incredibly tough, however the challenges failed to diminish his enjoyment; Esther from Kenya would only reflect positively on her time spent in higher education and refused to reflect negatively on any barriers invoked by the higher education border; and Maria from Malawi discussed the boost in self-esteem, which came from securing a scholarship.

The expressions of gratitude by the UK-based forced migrant participants could be related to the fact that for many this was their only chance to continue their education, which led Victor to describe his scholarship as: 'an even bigger privilege because the system says you technically can't and yet you find a way to do it', or in their position as newcomers to a new higher education 'field' which could deter them from offering any form of criticism (Devine, 2009). The alternate perspective, and one supported by research in this area, proposes the power of the therapeutic and rehabilitative qualities afforded by higher education and that the holistic impact on the lives of individuals could not be underestimated (Earnest et al, 2010; Lyall & Bowerman, 2013; Morrice 2013), as articulated by Zahed:

'Sometimes studying even puts my mind off other things and calms me down, so it has this sort of effect on me that I can't explain, but it's because I enjoy it so much'

Zahed, Iranian living in the UK, FMUK\_IR07

Higher education afforded many of the forced migrant participants a non-asylum identity, as they adopted a new identity as student. A university student card was a source of incredible pride, as it represented a piece of identification, which highlighted their inclusion within an institution at the centre of society, as opposed to their ARC (asylum registration card), which highlighted their immigration status and technologies of domination which sought to exclude them from society. John from Zimbabwe faced considerable challenges enrolling at University A, which meant he was not immediately issued with student ID. Due to the lack of internal communication regarding his scholarship, John's funding source was not recognised during the registration process. John described the absence of student ID, as making him 'look like an outcast within the university'.

John's experience of being stopped at the point of registration was similar to Zahed's experience (section 7.7). However, unlike Zahed, John assumed he had secured safe passage and didn't need to negotiate the registration mechanisms of the HE border. The reality was his 'state of exception', the process described by Agamben (2005) as the process of placing specific groups at the periphery of society, previously experienced outside higher education, were continued within. Due to an absence of ID, there were points at which he was repeatedly stopped by university processes preventing him from signing into lectures, logging onto computers and being physically denied access to university buildings. These incidences acted as perpetual reminders that University A did not recognise him as a student and that his exclusion in spite of securing a scholarship was unabated. When John received his student ID he described feelings of 'pure joy', as full access had finally been granted. John was the first ever recipient of a scholarship at University A. The institution subsequently made significant improvements to their practice, which impacted positively on the forced migrant cohort who commenced their studies the following academic year: Victor a Zimbabwean forced migrant reported that there were 'no hiccups', reaffirmed by Nesta also from Zimbabwe.

In the Swedish context, far fewer participants were actively studying on a degree programme: they were at the stage of working towards their engagement. Halil from Syria was studying on an undergraduate degree programme, which he believed provided him with the opportunity to engage in learning in ways which were not available to him



in his country of origin, integral not only to his growth in knowledge but also in respect to his personal development:

‘So the piece of paper [degree certificate] is going to be extremely important but the most important is what sort of things I’m learning in this process of getting that piece of paper and then how it will impact upon my choices in the future’

Halil, Syrian-Palestinian living in Sweden, FMSE\_SY13

Section 7.6 focused on the challenges of accruing linguistic capital specific to an individual’s professional field. This issue had been identified by University F, who were in the process of negotiating opportunities at a local hospital.

‘For these refugees that come, even though they have their exam in nursing and they have ten years’ experience they need to have SAS3, it can take five years. At the same time we need lots of doctors and nurses . . . my suggestion is when they come to Sweden, yes of course they need to speak Swedish but they don’t need to have SAS3. During when they are learning the language they should be at the hospital with some of the doctors who have the same area, if they on ER [emergency room] or if they are helping people who have stroke or heart problems. I think it’s an easier way to learn the language if you are a participant at the work place. You learn about the terms for the work in Swedish. It’s in Latin, so I think it’s more about the process of your work and how you’re going to manage to the system in Sweden’

Student Support staff, University F, HEISE\_F\_SS77

This constituted a small yet important incremental step towards developing alternative pathways for medical professionals to expedite their journey, not just to the labour market but to continue in their area of professional expertise. Gill et al (2014) employ the term ‘tactics’ to describe the incremental acts detailed above and assert that they have the potential to be conceptualised as ‘an important complement’ instead of ‘a poor alternative to radical activism’ (pp:21). Schram (2015) argues for ‘a politics of radical incrementalism’ to be embraced in spite of its inherent flaws, based on small acts representing the potential for the growth into much larger change (pp.4). This further supports Giddens (1984) argument that reconfiguration of activities leads to the restructure of existing structures into new activities reproduced by agents. To return to Fraser’s (2007) assertion, inclusion in a subordinate position is preferable to outright exclusion, which would seem to be evident in the forced migrants’ willingness to access university in a subordinate, at least financially, position at University A and University C in the UK. Simply the presence and recognition of forced migrants within the higher

education system can be viewed as an act of citizenship (on the part of the forced migrants) and an act of resistance (on the part of higher education institutions).

Even in the harshest of circumstances there is evidence of the will to thrive, in direct relation to forced migrants pursuing a future and constantly striving to take ownership and authorship of their bodies. The greater the extent to which their story is contested, the more important the need to 'recoup a narrative of selfhood becomes' (Munt, 2012: 559). Mountz (2011) reflected on how Afghani refugees exiled to islands in Indonesia, denied access to mainland Australia, who in spite of not being allowed to work or study (opportunities being located at a much greater geographical distance), rejected the state of exception and created new lives in the most challenging of contexts. They achieved this through entering into relationships with people living on the island, started families and strove to create a semblance of life in progress as opposed to stasis. The continuation of life, as opposed to what Agamben (2005) described as 'bare life' more akin to existence as opposed to growth, is evident within reports on the educational aspirations and activities of forced migrants living within formal refugee camps (Horst, 2006; Gladwell et al, 2016), as well as more informal settlements such as the Calais jungle (Rygiel, 2011).

The individual narratives of the 26 forced migrant participants were exceptional but not unique, as the desire and commitment to achieve in higher education within a context of exclusion rather than inclusion exemplified theories of autonomous migration and active citizenship (Isin, 2007); this is reflected in the small body of research focused on this specific area – section 2.9. 'Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience: its essential sadness can never be surmounted' (Said, 2000:137) yet 'rearranging the grammar of experience' (Turner, 1998) is central to the motivation of many of the forced migrant participants, to move beyond the limbo and uncertainty and make sense of what has occurred in the past through building a future worthy of the struggles.

## 8.6 Post Higher Education Experiences

The acquisition of new qualifications, or the translation or verification of existing ones as the result of engagement in higher education, was not an end goal, but what Spiteri (2015) describes as a vehicle or, for the purposes of this thesis, a conduit to achieve what was frequently referred to by the forced migrant participants as a 'better life'. A key consideration is whether the barriers they experienced in the context of higher education continued to characterise and shape their future experiences or were potentially minimised by the fact that their skills and experiences were more consistent with the norm in Sweden or the UK. University agents discussed their potential role in providing an educational legacy, which equipped the students to navigate further challenges in society with particular reference to the labour market.

'I want the students to have a tool box when they finish so that even if they get a job, if they come in a situation which they will when they are unemployed, they can look in the tool box and find what did I do the last time I was in this position and how can I do it again to succeed'

Academic, University D, HEISE\_D\_AD58

However, the successful acquisition of employment commensurate with skills and experience was not simply a case of translating existing and applying new capital to these challenges. The tools to overcome barriers connected with their forced migrant status, ethnicity and other aspects of their identity, such as gender, sexuality and disability (not an exhaustive list) are deeply embedded structural prejudices which it is unrealistic to think could be overcome within the initiatives discussed in this research.

This is exemplified in the contrasting experiences of two Syrian women both with settled immigration status – Nala living in the UK and Qamar in Sweden. The two women shared opposite visions for the future. Nala's original plan was to return to Syria following her PhD: remaining in the UK became an essential part of the reconfiguration of her plan owing to the conflict in Syria. Nala explained how she didn't equate the successful completion of her PhD with success in securing an academic position in the labour market. It was her belief that she was entering a field in which she was equal to her peers in respect to her knowledge capital, yet Nala envisaged that she would experience discrimination based on her status as a refugee and her ethnic identity, which would

ultimately impede her progress. In direct comparison Qamar favoured her chances of securing employment in Sweden over Syria:

‘Most people there study hard to get a degree but won't get a job. In Sweden you know that you'll get a job once you finish your studies and get a degree or license, but in Syria, there's not much hope’

Qamar, Syrian living in Sweden FMSE\_SY18

In addition to not having the same concerns about securing employment, neither did Qamar believe that her ethnicity had any bearing on her experiences in Sweden.

‘In Sweden everyone has the same rights. Me being someone from Syria, I have the same rights as a Swedish citizen. It doesn't matter if you have black hair, here people are equal’

Qamar, Syrian living in Sweden FMSE\_SY18

Nala had only recently resolved her immigration status and conceptualised race as an issue that would shape experiences beyond her degree programme, she didn't comment on any specific experiences of racism during her studies.

Several other participants described racism not in the context of their everyday experiences, but in terms of concerns around the wider political context and the escalation of xenophobia and Islamophobia. The forced migrants who arrived in the UK as children presented diverse perspectives on racism within compulsory education, which ranged from Esther, originally from Kenya, who felt under threat from attacks based on her ethnic identity to Zimbabwean Nesta for whom issues rooted in racism created many challenges during her time in compulsory education.

At the opposite end of the spectrum was Emmanuel who described the mix of different ethnic groups within his secondary school as a ‘beautiful thing’ in comparison with the prejudice he endured at school in South Africa. Rose was a PhD student at University B in the UK, who claimed asylum after fleeing Zimbabwe. Rose's immigration status had been resolved for approximately seven years and she advised me: ‘race has had more impact than my [immigration] status’. Rose explained that she exercised choice over who she informed about her background as a refugee: however she had no choice in respect to disclosing the fact that she was not ethnically white, comments which were replicated by Zimbabwean women in other studies (Morrice, 2013).

‘Ethnic minorities experience an ethnic penalty in relation to entry to prestigious universities and the labour market returns they receive for their university degrees’ (Maddood, 2004:102)

Maddood’s statement is supported by multiple authors discussing the impact of structural inequalities pertaining to ethnicity and race in creating an exclusionary context in higher education (Youdell, 2004; Naidoo, 2010). The UK has witnessed an increase in ethnic minority students accessing higher education: their exclusion is constructed in terms of challenges in retaining this student group – potentially reflecting their lack of belonging (Crozier et al, 2008).

During the 2016 Article 26 residential (September, 2016), I observed a session focused on building students’ confidence through the development of presentation skills. The facilitator expressed surprise at their proclaimed lack of confidence given the skill and ability demonstrated during practical exercises. Several of the students declared that it wasn’t the content of their presentations but the fact that they ‘didn’t look or sound like the other students’. These scholarship beneficiaries had successfully overcome the borders imposed by their immigration status to access higher education and were working hard to sustain their positions at university through managing their immigration cases with the Home Office, and making the necessary financial sacrifices. But these particular barriers they identified were based on their identity and not their status, which was connected to discrimination resulting from structural inequalities. This example serves to reinforce the fact that inclusion and belonging operate on a spectrum, and access does not as Ahmed (2008) contested, overcome the inequalities in higher education. However, this observation is indicative of the challenges the students encountered being more closely aligned with those experienced by members of the international student community, as opposed to relating specifically to their immigration status.

The holistic university experience extends beyond the acquisition of qualifications to other forms of social and cultural capital. This will undoubtedly increase the capacity of the forced migrant participants to be socially mobile and generate new capital. However, it is necessary to consider the longer term goal to pursue a professional career. Success in higher education in the destination country can support success in the labour

market to the extent of holding the correct qualifications and experience, but these accomplishments cannot overcome the unavoidable inequitable treatment based upon ethnicity and depending on the individual, gender, sexual orientation or disability. The case study institutions' provided solutions to overcome some of the challenges associated with the deficit in their forced migrant habitus, but they were not directly addressing structural inequalities, which will undoubtedly continue to characterise the lives and experiences of forced migrants in Sweden and the UK.

This thesis has demonstrated that forced migrant habitus coupled with the support of higher education agents can be utilised to traverse the higher education border: however, what is as yet unknown is how this will translate to the labour market. In the continued absence of data collected to track the progress of forced migrants once they have been awarded some form of leave to enter Sweden or the UK (be it temporary or fully settled), this will prove difficult to monitor. The question is whether the forced migrant participants will be able to continue to negotiate the borders imposed by managed migration or will this prove harder within the increasingly hostile environment in the UK and Sweden shaped by the rise in populist politics.

## 8.7 The Role of Higher Education in the Reclamation of Belonging

'Most people are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home; exiles are aware of at least two, and this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions, an awareness that – to borrow a phrase from music – is *contrapuntal*' (Said, 2000:148)

This thesis has presented forced migrant habitus shaped by elements which could be seen as both complementary and contradictory: shaped by experiences in more than one country context and distinctly different to the wider population and perceived to be in deficit of that which is required to belong in the destination country – see section 3.8 and 3.9. The introduction of this concept of forced migrant habitus as an extension of Morrice's (2013) description of refugee habitus was expanded on in 6.3 and 7.3 through the presentation of findings asserting connections between the forced migrant habitus held by the participants: first of all, the generational legacy of ambitions in higher education coupled with the education context, for some, in their country of origin,

resulted in a determination to reclaim and exercise agency through access and success in higher education.

The extent of the perceived deficit in various forms of capital was explored in depth across Sweden and the UK in sections 7.5 – 7.7, underpinned by the importance of reclaiming, and creating new, social capital. The concept of forced migrant habitus is extended here to explore the participants' motivations to overcome the higher education border and what Morrice (2013) describes as the 'boundaries of belonging' (pp.655), created by refugee habitus, exacerbated by the more restrictive forced migrant habitus. This habitus differs from Morrice's (2013) definition in that it encompasses the full range of immigration statuses (settled and unsettled), as opposed to only settled immigration status.

Concepts of limbo and belonging are located in this research on a spectrum, which has been extended in order that it is neither bounded by territorial borders nor the boundaries of legislation in order to consider the full extent of forced displacement and embrace holistic constructions of both concepts, as shaped by the forced migrants contributing to this study. A contrapuntal approach to belonging embraces Said's (2000) concept of one piece of music playing in harmony over a second piece of music. This concept is extended to forced migrants' approach towards and pursuit of belonging – in terms of settled immigration status or the realisation of rights associated with settled immigration status and the acquisition or validation of HE qualifications.

All 26 forced migrant participants sought asylum with a view to securing the permanent right to remain in the destination country. Section 6.6 highlighted the prioritisation of recognition within socio-legal frameworks of the destination country, yet this does not discount the multiple other identified facets of belonging. If citizenship is conceptualised as a process (Ralph & Staehli, 2011) then all the forced migrant participants without settled status in the UK and Sweden could be conceived to have embarked on this process regardless of their legal status. Through the pursuit of, engagement and success within higher education, all the participants were enacting what Foucault termed the 'affiliated' citizen (1991; 2001; Dean, 2010) and Isin the 'active' citizen (2007; 2008). The forced migrant participants sought freedom through social, political and economic

independence, which they envisaged would be afforded to them in positions of professional employment, which would directly impact upon their ability to effectively 'self' manage.

A contrapuntal approach to belonging was expressed through the forced migrants' articulation of their hopes and fears for the future. The main hope held by the forced migrant participants was that they could rebuild their families – many people feared for the safety of family members with whom they wished to be reunited. The loss of family members led many people to hope to one day have their own family in the destination country. The second priority was the opportunity to pursue a professional career and many participants were very specific in their choices e.g. Dentist, Cardiac Surgeon or Teacher.

16 of the research participants originated from either Syria or Zimbabwe, which resonated with research focused on the prevalence of people seeking asylum from these countries who were educated to degree level and/or had a professional career prior to displacement (Bloch, 2006; Mupakati, 2012; Verme et al, 2015). Central to the desire to pursue a professional career was the desire to complete their education – every participant was focused on higher education. For some people completion meant their undergraduate degree, while others aspired to undertake a doctorate degree. Zahed conveyed the collective hopes he had for both himself and his family:

'The first one is personal for me to become a surgeon, all the hard work I've put in and the faith people have put in me with huge sums of money, puts a little bit of pressure on me to do well in that. The second is to look after my family really, especially my mum, she deserves much more than what she has got from this world, I know I can give it to her . . . my little brother (aged 5) I don't want him to have any of the problems I had, the best education, the best life he possibly can'

Zahed, Iranian living in the UK, FMUK\_IR07

The fears expressed were more complex and wide ranging, but essentially conveyed concerns related to not belonging: their continued exclusion from, and marginalisation within, society. Victor's quote clearly reflects the fact that settled immigration status, even to the point of being granted citizenship, does not guarantee feelings of belonging and inclusion in the destination country.



‘The first fear is being sent back, the second fear is not being able to finish this degree and I guess the third one would be failing to get through given that I have worked so hard. I have talked to so many people who have said, “oh I have a British Passport” and he still wants to kill himself . . . so if after all of this and I finish and then I still find myself as empty as I feel right now, then believe me that would be a tragedy, so I guess I am afraid of finding out ‘

Victor, Zimbabwean living in the UK, FMUK\_ZM03

Unemployment, or more specifically underemployment, was the primary fear, as not pursuing a professional career, for many, equated to failure. Immigration status not being resolved, awarded or rescinded due to a change in legislation or political party was the second greatest fear: however, this was coupled with concerns regarding racism. Concerns were expressed about the rise of islamophobia across Europe and the significant fear that this would lead to increased prejudice, which would prevent integration and employment opportunities for the forced migrant participants. This also reflected the fact that aside from the power required to belong being perceived to lie with the state from a legal perspective, wider society also needed to recognise the entitlement to belong (Ralph & Staehli, 2011).

The forced migrants’ construction of belonging is also contrapuntal, in respect to their allegiance and aspirations for a future that includes the destination country yet also does not deny their country of origin: ‘A well-integrated refugee group is therefore better equipped to both return to their state of origin and to make a positive contribution to that society’ (Berry, 2012:6) – duality of belonging can be a positive.

‘A lot of Syrians have a kind of reverse shock, and don’t want to see Syria any more. I just want to forget this part of my life, and just live in another country and forget that where I came from. So it’s kind of justified. It’s not a big margin of Syrians, but you can find this, this kind of people. Yeah, you can find them. That as first as we going to get our permits, we are going to change our names, even dye our hair and forget anything about Syria. You can find them, but they are not much. I think the majority will think that they have something to return back to their country. But they would like also to stay in the countries that they are, because they don’t want to make all the efforts to settle, then when Syria is back make all the efforts to rebuild in Syria. They would like to go together. It’s a human nature that they don’t want to lose everything and rebuild again after they rebuild twice’

Elias, Syrian living in Sweden, FMSE\_SY23

‘People in Afghanistan who have been forgotten and you know that they are there and you know that if you can help, then you help. If I have, you know a good job and earning good money then I can go and help them out. So yes, that's my hope, that's the things I want to do in the future’  
Ali, Afghani living in the UK, FMUK\_AF01

‘I'd like to go back to South Africa, or to Zimbabwe and do something to give back . . . women's education’  
Ethel, Zimbabwean living in the UK, FMUK\_ZM08

Allegiance to and the connection to more than one ‘place’ is not uncommon. However, in the context of forced migration to maintain links and a connection with their country of origin or other places could raise questions as to whether or not they really had to leave. This can add impetus to the preference evident in immigration legislation that favours the award of temporary as opposed to permanent status for forced migrants, in the hope that even after the elapse of a significant period of time, return to the country of origin will be possible (Ralph & Staehli, 2011). Atonsich (2010) questions how belonging would be defined if borders did not exist: however, given the rise of populism and the race to protect, reinforce existing and erect new borders, conceptualisations such as this are completely unrealistic and unhelpful in the current context.

## 8.8 Conclusion

This chapter has extended investigation into the habitus held by forced migrants, contributing new perspectives on theories of belonging to include the relationship between forced migration and higher education. Following Said (2000), the pursuit of higher education in tandem with acquiring or realising the rights associated with settled immigration status constitutes a ‘contrapuntal’ approach to ‘belonging’ in the destination country. The contrapuntal concept is also evident in the construction of belonging, as forced migrants strive to establish themselves in the destination country whilst retaining a strong connection, and sense of belonging, to the country they originated from. This extends current conceptualisations of belonging by Yuval-Davis (2005; 2007); Atonsich(2010) and Ralph & Staehli (2011).

The higher education sector in Sweden and the UK provided, through access to their institutions, opportunities for forced migrants to construct their own model of belonging, which allowed them to shape their own futures and in doing so reclaim

agency and mitigate the impact of limbo. This supported the forced migrants' collective 'end goal': securing qualifications and the experience required to develop their desired career. The current forced migrant initiatives operating in UK and Swedish universities provide support to overcome the main challenges encountered in the pursuit of professional employment. However, evident within these initiatives, and contradictory to their intentions, exist inequalities which are a consequence of the higher education border.

I have, however, argued that these schemes remain imperfect incremental acts of resistance - evident within institutional initiatives and the actions of agents operating within them, in conjunction with forced migrant agents pursuing opportunities in adverse circumstances and against considerable odds. They reflect the potential for the long-term restructuring of higher education as a sector which includes, as opposed to excludes, forced migrants. However, the prospect of a higher education sector which increasingly 'includes' as opposed to 'excludes' this group needs to be contextualised within the very real social and political challenges posed not just by the national but by the European and global context. The sector is perpetually threatened by increasingly hostile managed migration regimes, focused on practices which serve to repress and immobilise forced migrants.

## Chapter 9

### Discussion

#### 9.1 Introduction

'I think being a refugee is something quite different, either you tell yourself to move on and concentrate on new experiences, which are always challenging, or dwell on what has gone before, all of it is not pleasant. So, there is no point if you think about how you left your home, you would be beat up all the time and angry, because somebody robbed you of the right to be in your own country and if you were bitter about how you've been treated by the system, or whatever, you will be bitter all the time. There will be no point'  
Rose, Zimbabwean living in the UK, FMUK\_ZM08

This thesis has been concerned with the largely unexplored relationship between forced migration and higher education. The small body of existing research in this area has highlighted and reported on the challenges forced migrants encounter in their pursuit of and engagement with higher education. This research has built on existing studies in far-reaching ways. Research presented previously has focused on forced migrants with settled immigration status: minimal attention has been directed towards those awaiting a decision on their application for asylum or seeking to progress from an award of temporary to settled immigration status. The findings of this thesis have clearly indicated that higher education impacts upon decisions made in the process of displacement, and significant emphasis from the point of arrival is placed upon starting or continuing on individual educational journeys, the intended outcome of which is embarking upon a professional career and the associated freedom to move beyond the constraints of managed migration.

In addition to broadening the spectrum of people affected by managed migration, yet who are also aspiring students, this thesis broadens the exploration of the actors responsible for the marginalisation of forced migrants in higher education. Very little attention has been directed towards the role played by the higher education sector and individual higher education institutions as agents reproducing mechanisms designed to exclude this group. They include reduced access to advice and information on access and participation, financial support, language assistance and a lack of recognition and

subsequent accreditation of prior qualifications. The analysis of the duality of structure revealed the reproduction of tangible managed migration legislation and policies, as well as less tangible habits and customs in respect to the treatment of forced migrants. This was influenced by the position of forced migrants at the bottom of the global hierarchy, reflected at the local level and the fact that this group were widely perceived to not belong in the destination country (especially in the absence of belonging in the socio-legal sense) and by default, in higher education. Evident within the duality of structure was the agency exercised by actors operating in higher education and also by forced migrants, manifest in the resistance of both, and their efforts to overcome the border constructed between universities and prospective students subject to immigration control.

The extended perspective on these issues was further reflected in the development of a more comprehensive conceptual framework supported by the work of Foucault, Bourdieu and Giddens – this facilitates an understanding of how the role of the state, the higher education institution and individual agents interconnect and influence each other. The final key development of this thesis is its cross-national comparison between the UK and Sweden which enabled the identification of thematic similarities between the individual experiences of the forced migrant participants. Their collective experiences could then be extrapolated to the national level. The combined narratives reflect the European context, which subsequently contributes to a global understanding of the opportunities for social mobility and capital acquisition within higher education for this group.

This final chapter presents five dominant concepts emerging from this research. The **(in) visibility** of forced migrants in civil society is replicated within higher education. This invisibility influences the construction of forced migrant discourse, which informed the development of a **forced migrant habitus**. An exploration of forced migrant habitus emphasised the direct relationship to the deficits used to construct, as opposed to deconstruct, the **higher education border** that forced migrants must navigate to access university. Higher education plays a vital role in the position of forced migrants on the **spectrum of limbo ↔ belonging**. The holistic approach to both constructing and defining limbo and belonging provides a nuanced understanding of this continuum

derived from the experiences of forced migrants, and extending beyond the socio-legal immigration definitions and frameworks. The importance of the *everyday* connects these initial four concepts, as it is within daily practices, routines, activities and interactions that these issues are reproduced, reinforced and also resisted. The accumulation and proliferation of incremental change has the potential to lead to structural change at the institutional, societal and even legislative level.

A central finding within this study is that in spite of different underlying political ideologies between Sweden and the UK there exists strong thematic similarity between the two countries in respect of the marginalisation and exclusion of forced migrants from mainstream civil society. However, such thematic similarity in terms of approach manifests itself in different ways. It is therefore important to highlight key comparative findings at the national level, which reflect the importance of, and connection between, different ideologies at the political level and their manifestation in everyday interactions and experiences. These connections are vital in respect to both the design and implementation of solutions to these challenges that can be effective across both countries. Reflections on my own positionality following field work provide the bridge to a discussion on the importance of generating policy contributions and recommendations.

## 9.2 Research Findings

The overarching aim of this study was to explore the impact of managed migration regimes on forced migrants' access, participation and success in higher education, as well as the response from both universities and forced migrants. The research questions first stated in Chapter 1 were as follows:

**RQ1.** To critically examine the role of higher education institutions in managed migration regimes and their impact on the higher education experiences of forced migrants.

**RQ2.** To explore the role of higher education in the lives of forced migrants as they navigate the limbo induced by their displacement.

**RQ3.** To critically compare and analyse the forced migrant higher education journey in the UK & Sweden

**RQ4.** To identify the extent to which forced migrants reclaim agency and shape their own definition of belonging through higher education.

The perpetual tension that this research (and the forced migrant participants had to navigate in the context of their daily lives) centred on the immobilising impact of immigration, and the opportunities for social mobility offered by higher education. A stark contrast exists between the limbo endured prior to and within the UK or Sweden and the huge potential provided by a university education, in terms of the value added to career prospects and associated benefits. This could explain the relentless perseverance exhibited not only by the participants contributing to this research, but the individuals represented in other studies (see section 2.9) and scholarship beneficiaries connected to the Article 26 project to reclaim agency through higher education.

This study has explored the ‘presence’ of forced migrants in the context of their ‘absence’ from structures outside of managed migration. The (in)visibility of forced migrants from the structures of higher education and individual universities was explored in Chapter 5, in the context of widening participation frameworks in Sweden and the UK. Throughout the thesis existing structures from which this group were typically absent provide a framework for exploring key concepts, as well as serving to highlight the extent of the invisibility of forced migrants in higher education, a reflection of their position in wider civil society. In Chapter 7 the experiences of the forced migrant participants were situated within the higher education student journey, which was modified and extended to reflect the distinct challenges these individuals faced in their navigation of the sector. The socio-legal citizenship framework supplied the context in Chapter 6 and Chapter 8 to situate the different constructions of belonging, as conceptualised by the forced migrant participants.

The concept of a forced migrant habitus builds over the course of this thesis and is one of the key contributions made by this research. Forced migrant habitus is shaped by the following key components:

- Shaped by experiences in at least two, if not multiple country contexts;
- Resilience and determination to reclaim and exercise agency;

- Deficit/s in capital, owing either to the fact that existing capital lacks comparability, a lack of recognition in a new context or having been lost in the process of displacement;
- Multiple different approaches to and ideas in respect to what constitutes 'belonging', described as contrapuntal, to reflect the notion that these different approaches and ideas can be delineated from each other yet pursued in harmony.

The forced migrant participants' encountered challenges in utilising their existing knowledge and other capital comprising their habitus within the new higher education fields in the UK and Sweden. This was evident within practices such as 'educational triage' and 'fields' wherein institutions exercise nationally-based protectionism by not recognising qualifications acquired abroad (Bourdieu, 1999; Youdell, 2004; Erel, 2010). UK and Swedish universities hold the power to not only recognise institutional capital in the form of qualifications secured overseas, but also less tangible cultural capital such as different pedagogical approaches and perspectives. This thesis concurs with Devine (2009), who articulated the experiences of forced migrants as walking a '... delicate line between recognition versus rejection' (pp: 526).

An inherent irony exists in bordering practices in that borders are utilised to physically and socially immobilize forced migrants, yet are themselves mobile and fluid constructs evident in the manner they move and are shaped into barriers by a wide range of agents working across civil society, acting in the capacity of quasi border officials. The quasi border officials present within higher education can be found within recruitment, admissions, finance and compliance teams responsible for ensuring students have the 'right to study' within the institution and who, in the UK context, work closely with the Home Office. Chapter 5 explored in depth the higher education border and its mechanisms, the construction of which resulted in economic and administrative barriers for forced migrants: barriers which were distinctly different to those applying to the wider population across both countries, yet which also replicated the distinct barriers encountered by forced migrants in other areas of civil society. Forced migrants with unsettled immigration status faced the most seemingly insurmountable barriers, in terms of their classification as international students and ineligibility for student funding. The challenges faced by forced migrants with settled status focused not on the



economic but administrative barriers they needed to overcome to cross the border and not only enter but succeed in the university.

Aside from these primary barriers, Chapter 7 identified four distinct areas in which forced migrants pursuing higher education often experienced a capital shortfall: this included the capital deficit in respect of immigration status and the subsequent impact on access to the required economic capital to meet the cost of tuition fees and daily life as a student. The remaining two areas of capital deficit also interrelate - knowledge capital and linguistic capital. Forced migrants frequently experienced a lack of opportunity to complete educational pathways they had earlier embarked on because prior qualifications were not recognised or because they were not able to provide physical evidence of qualifications. Similar challenges lie in the linguistic capital forced migrants hold, as especially in the Swedish context. The barriers comprising the higher education border manifest themselves differently across both countries but their existence could be mitigated if the regimes in Sweden and the UK could better accommodate and 'stretch' to meet the needs of forced migrants.

The higher education border was not only evident in respect of the initial layer of challenges encountered by forced migrants in their pursuit of HE studies. Chapter 8 shows that forced migrant initiatives in Sweden and the UK were designed to overcome the overriding barrier: the lack of economic capital in the UK and a lack of linguistic capital in Sweden. However, Chapter 8 explored what could be perceived as the extension of the higher education border, evident in the experiences of forced migrants and university agents across both countries who experienced challenges in terms of access to (forced migrants) and delivery of (university agents) these initiatives. Particular issues arose in respect to inconsistencies in the financing, promotion, delivery, access and eligibility of Article 26 scholarships and the Korta Vagen programme. These factors impacted not only on access but also on the retention and success of students and therefore could be seen to reinforce existing inequalities connected to immigration status as opposed to eradicating them. The forced migrant initiatives subject to scrutiny could be deemed unsuccessful at breaking down the higher education border, yet it is also unrealistic to expect these initiatives, in the absence of any other interventions, to resolve all of the challenges encountered by forced migrants.

The critique of these initiatives which either directly or indirectly targeted forced migrants could also be viewed from an alternative perspective. Evidence of incremental resistance within higher education by both university and forced migrant agents contributed to the gradual restructuring of higher education, as a sector in civil society working towards the inclusion, as opposed to the exclusion, of forced migrants. Such inclusion is constantly challenged by the growing xenophobia and hostility towards forced migrants within both countries. In the UK context, the wider climate of xenophobia created by managed migration reinforced an aversion towards risk within university teams responsible for compliance with the Home Office.

The concept of limbo was symbolic of the forced migrant participants' experiences of displacement. Limbo characterised the lives of the forced migrant research cohort from the point of displacement up until, and in some instances far beyond, the settlement of immigration status in the destination country. Limbo and its tangible manifestations was explored through the lens of higher education. While seeking asylum and sanctuary was the priority motivation in the migratory process, the desire to also seek opportunities at university was evident in decision making processes at the point/s at which individuals had the power to exercise agency. In some instances, higher education provided a safe route from the country of origin to the destination country, whilst other participants exercised no choice prior to arriving in the destination country: however, upon arrival they explored every opportunity to reclaim agency in the context of education.

The connection between forced migration and experiences of limbo is an established concept. However as discussed in Chapter 6, calculating limbo has received minimal attention. A further significant contribution made by this research is a new perspective into the process of measuring the ongoing uncertainty and accompanying frustrations endured by the forced migrant participants, both the experience and impact of which are included in the framework of shared characteristics. This research seeks to build on Brun's (2015) time specific measure for chronic and protracted displacement, through the assertion that time lost in the process of forced migration should be counted from the point of displacement up to the point at which a sense of belonging had been achieved. The calculation of time should be determined by the individual forced migrant and not, for example, by measuring the length of time forced migrants spend waiting

for the determination of their asylum submission. Time is one of multiple factors which need to be included when measuring the losses incurred as the result of forced displacement. Chapter 6 explored limbo as a multi-faceted series of losses including and beyond education: careers and career opportunities, positions held within society, family and friends, emotional health and well-being, religion, culture and language.

Emancipation from the confines of limbo was perceived to lie in the acquisition of settled immigration status or the realisation of the full rights and entitlements associated with settled immigration status. Higher education was described by the forced migrant participants as a conduit providing essential connections to a professional career and the associated economic and social benefits frequently described as a 'better life'. Chapter 8 discussed a contrapuntal approach to belonging in the destination country. Yet belonging was not only desired in the local but also the translocal context: duality of belonging in the country of origin and the destination country. The desire for a 'better life' was both an individual aspiration but also a desire to be able to use the skills gained in higher education to benefit the wider population in the destination country as well as the participants' respective countries of origin.

Managed migration policies are enacted upon forced migrants throughout society, as forced migrants' immigration status presents itself as a border when they are asked to evidence their status in a wide range of activities. The immobilisation of forced migrants is evident within 'everyday' activities, as governance technologies impose limitations on access to opportunities to generate economic capital through employment, physically restrict mobility through policies which provide accommodation in specific locations, and either limit funds or provide only 'cashless support', and restrict access to opportunities not only in higher education but to accumulate the necessary qualifications to qualify and access a university. Challenges pertaining to immigration status and specifically the forced migrant habitus held by this group, are evident throughout the higher education student journey.

### 9.3 UK & Sweden: Comparative Findings

‘What is defined as a viable higher education policy or university structure in one European nation is shaped by the policies and structures of other European nations, or of countries outside of Europe’ (Marginson & Rhoades, 2002:295)

This research highlights from the outset three dominant themes evident at the international, European and national level, forced migrants are excluded from mainstream society and treated as non-citizens in a diverse range of tangible and intangible ways. Social and economic factors create barriers to university. Forced migrants resist these barriers and the context of exclusion in which they are created. The findings presented in this research share thematic similarity across the six institutional and two case study countries, in addition to resonating with the body of not just European research, but the international literature specific to this field. The findings generated through research undertaken in the USA, Canada and Australia highlight similarities, reflecting the potential to extrapolate and extend these research findings to the international level. States exercise reduced responsibility for the long-term well-being of individuals whose presence is constructed as temporary and/or a threat to the wider population: these factors justify the derogatory treatment of forced migrants within societies across the world.

Federe (2010) states that higher education has never played a prominent role in forced migrant integration. The egalitarian ideology in Sweden is manifest in a programme of assimilation as opposed to integration. Until 50 years ago Sweden was relatively unaffected by immigration, yet the growing migrant population is now predicted to comprise one out of every seven people living in the country. It is important to question how the needs of forced migrants can be legitimately recognised and met by a system designed to meet the needs of a homogenous population. The multicultural ideology underpinning the UK system has resulted in a design that differentiates between, and responds, to dissimilarities between members of the population. The construction of forced migrant discourse serves to separate people designated to these categories from the wider population, and imposes limitations on the sectors of society within which they and their needs are recognised and subsequently met.

Gill (2010) and Soinenen (2010) argue that corporatist politics provide greater isolation for Swedish politicians than UK politicians from the influence of popular opinion within the population. In a post-BREXIT era wherein debates around immigration are increasingly contentious and divisive, the prevailing political narratives are dominated by a rhetoric of anti-immigrant sentiment, manifested in a sharp rise in right wing populist politics in Sweden and the UK. The different ideologies and connections with the state – in Sweden the emphasis is dependence while in the UK the aim is to work towards greater freedom from the state – ultimately result in similar outcomes in respect to the absence of societal spaces in which forced migrants can be recognised, which is reflected within higher education.

The two countries' differing political ideologies nevertheless exist alongside very similar technologies of domination exercised over the forced migrant population: including the separation of asylum support from mainstream welfare provision and marginalisation through physical exclusion such as the location of accommodation facilities along with detention and deportation practices. But key differences existed between the UK and Sweden in terms of the manifestation of managed migration practices within higher education; the construction, implementation and resistance of the higher education border and its mechanisms and the relationship between the state and initiatives to promote the access and participation of forced migrants in higher education.

In the UK, the growing pressure on higher education providers to comply with Home Office regulations, placed increasing restrictions upon international students. The default categorisation of forced migrants with unsettled status as international students creates challenges in respect to monitoring the presence of this group in higher education. On one level it is a straightforward assumption that because Sweden doesn't charge university tuition fees to home students that it is easier to access university – yet such an assumption fails to account for the wider policies and practice in place. The university application process in Sweden is much more complicated to navigate than the UK, and penetrating the system is incredibly challenging for anyone who hasn't secured the qualifications required to study at degree level.

Swedish universities exhibited a reluctance to exercise their autonomy, typically awaiting the state to provide direction and funding to overcome the challenges involved in supporting forced migrants. They were less willing to create new practice in the absence of an existing precedent. In the UK, the state is not interested in investing in integration or any activity which will create a hospitable environment for forced migrants. However, universities are much more comfortable acting independently of other institutions and are happy to pioneer and lead the way in terms of new practice. The aim is to try and exercise discretion and autonomy, albeit in an increasingly restrictive environment in respect to forced migrants.

The UK institutional case studies participating in this study and the wider network engaged in partnerships with the Article 26 project, face increasing pressures that have reached new heights. As I write this conclusion, an overhaul of the conditions applied specifically to people who are still actively seeking or appealing a decision on an asylum claim, who are already denied the right to work, are from the beginning of 2018, denied the right to study (at all levels apart from compulsory education) (Immigration Act, 2016; Home Office Guidance, 2018). A key challenge identified by Alberts & Atherton (2017) and Lyall & Bowerman (2013) in the provision of scholarships and support to forced migrants with unsettled immigration status in the UK context, is that fact that the provision of all support is at the discretion of individual universities and neither led by nor financed by the state.

The Swedish Migration Agency is not concerned with the surveillance of international students (including forced migrants) beyond their enrolment in higher education. However, changes to managed migration are frequent and practice within Sweden is increasingly aligning with the rest of Europe. One example of this is the relatively recent introduction of temporary residence permits for forced migrants; after 5 years they have to demonstrate either their continuing need for international protection or their self-sufficiency. Given the protracted routes to professional employment in Sweden, it is easy to understand why some forced migrants would seek a regular income via unskilled employment in order to try and guarantee their future in the country. The focus on employment and forced migrants becoming self-sufficient, is reflective of the social ideology and the requirement for full employment, which Korta Vagen also supports, as

the intention is not to expedite access to university but to the labour market. However the forced migrants I met who were participating in the programme, had different perspective on how Korta Vagen could help them achieve their career aspirations. Many of them foresaw Korta Vagen as providing the required level of language qualification to be taught in Swedish at university and therefore facilitate them resuming their studies.

This research has demonstrated that the barriers to higher education encountered by forced migrants manifest themselves in different ways, shaped by different ideologies, yet which achieve similar impacts on the lives of forced migrants. Connecting the two countries in this research was important, as it highlighted that structural exclusion at the global level was replicated at the local institutional level.

‘In other words, being an academic can get in the way of being an activist. A preoccupation with theory can distract us from working to achieve modest but worthwhile reforms that directly address people’s immediate concerns. This is doubly unfortunate if those reforms actually work to lay the groundwork for larger, transformational change in the future. Epistemic privilege can lead us away from the radical incrementalism of making small, realistic changes now that can lay the groundwork for larger ones down the road’ (Schram, 2015:4)

In the UK, I was already embedded in the ‘field’ in which this research took place and never ‘left’ the field but continued my work as a practitioner from inception to completion of this study. This was very different to the Swedish context. Prior to undertaking this research, I had never visited Sweden and had no network of contacts. Social networks are invaluable in every country, however in Sweden increased importance is placed upon social networks and people being able to connect one to existing contacts or contexts. The advantages of a situated epistemological approach, operationalised through case study, are the opportunities it provides to develop a concrete understanding of a place or situation whilst also generating theory – providing an effective means through which to bridge the gap between theory and practice, which was essential to this research project (Baxter in Hay, 2016).

I advised every research participant that I was open to further contact and encouraged further questions / enquiries, yet allowed this to be led by the research participants. In the UK, my position in the field remained the same, as I continue to act in my capacity

as the Director of the Article 26 Project. In the UK, many of the forced migrant participants' interviewed in the research chose to attend the project's annual conference. A small cohort further increased their involvement by volunteering to support the delivery of a seminar, and to participate in working groups to produce the resources detailed in section 9.4. The situation in Sweden was different, as I entered the country with the explicit intention of conducting research. Individuals working within the Swedish university case studies have maintained contact and as a consequence I have returned to Sweden to deliver three keynote presentations at conferences and delivered two seminars on my research findings. Forced migrant participants have also maintained contact, and I have met with individuals on return trips to Sweden, as well as receiving and responding to emails requesting advice.

#### 9.4 Research Implications

I share the perspective presented by multiple authors and consider it my moral obligation to generate policy recommendations from my research findings (Hyndman, 2001; Chacko, 2004). As a practitioner I also recognise my responsibility to not just recommend but implement policy recommendations and pursue further research in this area. I would describe my transition from research to practice as 'bringing the field home' (Hyndman, 2001). Harris & Marlowe (2011) and Earnest et al (2010) advocate for policy recommendations in the field of higher education and forced migration, as well as Alberts & Atherton (2017), Lyall & Bowerman (2013) and Gladwell et al (2016) producing research on these issues outside the academic field.

In February 2017, the Article 26 project hosted a seminar with university representatives from across the UK in a bid to revise existing policy, process and practice in respect to scholarships for forced migrants, with a view to identifying and addressing inconsistencies and creating greater transparency for prospective applicants. The outcomes of this event revolved around key changes, first of all in relation to the diversity of practice and the production of a compendium of 'Sanctuary Scholarship Resources' (see Appendix 7.). The changes in practice and resources are all directly linked to the five major research concepts presented in this thesis.



*'Guiding Principles on UK Sanctuary Scholars in Higher Education'*– is a set of principles designed to underpin all higher education initiatives that respond to the specific needs of forced migrants undertaking, or seeking access to, higher education courses or programmes in the UK. Betts (2010) developed the concept of survival migration in his research and advocates for soft law changes in the form of guiding principles. This particular set of principles seek to engage agents operating across institutions, raise the visibility of issues affecting forced migrants and seek wider engagement in support of the access and participation of these students – incorporating into the everyday activities undertaken across every university. *'Reaching out to Sanctuary Scholars'* – outlines key outreach strategies for the promotion of sanctuary scholarships internally within universities, in the locality and via national platforms – and aims to further reduce the invisibility of scholarship initiatives. *'Identifying Sanctuary Scholars'* is a guide to identify the different groups collectively described as forced migrants and lobby for their inclusion in the eligibility criteria for all scholarship schemes – this raises their visibility, as well as breaking down eligibility barriers.

An essential tactic to navigate the higher education border was located in the need to increase the diversity of pathways to access university. The Article 26 scholarships were initially only available to study on undergraduate degree programmes, which reflected the circumstances and higher education needs of the young forced migrants who originally lobbied universities for opportunities. The development of new pathways has focused on encouraging universities to broaden access to a wider range of opportunities within their institutions. This has included extending opportunities beyond undergraduate level to include postgraduate taught and research programmes. But perhaps more importantly an increased emphasis has been placed on the diversification of opportunities to support the acquisition of qualifications required to meet the criteria for a degree programme, for example, English language certificates, intercessional credits and foundation degree programmes.

The deficit for many UK-based forced migrants in their immigration status led to the production of *'Who Needs to Comply?': Sanctuary Scholars and Compliance* – this resource produced in partnership with CORAM Children's Legal Centre provides a framework, in the absence of any alternative provision, aimed at assisting Compliance

Teams to monitor forced migrant students studying within their institution. Further work in this area is required, but additional research is needed into how managed migration is effected through compliance teams and the potential to actively resist the Home Office.

The *'Sanctuary Scholarship Application form'* is a revised and updated application form and accompanying guidance notes to support universities in the establishment of new, or review of their existing scholarship scheme. This aims at standardising processes in order to support forced migrants and people supporting them in the application process. *'Selecting Sanctuary Scholars'* is a selection framework built on and directly connected to the revised application form, which supports universities in the process of shortlisting, interviewing and assessing the specific needs of prospective forced migrant students. These resources are aimed at creating a consistent and fair approach, and reduces the administrative burden for forced migrants applying to multiple institutions. The document also constitutes the first step towards piloting a central admissions process, delivered by a cohort of universities based in London and the South East.

In Sweden, I did not have the pre-existing knowledge and practitioner base, and neither did I develop one during my limited time spent in the country, upon which to design and deliver policy recommendations. The depth of my knowledge in the UK context highlighted the extent, in spite of the research, of my lack of both formal 'cold' and the intrinsic 'hot' knowledge, essential to achieve change within the Swedish system. A critical difference in Sweden is the volume of forced migrants who have entered the country at the same time, from the same countries, with not dissimilar backgrounds. At a conference in November 2017, a Syrian forced migrant presented his incredibly successful work organising the residents of the refugee camp he was housed in with his family, to lobby local universities for opportunities. There was clearly huge potential for this movement to grow and spread throughout Sweden.

Within the research findings presented in this thesis there was a clear need to focus on the provision of opportunities to enable forced migrants to learn Swedish in tandem with either studying or working. There was a need to engage instead of separating them from Swedish society, to facilitate the development of networks within their

professional fields, and thus avoid them becoming deskilled and reduce the frustration induced by limbo. Methodologies need to be developed by, and shared within Swedish universities to improve the recognition of prior learning. If the number of people seeking asylum in Sweden is leading to delays on immigration decisions, there could be calls to facilitate access to university for which credits can be accumulated and retrospectively awarded upon receipt of a residence permit and formal enrolment. The Swedish cohort of forced migrant participants was comprised of individuals with an established higher education history – further practice needs to be evidence-based and to assess the needs of forced migrants who are not easily identifiable as academics and to ensure children entering compulsory education receive advice and guidance to ensure they progress, if they wish, to university. The most important recommendation I have made during every conference and in every seminar in Sweden, has been to encourage everyone to listen to forced migrants, to understand the barriers and potential solutions from their perspective, rather than maintaining theoretical perspectives rooted in Swedish political ideologies of egalitarianism.

I share the same hope as Maillet et al (2016) that the ‘dissemination of research findings will challenge this imagined landscape by reducing the gap between ‘us’ and ‘them’ (pp.945).

## Appendices

### Appendix 1. Institutional Survey: UK

Widening Access to Higher Education for Forced Migrants in England
<b>Research Overview</b>
<p>I am undertaking a comparative study into the impact of managed migration in England with Sweden, in order to explore how different approaches to managed migration and immigration regimes affect both access and success for forced migrants in Higher Education.</p> <p>This survey aims to explore if and how universities target resources to enable forced migrants to study. I would like to hear from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>I) Universities targeting support to enable forced migrants to study</li><li>II) Universities which are in the process of establishing support for forced migrants</li><li>III) Universities which currently don't target support for forced migrants.</li></ul> <p>The Head of Student Services in every university in Sweden and England will be asked to collect and collate responses to the survey questions. The survey findings will not be used for the purpose of identification and the anonymity of both the University and the individual completing the survey is guaranteed.</p> <p>The survey is comprised of 16 questions, the vast majority of which are multiple choice, designed to be quick and easy to complete. However, if you do experience technical issues completing the survey, prefer to receive it in an alternate format or would like further information on my research project, please don't hesitate to get in touch. The survey will remain open until 30th September 2015</p> <p>The Helena Kennedy Foundation (HKF) is a collaborative partner in this doctoral research project. HKF delivers the Article 26 project, which supports people who have sought asylum in England to access and succeed in Higher Education.</p> <p>I am enrolled at the University of Sheffield and supervised by Dr Deborah Sporton &amp; Professor Paul White. This research has been approved by the University of Sheffield Ethics Committee.</p> <p>Thank you for your time, it is hugely appreciated and important to the success of my research.</p> <p>Rebecca Murray, ESRC Doctoral Candidate (Economic &amp; Social Research Council), University of Sheffield Email: remurray1@sheffield.ac.uk</p>

1. Please provide the full name of your University (this is to avoid duplicate responses, your answers will not be directly attributed to you or your University).

2. How many students are currently enrolled at your University?

- <999
- 1,000 - 4,999
- 5,000 - 9,999
- 10,000 - 19,999
- 20,000 - 29,999
- 30,000 - 39,999
- 40,000 - 99,999
- >100,000

Please comment further and / or expand on the option selected:

3. Please state your job title.

4. Which of the following best describes the University department in which you are based?

- Student Services
- International Student Services
- Widening Participation
- Admissions
- Senior or Executive Management
- Other (please specify) and / or expand on the option selected:

5. Does your University engage in activities to widen the participation of groups considered to be underrepresented in Higher Education?

- Yes  
 No

6. Which department i) leads and ii) coordinates widening participation activity across your University?

	Lead	Coordinate
Student Services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
International Student Services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Widening Participation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Admissions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Senior or Executive Management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify) and / or expand on the option selected:

7. Which of the following groups does your University consider to be underrepresented and the target for support via widening participation activity (please tick all applicable options).

- Lower socio / economic groups  
 Care Leavers  
 Disabled students  
 Ethnic minority groups

Other (please specify) and / or expand on the option/s selected:

8. Is any of the support provided through widening participation activity targeted at forced migrants?

For the purpose of this survey the following definitions are used:

Refugee - fled their country of origin to seek sanctuary in the receiving country and have been awarded settled status and they ARE entitled to support to access and fund Higher Education.

Asylum Seeker - fled their country of origin to seek sanctuary in the receiving country and their application for asylum is either pending or they have been awarded temporary status and they ARE NOT entitled to support to access and fund Higher Education.

Please tick all the relevant boxes.

- Refugees
- Asylum Seekers
- No Go to Qu. 10

9. Approximately how many forced migrants have benefitted from targeted support over the course of the past 5 academic years (please include current and graduate students)?

Refugees

Asylum Seekers

10. To your knowledge is support ever provided to forced migrants on a discretionary 'case by case' basis or by a specific department/s within the University?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Other (please specify) and / or expand on the option selected:

11. What type of support does your University offer through widening participation activity?

Financial support - direct payments to the student and / or the provision of goods & services.

Academic concessions - lowering university entry requirements.


Outreach / Raising Aspirations - targeting different groups to encourage and support them to access your University.

	Underrepresented groups (NOT forced migrants)	Forced Migrants (benefitting from University wide policies)	Forced Migrants (supported on a discretionary basis or by a specific department)
Financial Support - Go to Qn. 12	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Academic Concessions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outreach / Raising Aspirations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify) and / or expand on the option/s selected:



12. What type of financial support is provided through widening participation activity (either direct payments to the student or the provision of goods & services)?

	Underrepresented groups (NOT forced migrants)	Forced Migrants (benefitting from University wide policies)	Forced Migrants (supported on a discretionary basis or by a specific department)
University Tuition Fees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Books & Equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nursery /  Printing & Photocopying	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify) and / or expand on the option/s selected:

13. Does your University have any plans to start targeting or increase support for forced migrants?

	Asylum Seekers	Refugees
We already target support	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
We plan to increase support	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
We plan to start targeting support	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Please comment further on the option/s selected:

14. Which methods do you use to promote targeted support for forced migrants within your University (tick as many boxes as required)?

- University Website
- Social Media
- Outreach Work
- Posters / Leaflets
- No promotional activity

Other (please specify) and / or expand on the options selected:

15. Have you any further comments regarding targeting support to forced migrants within your University - internal or external factors which influence activity in this area?

16. Finally . . . I would like to explore in greater depth the context universities operate within, as well as the challenges and opportunities in promoting access and providing support to forced migrants.

Please indicate if you would be interested in:

- A report on the research findings
- A discussion regarding your University's potential involvement in the next stage of this research

Please provide your contact details below:

**THANK YOU** for your contribution to my research. It is hugely appreciated!

## Appendix 1.1 Institutional Survey: Sweden

### Widening Access to Higher Education for Forced Migrants in Sweden

#### Research Overview

I am undertaking a comparative study into the impact of managed migration in England & Sweden, in order to explore how different approaches to managed migration and immigration regimes affect both access and success for forced migrants. For the purpose of this survey the term 'forced migrants' is used to describe the following groups:

**Refugee** - fled their country of origin to seek sanctuary in Sweden. They have been awarded settled status, granted a residence permit and / or a personnummer and they ARE entitled to funding to pay for Higher Education.

**Asylum Seeker** - fled their country of origin to seek sanctuary in Sweden. They are still waiting for or appealing a decision on their application for residency and they ARE NOT entitled to funding to pay for Higher Education.

Sweden has been selected for comparison with the UK, as the country has adopted a much more open approach to immigration in direct contrast with the UK's highly restrictive immigration regime. I want to explore the impact that these different approaches have in practice in the Higher Education sector.

This survey aims to explore if and how universities support forced migrants to study through their widening participation activity. I would like to hear from:

- i) Universities that provide support to enable forced migrants to study.
- ii) Universities which are in the process of establishing support for forced migrants to study.
- iii) Universities which currently don't target and / or don't consider themselves to be in a position to support forced migrants to study.

The Head of Student Services in every university in Sweden and England will be asked to collect and collate responses to survey questions. The survey findings will not be used for the purpose of identification and the anonymity of both the University and the individual completing the survey is guaranteed.

The survey is comprised of 15 questions, the majority are multiple choice, designed to be quick and easy to complete. However, if you do experience technical issues completing the survey, prefer to receive it in an alternate format or would like further information on my research project, please don't hesitate to get in touch. The survey will remain open until the end of September 2015.

The Helena Kennedy Foundation (HKF) is a collaborative partner in this doctoral research project. HKF delivers the Article 26 project, which supports people who have sought asylum in England to access and succeed in Higher Education. I have also been working closely with Professor John Storan from the University of East London who is also a guest professor at Malmo University and has worked extensively in Sweden on widening participation to higher education questions for many years.

I am enrolled at the University of Sheffield and supervised by Dr Deborah Sporton & Professor Paul White. This research has been approved by the University of Sheffield Ethics Committee.

**Thank you for your time, it is hugely appreciated and important to the success of my research.**

**Rebecca Murray, ESRC Doctoral Candidate (Economic & Social Research Council), University of Sheffield**

**Email: [remurray1@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:remurray1@sheffield.ac.uk)**

1. Please provide the full name of your University (this is to avoid duplicate responses, your answers will not be directly attributed to you or your University).

2. How many students are currently enrolled at your University?

- <999
- 1,000 - 4,999
- 5,000 - 9,999
- 10,000 - 19,999
- 20,000 - 29,999
- 30,000 - 39,999
- 40,000 - 99,999
- >100,000

Please comment further and / or expand on the option selected:

3. Please state your job title.

4. Which of the following best describes the University department in which you are based?

- Student Services
- International Student Services
- Recruitment / Information
- Faculties
- Admissions
- Senior or Executive Management
- Other (please specify) and / or expand on the option selected:

5. Does your University engage in activities to widen the participation of groups considered to be underrepresented in Higher Education?

- Yes
- No

6. Which department i) leads and ii) coordinates widening participation activity across your University?

	Lead	Coordinate
Student Services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
International Student Services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recruitment / Information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculties	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Admissions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Senior or Executive Management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify) and / or expand on the option selected:

7. Does your University collect data on its widening participation activity i.e. statistics on which groups receive support, the type of support or outcomes for students receiving support? If this is the case, who do you share this information with? Please tick all relevant answers.

- National government
- Local government
- Shared internally within the University
- Widening participation data is not collected
- Other (please specify) and / or expand on your answer:

8. Which of the following groups does your University consider to be underrepresented and the target for support via widening participation activity (please tick all applicable options).

- Social background (students from households where no one has previously accessed Higher Education)
- Gender
- Disability (students with a mental or physical disability)
- Ethnicity (students from an ethnically diverse background)

Other (please specify) and / or expand on the option/s selected:

9. Is any of the support provided through widening participation activity targeted at forced migrants (people who have sought asylum)?

For the purpose of this survey the following definitions are used:

Refugee - fled their country of origin to seek sanctuary in Sweden. They have been awarded settled status, residence permit and / or personnummer and they ARE NOT eligible to pay university tuition fees and CAN access funding to help pay for living costs.

Asylum Seeker - fled their country of origin to seek sanctuary in Sweden. They are still waiting for or appealing a decision on their application for residency and they ARE eligible to pay university tuition fees and CANNOT access funding to help pay for living costs.

Please tick all the relevant boxes.

- Refugees
- Asylum Seekers
- Don't know - the university does not record if someone is a refugee or an asylum seeker - Go to Qu. 10
- No - Go to Qu. 10

Widening Access to Higher Education for Forced Migrants in Sweden

10. To your knowledge is support ever provided to forced migrants on a discretionary 'case by case' basis or by a specific department/s within the University?

- Yes  
 No  
 Don't know

Other (please specify) and / or expand on the option selected:

11. What type of support does your University offer through widening participation activity?

Outreach / Raising Aspirations - targeting different groups to encourage and support them to access your University.

	Underrepresented groups (NOT forced migrants)	Refugees (WITH a residence permit and / or personnummer)	Asylum Seekers (WITHOUT a residence permit and / or personnummer)
Outreach / Raising Aspirations	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Other 1. (please list specific activities in box below)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Other 2. (please list specific activities in box below)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Other (please specify) and / or expand on the option selected:



12. Does your University have any plans to widen the participation of forced migrants?

	Asylum Seekers	Refugees
We already support students.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
We already support students and would like to develop our work in this area.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
We are exploring how we can support this group of students.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
We are unable to identify these students from the general student population.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Please comment further on the option/s selected:

13. Which methods do you use to promote opportunities created through widening participation activity at your University (tick as many boxes as relevant)?

- University Website
- Social Media
- Outreach Work
- Posters / Leaflets
- No promotional activity

Other (please specify) and / or expand on the option/s selected:

14. Have you any further comments regarding targeting support to forced migrants within your University - internal or external factors which influence activity in this area?

15. Finally . . . I would like to explore in greater depth the context universities operate within, as well as the challenges and opportunities in promoting access and providing support to forced migrants.

Please indicate if you would be interested in:

- A report on the research findings
- A discussion regarding your University's potential involvement in the next stage of this research

Please provide your contact details below:

**THANK YOU** for your contribution to my research. It is hugely appreciated!

## Appendix 2.

### Research Promotion: Forced Migrant Participants



## Do you have personal experience of migration?

## Are you studying at University X?

If the answer to both questions is yes, I would really like to talk to you. I am currently conducting PhD research looking at the experiences of people with a migration background (in particular people who were not born in Sweden / UK) in higher education. This research is in collaboration with the Helena Kennedy Foundation, which delivers Article 26, a project supporting students from a migration background to study at university.

My research is focused on your experience of education and in particular your journey to higher education – it does not focus on why you migrated to Sweden / UK. The information you choose to share is up to you!

Any information that could be used to identify you will be changed in order to ensure you remain anonymous. I will not let anyone else know that you have participated in this research. I will be in University X during date to date. Interviews will take place in the area and last 60 minutes maximum. We can discuss when and where you would feel most comfortable being interviewed.

[University profile](#) is accessible here if you would like to learn more about my research and the work I have been involved in.

[Article 26 website](#) contains details of the project and how we work with students to access university.

If you would like to arrange an interview or find out more information, please contact Rebecca Murray: [remurray1@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:remurray1@sheffield.ac.uk) or +44 7912 284812 or skype: article262.

Through my research I hope to be able to gather evidence that will influence policy debates and contribute to promoting democratic access and opportunities within universities.

*Rebecca Murray*

## Appendix 2.1

### Research Participant Information

#### **What is the title of the research?**

“Let the right one in”

Transcending borders, barriers & binaries; widening access to higher education for forced migrants (provisional title).

#### **Who will conduct the research?**

Rebecca Murray is the Principal Investigator

#### **What are the aims and objectives of this research?**

The overarching aim of this research is to explore the impact of managed migration policies on access to higher education for forced migrants. I am interested in how managed migration policies manifest themselves in restrictions, which create barriers for higher education institutions (HEIs) and forced migrants, who wish to access higher education. I intend to explore the impact of initiatives that have been established in resistance to these restrictions and the agents of change (forced migrants, HEIs & agencies) responsible for their instigation. I also intend to investigate the alternative context wherein no initiatives exist and explore the range of barriers to their implementation.

This research has been designed in collaboration with the Helena Kennedy Foundation (HKF), a charitable trust which promotes access to higher education for underrepresented students. Article 26 is a HKF project, which takes its name from the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, which states that access to higher education, should be based on merit. Article 26 supports forced migrants who are classified as international students and denied access to student finance required to enter higher education.

#### **Why have I been chosen?**

You have been chosen because you either work within a university in the capacity of decision making or support staff or you study within the institution and /or come from an asylum seeking / refugee background.

**What would I be asked to do if I took part?**

First of all, we will discuss the research process in greater detail and I will provide you with a copy of the questions I wish to ask. I will answer any questions that you might have. If you are willing to proceed I will provide you with an informed consent form to sign, which will indicate that you understand your contribution to this research and how your personal information and the information collected during your interview will be used.

**What happens to the data collected?**

The data will be locked away and stored securely, accessible only to the investigators of this research. All data will be analysed by the principal investigator with the support of the supervisor. The data collected forms an essential part of the principal investigator's study towards a PhD.

**How is confidentiality maintained?**

All information provided collected will be transferred onto my computer as soon as possible. I will be the only person who has access to it. All tape recordings and handwritten notes will be locked away. All publications will fully anonymise the names of participants and any sensitive or identifying information.

**What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?**

You can withdraw from the research at any stage and you do not have to give a reason or provide an explanation.

**Will I be paid for participating in the research?**

No one will be paid for participating in this research. However, if it presents a barrier to your participation, the cost of transport or other minor expenses may be covered in order to enable you to take part in the research.

**What is the duration of the research?**

September 2013 until September 2016.

**Where will the research be conducted?**

The research is being conducted in the UK & Sweden.

**Will the outcomes of the research be published?**

The research findings will be published in academic journals and made available to the Helena Kennedy Foundation to inform their strategic direction, as they are the collaborative partner in this research project. I also intend to produce a summary report that will be made available to all research participants.

**Contact for further information**

Rebecca Murray (principal investigator): [remurray1@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:remurray1@sheffield.ac.uk)

Deborah Sporton (principal supervisor): [d.sporton@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:d.sporton@sheffield.ac.uk)

Prof Paul White (second supervisor): [p.white@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:p.white@sheffield.ac.uk)

**What if something goes wrong?**

In case anything goes wrong, please contact the principal investigator of this research. If you wish to make a formal complaint about the conduct of this research, please contact the principal supervisor.

## Appendix 2.2 Informed Consent Form

### Research Participant Consent Form

If you are happy to participate in the following PhD research project of which Rebecca Murray is the Principal Investigator, please complete this consent form

- Please  
Initial  
Box**
1. I confirm that I have read the attached information sheet on the above project and have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and had these answered satisfactorily.
  2. I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason or explanation
  3. I understand that the interviews will be audio recorded
- 
4. I agree to the use of anonymous quotes

Name of participant	Date	Signature
Name of person taking consent	Date	Signature

## Appendix 3.

### Forced Migrant Interview Schedule

#### **Intro**

My research is looking at the experiences of forced migrants in higher education. I want to start by finding out more about you, as someone who is studying in higher education OR who wants to study in higher education.

Why is education important to you?

Why in particular is higher education important to you?

#### **Pre Departure**

I want to talk more about your situation before you left your home country (I don't need to know details about why you claimed asylum) – what were you doing?

E.g. work, study or lifestyle?

What was your experience of education in your home country?

What level of education did you obtain?

Could you describe the education system in your home country? Can you identify any significant similarities or differences between the education system in your home country & Sweden?

#### **Arrival 'destination country'**

What were your expectations when you arrived? How did they meet with the situation you found yourself in? How would you compare it to what you left behind in your home country?

Did you face any barriers on arrival? If so, what were they? How did you overcome them?



Were there or did you see any opportunities open to you? If so, what were they? Were you able to take advantage of them?

### **Integration 'destination country'**

Did you know what you wanted your life in Sweden / UK to 'look like'? What were your goals?

Were you aware of what you needed to do to be successful in Sweden / UK in order to achieve these goals?

Did you feel that people in Sweden / UK whose job it was OR is to support you, understand and also prioritise what you want to achieve?

Have you been able to use the skills and experience you brought with you from your home country?

How have these skills and experiences helped you?

If not, why not, what has prevented you? Do you feel that there was any way you could overcome these barriers?

What motivates you? What demotivates you?

### **Higher Education**

I'd like to talk to you about your experience in higher education, in terms of securing a place, starting your degree and what your experience has been to date?

How did you find the application process? Navigating IT systems? Tuition fees assessment? Did you have any problems providing documentation in relation to i) status, ii) previous qualifications?

Can I ask what your immigration status was when you started university?

Has your immigration status changed during your studies?

How is your degree programme funded? If due to sponsorship or specific bursary programme – request full details and their experience of the process – how did you find out about it? What was the application process like?

What was the enrolment process like? How useful was your induction? Was anything missing or unnecessary?

Did you feel you had everything you needed to access higher education?

Did you access any help or advice? Where from, who helped you and what did they do that was most useful?

If you didn't receive any help or advice what would have been most useful?

Has your immigration status impacted on your degree programme?

Has it affected your experience of higher education? Would you like to have changed anything?

Overall, how would you describe your experience of higher education?

### **The Future**

Do you have any idea what you would like to do when you finish your degree?

What are the benefits of having a degree from a Swedish / British university if you:

- i) Remain in Sweden / UK?
- ii) Return to your home country?

Apart from gaining an academic qualification, are there any other benefits from having a degree that you weren't expecting?

What are your three main hopes for the future?

What are your three main fears for the future?

What would your advice be to another student who has sought asylum and wants to access higher education?

## Appendix 3.1

### Higher Education - Senior Management – Interview Schedule

- Expertise & Experience

I'd like to start by asking you what your role is within the university.

Job title?

What are your main responsibilities?

How long have you been in this role?

How much autonomy do you have as an institution - who are you accountable to?

What are the implications of failing to meet these requirements?

- Decision to support forced migrants.

Please could you outline the provision for refugees and asylum seekers within this university?

Why is this provision required?

Would you briefly explain the decision making process that resulted in the university deciding to establish this initiative? Why the institution felt that these students required this support?

What influenced your decision? Internal influences? External influences?

How is the initiative funded?

How does this fit with the university's broader approach to widening the participation of groups underrepresented groups?

- University impact

What has been the impact of this scheme on the university?

Have you encountered any challenges in the implementation of the initiative?

Are you able to identify any opportunities for growth and development of the initiative?

Are there any threats to the continuation of this initiative?

What would you identify, as the biggest barrier that needs to be overcome in order to widen access to higher education for refugees / asylum seekers?

What would your advice be to universities considering supporting forced migrants within their institution?

- Wider impact - students / society

How do you think forced migrant students will benefit from this initiative?

How do you think wider society will benefit?

- Is there anything else you would like to add or information you think is either useful or pertinent to my research?

## Appendix 3.2

### Higher Education - Operational Staff - Interview Schedule

- Expertise & Experience

I'd like to start by asking you what your role is within the university?

Job title?

What are your main responsibilities?

How long have you held this role?

- Decision to support forced migrants.

Please could you outline the provision for refugees and asylum seekers within this university?

Why is this provision required?

Were you involved in the decision making process that resulted in this initiative being established?

If yes, how?

No, why not? Would you usually be involved?

Are you aware of the factors that influenced the universities decision to establish the initiative?

- University impact

What has been the impact of this scheme on the university?

Have you encountered any challenges in the implementation of the initiative?

How do you intend to secure and sustain these opportunities for forced migrants within the university?

What challenges have you faced as an institution implementing and delivering this initiative?

Are you in contact with other universities offering provision to forced migrants?

If yes, what does your relationship with other universities look like?

If not, why not?

- Student Impact

What challenges do students face accessing university and access the bursaries?

How does demand compare with supply - amount of interest, applications and suitability - how competitive is the process?

How do you think forced migrant students benefit from this initiative?

What challenges do students face studying at university with the support of this bursary?

- Society Impact

How do you think wider society will benefit?

- What would you identify, as the biggest barrier that needs to be overcome in order to widen access to higher education for refugees / asylum seekers?
- Is there anything else you would like to add or information you think is either useful or pertinent to my research?

## Appendix 3.3

### Key Informant – Interview Schedule

- Expertise & Experience

I'd like to start by asking you which organisation you represent.

What position do you hold?

What are your main responsibilities?

How long have you held this role?

- Opportunities for forced migrants in higher education.

Are you aware of opportunities for refugees and/or asylum seekers in higher education?

Does this student group have a place on your agenda?

What influences your agenda?

- What would you identify, as the biggest barrier that needs to be overcome in order to widen access to higher education for refugees / asylum seekers?

Policy?

Practice?

Solutions?

- University impact

What do you think the potential impact is of forced migrants' students on universities?

- Student Impact

How do you think forced migrant students benefit from opportunities to study in higher education?

- Society Impact

How do you think wider society will benefit from forced migrants undertaking university education?

- Is there anything else you would like to add or information you think is either useful or pertinent to my research?



## Appendix 4.

### Research Participants: Coding System

<b>PREFIX</b>	<b>DESTINATION COUNTRY</b>	<b>COUNTRY OF ORIGIN</b>		<b>PARTICIPANT NUMBER</b>
FM – forced migrant	SE – Sweden	AF (Afghanistan)		01 - 26
	UK – United Kingdom	ET (Ethiopia) IR (Iran) KE (Kenya) MA (Malawi) South Africa (SA) SEA (South East Asia) SY = Syria ZM = Zimbabwe		
<b>PREFIX</b>	<b>DESTINATION COUNTRY</b>	<b>UNIVERSITY</b>	<b>POSITION</b>	<b>PARTICIPANT NUMBER</b>
HEI – higher education institution	SE – Sweden	A }	Academic - AD	27 – 78
	UK – United Kingdom	B } UK	Admissions - AM	
		C }	Compliance – CP	
		D }	Director – D [prefix]	
		E } Sweden	Executive Board - EB	
		F }	Student Support - SS	
			Students Union - SU	
			Widening Participation - WP	
<b>PREFIX</b>	<b>DESTINATION COUNTRY</b>	<b>SECTOR</b>		<b>PARTICIPANT NUMBER</b>
KI – key informant	SE – Sweden	Higher Education – HE		79 – 95
	UK – United Kingdom	Managed Migration – MM		

## Appendix 4.1

### Forced Migrant Participant Codes

Participant Code	Pseudonym	Gender	Destination Country	Country of Origin
FMUK_AF01	Ali	Male	UK	AF (Afghanistan)
FMUK_SA02	Emmanuel	Male	UK	South Africa (SA)
FMUK_ZM03	Victor	Male	UK	ZM (Zimbabwe)
FMUK_ZM04	Nesta	Female	UK	ZM
FMUK_IR05	Nathan	Male	UK	IR (Iran)
FMUK_ZM06	John	Male	UK	ZM
FMUK_IR07	Zahed	Male	UK	IR
FMUK_ZM08	Rose	Female	UK	ZM
FMUK_SEA09	Kirsty	Female	UK	SEA (South East Asia)
FMUK_KE10	Esther	Female	UK	KE (Kenya)
FMUK_MA11	Maria	Female	UK	MA (Malawi)
FMUK_SY12	Nala	Female	UK	SY (Syria)
FMSE_SY13	Halil	Male	Sweden	SY
FMSE_AF14	Omid	Male	Sweden	AF
FMSE_SY15	Moha	Male	Sweden	SY
FMSE_ET16	Joseph	Male	Sweden	ET (Ethiopia)
FMSE_AF17	George	Male	Sweden	AF
FMSE_SY18	Qamar	Female	Sweden	SY
FMSE_SY19	Bana	Female	Sweden	SY
FMSE_SY20	Zeinah	Female	Sweden	SY
FMSE_SY21	Abdullah	Male	Sweden	SY
FMSE_SY22	Layal	Female	Sweden	SY
FMSE_SY23	Elias	Male	Sweden	SY
FMSE_SY24	Tariq	Male	Sweden	SY
FMSE_SY25	Peter	Male	Sweden	SY
FMSE_SY26	Marwan	Male	Sweden	SY

## Appendix 4.2

### Higher Education Institution Participant Codes

<b>Participant Code</b>	<b>Position Code</b>	<b>University Code</b>	<b>Country</b>
HEIUK_A_EB27	Executive Board	A	UK
HEIUK_A_EB28	Executive Board	A	UK
HEIUK_A_DWP29	Director Widening Participation	A	UK
HEIUK_A_SS30	Student Support	A	UK
HEIUK_A_SS31	Student Support	A	UK
HEIUK_A_WP32	Widening Participation	A	UK
HEIUK_A_WP33	Widening Participation	A	UK
HEIUK_A_CP34	Compliance	A	UK
HEIUK_B_EB35	Executive Board	B	UK
HEIUK_B_DWP36	Director Widening Participation	B	UK
HEIUK_B_DSS37	Director Student Support	B	UK
HEIUK_B_SS38	Student Support	B	UK
HEIUK_B_CP39	Compliance	B	UK
HEIUK_B_AD40	Academic	B	UK
HEIUK_B_WP41	Widening Participation	B	UK
HEIUK_B_SU42	Students Union	B	UK
HEIUK_C_EB43	Executive Board	C	UK
HEIUK_C_DWP44	Director Widening Participation	C	UK
HEIUK_C_SS45	Student Support	C	UK
HEIUK_C_SS46	Student Support	C	UK
HEIUK_C_SS47	Student Support	C	UK
HEIUK_C_CP48	Compliance	C	UK
HEIUK_C_SS49	Student Support	C	UK
HEIUK_C_AM50	Admissions	C	UK

HEIUK_C_AD51	Academic	C	UK
HEIUK_C_WP52	Director Widening Participation	C	UK
HEIUK_C_DSS53	Director Student Support	C	UK
HEISE_D_EB54	Executive Board	D	SE
HEISE_D_WP55	Widening Participation	D	SE
HEISE_D_DWP56	Director Widening Participation	D	SE
HEISE_D_AD57	Academic	D	SE
HEISE_D_AD58	Academic	D	SE
HEISE_D_WP59	Widening Participation	D	SE
HEISE_D_DSS60	Director Student Support	D	SE
HEISE_E_EB61	Executive Board	E	SE
HEISE_E_EB62	Executive Board	E	SE
HEISE_E_WP63	Widening Participation	E	SE
HEISE_E_AD64	Academic	E	SE
HEISE_E_AM65	Admissions	E	SE
HEISE_E_AD66	Academic	E	SE
HEISE_E_SS67	Student Support	E	SE
HEISE_E_SS68	Student Support	E	SE
HEISE_E_SS69	Student Support	E	SE
HEISE_E_WP70	Widening Participation	E	SE
HEISE_F_AD71	Academic	F	SE
HEISE_F_SS72	Student support	F	SE
HEISE_F_SS73	Student Support	F	SE
HEISE_F_AM74	Admissions	F	SE
HEISE_F_DSS75	Director Student Support	F	SE
HEISE_F_SS76	Student Support	F	SE
HEISE_F_SS77	Student Support	F	SE
HEISE_F_DSS78	Director Student Support	F	SE

## Appendix 4.3

### Key Informant Participant Codes

<b>Participant Code</b>	<b>Sector</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Country</b>
KIUK_HE79	HE – Higher Education	UKCISA – UK Council for International Student Affairs	UK
KIUK_MM80	MM – Managed Migration	Refugee Council	UK
KIUK_HE81	HE	NUS – National Union of Students	UK
KIUK_HE82	HE	Continuum	UK
KISE_HE83	HE	Swedish Council for Higher Education – UHR	SE
KISE_HE84	HE	UHR	SE
KISE_HE85	HE	UHR	SE
KISE_HE86	HE	UHR	SE
KISE_HE87	HE	Swedish Institute	SE
KISE_HE88	HE	NUS	SE
KISE_MM89	MM	Swedish Employment Agency	SE
KISE_MM90	MM	Swedish Employment Agency	SE
KISE_MM91	MM	Swedish Employment Agency	SE
KISE_MM92	MM	Municipality	SE
KISE_MM93	MM	Municipality	SE
KISE_MM94	MM	Municipality	SE
KISE_MM95	MM	Migration Agency	SE

## Appendix 5.

Table representing time accrued at different stages of the asylum process

- 1 – 8 forced migrant participants living in the UK who arrived as children.
- [UASC] – unaccompanied asylum seeking child
- 9 – 12 forced migrant participants living in the UK who arrived as adults.
- 13 – 26 forced migrant participants living in Sweden who arrived as adults.
- Number indicates years unless specified in months.
- + indicates that the forced migrant continues to accrue time in respect to this specific stage of the process.

	Forced Migrant - Name	Forced Migrant – Participant Code	F/M	Country of Origin	Asylum application – pre submission i.e. undocumented or due to a visa.	Asylum application – awaiting an initial decision or appealing a negative decision	Temporary award of immigration status – time during which restrictions imposed on access to student finance.	Refugee status – time in receipt settled status
1	Ali [UASC]	FMUK_AF01	M	Afghanistan	0	3 months	9+	-
2	Emmanuel	FMUK_SA02	M	South Africa	5 (undocumented – private fostering)	1.5	2.5+	-
3	Nesta	FMUK_ZM04	F	Zimbabwe	5 (child dependent employment visa)	8+	-	-
4	Nathan	FMUK_IR05	M	Iran	3 (child dependent student visa)	2.5+	-	-
5	Zahed	FMUK_IR07	M	Iran	0	5	4+	-
6	Kirsty [UASC]	FMUK_SEA09	F	South East Asia	0	6	6	1+
7	Esther	FMUK_KE10	F	Kenya	5	4	3+	-
8	Maria [UASC]	FMUK_MA11	F	Malawi	5 (child dependent employment visa) (undocumented – trafficked)	4+	-	-
9	Victor	FMUK_ZM03	M	Zimbabwe	0	2+	-	-
10	John	FMUK_ZM06	M	Zimbabwe	0	5	3+	-
11	Rose	FMUK_ZM08	F	Zimbabwe	0	1 month	-	5+
12	Nala	FMUK_SY12	F	Syria	1.5 (student visa)	4 months	-	6 months +
13	Halil	FMSE_SY13	M	Syria	1 week visitor visa)	8 months	-	1.5+
14	Omid	FMSE_AF14	M	Afghanistan	1.5 (undocumented)	6+ months	-	-
15	Moha	FMSE_SY15	M	Syria	0	4 months	-	2+
16	Joseph	FMSE_ET16	M	Ethiopia	0	7+ months	-	-
17	George	FMSE_SY17	M	Afghanistan	0	4 months	-	1.5+
18	Qamar	FMSE_SY18	F	Syria	0	4 months	-	3.5+
19	Bana	FMSE_SY19	F	Syria	0	7 months	-	1.5+
20	Zeinah	FMSE_SY20	F	Syria	0	1+	-	-
21	Abdullah	FMSE_SY21	M	Syria	1 month (student visa)	1+	-	-
22	Layal	FMSE_SY22	F	Syria	4 months (adult dependent student visa)	0 In process of submitting asylum application.	-	-
23	Elias	FMSE_SY23	M	Syria	1 month (student visa)	4 months+	-	-
24	Tariq	FMSE_SY24	M	Syria	0	9	-	2+
25	Peter	FMSE_SY25	M	Syria	1 month (student visa)	1	-	3 months+
26	Marwan	FMSE_SY26	M	Syria	0	1	-	1+

## Appendix 6.

Table representing education trajectory and language ability

- 1 – 8 forced migrant participants living in the UK who arrived as children.
- [UASC] – unaccompanied asylum seeking child
- 9 – 12 forced migrant participants living in the UK who arrived as adults.
- 13 – 26 forced migrant participants living in Sweden who arrived as adults.
- Fluent in a language reflects the ability to study at degree level in the language specified.
- KV – Korta Vagen or alternative intensive Swedish language programme
- A26 – Article 26 scholarship recipient

	Forced Migrant - Name	Forced Migrant – Participant Code	F/M	Country of Origin	Scholarship OR Intensive Swedish Language	English / Swedish – Arrival Destination Country	Education Level – Country of Origin	Work Experience – Country of Origin	Education Entry Level – Destination Country	Higher Education – Entry Level
1	Ali	FMUK_AF01	M	Afghanistan	A26	No English	ESOL Course	-	No formal education	UG Degree – Year 1
2	Emmanuel	FMUK_SA02	M	South Africa	A26	Fluent English	Secondary school	-	Secondary school	UG Degree – Year 1
3	Nesta	FMUK_ZM04	F	Zimbabwe	A26	Fluent English	Secondary school	-	Secondary school	UG Degree – Year 1
4	Nathan	FMUK_IR05	M	Iran	-	No English	Secondary school	-	Secondary school	Foundation Degree
5	Zahed	FMUK_IR07	M	Iran	-	No English	Primary school	-	Primary school	Medical Degree – Year 2
6	Kirsty	FMUK_SEA09	F	South East Asia	-	No English	Primary school	-	Primary school	Medical Degree – Year 3
7	Esther	FMUK_KE10	F	Kenya	A26	Fluent English	Secondary school	-	Secondary school	UG Degree – Year 1
8	Maria	FMUK_MA11	F	Malawi	A26	Fluent English	Secondary school	-	Secondary school	UG Degree – Year 1
9	Victor	FMUK_ZM03	M	Zimbabwe	A26	Fluent English	Completed 1 year UG degree	Small business owner	Higher education	UG Degree – 1 <sup>st</sup> year
10	John	FMUK_ZM06	M	Zimbabwe	A26	Fluent English	Completed 2 years UG degree	Journalist	Higher education	UG Degree – 2 <sup>nd</sup> year
11	Rose	FMUK_ZM08	F	Zimbabwe	-	Fluent English	Masters Degree – qualified	University lecturer	Higher education	PG Degree
12	Nala	FMUK_SY12	F	Syria	-	Fluent English	Masters Degree – qualified	Graduate Teaching Assistant	Higher education	PhD
13	Halil	FMSE_SY13	M	Syria	-	Limited English - no Swedish	Completed 2 years UG degree	-	Higher education	UG Degree – 1 <sup>st</sup> year
14	Omid	FMSE_AF14	M	Afghanistan	-	Fluent English – no Swedish	Completed UG degree	Graduate Teaching Assistant	Swedish language	Informal entry – UG Degree – 1 <sup>st</sup> year
15	Moha	FMSE_SY15	M	Syria	-	Limited English - no Swedish	Completed 3 /4 years UG degree	-	Swedish language	-
16	Joseph	FMSE_ET16	M	Ethiopia	-	Fluent English – no Swedish	Completed masters degree – distance learning with a Swedish HEI	Journalist	-	PG Degree
17	George	FMSE_SY17	M	Afghanistan	KV	Limited English - no Swedish	Qualified Dr.	GP - 20 years' experience	Swedish language	-

18	Qamar	FMSE_SY18	F	Syria	KV	Limited English - no Swedish	Qualified Teacher	Primary Teacher - 10 years' experience	Swedish language	-
19	Bana	FMSE_SY19	F	Syria	-	Fluent English – no Swedish	Completed UG Degree	-	-	-
20	Zeinah	FMSE_SY20	F	Syria	-	Fluent English – no Swedish	Completed UG Degree. Completed 2 years' of a second UG Degree	Water Engineer	Employment as a Water Engineer	-
21	Abdullah	FMSE_SY21	M	Syria	-	Limited English - no Swedish	Completed UG Degree	Civil & Structural Engineer - 3 years' experience	Higher education	PG Degree
22	Layal	FMSE_SY22	F	Syria	-	Fluent English – no Swedish	Completed UG & PG Degree	-	Swedish language – informal education	-
23	Elias	FMSE_SY23	M	Syria	-	Fluent English – no Swedish	Completed UG Degree	Electronic Engineer - 3 years' experience	Higher education	PG Degree
24	Tariq	FMSE_SY24	M	Syria	KV	Limited English - no Swedish	Completed Dentistry Degree	Dentist – 6 months practice	Swedish language	-
25	Peter	FMSE_SY25	M	Syria	KV	Fluent English – no Swedish	Completed Dentistry Degree	-	Higher education	PG Degree
26	Marwan	FMSE_SY26	M	Syria	KV	Fluent English – no Swedish	Completed UG Degree	-	Swedish language	-



## Appendix 7.

### The Article 26 Project: Policy Resources

#### Guiding Principles on Sanctuary Scholars in UK Higher Education

The *Guiding Principles* provide the foundations for any sanctuary initiative designed to support the success of forced migrants in higher education. They are a vital strategic planning tool for institutions, tailored to assist them in establishing, sustaining or growing their scholarships and wider initiatives that support forced migrants at their institutions.

There are 10 main principles. These are:

1. **The right of forced migrants to access higher education** – as is evidenced in international, European and domestic law.
2. **Equal treatment and non-discrimination** – the primary identity of Sanctuary Scholars should be that of a student, and not their immigration status.
3. **The right to privacy** – protecting the privacy of Sanctuary Scholars and preventing the unlawful disclosure of their immigration status, especially without their permission.
4. **An outline of Sanctuary Initiatives** – Sanctuary Initiatives can vary in design and scale, but they need to be tailored to meet the needs of forced migrant students.
5. **Underlying principles for the design and implementation of Sanctuary Initiatives** – Sanctuary Initiatives should be accessible, fair, inclusive and transparent, and give due consideration to the needs and academic interests of Sanctuary Scholars.
6. **Selection processes and removal of procedural barriers** – processes need to be transparent, fair and accommodating.
7. **Communication** – clear, effective and timely communication is key.
8. **Academic, pastoral and professional support** – it is vital that Sanctuary Scholars have access to support services that effectively consider their specific needs as forced migrants.
9. **Student progress and participation** – keeping track of academic and social engagement is important for maximising student success.
10. **Staff training** – championing knowledge and awareness of the specific needs of Sanctuary Scholars among key staff.

The Guiding Principles are authored by Ben Hudson – Lecturer in Law at the University of Lincoln, and Rebecca Murray – Director of the Article 26 project. Their formulation has benefitted greatly from insights provided by expert gatherings of university representatives, students, academics and practitioners. Their development has come in response to the need for overarching

guidance that supports the design and administration of clear, coherent, accessible and transparent educational initiatives targeted towards championing forced migrant students in higher education.

### **Sanctuary Scholars: Compendium of Resources**

The 'Guiding Principles' are the first in a series of six resources aimed at providing the most up to date information:

**'Identifying Sanctuary Scholars'** – a guide to identifying the different groups (collectively described as forced migrants) that we encourage universities to include in their eligibility criteria for scholarship schemes.

**'Reaching out to Sanctuary Scholars'** – an outline of key outreach strategies for the promotion of sanctuary scholarships within universities, in the locality and via national platforms.

**'Who Needs to Comply?' Sanctuary Scholars and Compliance** – produced in partnership with [Coram Children's Legal Centre](#), this provides a framework to assist compliance teams to monitor forced migrant students studying within their institution.

**'Sanctuary Scholarship Standard Application form'** – a revised and updated application form and accompanying guidance notes to support universities in the establishment or review of their existing scholarship scheme.

**'Selecting Sanctuary Scholars'** – a selection framework built on and directly connected to the revised application form, which will support universities in the process of shortlisting, interviewing and assessing the specific needs of prospective forced migrant students.

## Appendix 8.

### Summary of Legislative References

<b>INTERNATIONAL</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948)</i></li> <li>• <i>Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951)</i></li> <li>• <i>New York Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (1967)</i></li> <li>• <i>International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR, 1966)</i></li> <li>• <i>International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1966)</i></li> </ul>	
<b>EUROPEAN UNION</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>European Convention of Human Rights (1953)</i></li> <li>• <i>Maastricht Treaty (1992)</i></li> <li>• <i>Treaty of Rome (1985)</i></li> <li>• <i>Dublin Convention (1990 &amp; 2013)</i></li> <li>• <i>Schengen Treaty (1995)</i></li> <li>• <i>Amsterdam Treaty (1997)</i></li> <li>• <i>Bologna Declaration (1999)</i></li>   <li>• <i>The Carrier Liability Directive (2001)</i></li> <li>• <i>The Reception Conditions Directive (2003)</i></li> <li>• <i>Race Equality Directive (2003 &amp; 2004)</i></li> <li>• <i>The Asylum Qualification Directive (2004 &amp; 2001)</i></li> <li>• <i>The Asylum Procedures Directive (2005)</i></li> </ul>	
<b>NATIONAL</b>	
<i>Sweden</i>	<i>UK</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Constitution of the Kingdom of Sweden (1974)</i></li> <li>• <i>Immigrant Policy (1975)</i></li> <li>• <i>Swedish Higher Education Act (1992)</i></li> <li>• <i>Reception of Asylum Seekers and other Act (1994)</i></li> <li>• <i>Aliens Act (2005)</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Aliens Act (1905)</i></li> <li>• <i>Commonwealth Immigration Act (1968)</i></li> <li>• <i>Further and Higher Education Act (1992)</i></li> <li>• <i>Asylum and Immigration Act (1996)</i></li> <li>• <i>Teaching &amp; Higher Education Act (1998)</i></li> <li>• <i>The Human Rights Act (1998)</i></li> <li>• <i>Immigration &amp; Asylum Act (1999)</i></li> <li>• <i>Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act (2002 &amp; 1992)</i></li> <li>• <i>Immigration Act (2014)</i></li> <li>• <i>National Health Service (charges to overseas visitors) (2017)</i></li> </ul>

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