NO LONGER WHERE THEY WERE, NOT YET WHERE THEY ARE: THE EXPERIENCES OF RECENTLY ARRIVED REFUGEES IN SCOTLAND.

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This thesis examines some of the social and political implications of European and British immigration policy through the personal experiences of twenty refugees who have been living in Scotland for less than five years. Particular emphasis is placed on the deconstruction of the 'deserving political refugee' and its replacement with the 'bogus economic refugee' in political and public discourse. Refugees are consequently finding it increasingly difficult to 'find a place' that will provide them with the security and safety they require, consequently placing the humanitarian imperative of being able to seek refuge under threat.

The thesis is in two sections. The first section is contextual and contains an examination of changing anthropological perspectives in the shift towards locating personal perceptions of belonging and identity within the structural, social and spatial concerns of transnationalism. A review of the various allegiances and agreements that facilitate European immigration and asylum policies provide the framework for a discussion on how the rhetoric of British national identity may be used to justify restrictions and control on asylum seekers by the demonization of them as 'bogus'.

Section two is experiential and begins with a methodological review of the fieldwork process outlining the relationships and techniques that formed the basis for the research. Narratives from several individual refugees are presented in which they describe their experiences of uncertainty and social isolation which are further exacerbated by a legal process in which some decisions regarding asylum claims may take several years. These narratives are then situated within an anthropological framework which addresses some of the contradictions and incongruities of spatial and structural belonging. The analysis then draws to a conclusion with the fusion of the personal and the political, locating refugees in the space (or non space) of an extended and uncertain liminality which places them outside the traditional parameters of nations and cultures.
I hereby declare that this thesis has been composed by me and (save where acknowledgement is made below) is based on my own work.

Joan Stead
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'The world is awash with refugees' - so begins the foreword to a recently published volume of essays on the experience of refugees around the globe (Daniel and Knudsen 1995), yet at the 1995 Annual Meeting of the UNHCR Executive Committee the High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, warned that the institution of asylum was under threat and recent years had seen a global decline of asylum, even on a temporary basis (UNHCR Press Release REF/1124). These comments illustrate the 'macro level' tensions inherent in refugee studies today as more people are forced to move, yet are increasingly perceived as 'unwelcome' and consequently have fewer places to move to. For the disparate individuals who took part in this research this tension reasserts itself in the promotion and facilitation of an identity as 'bogus', and a status that places them 'outside' the traditional parameters of nations and cultures. In order to give an indication of how these tensions manifest themselves, I will begin with a short snapshot of refugee experience:

"I do not like Arabs - the roots and blood of my people are European - I am Aryan, not Arab". This was how Bibiya introduced herself to me in a flurry of comments about how much she felt 'at home' in Scotland. She spoke fluent English, but admitted that she found it difficult to meet Scottish people. Bibiya doesn't like Arabs, or Pakistani's, or Bosnians or indeed anybody who, in her opinion, is not 'grateful' for being here. She gets angry when she sees Muslim women wearing the hajib (headscarf), saying that as Britain is democratic and free people here should all live as the British people do. Her
admiration for the British people can be summed up in her observation that it is only foreigners who throw litter on the streets. Bibiya wants to become a British citizen as soon as possible, and then she would be able to bring her mother here to live with her - "I have no feelings for Iraq, I don't care if I never go there again". She talked about being interrogated by the Iraqi police, and of the many instances she was given electric shock therapy. "It is this that has given me the illnesses I have today. I used to be such a different person before - you would not have recognised me."

We met once just after a local election and she asked me who I had voted for. When I told her I had voted Labour she was surprised and said she couldn't understand why anybody would vote for them because Mrs Thatcher was such a good, strong leader. I said that I would have thought she, as a refugee, would have been against the Conservative Government because of the recent asylum legislation. She answered to the contrary, that she agreed with the government that 'all these foreigners' were polluting the British culture, and that they were sometimes taking jobs away from British people. She thought that unless people were prepared to adapt and be grateful, then they should be made to leave and she commended moves that would discourage others from coming here.

I had been meeting Bibiya regularly for almost a year when she became very unsettled and depressed. She told me she had been feeling desperately lonely and had spent a lot of time on the phone to Iraq, talking to her mother. She was very worried about her mother, who had serious health problems, saying that as the only unmarried daughter it was her responsibility to care for her. Bibiya wanted desperately for her mother to come and live with her, but knew that this could not happen until she (Bibiya) had permission to stay here indefinitely (she only had the temporary, discretionary status 'Exceptional Leave To Remain'). Her frequent long distance phone calls made her worried about her forthcoming phone bill; "It's due at the end of this month and I don't have any money to pay it, but I don't care." Bibiya was not usually so dismissive,
and the extent of her feelings were brought home to me when she later said that she was considering returning to Iraq. She said that she had tried for five years to make friends here, but had been unsuccessful; "I want to meet people and make lots of friends, so why can't I?" She acknowledged it would be no easier for her to do this in another European country, so felt she had no choice but to return to Iraq. She told me her family were now very worried about her; "They know me, and they know that once I make up my mind nothing will stop me. They are frightened that I will return." She then said that the only thing 'holding her back' was the fact that the Iraqi government might 'use her' and torture her - she said; "If they would just kill me then I would return, because then I would at least have a chance of seeing my mother again, but I couldn't stand being tortured like before."

Bibiya's feelings reflect some of the emotions that were expressed by many of the refugees who participated in this research. She sympathises with those who believe that foreigners and refugees 'dilute' and threaten a national identity and 'understand' the antagonism aimed at refugees for 'taking jobs away' from 'British' people. But she is also painfully aware that she has little choice in where she now lives. Although she experiences the uncertainty and isolation of her position as a refugee she is undaunted in her desire to eventually become a British citizen so that she can be reunited with her elderly ill mother. Apart from when she is particularly depressed, she accepts that her future is now in Scotland and she feels she can identify with the Scottish people, although these emotions are entangled with the feelings of loss and loneliness that accompany her emotional displacement from those she loves. Unlike many other refugees however, Bibiya never expressed a sense of loss, or wish to return to her 'home' country,
her links and attachment to Iraq were entirely dependent upon those of her close family who remained there; she told me on several occasions that if her family were to move to another country she would never think of Iraq again. The cruel paradox is that although Bibiya has lived here for five years, wishes to become a British citizen and is actively working towards assimilation and acceptance, she is isolated and lonely and has not yet been given a status that would allow her to stay here indefinitely. As a refugee she also faces the increasingly hostile and xenophobic attitudes, voiced by the government and some sections of the media, that have accompanied the recent legislative debates on asylum and immigration in the House of Commons and the House of Lords' and this makes her secretive and embarrassed about being a refugee.

This thesis will examine the social and political implications of European and British immigration policy through the personal experiences of twenty refugees who have been living in Scotland for less than five years. Particular, emphasis will be placed on the political and social deconstruction of the 'deserving political refugee' and its replacement with the 'bogus economic refugee', through an examination of recent European and UK legislation which is placing increasingly restrictive control on the movement and acceptance of refugees throughout Europe. I will therefore suggest that the humanitarian imperative of being able to seek refuge is

'The Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act 1993, the Social Security (Persons from Abroad) Miscellaneous Amendment Regulations 1996, and the present Asylum and Immigration Bill under consideration at the time of writing (July 1996).
being threatened by the conflation of 'refugee' and
'foreigner' (in all its guises), and refugees are
consequently finding it increasingly difficult to 'find a
place' in Europe that will provide them with the security
and safety that they require.

Refugees have often been described as 'liminal', and
whereas this term does offer some understanding of their
position it cannot fully convey the acuteness of the
present, and the freezing of past and future for those
who wait for their status. The asylum procedures in
Britain represent a structural liminality that can last
for a few months or several years, without the refugee
having any indication of how long it will take for a
decision to be made in their particular case. Even when
a decision is made, it is statistically likely that it
will offer only temporary discretionary permission to
stay, therefore extending the liminal period for many
years. Therefore, not only are refugees denied a 'place'
by the increasingly restrictive asylum legislation, but
many are also subjected to an unlimited postponement of
their future.

Contradictions and tensions are inevitable in presenting
a study of this kind, for although the bureaucratic
category that links these individuals together does
present some shared structural and social experiences,
interviewing people from different countries, with
different experiences, living in different Scottish
cities strains 'traditional' anthropological methodology

and analysis, and presents considerable tensions in the attempt to place the personal experiences of individual refugees within the wider socio-economic and political situation. Geertz describes how, in order to 'seek a sense of self', there needs to be a continuous dialectical tacking between the most local of local detail, and the most global of global structure in such a way as to bring them into simultaneous view (1983: 68-70). This, I have found, to be no easy task. It is also the case, as Escobar suggests, that in emphasising social hierarchies and self enclosed cultures, anthropology has encouraged ethnographers to study crystalline patterns of a whole cultures, and not the blurred zone in-between (1992: 397). This thesis is an attempt to examine the processual nature of one such 'blurred zone' - the zone occupied by newly arrived refugees to Scotland.

**Becoming a refugee**

The refugees who participated in this research came from many different countries, each with their own reason for seeking refuge, but they are not 'victims', in either an emotional or practical sense, rather they are 'ordinary people having to respond to extraordinary circumstances' (Kos et al 1993:6) that now prevent them from living in their 'home' country. (I place the word 'home' in inverted commas because of the ambiguity of the term in relation to the position and attitude of the refugees to their particular situation, but I have chosen this because of emotional attachment it conveys - in preference to the implicit hereditary connotations of 'country of origin'). It is also important to note that I explicitly asked about what it was to be a refugee in
Scotland, and it is this particular part of their lives that is emphasised in this thesis.

A Chilean refugee, writing about her experiences of coming to Britain, discusses the need to be 'effectively heard' (Flores-Borquez 1995: 104-105), but while some refugees may want to talk, others cannot, or they may choose only to talk about certain things. It should therefore be remembered that beneath their shared battle as refugees, they are individuals engaged in very personal struggles (Knudsen 1995: 24). Although some refugees wish to stay in this country, there are those who are waiting and planning to return as soon as it is safe and possible for them to do so, but for all of them their experience of refugeeness is the often lengthy and confusing process of becoming a refugee, rather than a onetime set of events bounded in time and space (Peteet 1995: 171).

The experiences of refugees coming to Scotland are personal poignant episodes in a life story, and it is therefore important to both 'humanise the stereotype' (Agar 1980: 57) and to unravel what general (or generalizable) elements they contain (Kohli 1981: 63). Yet the urge to generalise must be countered in such as way as to avoid presenting coherence when coherence is not there. Recently arrived refugees experience a great deal of confusion and uneasiness until they are somehow able to make the new event fit their ongoing life narrative, or until they change the story to accommodate the new event (Linde 1993: 18). Refugees also experience a certain 'loss of control' to external agents (such as
Home Office officials, the Benefit Agency, housing authorities etc.) which denies them a sense of agency and the subsequent validation of personal knowledge and understanding in this new situation. The structural and legal constraints that impinge upon the ability of newly arrived refugees to control or influence their understanding of self and place consequently reflect a particular moment in this process and this was of concern to all those who participated in this research. It is therefore imperative to recognise that the narratives given are not well rehearsed or coherent (as understood in the folk notion of a 'life story'), but are part of a process that is 'necessarily discontinuous' (Linde 1993: 27). However, these personal and poignant episodes cannot be separated from the larger framework that places refugees in a particular position vis-à-vis issues of sovereignty and national identity for the nation state.

Although I will stress the specific situation of refugees as opposed to that of immigrants or other minority groups, these categories overlap and are not mutually exclusive. Many of the refugees who participated in this research told me they would not have claimed asylum if there had been any other legal way of staying in the country (not because they did not have good, sound reasons for doing so, but because of the stigma and position of refugees in this society), and there are also those categorised as immigrants who have fled persecution and come here to seek refuge. However, all those contributing to this research had applied for asylum in this country and it is this process which categorically and experientially links them together for
the analysis that follows'. Although the political implications of defining refugees will be discussed more fully in chapter two, it is important to clarify my own (subjective) use of the term now to prevent any confusion or misunderstandings. Legally those interviewed fall into the categories of Asylum Seeker, those with Exceptional Leave to Remain, and those who have Convention Status. An asylum seeker is anyone who has applied to the government for refuge by surrendering their passport (if they have one), and completing a Political Asylum Questionnaire in which they must justify their claim for asylum. A person then remains an asylum seeker until the Home Office have considered their case and they have been informed of this decision; a process which may take from a few months to several years. One of the decisions made by the Home Office regarding a claim for asylum may be to award the temporary, discretionary status of Exceptional Leave to Remain (ELR). This status recognises that the individual has 'good reason' for seeking asylum, but that their particular situation falls outside the remit of the United Nations (UN) Convention definition of refugee. ELR gives permission to stay in this country for one year, and is then renewable for two consecutive periods of three years each before the refugee can apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain. A Convention refugee is someone who receives permission to stay in this country for four years as a bona fide refugee under the provision of the UN Convention definition (with automatic entitlement to Indefinite Leave to Remain after this time

'Those refugees entering Britain as part of a government quota are classified by the Red Cross or the UNHCR as refugees BEFORE they are allowed into Britain e.g. many Chileans, Ugandan Asians and Vietnamese.
has elapsed). Importantly this decision also allows for immediate family reunion and allows the individual to apply for a travel document which will allow 90 days travel per year outside the UK (although not to the 'home' country).

Each of these statuses has particular implications for those so designated, and these will be discussed in chapter seven. However, I will use 'refugee' as a generic term to describe all those who participated in the research because this is how they described themselves to me and it is generally accepted that a strict interpretation of the UN definition of refugee no longer usefully or appropriately describes the complexity of the range of situations which lead people to seek refuge elsewhere in the world today. As described by Jean-Pierre Hocke (who was UN High Commissioner for Refugees in 1986), the UN Definition is legalistic and static - 'doctrinaire rather than doctrinal' (Hocke 1989: 43). There will, however, be occasions when the specific legal definitions pertaining to the individuals concerned are important and pertinent and they will be used accordingly.

**Relationships with place**

Refugees, by the very nature of their forced migration, inevitably experience dislocation, isolation and homelessness, which place them initially in a vulnerable position regarding their status and position, both in their 'home' country and in the country where refuge is sought. An understanding of refugee identities should however, be premised on both the desire and the pragmatic
reality of their finding 'some ground, some place, some position on which to stand' (Hall 1991: 47). Unlike their migrant counterparts, many recently arrived refugees in Scotland are rarely able to link into established networks or communities that provide the security on which they can re-establish or maintain contacts with their 'home' country or begin to build for their future. However, it is no longer politically, socially or economically possible to treat refugees as if they will be leaving in a month or two, or to dismiss them as 'acultural' because they have been forcefully separated from primordial ties, and have, as yet, been unable to forge new ones. The old adage 'if it's moving it isn't cultural' (Rosaldo in Escobar 1992: 397) can no longer be sustained when people, goods, money, and information, cross national, social and cultural boundaries at an ever increasing rate. Yet the ambiguities and the asymmetry of the relationships between those who may view themselves as 'local' and those they in turn view as 'incomer', inevitably project on to the 'incomer' negative associations such as a 'not belonging', and an understanding of them as 'recent and fugitive' (Jedrej and Nuttall 1996: 94). The assumption therefore fostered is that those who have been 'uprooted' are left with broken, withering roots and a loss of moral bearing (Malkki 1992: 32). The 'incomers' described by Jedrej and Nuttall are the English who migrate to rural Scotland, and the 'uprooted' described by Malkki are Hutu refugees in Tanzania, yet both situations powerfully evoke the sedentarist view of an essential connection between culture and place. For migrants this can be countered by expressing an emotional, and therefore an
irrational, attachment to the locality that can be either placed within a specific history of migration to Scotland (Maan 1992), or in terms of 'falling in love' with an area, or 'destiny' (Jedrej and Nuttall 1996: 96). But for refugees whose circumstances of forced migration inevitably suggest forced relocation, no such emotional attachment is assumed or expected, rather their presence is perceived as the action of a rational agent exercising a calculating utilitarian attitude. This perception of refugees as detached, rather than attached is undoubtedly true to a certain extent, but allegiances, loyalties, identities and feelings of belonging are complicated, contingent, fragmented and changing. As Bibiya clearly stated, her feelings towards her family were paramount and, for her, were uncomplicated by any emotional attachments to her country, yet she felt 'at home' in Scotland even without the security of being able to stay beyond the couple of years left to run on her ELR visa.

Edward Said (1989) states that it is no longer possible to predicate ideas of identity and belonging purely in relation to place, and that exile, immigration and the crossing of boundaries are experiences that can provide us with new narrative forms (ibid. 225)¹. But it should also be acknowledged that it is not only those who are displaced who are part of this new narrative, but those who remain in familiar and ancestral places may also find their relation to place ineluctably changed, and the essential connection between the place and the culture

¹See also Bhabha 1994
broken (Gupta and Ferguson 1992: 10). With a sense of dislocation and disorientation becoming a major cultural experience for us all (Weeks 1990: 94), the post-modern experience can be understood as sustaining and nurturing marginality as a 'powerful space' (Hall 1991: 34); the 'local at the heart of the global' (Tsing 1994: 280), which celebrates the self as no longer centred, unified and in place, but multiple, shifting and decentred (Westwood 1992: 258). However, if such narrative forms are no longer to be found on the margin, or at the centre, but somewhere in-between, then this 'third space' becomes a new area for the negotiation of meaning and representation (Bhabha 1990: 211). But, any negotiation involves having something to negotiate with, and so within this swirling maelstrom of deconstruction the reality of refugees claiming 'some ground, some place, some position on which to stand' is ultimately thwarted by their temporary disempowerment; "The most powerless people have no place at all" (Rodman 1992: 630). Indeed Westwood also argues against marginality as a 'powerful space' because it eludes those, such as the black mentally ill (and I would add refugees), who are positioned in relation to a multiplicity of cross-cutting regimes of power that define, confine and exclude (1994: 262).

The essentialist connection between culture and place has therefore led to the problematising of those whose who do not fit into this paradigm. The 'problem' of refugees can be located in their definition as 'bogus', in their confinement in prisons and detention centres, and in the exclusion of their full participation in society through
the structural constraints which reduce the totality of their situation to that of a single facet defining clientship (Waldron 1987: 2), further exacerbating perceptions of them as victims and dependant. There is therefore a need to look beyond the category of 'client' to locate refugees in a theoretical space that recognises their presence while neither glorifying them nor explaining them away (Voutira and Harrell-Bond 1995: 209). Many newly arrived refugees are particularly powerless and vulnerable and are consequently not accorded many of the rights that pertain to other marginal groups in our society. For example, at any one time 600 men and women seeking asylum in the UK are held in detention on the basis of a cursory examination by an Immigration Officer, acting without effective reference or accountability to any court or independent review body (Amnesty International 1995: 1). These refugees are therefore being detained (and all refugees are now fingerprinted) without having been accused or charged with any offence - a situation that would not be tolerated by any other group in society and one that is interpreted by Amnesty International as a violation of international human rights standards.

This tension between the state's responsibility to provide asylum and its desire to deter (for that is what the UK government openly intend by such action), results in refugees having the protection of no country - their rights effectively being 'put on hold' for an indeterminate amount of time until their claim for asylum is either accepted or

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1For example Article 5 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
rejected. However, it is not only the tension between the individual and the state that affects refugees, but the relationship of states with each other.

**Refugees in Europe**

'Europe' can appear amorphous when definitions revolve around the membership of various treaties and agreements that now govern aspects of national and international life. But for refugees 'Europe', in all its guises, represents one startlingly coherent fact - increasingly restrictive asylum policies. The jostling for power and position between European countries has produced a level of xenophobia for which the refugee is the scapegoat. The decentering of individual identity and the globalization of socio-economic forces is precipitating a crisis in national identities and power structures, which is being partly blamed upon the 'invasion' and 'flood' of refugees coming to Europe. As Monnier observes:

In Switzerland, as elsewhere in Europe since the 1980s, political asylum and refugee status have lost respectability. Facing a significant flow of asylum seekers, Western Europe seems to have become a fortress. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Geneva Convention (1951), and its Protocol of New York (1967) concerning refugee status, are an embarrassment to Europe. (Monnier 1995: 305).

This lack of respectability and the embarrassment of European governments towards refugees has been steadily growing over the last decade as legal immigration to countries in the European Community is now almost impossible and the increase in refugees is consequently
perceived as 'common profiteering' on the part of would be migrants (ibid. 305). There is little doubt that some people coming to Europe are using (and abusing) the asylum procedures as a way of gaining entry for residence and employment, but as the UK Government has so far failed to provide any credible evidence of the extent of such misuse (Amnesty International 1996: 46) there is no justification for this being used to further restrict entry for those who are genuinely seeking asylum. The entanglement of asylum and immigration in the attitudes and legislation that are now being enacted throughout Europe, have therefore consequently blurred and confused the humanitarian right of everyone to be able to seek, in another country, asylum from persecution, with the need for an effective system of immigration control. Immigration legislation has also, in the form of the Schengen Agreement, been closely linked to the prevention and control of terrorism, which further conflicts with the humanitarian ideal of providing asylum. All the various treaties and agreements now being brokered by European governments are therefore about restricting the numbers of all foreigners who would wish to live and work in Europe, irrespective of who they are.

The unprecedented co-operation between European states, and the amount of legislation recently enacted, reflects the growing concern and prominence of immigration issues in today's political climate. There has often been concern over who and how many should be allowed to enter

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'See Salt, Singleton and Hogarth (1994)
'As stated in Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
'For example The Schengen Agreement, The Dublin Convention, The Maastricht Treaty
the territory of a nation state, but there were no serious administrative impediments to the movement of persons between states until the beginning of this century. This changed dramatically with the First World War, when those deemed 'useful' were not allowed to leave their countries, and anxiety about those who may be spies led to the formalisation of immigration controls (Marrus 1985: 92). During the 1920s the use of passports represented the development of an organised system of immigration regulations throughout Western Europe which was strictly applied in protection of the national labour market (Hammar 1985: 249). However the unprecedented upheaval of 40 million European civilians in the Second World War - which included considerable displacement within pre-war boundaries and forced relocation in other countries - (Proudfoot 1956: 32), initially overwhelmed any attempt at control. But by 1946, after a concerted programme of resettlement, there were only one million refugees left in Europe who could not be repatriated. The formation of the International Refugee Organisation in 1948 (which became the United Nations High Commission for Refugees), therefore represents what Marrus calls the 'continuing obligation' felt by Western Governments towards refugees (1985: 340).

Following the consolidation of Communist dictatorships behind the iron curtain, this apparent 'end of a European refugee problem' (Marrus 1985: 371) was, in reality masked by new refugees who fled from the right-wing dictatorships of Greece, Spain, and Portugal being described as guest workers to help alleviate the labour shortage at this time (Widgren 1989: 50). However, as
argued by Salomon (1991) future refugee policy was greatly affected by the ideological opposition between the USSR and the USA during the period of the Cold War, taking on overt political, rather than humanitarian, considerations - a legacy which has repercussions today as Europe grapples with the refugee 'problem' once again.

During the 1960s refugee movements took place mainly outside Europe - in Africa or Asia - with few refugees reaching European borders, although this did not stop the 'deeply conservative impulses' which represented the 'drift towards increasing restrictions on the right of asylum' (Marrus 1985:370). By the 1970s the character of refugees in Europe began to change as large numbers of third world nationals began to seek refuge in Europe and North America, with the causes of refugee flows becoming increasingly complex; interwoven with other major international problems such as population growth, unemployment, internal conflict and widespread political and economic repression (Loescher 1989: 17-21). However, during the 1970's many of these 'third world nationals' were admitted 'in an orderly manner' to the West by quota agreements (Cels 1989: 191). However, as described by Hammar (1985), the early 1970s represented a 'turning point' when labour immigration was stopped as a result of the oil crisis and there was a need to avoid exacerbating the social problems of resident immigrants as British economy declined and demands on local authority social services by increased (Hammar 1985: 263). This 'turning point' was also crucial for the attitudes and legislation

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that now began to affect those seeking asylum. In recognition that the 'problem' of refugees was not a temporary one, and that any solution was now outwith the control of any one nation-state, European nations began to form alliances in a joint effort to protect their borders and their sovereignty. From the 1980s very few refugees had arrived through government quota schemes, rather the majority arrived 'haphazardly' (Cels 1989: 191) and the West reacted to these unscheduled arrivals with policies that were 'defensive in nature and determined by the imperative of deterrence' (Hocke 1989: 38). With immigration now almost impossible and with public protests growing at the perceived economic and social cost of 'foreigners' living in Western Europe, governments turned to each other in an unprecedented gesture of co-operation to consolidate asylum legislation as a way of tightly controlling the numbers of those allowed to enter (ibid. 264).

Refugees in Britain

Although there is continuing European co-operation in asylum and immigration matters individual nation-states still have ultimate autonomy when deciding who should and who should not be admitted to their territory. Although there will be a discussion of Britain's asylum and immigration legislation in chapter three, it is important to indicate here how current perceptions of refugees coming to the UK as 'bogus refugees', 'economic migrants' and 'hordes of benefit scroungers', represent a crucial move from identifying an immigrant Other as different and unwanted to a refugee Other who is 'guilty' and subsequently vilified.
Cohen (1994) describes how nation-states legitimate the right to control entry and demand departure by defining any undesirables as 'dangerous individuals' (ibid. 37) - an attitude which in Britain's case became enshrined in the Aliens Restrictions (Amendment) Act of 1919. But this did not, at this time, include those who were seeking asylum (ibid. 73). With various other groups seeking entry into the UK during the early part of this century, refugees were not yet considered as unwelcome or unwanted - this was reserved for easily defineable groups such as Indians, Gypsies, Jews and Africans who were the main targets of animosity at this time (ibid: 43). Although Britain's history of welcoming those escaping from persecution has never been exemplary, the right to seek asylum was never directly challenged until unemployment and social unrest became associated with the number of immigrants ('black' immigrants) who were now living here. Immigration in Britain has always been inextricably linked to race, and the speech by Enoch Powell in 1968 gave a popular and public face to the racism that, according to Miles (1993) had permeated political debate about all migrations (ibid. 165 my emphasis). However;

When Enoch Powell made his infamous 'rivers of blood' speech he was expressing the sense of alarm and resentment that lay, not with the immigrant population, but with those among whom they have come to live" (Hiro 1992: 247).

In response to the sentiments expressed by Enoch Powell there was a flurry of legislative moves around
immigration, asylum, nationality and race relations during the 1970s and 1980s, including the imposition of visa requirements on many 'refugee sending' countries\textsuperscript{10}. Although Britain prides itself on its exemplary record of offering hospitality to those fleeing from political and religious persecution, its 'shrinking circle of generosity' towards refugees in recent years (in comparison with some other countries) can be all too adequately demonstrated (Cohen 1994: 77). The Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act came into force in 1987 which provides for the imposition of a fine (currently £2000 per passenger) on any transport operator bringing passengers lacking valid travel documents - a situation which inevitably affects the ability of refugees to seek asylum, as it is often impossible for them to obtain such documentation. In the 1990s, with immigration to the UK controlled and all possible permutations of restricting entry to British Commonwealth and Dependent Territory Nationals enacted, refugees have therefore become the latest victims of Britain's immigration laws with three major pieces of legislation (1993, 1995 and 1996) designed to restrict their entry (see chapter three).

Although the most recent legislation\textsuperscript{11} has been condemned as 'playing the race card' in the run up to a general election (The Herald 26/10/95), the government has consistently denied that this is the case saying that they are acting 'morally' in response to the 'cheats' who make bogus claims for welfare benefits. The columnist

\textsuperscript{10}In 1985 visa restrictions were imposed upon nationals from Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh, Ghana, Nigeria and Pakistan

\textsuperscript{11}The Asylum and Immigration Bill (published on 30 November 1995)
Andrew Marr, writing in the Independent, sarcastically suggests it is surprising that the government still feels it necessary to produce any mimicry or legalism for measures whose purpose seems all to clear - to keep dark-skinned foreigners out (Independent 26/10/95), but the Daily Star editorial comes closer to my understanding of British racism and xenophobia when it states: "It doesn't matter whether they're white or black, Britain can't keep an open-door policy. **Sorry this country is full.**" (Daily Star 21/11/95 - original emphasis).

Although Britain has always prided itself upon its humanity and welcoming attitude towards refugees (Cohen 1994), there is considerable evidence to suggest that there have always been groups of people who have been imagined or transmuted into the unwelcome Other, but it is the supposed 'guilt' of asylum seekers that is used to justify and promulgate recent legislation. For example Britain has introduced what has become known as a 'white list' of countries which designates asylum seekers from those countries as likely to have unfounded claims. These countries are: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Ghana, India, Pakistan, Poland and Romania. Although this list contains countries whose human rights record gives cause for concern, it is nonetheless becoming widely used throughout Europe". The British Government has also introduced 'fast track' asylum procedures to deal with those arriving from 'white list' countries therefore

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1"A leaked Foreign Office memorandum confirms the intention to add to this list Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Nigeria (Amnesty International 1996: 29)

2"Other European countries operating this 'white list' include Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland.
implicitly presupposing that claims are fraudulent by creating a system imbued with distrust. As Amnesty International has suggested, this denies individual claimants the right to have their cases individually assessed and determined - which is a fundamental principle of international refugee law (1996: 29). However, although the concern over the 'white list' is because it contains countries whose human rights record is giving cause for concern, crucially, it also contains countries from which there has been a recent rise in refugees.

The rhetoric of refugees as 'bogus' is therefore an important element in recent moves by governments to deter refugees and it places the individuals concerned in the unenviable position of being 'unaccepted where they are, unable to return whence they came' (Gordenker 1987: 213) - the ultimate dilemma for refugees today.

**Refugees in Scotland**

Refugees in Scotland present a particular dilemma for my analysis because although all asylum and immigration legislation stems from Westminster, placing substantial structural constraints upon the refugee no matter where they are in the UK, some refugees nonetheless think of Scotland as very 'different' to England and many of them have specifically chosen to live here. In order to discuss these feelings of difference without becoming embroiled in sociological debates about Scottish nationalism and identity, I will adopt McCrone's (1992) suggestion that Scotland is a separate 'society' insofar as it provides a set of meaningful frameworks through
which to judge social experiences and other levels of association (ibid. 26). Yet refugee experiences are not without contradictions when trying to understand on what basis they define their experiences within a Scottish framework. For example, the perception of Scotland as 'non racist' was mentioned by several African refugees, yet each could relate experiences of acute racism, and the murder of a Somalian refugee in Edinburgh was well known and recognised as a racist attack. In answer to the question 'Is Scotland Colour Blind' the evidence suggests that this is indeed a myth (Ridley and Kendrick 1994). Yet although Maan (1992) discusses the situation for Indian migrants in Scotland as constituting institutional racism and individual prejudice, he goes on to say:

In spite of all that, there is no denying that the Asian community and other black people have fared comparatively better in Scotland than their kind in England (Mann 1992: 203).

This can be viewed as an interpretation of the powerful and prevalent myth of Scotland being more egalitarian than England, which may be a distortion of reality but nonetheless suggests that Scotland can be understood as a landscape of the mind, and a place of the imagination (McCrone 1992: 17). Through their imagination refugees can therefore identify with Scotland as a 'separate place' that may have resonances of 'home' and be represented by a society of friendly, egalitarian and non racist people. Unfortunately for many refugees Scottish people appear to exist only in their imaginations, for the most frequently expressed frustration was the inability of the refugee to 'get to know' Scottish
people. As will become evident in the narratives that follow these feelings of isolation result in a frustration and disappointment that often led to disillusionment and despair, but yet allowed the myth of a generous and egalitarian people to be sustained.

The ambiguity and tension for refugees living in Scotland can also be illustrated by the lack of specific support organisations. Apart from Scottish Refugee Council Offices in Edinburgh and Glasgow (and their frequent outreach work to other areas of Scotland), there are few ethnic organisations who exist to help and support refugees. In the larger cities in England", where there are substantially larger refugee populations, a number of specialist organisations exist to inform refugees of their rights and provide valuable support. For example, in a recent list of Refugee and Ethnic Group Primary Care Organisations in London 13 were specifically named as refugee groups, although the other 53 were also involved in direct help and support for refugees. This is in stark contrast to the situation in Scotland, where ethnic organisations are run by and for immigrants - existing primarily to promote cultural identity and activities - not to give specific support and advice to refugees. This rather obviously begs the question of whether the refugees who choose to come to Scotland are somehow 'different' from those who choose to live elsewhere. Although there is recognition of some refugees moving to the larger cities south of the border in order to live in ethnically similar communities (McFarland and Walsh

"In particular London and Manchester"
1988), there are many who have chosen to remain in Scotland and my research indicates that this may be part of a particular strategy of self determination and independence (see chapter 6). The tension between the perceived particularity of being in Scotland and the refugee experience of being enmeshed in a structural system that expands beyond Scotland and the UK to Europe, therefore permeates throughout this thesis as a reminder of the personal, spatial and political complexities of the refugee situation today.

The first section therefore begins with an examination of the theoretical changes in the ethnographies of migrant, minority or ethnic groups studied during the last twenty years from detailed descriptions of the social relations connecting migrants with their place of origin and their 'boundedness' in social and cultural terms, to a discussion of the markers of ethnicity that represent the symbolic boundary between 'them' and 'us'. Recent analysis is now considering the complexity, fragmentation and ambiguity of ethnic identity in terms of transmigrancy and transnationalism, and this theoretical shift reflects a growing move towards locating personal perceptions of belonging and identity within the multitudinous structural, social and spatial concerns that impact upon refugees today.

Chapter two provides an historical overview and commentary on the political interpretation of the definition of 'refugee' as outlined by the United Nations and the consequences of this for European co-operation.
regarding the various treaties and agreements that now seek to control the numbers of those seeking asylum.

Chapter three further illustrates the changing nature of legislation and attitudes in Britain, where as asylum seekers have become the latest scapegoats in an attempt to both appease and fuel public unrest over the perceived loss of British sovereignty to the European Union. However it is important to note that although the 1993 Asylum and Immigration Act greatly influenced the attitudes towards refugees in this country (and the perception of refugees towards their position here), the structural constraints contained in both the 1993 Act and the 1996 Regulations did not apply to the refugees in this research. With two major pieces of legislation enacted within three years, and a third expected to be passed during the next Parliament (1996)\textsuperscript{15}, it is inevitable that the situation for newly arrived refugees is now very different. However, although this does mean that, for those refugees who have been here for a number of years, some structural aspects of their situation are now 'out-of-date', their narratives nonetheless vividly convey the sense of being unable to 'find a place'; with the full implications of this process being revealed in the day-to-day lives of those refugees who find themselves in an extended and uncertain liminality - a situation that, for new arrivals, has been intensified, not diminished by the new legislation.

\textsuperscript{15}The Asylum and Immigration Bill (published on 30 November 1995)
Section two begins with a methodological review of the fieldwork process outlining the relationships and techniques that formed the basis for the research. Chapters five and six are refugee narratives. The questions I asked refugees were aimed at establishing what it felt like to be refugee in Scotland and for a very few, describing their feelings about being here did entail some thoughts as to the situation that prompted their flight, their feelings about home and country and of the many people left behind, but, more generally however, the issues raised were related to the intensity of their experience 'here and now'.

In chapter seven the analysis moves towards a fusion of the personal and the political, locating refugees in the space (or non space) of an extended and uncertain liminality which places them outside the traditional parameters of nations and cultures. The often painful, lonely and confusing first few years for refugees in Britain is contextualised within the legal structures that facilitate and encourage their social isolation by the unlimited time they may have to wait for a decision on their refugee status and the continuing uncertainty if they receive only temporary and discretionary permission to stay.

This period of 'unlimited liminality' therefore often prevents refugees from securing an understanding of the present, postpones an understanding of the past and denies any expectations of the future - the experience of which will be poignantly evidenced in chapter eight through the introduction of two further refugee
narratives. However, these stories ultimately fit into the much larger narrative of an anthropological perspective which grapples with contradictions and incongruity of spatial and structural belonging that effect refugees today, and this is the subject of the next chapter.
CHAPTER ONE

FROM MIGRANT TO TRANSMIGRANT

Introduction

The move towards decentred and fragmented identities is a theme that will emerge in the course of this chapter, but it also should be mentioned here as a description of what may be loosely called, 'refugee studies'. As Johansson (1990) observed, refugee research is eclectic and therefore lacks standard texts, a theoretical structure and a firm definition of the subject (ibid. 227). Historians have investigated the impact of refugees in Europe during this century\(^1\) and geographers have recently begun to separate the movement of refugees from more general demographic trends and forecasts\(^2\), but the largest contribution towards the literature on refugees in Europe has mainly come from those particularly interested in politics (see for example Loescher and Monahan 1989, Gordenker 1987, Golkap 1988, Stahl 1988, Rystad 1990, Joly and Cohen 1989) and immigration law and policy (Layton-Henry 1985, 1992, Hammar 1985, Dowty 1987), with some overlap between the disciplines as evidenced in edited volumes. Studying refugees is therefore a multidisciplinary activity but it is one, that until recently, has evaded a concerted anthropological gaze. Ten years ago Harrell-Bond (1986) wrote *Imposing Aid: Emergency Assistance to Refugees* in which she discussed the misrepresentation and

\(^1\)In particular Vernant (1953), Murphy (1955), Proudfoot (1956), Marrus (1985) and Salomon (1991)

\(^2\)Black and Robinson (1993)
misunderstanding that surrounded the attitudes and aid packages designed for Ugandan refugees in Sudan. Since then there has been an increasing anthropological focus on refugee communities throughout the world and a substantial number of publications within the last few years. Many of these studies still stress the misrepresentation and misunderstanding of the refugee highlighted by Harrell-Bond, but they also show a change of approach and concern as anthropology now begins to address the phenomenon of moving populations. For anthropologists the 'traditional' focus on ethnically or geographically bounded groups of people, or those studies based upon the 'push' and 'pull' theories of migration are no longer adequate to analyse the political, social and economic complexity of increasing numbers of disparate people forced to move to lands and cultures distant from their own. There has therefore been a move away from studying 'migrants', who are temporarily living outside their 'home' country, to that of recognising 'transmigrants' who may have economic, social and citizenship connections in several countries.

I have chosen to review the following literature in a roughly chronological order to indicate the theoretical changes that have occurred in studies of people who have moved, and who are on the move. By describing the content and approach of various ethnographies an understanding of the complexities of ethnic and multi ethnic communities begins to emerge.

Minorities in Britain

The anthropological literature on minorities living in Britain is a useful springboard from which to examine more recent work on refugees. During the last twenty years ethnographic studies have concentrated upon the social relations of ethnic groups, paying particular attention to their perceived cohesiveness and the persuasiveness of cultural beliefs and customs that have been reformed and renewed by the transition from one society to another. When Barth wrote the introduction to an edited volume addressing the 'problem of ethnic groups and their persistence' (1969: 9) many of those who had arrived in the UK in the early 1950's now considered themselves as settled here, and consequently Ethnic Groups and Boundaries became a key text for the analysis of these migrant groups. The influence of Barth's work on anthropological studies is considerable as he showed that the identity of ethnic groups could not be fixed by an adherence to particular cultural codes such as dress, food and so forth, but was socially and symbolically constructed - with the construction of such ethnicity's being most visible at the boundaries with others. However these boundaries also expanded to embrace contact with the 'home' country, facilitating the production and understanding of a shared identity between members of a group who were now outside their 'home' country. Migration history and chains of movement between particular villages or areas have been identified from the single male traders and seamen who originally travelled here alone, to those of present day relationships between families and kin networks that span across continents. It is therefore recognised that one
of the most distinctive contributions which anthropologists have made to our understanding of migrant communities, are the detailed descriptions of the social relations connecting migrants with their places of origin (Eades 1987).

Watson (1977) illustrates the value of such an approach in an edited volume where twelve anthropologists provide accounts which illustrate the process of migration by investigating the people and their families at both ends of the migration chain. This two centre approach highlights the problematic simplicity of the 'push' and 'pull' paradigm which obscures the inherent complexity of the migration situation therefore questioning, as does Richmond (1994: 49), the assumption that economic factors are predominant in determining the outflow and interpreting the experience after migration. For example Constantinides (in Watson: 1977) describes how the situation for Greek Cypriots living and working in London was drastically changed when Turkey invaded Cyprus. Not only did plans for returning home in the near future have to be suspended, but consciousness of a specific Greek identity was heightened at this particular time (ibid. 270) and it could therefore no longer be assumed that Greeks in London were here for purely 'economic' reasons. Not only was the public perception challenged, but the Greek Cypriots' understanding of their own change of circumstances could not have been anticipated or planned for.

Anwar (1979) also visits 'both ends' of the migration chain, but presents a more functional analysis. His
emphasis is upon the social networking of the Pakistani community, both in Rochdale and in Pakistan, which provides strong and powerful bonds that do not fade over time but are constantly renewed by labour sponsorship and the maintenance of family ties through a system known as biraderi. The movement between Pakistan and Rochdale is considerable because of the immigration restrictions that initially prevent the sponsored workers in Rochdale bringing their immediate families with them. Anwar argues that the historical biraderi links which facilitate this chain migration permeate and promote the 'encapsulation' of the Pakistani community in Rochdale, which requires only 'small modifications' to exist as it would in Pakistan. The somewhat static nature of this analysis can be contrasted to that of Werbner (1990), who stresses that Pakistanis now living in Manchester are not simply reproducing social systems of employment and wealth creation, but creating them. She also places the migrant entrepreneur within the larger economic and trading partnerships and rivalries that exist locally within the garment industry in which the majority of them are involved. This is not to deny that social networks, such as biraderi, exist and are important for social relations, but, in order to present a holistic picture of minority communities, there is a need to look beyond the central core of any group to the relationships beyond.

Werbner's analysis is therefore in stark contrast to the approach of Anwar (1979) and to that of Watson (1977) who suggests that successful business people (such as the Chinese restaurant owner), are isolated in the economic
and social niche that Chinese control allows them; allowing the migrant to live, work, and prosper without changing their way of life to suit British expectations (ibid. 193). As Hannerz (1987) reminds us, people do develop a certain awareness of, and familiarity with cultural forms which are not primarily theirs, and the anthropologist stands to lose many insights into the dynamic of this totality by looking at only one of its parts (ibid. 549).

Shaw (1988) shows how the interpretation of a cohesive enclave community here and a 'traditional' unchanging community there can sometimes mask a misunderstanding due to the dangers an ethnocentric viewpoint. She discusses how some of the changes that have usually been attributed to life in this country, are actually happening in Pakistan as well. In particular she draws attention to the reactions of young people towards 'arranged' marriages which are similarly rebellious in both countries, and therefore cannot necessarily be attributed to the particular attitudes and circumstances of a second or third generation migrant living in the UK adversely reacting to the 'traditional' culture of Pakistan. This recognition of the fluidity and malleability of the identity adopted by minority ethnic groups living in the UK is further elucidated by Werbner (1990:2) who states that 'ethnic groups, rather than being are constantly becoming. This need to address the complexity of relations both within the minority group and between them and the majority is becoming increasingly acknowledged to be a valuable and necessary part of the research agenda. Werbner's analysis also
recognises that labour migrants are now perceived within the larger framework of 'ethnic minorities' (1990: 3) and that these interrelated processes are now increasingly coming under investigation.

The effects of technology on the ability of people to move around the world, and the ease at which they can retain frequent communication with each other, now serves to contradict any notion of a specific unchanging culture either 'there' or 'here'. The theoretical shift from viewing migration primarily as a reaction to international flows of capital and labour has now been expanded to present the migrant as proactive, both in their reasons for moving and in their new situation (Mascarenas-Keyes 1987, Richmond 1994). Migration can therefore no longer usefully be served by a functionalist model of chain, or push and pull migration, because it now requires a different level of analysis beyond that of economic labour movement. As expressed by Eades:

"The anthropology of migration has evolved, it has become the anthropology of a world social order within which people struggle to make lives for themselves (Eades 1987:13)."

This is a particularly useful approach in researching refugee issues, for by now focusing on individuals and relating them directly to the 'world social order' there can be a move away from what is referred to by Bottomly (1992: 17) as the 'uni-dimensional' nature of migration and immigration as static concepts of culture as tradition, linking them instead to the fluidity and
malleability of personal perceptions and structural explanations.

Although Desai suggests that it is only when male migrant workers are joined by their families that a community or ethnic identity can begin to be established, there are few ethnographies addressing the role of gender in constructing and transforming ethnic identities (in Banks 1996: 102). As Shaw (1988) recognises there is no doubt that women do play an important role in providing a locus for cultural activities, but it would be a serious error to see the role of migrant women purely as 'culture' makers and sustainers. In one of the few volumes addressing these issues, Westwood and Bhachu (1988) draw together a selection of writers who look specifically at the role of migrant women in the enterprising cultures of migrant employment'. This book rejects the way 'culture' has been used in ethnic relations literature to mark out specific populations as aberrant (1988: 11), and highlights the ambiguous and often hidden nature of women's place in wider employment roles (outwith the family or 'ethnic' businesses), which often supports and makes possible the 'family' business.

To fully explore issues concerning minority groups (including issues of gender) Barth's description (1969) of the fluidity and frequency of movement across boundaries would appear to need both restating and expanding to take into account the complexities of both the individual and the group as they manipulate, and are

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'See also an edited volume by Buijs (1993)
constrained by, the realities of an ethnic identity that cannot always be assumed to be a matter of neutral choice (Banks 1996: 105). As Krufeld and Camino observe (1994) ethnic groups are found to respond not only to the boundaries that they themselves erect, but to those constructed by outsiders, and for refugees the diversity of their experience of forced migration adds further complexities to the process of ethnic identity formation (ibid: xii). However, for many minority groups the concept of ethnicity becomes even more variable and difficult to define when groups and individuals are able to assert some control over how and when it is used.

For example Talai (1989) describes how Armenians living in London share a set of symbols that provide a framework for their 'Armenianness', rather than sharing a uniform experience of ethnic identity. Because of their varied diasporic background and the fact that they are geographically scattered and 'white', she describes their ethnicity within the British context as 'anonymous'. This fact is important and manipulated by Armenians for expediency, but their ethnicity is viewed as more than contingent. Talai claims that the most emotive of these symbols of ethnicity is the view of the Armenian as an exile which imparts a moral obligation to perpetuate an identity almost extinguished in the genocide (ibid: 4). However, ethnicity as a 'moral obligation' (rather than an economic, political or social imperative), still depends upon the interpretation and the experience of sharing common symbols that are celebrated by Armenians when they come together at gatherings sponsored by a constantly shifting network of
voluntary organisations. Therefore an exposition of 'Armenianness' which defines appropriate behaviour and attitudes too explicitly and too narrowly would be incapable of accommodating the variety of interests and contingencies experienced outside the community.

It would appear that Armenians in London gain a power from their 'anonymity' that allows them to cross the symbolic boundary of Armenian ethnicity with relative ease, and in this Talai follows closely Barth's analysis. The ability of the Armenians to group together and consolidate whatever it is that is understood as Armenianness illustrates the viability of acknowledging differences between them and others, and Talai notes that although the nature of these differences may change over time, the differentiation itself is unlikely to disappear (1989: 54). For many minority groups such anonymity (either economically, spatially or culturally) is not possible and what Barth's approach therefore appears to lack is the consideration of the relative power balance on either side of the ethnic boundary and on the constellation of symbols regarding the 'other' that are meaningful for the majority group (Banks 1996: 117). For those migrant and refugee groups who are small in number, ghettoised or relatively powerless, the boundary symbols that may emanate from the 'majority view' become categorisations and stereotypes that are outwith the control of the group to which they are directed. For example, refugees are described as refugees by the media when they are outside the UK, but become 'bogus refugees' or 'economic refugees' when they arrive here. This recognition of boundary symbols and maintenance as
coming from outside, as well as inside a group, therefore moves this discussion beyond ethnicity to that of race which distances the 'other' to that of a stereotype within a category.

For the study of refugees in Scotland categorisation, stereotypes and racism are more pertinent concepts on which to base an analysis of their particular situation. Although ethnicity today implies some consideration of racism and categorisation, in Barth's terms it appears primarily as a neutral concept. As the earlier ethnographies suggest, too often ethnicity would appear to have been the only analytical tool used, which inadvertently led to groups being analysed as self contained ethnic enclaves who, as Watson (1977) describes, can live in isolation without changing their ways to suit British expectations. Jonkind (1992) suggests that as little or no attention has previously been paid to the role of non-ethnic factors in the personal experience and use of ethnicity by an individual migrant, the 'ethnic component' should always be put into perspective by relating it to personal, situational and other relevant factors. For example, for the small number of refugees interviewed for this research the issue of their specific group, cultural or ethnic identity here and now was largely irrelevant. Few of those arriving in Scotland are able to link into already established networks (the Kurds and Sudanese being notable exceptions), because of the small numbers involved. Therefore, having only recently arrived, with few or no contacts with others from their countries, the need to make sense of what is here, and find their place
within it, was of paramount importance. It was not issues of ethnicity that concerned refugees at this time, it was the racist attitudes that coloured immigration legislation and their understanding of their place in this society. However, it is important to stress that this was not always the perception of all refugee and minority groups. For example, Rouse describes the situation for Anguilillan migrants in California and notes that:

While, to me, it seemed obvious that they were victims of racism, ethnic prejudice and other kinds of discriminatory treatment, they rarely spoke in these terms, even when I prompted them to do so. (Rouse 1995b: 371).

This concurs with my own experience with refugees in Scotland. Although those who participated in my research had been forced, by their circumstances, to be categorised as refugees and were then consequently stereotyped with the derogatory labels of 'bogus' and 'economic', this was not understood by them to be racist. However my analysis takes a much broader approach, as refugees are defined as a 'problem' by government, and as Gilroy (1987) observes, people described as a 'problem' are at the core of racism today.

Racism does not move tidily and unchanged through time and history, and cannot be separated from issues such as ethnicity and nationalism (see chapter three), but the use of 'race' as an analytical concept is problematic. A full discussion of racism is beyond the scope of this thesis, and so I will only briefly highlight aspects of
racism that are particularly pertinent to the structural constraints that impinge upon the position of refugees during their first few years in this country. An overview of theories of race can be crudely divided into two camps and although any recourse to biological racism is no longer valid, the emphasis given to other factors is in some dispute. Banton (1966) recognises the reality of everyone belonging to a race, nationality, colour or ethnic group and he suggests that 'race relations' can therefore be identified as the subjective meaning attached to difference. This view is supported by Bah (1993) who recognises that while some differences may be seen as biological, cultural racism is also predicated on the subtext of innate difference (1993: 11). But others, such as Miles (1993b) and Gilroy (1987), would argue against the 'reality' of race as representing something inherently different. They argue that race has the effect of actually legitimising, perpetuating and supporting such difference, when racism is actually mediated by and through other structures and social relations. Miles argues that racism is not entirely constructed or dependent upon immigration:

The racist imagination can be made to do its work not only with a real population as its subject (but transmuted through signification into an Other), but also with an absent, wholly imagined, subject (transmuted through signification into a 'really existing' Other) (Miles 1993b: 14).

This understanding of racism as directed at an imagined subject immediately brings to mind the imagined quality of belonging to a nation as outlined by Anderson (1991). Indeed Miles (1993b) argues that English nationalism is
particularly dependent on, and constructed by, an idea of 'race', with the result that English nationalism encapsulates racism. It is therefore hardly surprising that the two issues become entangled when discussing the 'problem' of rising numbers of refugees coming to Britain, and this will be discussed more fully in chapter three.

It is now recognised that throughout the world today huge numbers of people are constantly on the move. They may be workers moving backwards and forwards between work and family; workers with families following the demands of the global economy, or they may be those who have been forced to relocate because of environmental, economical or political pressures. There would seem to be a general acceptance that people migrate ultimately to improve their economical well-being, and whilst this in itself may appear unproblematical, it does promote confusion when attempting to draw a clear line of definition between who is a migrant and who is a refugee. This confusion has been recognised by Richmond who acknowledges that the economic conditions in sending countries may be so harsh that migration becomes the only resort, therefore making it as coercive as political or religious persecution, or displacement caused by the ravages of war (1988: 11). In a later book Richmond (1994) elaborates on the considerable variations of 'reactive migration' and presents twenty five categories delineating a comprehensive typology of situations that outline the major determinants involved. However, although there are considerable problems surrounding the definition of refugees, I cannot agree with Lee (1969:
who states that migration can be defined with no restriction placed upon permanent or semi-permanent change of residence, the distance of the move, or the voluntary or involuntary nature of the act. To take this approach denies the complexity of migration and the diversity of refugees.

Anthropology of refugees

In an article discussing anthropology and refugees Harrell-Bond and Voutira (1992) outline the conceptual confusion surrounding the perception of displacement in which refugees are seen as both villains and as an undifferentiated mass. Although the perception of refugees as an undifferentiated mass is one that was highlighted by Harrell-Bond in 1986, it is still on the agenda for refugee studies. In an attempt to counteract the stereotypes and the categorisation of refugees, Harrell-Bond and Voutira conclude that anthropologists have a role to play as cultural brokers and indeed this has been the case as anthropologists have concentrated on particular groups living in refugee camps scattered around the globe. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that until recently there were few anthropological studies of refugees outwith a development context. As already mentioned, the most influential work of that genre is Harrell-Bond’s study of aid organisations working with Ugandan refugees in South Sudan. Although this study inevitably concentrates on refugees in camps, and the development issues raised by the sudden movement of thousands of people, it also raises questions about the attitudes and perceptions of the aid agencies and the aura of dependency that is placed upon refugees.
Harrell-Bond advocates that refugees should be involved in decisions regarding the most suitable solution to their forced migration. Such participation will not only ensure that they have the necessities such as food and shelter, but will prevent prolonged dependence by recognising individual agency and independence. She also tackles the tricky issue of the portrayal of refugees by the aid agencies in their quest to gather funds for emergency relief, a portrayal that relies on the very sentiments of dependency that she is attempting to dismantle. Camino and Krufeld (1994) restate these issues of (mis)perception and (mis)understanding almost ten years later by emphasising the perception of refugees as 'more alike than different' and as 'victims', whose ethnicity and national identity are conveniently merged for expediency (1994: xiii).

In a very personal study of Greek Cypriot refugees, Loizos (1981) counters any perception of refugees as 'more alike than different' by a poignant portrayal of the initial incomprehension felt by his friends and relatives as they are forced to move from their homes to another part of the island when Turkey invaded Cyprus. Loizos had completed anthropological fieldwork in this area some years earlier, and his return at this time provides a cruel comparison with life before the invasion. His often painful and evocative account highlights the problematic status of refugee for those now defined, which produced resentment in the Greek villagers as it slowly came to signify not only a drastic and semi-permanent change in their lives, but also in their status. As one villager recalled:
They call us ‘refugees’ as if we were gypsies. I’ve lost God knows how many thousand pounds’ worth of property, and, in a village which has fifty apple trees to its name, they label me ‘refugee’! (Loizos 1981: 121).

Even within his family Loizos is faced with different degrees of loss and vulnerability and he comes to the conclusion that whereas they may all be refugees, they were not refugees in the same sense: “One has lost her only home, the other lost the home she had grown up in, but she had a second home in Nicosia.” (ibid: 124 - original emphasis). This study provides an invaluable record of the way in which a community, and the individuals in that community, experience displacement and loss as it is happening, and it chronicles the emotional suffering, hardship and fight for survival faced by them all.

The ‘two centre’ approach advocated by Watson for the study of migrant communities is also prominent in the collection of essays edited by Daniel and Knudsen (1995) which brings together a multidisciplinary view on refugee issues with contributions by several anthropologists. The comparative nature of the studies is evidenced by the movement of the anthropologist between, for example, Southeast Asian refugee camps and Asian refugees now living in Norway (Knudsen 1995) and refugee camps in India and the Tamil refugees now living in the UK (Daniel 1995). It is a disparate collection of essays ostensibly grouped around the breakdown of trust; “The refugee mistrusts and is mistrusted” (Daniel and Knudsen 1995:
1), a premise that is disputed in the volume by Voutira and Harrell-Bond as an invalid methodological tool in the analysis of human social relations, particularly as it relates to the study of refugees (ibid: 207). The difficulty of using 'trust' in this way is evidenced by a strong feeling that many of the essays have been squeezed and manipulated, by their authors, into this paradigm. The ambiguous and indeterminable nature of 'trust' is mentioned by several authors, in particular Peteet who states that trust, for Palestinians, is not axiomatic - it is a multilayered sentiment and relationship (ibid: 169). However, what this volume does highlight is the experience of 'newness' of the refugee situation (for the individuals concerned) and the often contradictory cultural strategies that have to be adapted for survival. The 'two centre' approach gives valuable insights into the process of refugeeness and highlights the often 'bleak personal world' that some refugees are forced to inhabit (Turner 1995: 56) throughout their lengthy emotional and physical journey to safety.

In the introduction to another recently published edited volume on refugees (Camino and Krufeld 1994) the observation is made that it is only recently that anthropologists have come to view this as a major focus of study, and the methodologies employed therefore reflect the eclectic nature of anthropological approaches to the study of refugees. This book places emphasis upon providing 'a broader understanding' (Camino and Krufeld 1994: x) of cultural change in terms of identity and gender and looks towards an understanding of the modification, creation and recreation of culture that is
precipitated by the increasing numbers of those who are forcefully relocated. The process of ethnic identity formation for refugees is recognised as complex as they experience upheaval, not only in their countries of origin, but also while seeking asylum, in detention camps, and in response to the diaspora itself. Although the editors are dismissive about the 'older' concepts of traditional culture, assimilation and acculturation, there are still echoes of the concerns voiced by Harrell-Bond: "Essential to the task of constructing valid portrayals of refugees is the careful elucidation of erroneous and dysfunctional assumptions commonly made about refugees" (Camino and Krufeld 1992: xiii). The emphasis in this book is upon expressing what it is to be a Cambodian, a Vietnamese, or a Laotian in a new country when the usual determinants of gender identity may have been uprooted as a consequence of forced relocation. This approach allows the authors to stress the integration of a refugee identity with gender identity in a valuable and important move away from the previous predilection for an ungendered ethnic analysis.

As with the anthropological studies of minority migrant groups, studies on refugees recently arrived from camps to the United States usually revolve around issues of ethnicity and adaptation, yet, as Gold (1992) argues, refugees do not necessarily arrive with an understanding of themselves as a minority or as part of an ethnic group, or immediately have access to already established groups. Gold offers a fascinating comparison between Soviet Jews and Vietnamese refugees now living in California. The Soviet Jews moved from the Soviet Union
to California with an already established sense of
themselves as a minority, while the Vietnamese (apart
from the ethnic Chinese) did not, resulting in a curious
inversion of expectations regarding their 'organisation'
in the United States. For example the Soviet Jews did
not rapidly organise upon arrival in the US and seldom
developed formal collective activities, while the
Vietnamese were active entrepreneurs but segmented (ibid:
231). Gold's analysis also highlights the schisms and
fragmentation of both groups and the rapid
transformations of power and control that occur within
the communities. However, now that both groups have been
in the US for fifteen years, Gold surmises that there
remain high levels of localised social solidarity based
on the intimate collectivities of family, social network,
regional origins, profession, religion, education and
common ethnicity, which limit collectivism on a larger
scale (ibid: 229). This ethnography represents eight
years of fieldwork with Gold working in various settings
to facilitate his access to the refugee population, and
he concludes by suggesting that ethnic consciousness
appears to be growing as refugees experience greater
independent contact with the dominant culture (having now
moved away from 'resettlement' agencies and other state
organisations) demonstrating in turn some movement
towards broader unification in the future.

Gold's ethnography compares the lives of the Vietnamese
and Soviet refugee communities with those of other
immigrants and consequently highlights not only the
difference between the ethnic identities so formed, but
also the differences in the relationship with the
institutions of state that are responsible for minority groups. For, unlike immigrants, refugees are immediately placed in the role of 'client' with resettlement agencies and other organisations, which initially determines their patterns of unification and mobilisation (1992: 227). Because these are, as yet, new communities the emphasis is upon their often unsteady relationship with others in their group and the host society, which vividly illustrates the fluidity and rapid change that characterises their lives during these often turbulent years. This book goes some way to dismantling the (mis)perceptions towards refugees by clearly outlining the structural constraints under which refugees initially have to live and it begins to suggest how individual refugees may, without the networks and support of others from their country, adjust and integrate into their new situation. Gold's analysis is therefore close to that of Talai (1989) in that they are both addressing the maintenance and growth of an ethnic identity despite the various schisms and allegiances that permeate such groups. Both ethnographies, however, are based in western contexts where the ability to draw together those who share an ethnic identity is facilitated by their minority status and the availability of communication and travel networks, and most importantly, by the large numbers of refugees concerned. The scattered and fragmented nature of the Armenians in London and the Vietnamese and Soviet Jews in California would therefore appear to present a 'baseline' for my own analysis, yet the connection of these groups with their various organisations, allows them the opportunity to meet and share a sense of their ethnicity, not of their category.
I have consequently found a greater empathy with research done by Malkki (1995) in Tanzania with those Hutu refugees living in the local township who respond to their categorisation as refugee on equal terms with that of their ethnic identity; by denial.

Malkki’s ethnography stands out because she is able to make a direct comparison between Hutu refugees living in camps, and those who are living in the local Tanzanian town. This is a fascinating account of how the physical location of the refugees produces contrasting, and sometimes antagonistic, views of themselves as refugees and Hutus. Malkki describes the mythico-history that is formulated in the camps which binds the group together and strengthens their identity as both Hutus and refugees, which is often in strong opposition to not only their Tanzanian neighbours, but to other Hutus living in the local township. The camp refugees appear to thrive on the idea of their identity as ‘pure’, and consequently place great emphasis upon repeating and reformulating a history that will unite and sustain them. Hutus in the township however, would appear to utilise many of the strategies used by refugees in Scotland in that their aim is to integrate, or at least appear unobtrusive and invisible, and consequently to divert attention away from their particular status as refugees and their ethnic identity as Hutus. For the Hutus in the local township this manipulation and denial of their ethnicity is relatively easy as they speak the language and do not look substantially different from their Tanzanian hosts, but the choice of promoting invisibility and actively denying their ethnic identity, is an aspect of
refugeeness which is only now receiving attention. Malkki's study will be discussed more fully in chapter seven, but it signifies here a substantial shift in the analysis and understanding of refugee issues.

The understanding of refugee issues is further expanded by Gilad's study of refugees in Newfoundland (1990). Unlike other studies which have concentrated on a particular ethnic group of refugees Gilad addresses the categorisation and diversity of refugees who arrive on this island and she examines the situations from which they fled. Gilad groups together the refugees as either victims of active persecution - including religious targets - or victims of civil strife and those she describes as refugee ideologues (ibid: 25-52). Her emphasis is upon the particular situations in the countries from which the refugees have fled, the process of their flight and the structures which control their arrival in Newfoundland. For example she places great emphasis upon the 'push' factors that precipitated flight, seeing them as having important implications for the self perception of those she interviewed (ibid: 25). Gilad also avoids the usual issues of immigrant experience i.e. family, gender and ethnic identity stressing instead the local, national, and international context of the refugee journey in order to understand the particular socio-political process that relates these individual refugee experiences to an overall structure. To present this 'overall structure' she also interviews many different organisations and government officials who have responsibility for, and direct contact with, refugees. Gilad's interviews with refugees poignantly
illustrate the long process that can be involved in 'becoming' a refugee, including the time spent in border villages or refugee camps, as many people had been forced to move several times before reaching Newfoundland. Gander airport is a fuelling stop for many transatlantic flights and has therefore become a particular oasis for those who wish to enter Canada or head towards the USA, and Gilad documents how, shortly after completing her fieldwork, most of the families she had interviewed had already moved to the Canadian mainland.

These ethnographies indicate a considerable theoretical and analytical shift from those studies which concentrated on geographically bounded and nationally or ethnically determined minority groups to those which now attempt to understand the individuals and structures which inform our multi ethnic communities of today. The apparent determined isolation of those such as the Chinese restauranteurs described by Watson, and the self sufficiency and culturally exclusive nature of the Pakistani biraderi network (Anwar 1979), represent the theoretical niche in which anthropologists were working at that time. The value of these studies was the insight they gave to the form and movement of the cultural values employed by the group in question and the creativity and change that was ever present, but Clifford suggests they may have also have obscured as much as they revealed (1994: 303). Barth's (1969) emphasis on boundary maintenance highlighted the malleability and vulnerability of ethnic identity, but did not encourage a wider discourse on the complexity of relationships with those on and beyond those boundaries. For example racism
and discrimination were rarely discussed unless briefly mentioned as part of the reason for the preponderance of business ownership among minority groups, and discussion on the symbolic maintenance of ethnic boundaries did not address issues of disenfranchisement, marginality or powerlessness. I have some sympathy with Banks' statement that ethnicity may be no more than an analytical tool that is located firmly in the observer's head (1996: 186), because it can present an exaggeration of difference that provides an ethnographic counterweight to claims of homogeneity. However, Knight (1994) offers a critique of the 'anthropology of locality' as advocated by Cohen's which he sees as transferring the reification of the national to that of the local (1994: 216). I would suggest that such reification has, in the past, also been placed on the ethnic identity of minority groups which has inadvertently led to an essentialism that has fixed them in time and place. Although the cultural differences described in the ethnographies above are significant, they now need to be recognised as structurally influenced as well as symbolically indicated.

It is interesting to note that most of the recent innovative work on refugees as individuals within a structure has come from the United States and Canada's although some UK anthropologists are also addressing these issues for minority groups as the volume edited by Westwood and Bachu (1988) indicates. The contributors concentrate on the working relations that characterise

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2Gilad (1990), Gold (1992), Camino and Krufeld (1994)
the lives of black and minority women, taking into account the structural influences of class, gender and race. The accounts given by the women, are then used to construct both the detail and the parameters in which minority cultures and lives can be understood (ibid: 13).

Another significant feature of recent refugee ethnographies is the difficulty of physically locating those who you wish to research. Malkki (1995) highlights the contrast between researching a community fixed in time and place, such as the Hutus residing in the Kigoma Refugee Camp, and the problems of identifying and communicating with those who wish to remain anonymous and invisible (those Hutu refugees living in the local township). Those such as Gold and Gilad were able to use the structures of government organisations to contact refugees, but such contact was, for the refugees, invariably compulsory - at least for an initial period - and could not be relied upon for future communication (as evidenced by Gilad's remark that before the end of her fieldwork many of those interviewed had already left Newfoundland).

Not only has the geography of anthropological research had to expand beyond the confines of a bounded unit - be that an inner city area, village or a refugee camp - to that of dispersed individuals, but the methods of investigation have also had to change accordingly. The collection of narratives and life stories has therefore emerged as the primary research method supplanting that of a more generalised participant observation. However, the ability and apparent willingness of the refugees in
Gilad's ethnography to tell of torture and flight is nonetheless surprising given the paucity of this information in my own study. This may be because of the particular experience of refugees arriving in Newfoundland having to frequently tell and retell the reasons for seeking asylum as their claims have been regularly scrutinised both in the camps and throughout the Canadian immigration procedure. Only one of the refugees I interviewed had moved to Scotland via a refugee camp (all the others had travelled directly from their homes), and I believe this is an important factor in the hesitancy and lack of information given to me regarding the situation surrounding their flight. For the refugees who participated in my research there has therefore been no 'rehearsal' to facilitate the 'putting into words' of their experiences, and consequently there is no 'performance' of a narrative of flight. Asylum seekers in the UK are asked to complete a written Political Asylum Questionnaire, which may be completed by them alone, therefore their 'stories' often remain hidden until they may be called for an interview with the Home Office.

A study of the changing emphasis of analysis also needs to include a consideration of the globalisation of economical and political concerns and the spatial arenas in which these are now enacted. As suggested by Richmond (1994: 51) it is no longer possible to treat 'refugee' movements as completely independent of the state of the global economy, yet their particular position vis à vis political and spatial territorialisation also needs to be addressed. Studies of diaspora and transnationalism now
highlight ways in which the experiences of refugees and migrants challenge our previous conflation of geographic space and social identity. Recent literature on transnationalism (Rouse 1995, Chavez 1991, 1994, Gupta 1992, Clifford 1994, and Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 1994) describes the ability, desire, and pragmatic reality of individuals and groups retaining strong links with more than one country's political system or socio-economic structure. As indicated by Basch et al (1994) this is not a new phenomena, but has been an integral part of American and European history during the last two centuries with recent substantial changes in the understanding of transnationalism reflecting an increased and more pervasive type of migrant experience (ibid: 24). Gupta (1992) also notes that the changing global configuration of postcoloniality and late capitalism have resulted in the repartitioning and reinscription of space, with profound implications for the discursive construction of nationalism (see chapter three).

Connecting such global phenomena with questions of place and identity is consonant with recent moves in anthropological theory that urge us to move beyond 'the field' to see how transnationalism refracts and shapes 'the local' (Gupta 1992: 63), in order to provide a basis on which to examine the notions of inclusion and exclusion that simultaneously exist within the space and control of nationalist ideologies. To come to terms with the experience and consciousness of transnationalism and transmigrancy therefore involves new conceptualisations and a new analytical framework (Basch et al 1994: 4). An
essential element of transnationalism is the mutiplicity of involvements that transmigrants' sustain in both home and host societies (ibid. 7); transnationalism being the process by which transmigrants link economic, social, political, religious and familial relationships between two or more locations.

However in opposition to (or expansion of?) this idea, Chavez (1994) acknowledges the ability and reality of undocumented migrants now living in the US to retain links with their 'home' country and yet, even without official immigration status, they feel themselves to be part of the local community (ibid. 68). However, although the various links and connections that forge and sustain multiple relationships between the migrant and their 'home' country does inform the experience of refugees and exiles, it does not always address the specificity of the refugee situation. For example, refugees are sometimes unable to maintain any communication with their 'home' country, but are nonetheless emotionally tied to it, often with an intensity that would overwhelm any other consideration of economic or political connection. It is also the case (as will be discussed in detail in chapter six), that newly arrived refugees in Britain are initially denied a secure position, vis à vis immigration controls from which to maintain, or re-establish contacts with their countries of origin as they are structurally placed in limbo, sometimes for several years. To present an analysis of refugee experience using a transnational framework does therefore recognise the fluidity and diversity of relationships between individuals and the
various countries with which they are involved, but such an analysis also appears to rely upon established empirical connections which are often outside the refugee experience. When Gilad (1990) discusses the arrival of newly arrived refugees in Newfoundland she notes that:

To gain knowledge about the new surroundings, to know how to act, how to cope, what to ask and what to expect in the future, is to be able to have a semblance of control over one's life (Gilad 1990: 92).

To be part of two or more nations requires at least a 'semblance of control' which can only be attained by those who feel secure in their particular relationship with the countries concerned. This security is, however, denied to newly arrived refugees in the UK who are constrained by the legislative structures that may, for several years, only offer them temporary and discretionary permission to stay while they are, at the same time, estranged from their 'home' country.

Clifford (1994) also acknowledges that minority discourses can no longer be reduced to epiphenomena of the nation-state or of global capitalism, and he suggests that 'diasporic language' may provide a more expansive and critical analysis. Under this rubric he includes terms such as border, travel, creolization, transculturation, hybridity, diaspora, and immigrant, refugee, guest-worker, exile community and ethnic community which he describes as characterising the contact zones of nations, cultures and regions' (ibid: 303). However, he also accepts that these are an 'unruly
crowd' of terms which jostle and converse in an effort to encapsulate the separation and entanglement of living here and remembering and desiring another place. This 'unruly crowd' of diasporic articulations are however, necessary tools with which to highlight the uncertainties, comparisons and contrasts that shape and form the lives of millions of people throughout the world today.

Conclusion
Different approaches over the last two decades have highlighted a change in perspective from the study of the geographical and ethnic boundaries of minority groups to that of a wider discourse involving considerations of the socio-economic and political aspects of race, migrancy, minority, gender and ethnicity. Some of the titles of books discussed give an illuminating indication of this journey: from Shaw's 'A Pakistani Community in Britain via Werbner's 'The Migration Process' we move to the more expansive 'Entreprising Women' by Westood and Bachu which offers a critique of accounts in which ethnic and cultural elements were abstracted from the whole structure of relations of which they were a part. "Nations Unbound" by Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc represents a further move in which they aim to provide a conceptual framework in which both individuals and their 'transnationalism' can be located.

The titles of those books concentrating on refugee issues tell a similar story beginning with the historical 'The Unwanted' (Marrus) which reflects the view of refugees as passive victims of circumstance, followed by Harrell-
Bonds Imposing Aid which highlights the tensions and relations of power in 'giving' and 'receiving' and the misunderstanding and misrepresentation of the refugee position to the edited volume entitled Reconstructing Lives, Recapturing Meaning by Camino and Krufeld which develops the interplay between cultural, ethnic and gender constructions of refugee identity.

The entanglement, innovation and preponderance of concepts that are used to describe the processes of migration and identity therefore reflect the complexities and paradoxes of cultural practices and subjectivities that are now the focus of any anthropological study of people who are 'constructing homes away from homes' (Clifford 1994: 302). However, as recognised by Basch et al (1994) although terms such as transnational and transmigrant are not used by those so described, they are nonetheless useful and important analytical devices that attempt to articulate the nature of daily life for a large number of individuals living lives that are 'stretched' across national borders (ibid. 4).

It is this juxtaposition of individual lives with the ideas and concepts of transnationalism that places anthropologists in a unique position of providing both an empirical base and theoretical understanding of those who defy any limited characterisations of the communities they identify with. Ethnographic studies of those, such as refugees, can therefore utilise such an approach to locate personal displacement and categorisation within the structures that inform both nationalist and transnationalist discourses. However, in the following
chapter the unfolding structure of Fortress Europe signals the political and social restrictions that will inevitably limit the crossing of these borders for anybody other than Europeans.
CHAPTER TWO

'UNPRECEDENTED CO-OPERATION'

Introduction

Although there have always been people in 'refugee like' situations, the concept of refugee as it is applied in Europe today is a relatively new construct. It is now widely acknowledged that today's forced migrations are unique, and represent a departure from the perception of refugee problems in recent history and a contrast with earlier migrations (Gordenker 1987: 49). This is in part due to the increased availability of air travel and other transport, and the frequency of wars and disasters taking place around the world, which have substantially changed the profile and movement patterns of refugees today.

Because the social, political and personal upheavals of current refugee crises are now recognised to lie beyond the capacity of any one government to deal with, they have subsequently become embroiled within a generalised debate on immigration matters that has resulted in a polarisation of attitudes towards those who belong to Europe and those who don't. Recent economic recessions in Europe have prompted substantial restrictions on all types of immigration, resulting in the blurring of boundaries between immigrants and asylum seekers as governments move towards a reduction in the numbers of those allowed to
enter and live here. However, not only have legislation and attitudes hardened towards the acceptance of 'non Europeans' in Europe, but increasing xenophobia is actually placing the right to asylum in Europe under threat. Although it is now generally accepted that refugee movements can no longer be perceived as temporary phenomena for which piecemeal ad hoc arrangements will suffice, there is little sign that governments are moving towards a co-ordinated strategy of refugee reception. There has however, been a steady stream of restrictive legislation as European countries have joined together to form alliances and treaties in order to address the 'refugee problem'. But what exactly is this refugee problem?

In governmental terms the 'problem' is the increasing number of people seeking asylum, and the perceived 'weakness' of such claims (Frelick 1992: 12), which is perceived as placing an unacceptable economic burden on many European countries. I will argue, however, that the problem is not one of preventing thousands of 'bogus refugees' trying to gain entry to Europe, but of a more generalised European xenophobia that rests not only upon the definition of a refugee, but on the political implications of who decides. Legislation and attitudes would now appear to reflect the desire to restrict the numbers of non-Europeans entering Europe (regardless of whether they are migrants, workers or asylum seekers), and this calls into question both the understanding and definition of 'refugee' as used in Europe today.
For those who seek asylum today, the geographical and social boundaries of Europe increasingly represent ever moving goal posts. The joining together of certain countries (under agreements such as Schengen, Maastricht, TREVI, Dublin, etc.), has resulted in a confusing mixture of inclusion and exclusion, that has done little to produce a coherent European asylum strategy. The consequence of this, for asylum seekers, is a complicated mire of legislation which often places considerable restrictions on the possibility of entering certain European countries to make a claim for asylum. However, although the problem of asylum seekers today may be 'unique', the attitudes and legislation that immediately predate current policies need to be examined in order to highlight the present situation in Europe.

Definitions and Interpretations
The first 'universal' attempt to define a refugee was in the 1951 Geneva Convention on Human Rights, and although it was modified in 1967, it remains the baseline from which all present definitions of a refugee stem. However, the numbers of refugees, the countries they are travelling from and the regions of the world that are affected by their movement have all multiplied considerably in the last two decades, and interpretations of the definition can be seen to reflect the recent economic, political and humanitarian issues that now influence government and intergovernmental policies.
Until the 1950’s Europe’s overriding concern was for the repatriation or resettlement of the refugees and displaced people from the Second World War. Salomon (1989) describes how refugee policies today have been influenced by the formation of the United Nations, the development of the Cold War and the decolonialisation of the post-war period. He places particular emphasis upon the influence of the Cold War upon the changes in refugee policy at this time by suggesting that they can be interpreted ‘in large measure’ in terms of East-West differences which, regarding Displaced Persons, revolved around issues of repatriation (supported by the East), as opposed to resettlement (supported by the West), consequently heightening East-West opposition (Salomon 1989: 257). Cole also recognises the effects of the Cold War on refugee policy, but sees it in terms of the assumption in the West that refugee movement was a good thing, because it gave the opportunity to politically attack an adversary, since refugee movement was a product of political persecution (Cole 1989: 338). This legacy has repercussions both for European and non European refugees today.

For example, both Isodore from former Yugoslavia (Chapter 5) and Yelena from Russia (Chapter 6) came from what had been known as ‘the Eastern bloc’, ostensibly moving from one European country to another, and until recently they would have qualified for various relief and resettlement programmes without having to undergo the scrutiny to which
many other groups were subjected (Salomon 1991: 14). However, their very different experiences of claiming asylum in Britain reflect the recent changes in attitude which are illustrated by the increasing restrictions on all asylum claims. Yelena's experience can be understood as representing the legacy of the Cold War in that she applied for asylum in 1990 and was given the Convention status of refugee after waiting for less than a year. Isodore however, arrived here in 1992 and is still waiting for the Home Office to make a decision regarding his claim for asylum. Although there have been special procedures for refugees from the former Yugoslavia (including quota agreements by several European governments), their situation has nonetheless highlighted Europe's hesitancy in dealing effectively with large numbers of people seeking refuge. For example in 1992 the estimated numbers of displaced people from former Yugoslavia in Germany were 220,000, in Switzerland 70,000, Austria 57,000 and Sweden (60,000)\(^1\), yet even though these numbers were increasing, the quotas for Bosnian ex-detainees, agreed by European governments in 1993 (excluding dependants) were for Austria - 200, Sweden - 150, Switzerland - 1500 and Germany (with the highest total) - 2000 (Guardian 7/5/93).

The reluctance and unwillingness of European governments to commit themselves to sharing and alleviating the refugee problem in former Yugoslavia is indicative of the closing of doors and minds to all those who seek asylum in Europe.

\(^1\)In Salt Singleton and Hogarth (1994: 214)
Isodore faces increasing scrutiny regarding his claim for asylum, and, when a decision is eventually made, he is less likely to receive Convention refugee status - more likely receiving instead a refusal or the temporary, discretionary status of Exceptional Leave to Remain. However, prior to the 1960's, International refugee agencies had been acting essentially pragmatically to resettle and repatriate the millions of displaced people from the second world war, and they therefore had a limited lifespan. The International Refugee Organisation (IRO) was set up in 1947 with a Charter due to expire in 1950, which was followed by the foundation of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR)'. The problem of displaced people and refugees was seen as temporary and the UNHCR was thought to need only three years to ensure the legal protection of refugees and to find permanent solutions regarding resettlement or repatriation. But, given the enormity of the task and further refugee movements, it was subsequently made permanent. In 1951 the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees provided a definition of a refugee, and stipulated the rights and standards of treatment to which a refugee was entitled. However, the 1951 definition applied only to refugees affected by events occurring prior to 1951 in Europe, thus excluding the rest of the world's refugees from its protection mandate. Although the geographic limit and cut-off date were subsequently dropped in the 1967 Protocol,

\[\text{See Gordenker (1987) and Salomon (1991)}\]
the implicit Western and Eurocentric bias remained untouched (Frelick 1992: 12).

Today 107 countries' are signatories to Article 1 of the 1951 Geneva Convention on Human Rights and the 1967 Protocol relating to the State of Refugees' and, although conditions have changed since this definition was adopted, it remains the single most widely used definition of refugee status today; in it a refugee is defined as a person who:

Owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality or membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such a fear, unwilling, to avail himself of the protection of that country.

There are many debates and discussions surrounding this definition and I will highlight only some of the general issues and concerns which have a direct impact upon the lives of refugees in Europe today.

The understanding of a 'well-founded fear' and of 'persecution' are crucial elements in deciding who can be a refugee, and the interpretation of these concepts is entirely in the hands of the governments concerned. A 'well-founded' fear may have psychological, legal, political or administrative dimensions, and although it

3See Appendix I
4See Appendix II for full text of definition and 1967 Protocol
relates to the nature of the refugee's perception of danger this may or may not be shared by those who have to decide on asylum (Gordenker 1987). Isodore feared that if he remained in Croatia he would be forcefully made to join the Croatian army, and he left because the volatile political situation led him to believe that recriminations for not joining the army would be severe. However, the subjectivity of a 'well founded fear' is often countered (or tempered) by the need to prove that it is directly emanating from personal persecution by the government towards the individual, therefore excluding the well founded fear of those who are fleeing from generalised conditions of insecurity, civil war and oppression:

Neither war nor the most devastating natural disaster, nor fear of such events, nor manifest personal harm will do. The refugee must show that the fear he or she has is for persecution directed personally towards him or her. (Refugee Council 1991: 6)

It is interesting to note the contradiction between the rather narrow Western government interpretation of who is a refugee, and the media and public usage of the term which described, as refugees, those fleeing from ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and those made homeless by the earthquake in Kobe, Japan. Both these examples involved individuals who had not crossed national borders and who were not 'individually' persecuted, and therefore who would not have been defined as 'refugees' under the 1951 Convention. There is therefore a huge gulf between this general use of the word and the legislation and attitudes that now promote
a categorisation of refugees as generally 'bogus' and 'economic' (see chapter three for a discussion of this in the British context). The specificity of individual persecution therefore allows governments to reinforce the idea that persons who leave their country for political reasons are refugees, while those who move for any other reason are migrants. However, whilst the majority of migrants would not consider themselves, or be considered by others, as refugees (and vice versa), there is a 'grey area' where it becomes impossible to make a distinction on either moral or political grounds:

Economic conditions in sending countries may be so harsh that migration becomes the only resort. In this case it may be as coercive a situation as political or religious persecution, or displacement by the ravages of war. (Richmond 1988: 111)

Eades (1987) concurs with this when he suggests that the main determinants of the rate of migration from a given area are patterns of economic transformation and/or the actions of the state, and he suggests that as both are constantly changing it becomes impossible to draw a neat legislative line between the two.

Although the Convention definition can be described as 'universal' every measure taken by governments to assist refugees has to be financed, on a voluntary basis, by the individual governments concerned. It is therefore the state's own business just how much it makes available to refugees in material assistance and administrative and
legal aid, although international law seeks to define the minimum that should be offered (Loescher 1989: 9). As economic recessions abound in Europe, the means of supporting large numbers of refugees becomes a central issue in government policies, and this produces varying strategies among European countries.

A more liberal and, I would argue, realistic appraisal of who should be considered as a refugee today was put forward in 1969 by the Organisation for African Unity (OAU) in their Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of the Refugee Problem in Africa. To the UN definition they added:

The term 'refugee' shall also apply to every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or in the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country. (in Melander 1990: 144)

Frelick (1992) highlights the 'right to asylum' in the OAU definition when it speaks specifically about the obligation of African states to endeavour to 'receive refugees and to secure the settlement of those refugees'. He further comments that Western governments are under no such obligation and that this is no mere oversight, for when a UN conference was convened in 1977 - with the idea of correcting the problem by drafting an internationally binding convention on the right to asylum - it failed
(Frelick 1992: 15). This illustrates the contradiction apparent in the commitment towards refugees, in that these very same governments had already recognised, in principle, Article 14 (1) of the nonbinding Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states: "Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution".

The distinction between 'refugees', 'bona fide asylum-seekers' and 'economic migrants' therefore rests largely on the attitudes and legislation of the 'host' state, which are subsequently moulded to fit intergovernmental alliances and agreements. This has unfortunately, although predictably, led to the adoption of the lowest common denominator as representing European asylum policies. These definitions are therefore less predicated on the assertion of the humanitarian impulse, than on reasons of state and ethnic solidarity (Cohen 1994: 97), and economic and political interests (King 1993: 191).

However, although most Western governments do interpret the definition narrowly they have initiated legislation to provide for what are generally known as de facto refugees - that is those who do qualify for refuge under the more generalised conditions mentioned in the OAU definition above. But there are two crucial differences between de facto and Convention refugees that highlight the economic implications of extending the definition of refugees in line with that suggested by the OAU. Convention refugees have the right of family reunion, and they are given
permission to remain in a country until they decide to return; both of these 'rights' can entail substantial economic input from the host country. De facto refugees are recognised as needing some sort of protection but this is only granted on a discretionary and temporary basis (the government may return them when it decides that the situation has been resolved and they are no longer in danger), and there is no automatic right to family reunion. This therefore allows governments greater economic and social control over de facto refugees than that allowed under the Convention. However, the numbers of both Convention and de facto refugees accepted in Europe is still only a small proportion of the total applications for asylum. For example, in 1991 only 9% of applications in Europe received Convention status, with a further 15-20% expected to receive de facto recognition; less than one third of the total applications received that year (Salt et al 1994: 216).

Given that within Europe the definition of refugee is both ambiguous and generally used as a restriction upon entry and residence, the practicalities of seeking asylum can then become a severe test of perseverance as well as luck, depending on which country you come from and which country you arrive in. An important part of the Convention definition (Article 33) is the non refoulement clause which prohibits governments from: expelling or returning a refugee to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened
on account of his race, religion nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.

However, reaching agreement on where these 'frontiers of territories' are, depends on the criteria used. For example there is a 'safe third country rule' which has long been common practice in many countries, particularly Europe and North America. Application of this rule has no real basis in international law and the Executive Committee of UNHCR has directed that: "Asylum should not be refused solely on the ground that it could be sought from another State"\(^5\), yet countries frequently use it to return asylum seekers to the last 'safe' country that they travelled through before reaching their intended destination. In a growing number of countries, special 'accelerated' or 'admissibility' procedures have been established to facilitate expeditious expulsion of asylum seekers to whom the rule has applied; every month hundreds of people attempting to seek asylum in the European Union countries are summarily refused and then expelled to countries through which they have passed in transit (Amnesty International 1995: 3). Although this is common practise, in 1990 the then twelve member states of the European Union concluded an agreement (The Dublin Convention), which attempted to systematise the procedures among themselves. However although this has not yet been ratified the numbers being expelled are significant; for example, there were 306

\(^5\)UNHCR Excom Conclusion 15, adopted by consensus in 1979 by the governments then participating in the Executive Committee of UNHCR.

The principal difficulty with such a practice is that, without proper safeguards, it carries the risk of asylum seekers being expelled to unsafe third countries where, instead of being admitted to the asylum procedure, they will be returned to the country from which they have fled and where they face persecution. The inconsistent judgement as to which country may be considered 'safe' has recently been highlighted by Britain, Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland using a 'white list' which contains six countries from which asylum applications are 'likely to be refused'; these countries are Bulgaria, Poland, Romania, India, Pakistan and Ghana. This 'white list' therefore represents a further assault on the non refoulement clause and also suggests that the key criterion for a country to be included in the white list is not its human rights record but the volume of asylum claims it generates (Guardian 8/2/96). This accusation can be evidenced by the figures of asylum applications received by the UK Government which show that between Jan-Jun (1996) 1,815 Nigerians applied for asylum with Indian applications at 1,185, and Pakistani applications at 975. These three countries represent the three highest totals of asylum applications received by the British Government and with

'A leaked Foreign Office memorandum confirms the intention of the British Government to add to this list Ethiopia, Tanzania and Nigeria (Amnesty International 1996: 29)
India and Pakistan already on the 'white list', it seems inevitable that Nigeria will soon follow.

What the 'safe third country' rule, and the 'white list' indicate is that regardless of the safeguards contained within the UN Convention definition of a refugee some governments are openly and actively pursuing procedures that at best limit, and at worse prevent, many individual asylum seekers from exercising their right to claim asylum. This is both an explicit and implicit manipulation of what it is to be recognised as a refugee in many countries in Europe today. I do not intend to outline the asylum procedures for any country other than Britain, which I shall do in the following chapter. Here my aim is to emphasise the variability and malleability of the definition of refugee, to recognise the various legislative strategies that some countries in 'Europe' operate today, and the consequences of this for those who wish to seek asylum. However, just as the definition of a refugee was problematic, so is any attempt to define Europe which inevitably leads to processes of incorporation for some through increasing convergence, but marginalisation for others that would perhaps like to join (King 1993: 184) The crucial question has therefore moved from 'who is a refugee?' to 'where is Europe?'

**Defining Europe**

Marginality means being on the edge or periphery of something, but when examining the situation of refugees in
Europe today the question is 'where is the edge?' Spatially Europe grows and contracts depending on the criteria used to describe it. At the same time social boundaries are being drawn tighter and tighter around individual nation-states as national identities are threatened by increasing interconnection, and fears of hybridity and globalisation. The tension between geographical expansion and social introspection is an uncomfortable one for nation states in Europe as they attempt to reconcile the inevitability of co-operation and interconnection (and a subsequent fracturing of their power base), with the need for a cohesive national identity. As Europe steadily moves towards greater political and economic union the structural and social significance of the relationships within and between member states can have far reaching implications for those, such as asylum seekers, who want to exercise their rights under the UN Convention, to enter and live in Europe.

A discussion of European policy including a detailed examination of all agreements and treaties as relating to asylum seekers, is beyond the scope of this thesis. Rather I shall begin with an examination of the political margins of Europe in order to highlight the geographical movement of the periphery, and the effect this has on those who wish to seek asylum before outlining some of the main themes contained in joint legislative initiatives as they pertain to asylum seekers.
There appears to be a concerted effort to push the margins of an expanding Europe further and further eastwards, which in turn promotes an increasingly narrow view, emanating from the centre, of who is, and who is not, allowed to enter and stay. Geographical margins are therefore no longer confined to national borders, but represent a hierarchy of filters ultimately protecting the centre. These outer margins of Europe may be politically vulnerable and malleable, and part of some treaties while excluded from others, but they are also part of a structure in which the tensions between social and geographical space collide. Economic relationships necessarily cross borders with ease and encouragement, moving between and beyond political and social boundaries. However, the physical presence of people entering, crossing or staying in Europe is not encouraged, and restrictions on such movement will inevitably affect not just asylum seekers and immigrants, but travellers as well (Close 1995: 13).

Europe has no one boundary line neatly encapsulating a finite number of countries. Instead, especially in matters relating to asylum seeking and immigration control, it can be represented by several consortiums of countries under various treaties and agreements. The Schengen group consists of Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Italy, Spain and Portugal; for the European Union and TREVI Group add Britain, Denmark, Eire and Greece, while the Dublin Convention includes all EU members except Denmark. However, also coming under the ‘European’
rubric is EFTA (European Free Trade Association), EEC (European Economic Community) and indeterminable descriptions such as 'Western', 'Eastern', 'inner and outer' Europe. Although many of these descriptions coincide, when it comes to controlling the outer borders, 'Europe' cannot be easily localised, and the refugee 'problem' cannot be simplified in terms of movement from Eastern Europe to Western Europe, or from the 'south' to the 'north'. For example, it is conceivable that the more Western Europe pursues its exclusionist policy, as opposed to more positive policies regarding the likely situation of Eastern Europe refugees, the more those refugees will be trapped within Central Europe (King 1993: 193).

It is in this mire of incorporation, convergence and marginalisation that many asylum seekers attempt to enter 'Europe' to seek refuge from persecution. In order to chart the emergence of these various alliances, and the consequences for asylum seekers, it will be necessary to begin with a brief outline of recent migration trends.

People Movements
A comprehensive analysis of Europe's International Migrants was undertaken by Salt, Singleton and Hogarth in 1994, and will form the basis of my analysis here. With widespread economic recession in Europe during the 1970's, the active recruitment of vast numbers of semi- and un-skilled workers largely ceased. The traditional receiving countries for migrant labour no longer needed large numbers of un-skilled
and semi-skilled workers, and immigration policies began to reflect this, resulting in immigration being greatly reduced and often being possible only through family reunion (ibid. 182). However, around the mid-1980's several converging trends combined to suggest a turning point had been reached in European international migration. After years of entrenchment, foreign labour recruitment in Western Europe began to recover (ibid. 160). Many countries, including the UK, saw a rise in labour immigration from within the EC, and there was also a rise in highly skilled international immigrant workers coming to Western Europe (ibid. 159). At the same time traditional sources of emigration in Mediterranean Europe have emerged as a major focus of immigration, making it impossible to identify one particular European trend. One result of these restrictions on semi and un-skilled migrant workers in countries such as Germany, France and the UK, is that the new immigrants are now either skilled workers, or relatives of people who are already settled, while countries who were previously sources of emigration, such as Greece and Italy, are now net importers of labour.

The desire of semi-skilled and unskilled workers to migrate to the west, would however, seem to have been unaffected by the lengthy economic recessions experienced by most European countries, or the immigration restrictions now imposed. The restrictions on legal immigration have therefore not prevented people moving from country to country, but have instead led to an increase in the number
of illegal immigrants, especially in those countries with considerable land boundaries (ibid. 185).

The categories of migrant and asylum seeker cannot be easily distinguished from each other, and whereas the view may be taken that migration recognises a permanent or semi permanent change of residence, with no restriction upon whether the move is voluntary or involuntary (Lee 1969: 285), it is more usual to concede that harsh economic conditions in sending countries may be as coercive as political or religious persecution (Richmond 1988: 285). Before the late 1970's, refugees entering Europe were mainly from the Eastern Bloc. After World War II large numbers of refugees crossed Europe, from the East to the West, and appealed to the international community for assistance. For the states of Western Europe, the value of the Iron Curtain was not only that it served as a symbol of the freedom supposedly 'inherent' in capitalist societies, it also ensured that only very limited numbers of the victims of totalitarianism were able to flee to 'freedom':

Those who did make the perilous journey however, were accorded the political and legal status of refugee and, in this guise, they played an important role in the ideological struggle to legitimate capitalism (Rystaad quoted in Miles 1993a: 461)

With the Iron Curtain now gone there was initial concern that there would be a surge of refugees coming to the West from the former Soviet Union, but the 1990-91 forecasts of millions of Soviet refugees storming into eastern Europe,
driven by hunger and increasing anarchy at home, have not yet taken place (Miles 1993a: 467). However, this situation has now changed considerably as the conflict in former Yugoslavia has produced large numbers of European refugees, and the continuing conflicts throughout the world result in many people seeking refuge in Western Europe today. The relative ease of travel by air, rail and road has not only changed the profile of those arriving in Europe, but has forced the realisation that such movements can no longer be viewed as temporary, or controlled by one nation-state. The resulting change in the refugee profile has led to the expression 'new refugees', who are distinct from 'traditional' refugees in that they are culturally and ethnically different from their hosts; they come from less developed countries, at a different stage of development from that of the host, and they are likely to lack kin and potential support groups in their country of resettlement (Stein in Joly and Cohen 1989: 6).

Consequently not only has the profile of refugees changed but the numbers of asylum seekers in Europe has increased dramatically over the last decade. In 1983 Europe had about 70,000 applications for asylum, which rose to a staggering 658,7000 in 1992 (Salt, Singleton and Hogarth 1994). However, it is important to place these figures in some sort of context to counter the semi-hysteria displayed by governments and media towards, what in reality is 0.17 per cent of the European population (Joly and Cohen 1989: 8). Many other countries have a much higher ratio of
refugees to non refugee population, such as Malawi where one in ten of the population is a refugee, and Thailand where the ratio is one to one hundred and fifteen', and yet it is western governments who are reacting so vociferously to the refugee 'problem'. It can be argued that because of a reduction in aid and social investment programmes to the 'third world', some countries have been unable to respond effectively to the devastation wrought by famine, war and drought which then results in substantial refugee flows to the West (Joly and Cohen 1989: 6) But the attention of governments is focused upon the reduction of foreigners entering Europe, and they therefore turned from immigration, which was now largely controlled, towards implementing stricter asylum procedures.

In the early 1980's there was little harmonisation of policies between countries, but regular informal dialogue indicated that the 'problem' of increasing numbers of foreigners entering to work and seek refuge from persecution, was one shared by all states in Western Europe. Whereas previously such legislation had been decided and implemented by individual nation-states, it was now recognised that joint initiatives were necessary to control the influx of those seeking asylum within the European community, and so, by the late 1980's, 'asylum seeking' had become the major preoccupation of Western

7 No European country was listed in the top 24 countries (World Refugee Survey 1992: 34)
European governments (Salt, Singleton and Hogarth 1993: 209).

There are, however, some European countries who have seen the numbers of asylum seekers declining since the late 1980's, and others who were previously migration sending countries who are now net importers of labour, and it is this imbalance which is producing varying national and inter-governmental strategies to deal with immigration and the refugee 'problem'. Most decision-making, at European level, takes place in meetings between ministers of the interior and foreign affairs at inter-governmental level and, on the basis of advice from officials representing the twelve EC states, in the EC ad hoc Working Group on Immigration (Salt, Singleton and Hogarth 1994: 220). However, although the result of such co-operation and harmonisation has been uneven, it has generally resulted in increasingly stringent attitudes towards immigration and asylum as each of the '12' states positioned itself for a significant clampdown on immigration from non-EU countries, a stance that was correctly characterised as building 'Fortress Europe' (Cohen 1994: 181). The most outstanding discrepancies in the procedures for the admission of refugees are those affecting the structures set up to manage refugee settlement and reception. From highly structured reception centres and controlled integration in Denmark (Kormendi 1989: 40-53), to the deterrent strategies of restricted movement and a reduction in their entitlement to social assistance in Germany (Cohen 1994: 172), the
reception of asylum seekers in Europe, remains extremely variable.

What needs to be stressed at this point is that the decisions that are made, in response to the increase in numbers entering Western Europe, are about control, limitation and regulation:

How could foreign workers be persuaded to return home? How could those destined to stay be integrated? How could illegal immigration be prevented? What could be done about rising numbers of spontaneous asylum applications? (Collinson 1993: 110).

The concern of governments was ultimately about the number of foreigners crossing their borders, rather than about who those foreigners were and why they wanted to come to Europe. Asylum seekers, migrant workers and illegal immigrants previously considered as separate and discrete groups in both structural and social terms, were now being lumped together under increasingly restrictive European legislation. Foucault (1961) makes an interesting observation regarding the speed at which legislation incarcerating vagabonds in the seventeenth century spread across Europe, and his analysis emphasises that there must have been a ‘unity which justified its urgency’ (1961:45). The unity and urgency on matters of immigration are today proving equally potent ‘formulas of exclusion’ for asylum seekers attempting to enter Europe.
As the distinction between immigrants and asylum seekers became blurred in the consciousness of governments so it did in the minds of some immigrants who turned to the asylum procedure as a way of entering countries that had restrictive immigration rules. This was also prompted by the inability of governments to deal with asylum claims quickly and efficiently resulting in a considerable backlog of claims, which allowed people to remain in the country while their claim for asylum was being processed. Many European countries can take many months, and even years, to process a claim for asylum, and so the temptation and scope for abuse of these systems is considerable. The ability of governments to deal not only with the applications for asylum, but for the consequences of the majority of claims being rejected is also proving difficult and time consuming, resulting in relatively few deportations. As Salt, Singleton and Hogarth point out:

Studies have shown that only about 20% of those found not to be genuine asylees leave. Clearly, therefore, asylum seeking has proved to be a very good way of circumventing normal immigration procedures (1994: 216).

The reasons for so few people leaving once their claim for asylum has been rejected are many and complicated, but they should be seen as a justification to make asylum procedures fairer and quicker, not as a reason to restrict and control entry for the increasing numbers of people fleeing from persecution.
France, Germany and the UK have recently made a concerted effort to tighten asylum legislation and clamp down on illegal immigrants. In 1989 Germany began to tighten up its previously liberal asylum procedures, with Chancellor Kohl regularly speaking of 'the misuse of asylum' (Cohen 1994: 171), and in France the success of Jean-Marie Le Pen paved the way for the legislation introduced by Interior Minister Charles Pasqua which will place severe restrictions and controls on immigrants and asylum seekers by allowing random identity checks, and expulsions without recourse to the judiciary (Close 1995: 126). The UK introduced its Immigration and Asylum Act in July 1993, considerably tightening up immigration and asylum procedures and causing concern among human rights activists as Britain already summarily expels dozens of asylum seekers because they have not travelled here directly from the country where they claim to be in fear of their lives (Close 1995: 133); and Sweden introduced restrictions on the number of asylum seekers from the former Yugoslavia. The overall result of such legislation is that fewer and fewer people are allowed to enter and claim asylum in Europe, whether or not they have a valid claim to do so. It has therefore been suggested that Fortress Europe will increasingly look like a sealed, makeshift transit area beyond the main terminals where the fate of bewildered asylum-seekers and refugees from the Third World is swiftly decided before they are flown back home (Gow in Close 1995: 135). The responsibility to provide those fleeing persecution with refuge (after due consideration of their claim), and not
return them to the countries from which they have fled, would therefore appear to have been superseded by a xenophobic desire to prevent as many people as possible from entering the inner circle of Europe.

As co-operation and management of borders between European countries evolves, Governments appear to be compensating for the loss of power and control over their own borders by placing greater emphasis on the uniqueness of their respective nationalities, and by turning asylum seekers into the new scapegoats of Europe. This xenophobia has led to a rise in fascism and neo Nazi groups whose activities in Europe hit the international headlines in 1991-1993 when hostels for asylum seekers were bombed and burned in Germany, and when France revived the notion of a 10% 'threshold of tolerance' towards immigrants and asylum seekers (Cohen 1994: 169-180). Even in Sweden 'the famously tolerant land', there has been an upsurge of neo Nazi activity amongst the young, with racism, or at any rate a defiant brand of nationalism, carving itself a prominent niche in youth culture (Observer, 21/1/1996). European governments have bowed, largely passively, to internal right-wing pressures by drawing an impermeable barrier around themselves - detaining and deporting asylum seekers and attempting to prevent refugees reaching European borders, offloading immigration controls to airline, shipping agents, and travel companies: "The European community looks more and more like a gilded cage with the Ministers of the Interior bracing and painting the bars"
(Joly and Cohen 1989: 16). The right wing influence on policy is considerable, and although the more barbarous and horrific incidents are condemned by governments they are unable to ignore the increasing public support for right wing 'solutions' to the immigration/asylum 'problem'.

The pressure on governments to 'do' something about immigration and asylum therefore prompted intergovernmental alliances and co-operation, the most important of which is the Schengen Agreement. However, as wryly noted by Joly and Cohen (1989) it is surprising to discover that considering the very different political traditions of European governments a uniform policy regarding refugees could have emerged and been shaped outside the clamour of public forum in bodies such as Schengen (ibid. 15). The Schengen Agreement is central to European co-operation on immigration and asylum, because of its emphasis on the 'harmonisation' of control or, as described by Hathaway, on its 'burden shifting arrangements' (1995: 292). However it is viewed, the Schengen Treaty is already in operation with freedom of movement between Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Italy, Spain and Portugal, and is considered as a potential model for the EC generally (King 1993: 185). However, it should be remembered that Schengen began as an instrument intended to facilitate international transport, but has now become an instrument designed mainly to control terrorism and immigration by means of strict external border controls, a common visa policy, carriers'
sanctions and the exchange of information (Fernhout 1993: 493).

Central to the Schengen Implementation Agreement and the draft EC-convention on the crossing of external borders is the common policy on visas and the strengthened control of external frontiers (Fernhout 1993: 495). Given this emphasis on border controls and governmental concern over the increasing number of asylum seekers, it is pertinent to note that the UNHRC, and other non-governmental agencies involved in refugee issues, have not been permitted to participate in the formulation of the Schengen Agreement. (Rudge 1989: 214) This omission may help to explain the bizarre reasoning behind the emphasis placed upon many asylum seekers having to obtain visa's before entering Europe. To expect people fleeing persecution and war to dutifully attend their local (or not so local) Embassy to request permission to leave the country is difficult to comprehend, not least because of the considerable risks involved. Frelick gives an illuminating anecdote that illustrates the incomprehension of such a policy:

A joke was circulated among asylum practitioners a few years back about their clients being required to 'bring a note from your dictator'. It is becoming harder to see where satire ends and reality begins. (1992: 15)

Many European governments have also introduced fines for airlines and shipping companies who transport asylum seekers without the 'necessary' documentation consequently
denying their right to seek asylum in countries that operate a common visa policy. The responsibility for their inclusion or exclusion from Europe may therefore often be in the hands of airline employees or determined by the attitude and legislation of the country of first entry, who will be operating on conditions laid down by all the other signatories, yet with no agreement on a unified law and regulation (Cohen 1994: 184). These procedures restricting entry to Europe directly contravenes Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The situation is further exacerbated because countries continue to be entitled to apply their own interpretation of the definition of refugee which means that if asylum is refused by the country of first entry the chance of having an asylum claim accepted in another country operating a different definition is impossible. The UK is not a signatory to Schengen, and is therefore resisting the relaxation of border controls within the Schengen group, but it has signed the Dublin Convention which aims to prevent asylum seekers from making more than one application for asylum within those countries subscribing to the Dublin Convention. With all these various treaties and conventions the ultimate aim is to cut down on the numbers of non EU citizens living and moving within its borders, but there will be many others who will find themselves on the newly formed margins of Europe:

Some non EU nationals, no doubt, will be protected by wealth and privilege... others will find their fate being increasingly linked to that of 'third country nationals' from outside the EU. As the drawbridge of
Fortress Europe is pulled up some residents, it appears, may be tossed in the moat. (Cohen 1994: 182).

These moving margins therefore facilitate a filtering process that restricts access to the centre of Europe. The bi-lateral and multi-lateral border agreements such as those between the Nordic group (see Appendix) and the intergovernmental (but non-EC accountable) policy making bodies, like the TREVI Group of Ministers of the Interior, also have far reaching consequences for those wishing to move across or into a particular country. As already mentioned these filtering strategies not only prevent or restrict asylum seekers and prospective immigrants from moving into Europe, but also operate on various levels of EC membership and citizenship, placing some restrictions on movement on all but a privileged few. King (1993 quoting Cohen) graphically describes the situation as a process of 'herding and sorting', but as recognised by Close there are also those outside the target populations who will be affected, including essentially non-white travellers who will suffer both quantitatively and qualitatively irrespective of their nationality, national citizenship and nation-state (1995: 135).

The borders of 'Europe' can therefore be viewed as geographically and politically fragmented depending upon the criteria used, but individual nation-states are nevertheless still able to promote particular ideas of inclusion and exclusion. Certain political relationships between neighbouring or member states have therefore
become ever more diffused and they adopt a pragmatic fluidity for their continued existence. However, this pragmatic fluidity does not mean that the margins become redundant, rather that they become a more temporary space with neither national boundaries, or the people within them, able to be fixed or permanent. For example, the Austrian government recently erected and staffed a string of new border posts, which, in effect, shifted the Berlin Wall eastwards, and it is now validating part of its case for EU entry by how fiercely it can police the border (Cohen 1994: 181).

It is a sad reflection on these treaties and agreements that Austria feels it must prove that it can 'fiercely police its borders' to enter the 'gilded cage' or 'fortress' of European unity. But what is even sadder is that within the 'gilded cage' individual countries are becoming increasingly xenophobic in an effort to promote and control a specific national identity.

I have suggested that although different European margins are regularly being formed and consolidated in order to maintain and expand the notion of a 'fortress Europe' these boundaries are malleable and vulnerable and ultimately outwith the direct control of the individual nation-states. Although it was expected that with such co-operation internal boundaries would subsequently be relaxed this has not been the case with the UK, and, more recently France,
who are insisting upon a reassertion of their own geographical boundary controls.

Individual nation-states would therefore appear to be becoming increasingly protective regarding their margins, which are having to be restated and enforced on not only a geographical level, but on a societal one as well. This in turn leads to humanitarian and ethical considerations surrounding the issue of refugees often being subsumed under national and economic considerations. Not only is the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the definition of a refugee being undermined by the recent legislative moves within Europe, but the repercussions of such attitudes and legislation for refugees are manifest:

It is safe to surmise that the majority of asylum seekers in the world today never have the opportunity to file a claim. Visa restrictions and airline sanctions ensure that many would-be refugees never succeed in escaping the homelands they seek to flee....Others are turned away by border guards, such as about 6,000 undocumented persons who sought to enter Austria from Hungary in 1991, who never had an opportunity to file asylum claims (Frelick 1992: 17).

Many commentators have expressed their concern for what is generally understood to be an attack on the very principle of asylum as more and more legislation is enacted to curtail, and ultimately to prevent, asylum seekers coming to Europe. An evaluation of the member organisations of the European Consultation on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) highlights these concerns by suggesting that the nature and

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scale of the asylum question in Europe is seriously misunderstood and badly represented and consequently the response of some governments is inappropriate and excessive in terms of restriction and deterrent policies. They also suggest that there is a very real risk of the abandonment of humanitarian values and commitments established over recent decades, and the inward looking preoccupation's of many European states are blocking action urgently needed for the long-term resolution of problems leading to refugee movements (in Rudge 1989: 212).

However, not only are European countries stopping asylum seekers from crossing their borders, but there is an increasing demand upon the UNHCR to do something in the countries of origin to actively prevent asylum seekers from leaving in the first place. Two recent examples illustrate an attempt to put this policy into action; the first involves the declaration of a 'safe haven' for the Kurds in Northern Iraq, and the second the 'protected area' of Srebenicia in former Yugoslavia. But, as passionately argued by Hathaway, whatever movement is made towards more effectively ending or attenuating human rights abuse in-country this should never be at the expense of the one truly autonomous remedy - flight when circumstances become unbearable (1995: 293). Forcing prospective asylum seekers to stay where they are under the auspices of 'the right to remain' has already been used as a pretext for turning asylum seekers away from European borders therefore becoming (in some situations), a mechanism for keeping the
abused in a situation in which the abuse can continue (Hathaway 1995: 293).

Conclusion

The moral imperative of the right to seek asylum is one that is under threat in Europe today. The tension between individual national identity and sovereignty, and the need for economic and political union is vividly illustrated in the attitudes and legislation affecting the ability of refugees to enter and live within Europe. The UN Convention definition of a refugee is being flouted and manipulated in order to placate the insecurities of nation states in their relationships with each other, resulting in the increasingly xenophobic attitudes that now inform legislative initiatives for immigration control. The conclusions of the ECRE (above) are a damming indictment of the situation in Europe today, and reflect the apparent consensus of opinion regarding the ultimate aim of eventually preventing any refugees actually seeking asylum outwith their country of origin. Yet in a joint initiative (funded by the European Commission's Development Education Fund), the British Refugee Council and the Danish Refugee Council have produced a Refugee Charter For Europe which (among other things) calls on the abolition of visas for asylum seekers and a cessation of fines on airlines in order to protect the right of asylum seekers to seek asylum in Europe.

\^See Appendix III
However, the ‘problem’ of (and for) asylum seekers is not only malleable European borders, or the restrictions contained in the joint initiatives on asylum legislation, but is located in the attitudes of individual countries to their refugee populations. These attitudes reflect recent moves to reaffirm and strengthen national identities which have in turn been used (and abused) in the promotion of xenophobia and nationalism. In the following chapter I will discuss the emergence of refugees as the perceived Other in British immigration legislation.
CHAPTER THREE

NOT JUST 'OTHER' BUT 'BOGUS'.

Introduction
In the previous chapter tensions were identified between the economic and political need for European countries to join together, and the perceived imperative of individual nation-states retaining control over their borders and sovereignty. During this century, as a way of asserting national control over its borders, progressively restrictive immigration legislation has been enacted to prevent certain groups, at certain times, from entering and living in the UK. However, the challenge of controlling people moving across national borders has continued, resulting in the recent inclusion of refugees in British immigration legislation. This shift of policy, from that directed at specific national or cultural groups to that directed at the exclusion of refugees, suggests a significant move from the construction of the Other in terms of cultural racism, to that of the Other as a purely imaginary concept mediated by and through other structures and social relations (Miles 1993). In this chapter the focus therefore moves from the challenge of transnationalism towards the authority of the nation-state in controlling its borders, to the particular role of English political rhetoric in determining how refugees have become our Other, and why they are labelled 'bogus'.

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Understandings of nationhood, and control over national boundaries, have been possible through a definition of self and Other based on ethnicity language, sentiment, ideology and political and cultural movements. But this ideology of nationhood cannot be sustained if substantial numbers of people change geographic locations, identities and defy limited characterisations of which communities they belong to (Chavez 1994: 55). Population mobility therefore appears to have prompted a process of national reconstruction which is threatening, and sometimes negating, the more traditional national narratives (Hutchinson and Smith 1994: 12); consequently changing the construction of the Other in nationalist discourse.

Rouse (1995) discusses the move from nationalism (or multi-nationalism) to that of transnationalism as representing a growing crisis in the influence and authority of the nation-state. As people and their commitments continue to cross national borders, nation-states are becoming increasingly challenged by the economical, social, political and cultural realities of transnationalism. In recognition of the diversity of those who may be living within a national territory it would appear that, in nationalist discourse, notions of commonality can more easily be directed at those who can be excluded from, rather than included in, the spatial and social domain of a nation-state. It is therefore ironic that in response to the 'relative nature' of transnational identities, nationalist discourse should now appear to be using the cross cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-national category of 'refugee' to determine the
Other, to counteract the diversity of those within its own borders.

**Refugees as 'our' Other**

During the course of this century immigration legislation has generally been debated in terms of defining the unwelcome Other in two ways; either as an invading force consuming an inordinate amount of jobs and houses, or as having inherently bad characteristics. In 1902, as a forerunner to the 1905 Aliens Act, an amendment to the Queens Speech demanded immediate immigration control by stating:

> Not a day passes but English families are ruthlessly turned out to make room for foreign invaders. Out they go to make room for Rumanians, Russians, and Poles......It is only a matter of time before the population becomes entirely foreign ...Among the thousands who came here there is a considerable proportion of bad characters and the competition with home industries extends to burglary and other cognate crimes. I should have thought we had enough criminals of our own ..... (in Foot 1965: 88).

However, although 1905 was the beginning of immigration control, it did not include any restriction upon those who were seeking asylum. Instead restrictions were aimed at preventing the unemployment and housing problems associated with groups of immigrants congregating in areas such as the East End of London (Marrus 1985: 37). Although concerns over the immigrant population were largely voiced in moral tones they were nonetheless directed towards certain groups, in particular towards those such as Indians, Africans, Jews, and Gypsies, rather than towards refugees - although there were some
Jews and large numbers of Russian revolutionaries living in London at this time (ibid. 37). However, the problems associated with immigration were more likely to have been solved by a degree of social planning and social reform (Foot 1965: 102), rather than immigration control. But any further debates and concerns over this Act were largely swept aside by the events in Europe:

Suddenly, on 5 August 1914, all the liberal arguments, all the 'traditions of asylum', all the high-blown talk about the free haven of Britain, all the long, tumultuous opposition of Liberals and socialists to strict immigration control were washed away by a single Act passed through all its parliamentary stages on a single day. (Foot 1965: 101)

The result was the Aliens Restriction Act of 1914 which was hastily enacted in response to the onslaught of war and fear of spies. The main thrust of this Act was the power it gave to immigration officials to refuse entry and deport whosoever they considered as 'dangerous'. This Act was hurriedly passed in order to prevent those such as spies from easily entering Britain during a time of war, but just as previous immigration policy had been implicitly directed at particular groups, so the 1914 Act represented an 'almost hysterical level of Germanophobia' (Cohen 1994: 44). Although this Act was hurriedly passed in one day without debate, this was on the understanding that such enormous and arbitrary powers would only last in wartime. But it was nonetheless continued and expanded by the Aliens Restriction (Amendment) Act of 1919. An ominous precedent had been set, and these
'wartime' measures would remain, relatively unchanged, for the next fifty years.

The essence of the 1919 Act is that an Alien can be refused entry into the United Kingdom at the discretion of an immigration officer; that in general, he or she shall not be allowed into this country for more than three months unless he hold a Ministry of Labour permit for work or has visible means of financial support: and that any alien can be deported either by the courts or by the Home Secretary when 'he deems it conducive to the public good' (Foot 1965: 107). The 1919 Act did however, allow for those fearing persecution to enter and remain in the country - although this was not an 'automatic right' (Marrus 1985: 37) and while Miles (1993: 147) argues that there was implicit racism towards Jewish refugees arriving from Eastern Europe, xenophobia towards refugees as a category, rather than that aimed at specific groups, was not an issue at this time. Although an appeals procedure was eventually introduced in 1956, the general atmosphere surrounding the continued maintenance of this Act was of xenophobia and the curtailment of civil rights towards immigrants.

Foot (1965) suggests that the attitudes of the Government towards those fleeing persecution as a result of the Second World War was 'crucially different' from those who were fleeing from persecution during the First World War, in that they could not be regarded as potential spies because they were fleeing from a regime that Britain was fighting (ibid. 115). But if the indication is that they received any better treatment because of this, then this
was generally mistaken. For example Poles, who had served under British operational command and who were considered as political refugees, were only 'grudgingly' offered resettlement and employment:

The reluctance to extend hospitality to former allies might seem ungrateful given the Poles' fine war record under British command. It certainly seems illogical given the needs of the British economy at the time. (Sword 1988: 235)

However, Poles were not the only people during this time who, regardless of their position as refugees, were treated 'inhospitably': "Refugees, one might argue, always arrive at wrong time" (Marrus 1985: 135): Sword (1998) points out that it is illogical to refuse entry to allies at a time when labour shortages are acute, and Marrus (1985) notes that even when numbers of refugees arriving in Britain were small (as in the first wave of refugees from Nazism) any indication of 'official hospitality' for the politically oppressed was dismissed:

For the Home Office, hearing the appeals of refugees in 1933, policy flowed along neat utilitarian channels. "We do not ... admit that there is a 'right to asylum'." explained an official dryly, but when we have to decide whether a particular political refugee is to be given admission to this country, we have to base our decision ... on whether it is in the public interest that he be admitted". (Marrus 1985: 150)

Although the 'right to asylum' would become enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (adopted and proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1948), and later specified in the UN Convention
definition of a refugee (agreed in 1951), the need to consider 'the public interest' in compiling immigration legislation connects the reasoning behind the 1919 Act with the justifications offered for recent legislative policies.

The legacy of the world wars on the definition and subsequent political manipulations of the concept refugee has been discussed in chapter 2; here I want to highlight the long-term influence of the 1919 Act which, although not originally aimed at refugees, contained the blueprint for increasing restrictive practices for widening categories of people. The provisions in the 1919 Act were therefore subsequently supplemented and expanded by the British Nationality Act of 1948, and the Immigration Acts of 1962, 1968 and 1971.

In the aftermath of the world wars, when the majority of refugees and displaced people had been repatriated, attention moved towards the increasing number of British Commonwealth citizens who were coming to Britain for employment. Because of the need for labour, and the status of these immigrants as 'British subjects' this influx was not controlled under the 1919 Act. Initially, after some apprehension on the part of trade unionists, the degree of hostility and bitterness throughout the factories and mills into which the immigrants were absorbed was remarkably small (Foot 1965: 127). However opposition to the immigrants was building up 'outside the factory' with accommodation and overcrowding causing concern and resentment among local residents, but government remained relatively aloof: "In
that crucial decade of Commonwealth immigration, the Conservative Government had no programme for the immigrants who came." (Foot 1965: 132). However, under the terms of the 1948 British Nationality Act, certain categories of British subjects (primarily those signified as 'coloured'), began to have their rights of entry into Britain withdrawn (Miles 1993: 133). These restrictions were then increased in the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act when the government initiated policies of control and deportation to 'regulate the number of coloured immigrants coming in, and assure equal rights to those already here' (Hiro 1992: 210).

With the introduction of legislation from 1962 onwards, the focus of political attention shifted away from the level of migration per se towards the size and colour of the population of New Commonwealth origin (Miles 1993: 129-34). This position was then consolidated in the 1965 Race Relations Act which signalled the convergence of the two major political parties on the issues of immigration control and 'race'. Although attention was on legislation to control the entry of Commonwealth citizens, post 1945 migration from the Caribbean and Indian subcontinent was not the only migration to have occurred at this time. To varying degrees, European migrations have also been racialised:1 that is to say, the migrant population has been signified as a distinct category of human being by reference to real or alleged biological characteristics, a signification that has usually been accompanied by an explicit or implicit use

1In particular Jews and the Irish
of the discourse of 'race' (Miles 1993: 135). However, for many people 'race' was still equated firmly with 'colour' and when Enoch Powell expressed the 'mass anxiety' towards coloured immigration in his 1968 speech, the debate moved away from 'constructive measures to improve race relations to the old premise of immigration restrictions' (Hiro 1992: 249). Although accusations of playing the 'race card' have been recently levelled at government, the validity of 'race' (as directed at real or alleged biological characteristics) in political debates would now appear to be limited. For example, charges of 'racism' are being successfully deflected by the government (and supportive newspapers) who consistently point out that it is not only 'coloured' refugees who have been targeted, but all refugees: "It doesn't matter whether they're white or black, Britain can't keep an open-door policy" (Daily Star 21/11/95). However, the inability of the opposition parties to denounce these policies as racist, without being perceived as being 'soft' on controlling immigration, has nonetheless prolonged the political expediency of such an approach: 'the only way to destroy the race card is to show, without the smallest ambiguity that it cannot win' (Guardian 12/12/95).

However, although the 1962 Act was passed 'to make temporary provision for controlling the immigration into the UK of certain Commonwealth citizens', it was renewed every year until the 1971 Act superseded it, and the deportation provisions were extended (Moore and Wallace 1975: 2). During this time the number of refugees arriving had been relatively small and usually European.
(Cels 1989: 190), and so, in spite of the 1968 and 1971 Immigration Acts, in 1972 the Conservative Government reacted to the crisis in Uganda by stating that it had a 'moral and legal duty' to accept those British Asians who were being expelled (Moore and Wallace 1975: 29). However, this situation proved not as generous as it at first appeared when a quota voucher scheme was subsequently imposed to strictly regulate the numbers of Ugandan Asian refugees allowed into Britain. This procedure was to be repeated when the British Government also agreed to a quota of Chilean refugees in 1973 and Vietnamese refugees in 1979, leading Cels (1989) to suggest that refugees coming to Britain from outside Europe were entering in an 'orderly manner' and under strict control. Certainly the profile of refugees arriving in Europe prior to the 1980s was generally European, and although elements of 'cultural racism' were directed at specific groups during this time, it was the subsequent increase in large numbers of individual Third World nationals arriving to seek refuge here in the 1980s which became the watershed for future refugee policy.

It is interesting to note that the terminology used throughout this century to justify restricting immigration, revolved around perception of this small island being constantly threatened by 'floods' and 'invasions' of those designated as Other. But this statement has continually relied on a fear that is both pervasive and misplaced. For example, the need to address the problem of an 'invasion' of foreigners is based on the assumption that Britain is overcrowded, but emigration from Britain has historically been higher than
immigration (Layton-Henry 1992: 273). The distribution of the foreign population throughout Europe has also remained relatively stable, with only 3.2% of the British population designated as foreigners in 1991\(^2\) (Salt, Singleton and Hogarth 1994: 175). Likewise although the restriction of employment vouchers was the main criterion of control contained in the 1962 Immigration Act the question which presented itself to some politicians reading the Bill was: why keep people out on an employment basis when there are less than enough here for employment purposes at the moment? (Foot 1965: 140). However, even when employment vouchers were eventually withdrawn, and the automatic right of British Commonwealth Citizens to come to the UK had also been curtailed, the notion of 'floods' and 'invasions' of foreigners continued to be promulgated - illustrating an 'irrational hatred of aliens' (Foot 1985: 88). Up until this point, in among the proliferation of immigration restrictions, small numbers of individual and quota refugees had been welcomed (or at least tolerated) in recognition of the 'moral and legal duty of government towards those escaping persecution', but this was to change dramatically when the numbers of those independently seeking asylum began to increase.

Refugees as 'Bogus'

In 1979 Britain received 1,563 requests for asylum rising to 5,444 in 1985 (Cohen 1994: 81). Although there was clear evidence that the number of indisputably genuine refugees world-wide had increased dramatically - and 70%...
of asylum applications in Britain were successful (Cohen 1994: 82) - the rise in numbers of those coming to Britain was nonetheless used as a justification to declare that asylum seekers were now 'economic' migrants and therefore 'bogus'. Although church leaders, and human rights groups such as Amnesty International, immediately questioned the assumption that those who had been deserving political refugees could now be categorised as 'bogus' purely on the basis of a rise in applications for asylum, this was dismissed by the government. With many immigrants now well established, and many having British Citizenship, the possibility of the British government relying on a purely 'coloured' aspect of racism with which to justify their increasingly restrictive immigration strategies was no longer possible and the construction of the 'bogus' refugee was underway.

As with previous immigration legislation, when prospective immigrants were denied employment vouchers and subsequently prevented from travelling, the government began by attempting to prevent refugees from reaching Britain. In 1985 new visa controls were introduced and were initially imposed on nationals from Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh, Ghana, Nigeria and Pakistan with the government repeatedly implementing further visa requirements over the years - resulting in 99 countries being placed on this list by May 1991 (Cohen 1994: 83).

The absurdity of demanding that people fleeing a country should have a passport and visas before being allowed to make their escape to a country of refuge, was matched by the absurdity of the government placing visa controls on countries that were experiencing particular human rights
problems and therefore inevitably generating large numbers of refugees. For example in 1988, 335 Turkish nationals applied for asylum but when the figure rose to 2360 in 1989 (as a result of large numbers of Kurdish people disappearing or being arrested and tortured), the British government immediately implemented visa controls. Visa controls were also instigated for Ugandan nationals in 1991 when, in response to military counter insurgency operations, the numbers applying for asylum rose from 410 in 1988 to 1895 in 1990.

The implementation of visa controls was closely followed by the 1987 Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act which provides for the imposition of a fine (currently £2,000 per passenger) on any transport operator bringing passengers lacking valid travel documents or a valid visa where one is required, therefore ostensibly turning transport operators into 'outreach' immigration workers. However, these measures did not stop refugees coming to the UK, and airline and shipping companies continued to provide an escape route, incurring fines of over £89 million between March 1987 and April 1996 (Amnesty International 1996: 2 fn). The Refugee Council also disputes government claims that false documents automatically equals false claims by clearly stating:

Asylum seekers have been presented as bogus because their travel documents sometimes are...It is precisely the persecuted who are most likely to need to use false documents. The Act simply criminalises without distinction (1991: 13).

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1Amnesty International Report 1994
2Figures in Salt, Singleton and Hogarth (1994: 208)
As both these measures were aimed at preventing refugees coming to Britain the notion of 'bogus' refugee was therefore being introduced by initially referring to those outside the UK. Visa controls, the 1987 Act, and Britain's recognition of fledgling states ⁵ (where 'safe havens' had been created) has therefore resulted in the British government being able to treat victims of civil war, ethnic conflict and political persecution as foreign nationals rather than refugees (Cohen 1994: 98). Though these measures nonetheless represent a substantial onslaught on the 'spirit' of the UN Convention, in retrospect they were merely 'paving the way' for the further decimation of refugee rights in Britain.

The government was also justifying its claims about 'bogus' asylum seekers by highlighting the increase in the numbers of asylum applications made in Britain - thereby ignoring their obligation to offer asylum regardless of the numbers involved. The government was also recognising fewer asylum claims (a process which is entirely in its control). For example, the percentage of refugees awarded Convention status has significantly fallen over the years, with this decrease in awards subsequently fuelling government claims of refugees being 'bogus' and making false claims. In 1982, 59% were awarded Convention status, with this figure falling to 2.57% in 1994, ⁶ but neither an increase in numbers of refugees, or an increase in Home Office refusal rates can be presented as proof that the majority of asylum claims

⁵For example Bosnia, Kurdistan and Croatia
⁶Home Office figures quoted in the Guardian and Scotsman newspapers (1/7/95)
are now likely to be false. Indeed the UNHCR expressed concern that the procedures operated by the Home Office since 1991 (to determine eligibility for Convention status), highlighted some factors perceived as relevant to an asylum claim, while dismissing others. By insisting that all factors should be considered in the evaluation of a claim for asylum, the UNHCR is therefore suggesting that the current low recognition rate reflects the narrowness of the Home Office’s application of the refugee definition, rather than the falseness of claims made. The narrowing of the definition of refugee can also be identified by Britain’s intention to compile a ‘white list’ of ‘safe countries’ from which asylum claims will be ‘unfounded’, which shows disregard for article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the UN Convention on Refugees which states that each case should be treated individually on its own merits.

The ‘numbers game’ is further questioned by Amnesty International (1996) who present a detailed analysis of the human rights problems in many refugee producing countries which clearly coincides with an increase in those nationals seeking asylum in Britain, therefore indicating that there may be some justification for an increase in refugees from those countries at particular times of political unrest. However, in 1991 applications for asylum in the UK reached an all time high with 44,745 claims (Salt, Singleton and Hogarth

As quoted in Amnesty International (1996: 40)
Article 14 states that ‘Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution
Human rights abuses (catalogued by country) can also be found in the Amnesty International Yearly Reports - published by Amnesty International Publications
1994: 208), fuelling a government orchestrated media campaign for a further onslaught on the right to seek asylum. The process of deconstructing the previous 'morally untouchable category' of the 'deserving political refugee' (Cohen 1994: 82) was well underway and would be confirmed and underlined in the 1993 and 1996 Asylum and Immigration Acts.

Throughout the first 6 months of 1991 most newspapers began to make regular reference to the increase in asylum applications, the subsequent fall in those granted asylum, and the perceived abuse of the welfare benefits system. This information began to circulate prior to the announcement by the Home Secretary in July 1991 that new measures were to be introduced to control the numbers entering Britain and claiming asylum: or, as interpreted by the Daily Express to 'stem the rising tide of bogus refugees' (Daily Express 3/7/91). However in an earlier article the Daily Express had carried a 'special investigation' which described the obligation on countries to provide asylum as a 'gaping loophole' in the UN Convention that was being exploited by those 'claiming' political asylum (Daily Express 27/5/91). This article is particularly interesting because it suggests that the UN Convention needs amending - a suggestion that was subsequently given no further attention, presumably because this approach would take the debate outside the jurisdiction of the UK and be vigorously contested on humanitarian grounds. Indeed, a couple of months later, the Daily Express makes no mention of the UN Convention, emphasising instead that asylum seeking was a 'world wide racket of acquiring
residence and citizenship by false pretence' (3/7/91) - a theme in line with government policy and within the British government's legislative control. The tabloid newspapers were then unanimous in their approach, which applauded Britain's 'long and honourable tradition of giving sanctuary to political refugees' whilst warning that 'the privilege must not be abused' (The Sun 3/7/91). Although the broadsheets generally offered a wider debate on the proposed measures by stressing the need for 'efficient fair and clear rules subject to independent appeal' (Independent 3/7/91) and the danger of 'Eurocentric racism' (Guardian 3/7/91) the main thrust of the government's message - that the majority of asylum seekers were 'bogus' and 'economic migrants' - had been introduced well before the actual publishing of the Asylum and Immigration Appeals Bill, and continued throughout the Bill's passage through parliament.

Although the total of asylum applications in 1992 was almost half the total of the previous year (24,605), and has remained relatively steady every since, the rhetoric of 'floods' and 'scroungers' that began in the early 1980s continued unabated - fanned by the seemingly continuous demonization of asylum seekers as 'bogus'. Although the government regularly publicises the increase in the number of those refused asylum there is another way of interpreting this data: "What the refusal rate shows is not an increase in bogus applications, but in bogus rejections" (Guardian 14/11/95). As the

"Published on 21/11/92
For example in the first 6 months of 1996 there were 14,860 asylum claims (Refugee Council figures)
implications of the Asylum and Immigration Bill became known, concern was expressed by the London representative of the UNHCR who declared the new rules as 'tendentious and biased against the applicant' (Guardian 2/11/91). But political opposition was subsequently muted when the shadow Home Secretary offered the government a conditional opportunity to speed the Bill through parliament before a general election, by agreeing to only three changes (Guardian 3/3/92):

It is a poor reflection of the state of British popular opinion that the government’s persistence with the Asylum Bill was not effectively opposed either in the country or in the Commons. It was left to the unelected House of Lords to show some old-fashioned humanitarian concern (Cohen 1994: 96).

Indeed the move by the Labour shadow home Secretary clearly indicates the concern that any perception of the Labour party as 'supporting' asylum seekers, would result in votes lost in the forthcoming general election. Although a wide range of organisations did oppose the Bill, including Amnesty International, the Refugee Council, the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, The Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture, the Children's Legal Centre and many faith groups, the 'numbers' campaign waged by the government nonetheless successfully managed to deconstruct the notion of a deserving political refugee and override any possibility of humanitarian concerns being placed on the political agenda by the House of Lords or anybody else. Amnesty has also suggested that since July 1993 the Home Office has operated an unofficial and undisclosed quota
system, whereby the total number of applicants granted either Convention status or ELR is kept below an arbitrary ceiling of approximately 20% of all decisions made (Amnesty International 1996: 41). The government's apparent determination to continue to justify its position on the basis of the numbers of asylum applications has therefore meant that 'bogus asylum seekers' have consequently become established and accepted, by a large number of politicians and members of the public, as the undeserving and unwanted Others who are attempting to 'flood' and 'invade' Britain.

The importance for the British government of being able to assert its control over refugees is therefore being perceived as a measure of its ability to define the Other in its own terms. This can be illustrated by the specific description of refugees as 'invading' Britain - promoting a sense of urgency upon the government to act quickly against those viewed as unwelcome and unwanted. As the 1914 Act was hurriedly enacted in response to keeping out 'dangerous' individuals during the First World War, the language used in promoting subsequent legislation, and the 1993 Act in particular, is therefore disarmingly similar. Post war immigration legislation has also placed some emphasis upon the perceived continuance and need for a British identity that is stable and reliable, and able to provide its citizens with 'still points in a turning world' (Hall 1991: 22), as by the early 1980's Britain was routinely described in official and unofficial statements as a multiracial, multicultural society (Hiro 1992: 311). This assertion of national identity through the Othering of refugees has
therefore resulted in recent legislation no longer appearing to adhere to the humanitarian imperative. The emphasis on keeping these outsiders outside is now recognised as a strategy to protect British identity and assert British sovereignty at a time when these appear to be under threat by the necessity for greater European cooperation and the realities of transnationalism.

In this shift from the cultural racism of immigration policy, to the imagined Other of the 'bogus' refugee, aspects of defining self and Other can be understood as a device for defining a community of the innocent, and a community of the guilty who are responsible for 'our' predicament:

'They' can be, must be, blamed for all the grievances, uncertainties and disorientations' which so many of us feel after forty years of the most rapid and profound upheavals of human life in recorded history. And who are 'they'? Obviously, and virtually by definition, those who are 'not us' - the strangers who, by their very alienness, are enemies... If the foreigners with their knavish tricks did not exist, it would be necessary to invent them. But at the end of our millennium they rarely have to be invented: they are universally present and recognisable within our cities, as public dangers and agents of pollution. (1990: 174).

By using 'guilty' and 'innocent' instead of 'us' and 'them' Hobsbawm has highlighted what appears to be the underlying strategy of British nationalist rhetoric towards the position of refugees as, first and foremost, guilty of being bogus, undeserving cheats who are tricking innocent Britain out of the money (welfare benefits), jobs and houses which it needs for its real
citizens (Daily Mail 10/6/91 & Daily Express 27/5/91). The sentiments of a 'long and honourable tradition' of Britain giving sanctuary to refugees (The Sun 3/7/91), and 'Britain's traditional sympathy for any refugee' (Times 3/7/91), are often evoked to present an air of innocence (on behalf of the British state) which is then presented as being 'abused' by those seeking asylum in order to further deconstruct the category of the deserving political refugee.

Although it is in the debates surrounding immigration legislation, that the construction of the refugee as the unwelcome and bogus Other has taken place, it is in the experiences of those who participated in this research that such 'demonization' can begin to be understood as a very real and confusing issue.

Being the 'Bogus' Other
In July 1993 the Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act became law. In July 1993 I began my fieldwork. The Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act 1993 was criticised by the Bishops, the Bar Council, the Government sponsored UK Immigration Advisory Service, the Times, Amnesty International, the UN High Commission for Refugees and many others. But it was passed by Parliament relatively unchanged, only to be followed, with somewhat undue haste, by the Social Security (Persons from Abroad) Miscellaneous Amendment Regulations 1996, and the introduction of a new Asylum and Immigration Bill which will be fully debated in Parliament later this year (1996). With this apparent rash of increasingly restrictive legislation it could be argued that British
nationalist sentiment has been successfully mobilised by the concerted effort of the government, to vilify and legislate against refugees with impunity; indeed the 'inevitability' of such measures was publicised long before the Act came into force (Daily Mail 10/6/91).

Although the measures contained within the 1993 and 1996 Acts represent a serious attack on the rights of refugees coming to the UK (and I will describe some of these in detail below), the concerns of those I interviewed were primarily with particular elements of the 1993 Act which fostered an atmosphere of antagonism that directly impinged upon their lives as refugees. Having entered Britain, with some refugees interviewed already living here for three or four years, they were not personally subjected to any of the new procedures, but some of the implications of the Act were of concern to them all. In order to place these concerns in context I will highlight particular aspects of the 1993 Act\(^{12}\) and then illustrate how these impacted upon their understanding of their position as a refugee at this time.

The 1993 Act included the removal of the automatic right of appeal for those refused asylum, the withdrawal of legal aid for advice on asylum and all immigration matters, and denial of housing rights under the homeless provisions of the Housing Act:

Section 3 of the Act provides the power to fingerprint all asylum seekers and their dependants, including children. Asylum seekers who fail to cooperate with the requirements to be fingerprinted

\(^{12}\)See Appendix V for a fuller exposition
can be arrested without a warrant and detained until the fingerprints are taken. The Act does not specify at what age children will be fingerprinted.

Section 4 and 5 and Schedule 1 of the Act modify existing homelessness legislation and reduce local authority responsibilities to homeless asylum seekers. And, although provision to detain asylum seekers at a port of entry was contained in the 1971 Immigration Act, the numbers of asylum seekers held in detention at any one time doubled after July 1993 when new accelerated asylum procedures, established under the 1993 Act came into force.11

Refugees I talked to were shocked by the introduction of compulsory fingerprinting, and the detainment of those seeking asylum. They clearly understood that previously the only people in this country who could be required to be fingerprinted were people who have been charged with a criminal offence. It is not a criminal offence to apply for asylum (JCWI 1992). Many refugees were therefore made to feel like 'criminals' - their 'guilt' being automatically presumed and widely publicised because of the government's continuing emphasis upon the low success rate of those seeking asylum. As the following examples show, even those refugees who had been given permission to stay felt uncomfortable and insecure when the presumption appeared to be that everybody who was a refugee was 'bogus'. Ivan told me he never tells anyone he is a refugee, but when the letter came giving him refugee status he was so relieved that he told a friend who was visiting: "They were shocked, and said that they thought refugees had to have done something wrong to leave their countries. He acted strangely towards me for some months after this." Nasrin had ELR, but was so

11Amnesty International (1994: 2)
concerned about the atmosphere that surrounded refugees, that she would deny she was from Iraq and pretend to be European because she felt that if there was any 'trouble' in her block of flats she, as a refugee, would immediately be blamed. Farhad (also from Iraq) told me he wanted to be honest with people and tell them he was a refugee and that he had permission to stay here (he had ELR), but, on the occasions when he had done this, reactions had been usually hostile: "I don’t like to be dishonest and it’s important for people to understand that I am not here under false pretences, but what else can I do?" Apart from the many instances of refugees keeping their status secret to avoid being perceived as bogus, cheats or criminals, the perceived 'expectation' of their guilt and wickedness also meant that they were often afraid of contacting the police or authorities when they should have done. For example a young Ghanaian couple had been assaulted but would not go to the police because they felt that as they were already 'guilty' of being refugees they would be treated unsympathetically.

The link between refugees and criminals therefore reflects an ominous shift in the attitude of the government and some newspapers towards refugees. As all refugees must now be fingerprinted and many are subjected to increased levels of detention this represents a significant curtailment of the civil rights of refugees in this country. The situation for those in detention is particularly grim as few of the detainees have been told (in writing), the specific reasons for their detention and, unlike criminal remand prisoners, many have no right to seek bail (Amnesty International 1994: 5). Again,
although none of those I interviewed had been detained beyond a few days at the airport, the placing of refugees in detention increased their feelings of vulnerability and insecurity: "If I had been put in prison when I arrived here I would have killed myself - how can this happen?" (Sudanese refugee). Although many refugees were emotionally hurt and confused by the implications of recent legislation regarding their status in society, some of them (in particular those from Middle Eastern countries) were nonetheless generally supportive of government policies. In the introduction I quoted Bibiya empathising with the government perception of Britain becoming 'polluted', and Farhad frequently referred to refugees from Iraq as being 'real political refugees' as opposed to 'those refugees from other countries'. The tension between being a refugee who felt and experienced the stigmatisation attached to that status, yet who also 'sympathised' with the legislation and attitudes that fostered such discrimination may be explained as a reaction against stereotypes and categorisation, or more uncomfortably, as an ironic reminder of the persuasive rhetoric of the 'bogus asylum seeker'.

Ambiguous nationals
Like any category, the term 'refugee' suggests a homogeneity that in reality does not and cannot exist, yet such stereotypical descriptions form the basis from which nationalist imaginings and identities are formed and evaluated. The experiences of refugees as nationals of their 'home' countries, and their experience of becoming a refugee in Britain produces inevitable tensions in their understanding and attitudes towards
both these imagined communities of nationalist sentiments. Some refugees are 'long distance nationalists' (Anderson 1994: 327), who remain politically and emotionally committed to the changes and reforms necessary to facilitate their return 'home'. In particular the Kurdish and Sudanese communities in Scotland provide networks of contacts and communications among those committed to political change, with these refugees seeing their time in Britain as preparation for their return. For example a young refugee told me she was studying computers and business studies so that when she returns to Sudan she will have 'useful skills' with which to help rebuild her country, and although many refugees are hesitant about speaking in public about their situation, often those committed to change will consider doing so. However, there are also those refugees who are ambiguous, disillusioned or confused about both their relationship with their country and their relationship with Britain. The nationalist rhetoric of a secure, homogeneous imagined community (wherever it may be) is one that often evades refugee experience as they attempt to come to terms with the allegiances of their past and find a place for themselves within the British (and Scottish) nationalist structures of the present.

For refugees the idea and experience of community rarely coincides to produce a single sustainable national identity, rather they come together occasionally and produce moments of belonging. Chavez (1994) discusses how the power of imagined communities leads to undocumented Mexicans and Central Americans settling in
the United States because they can imagine themselves as part of the community without necessarily having a profound sense of a shared identity with that community. The tangible aspects of belonging, for both illegal immigrants and refugees, would appear to be immigration status, employment, family (especially the raising of children), social contacts, language and the acquisition of local cultural knowledge. Yet even when few, or even none, of these are present some people will be able to nonetheless imagine themselves as part of the community.

Bibiya is a young woman from Iraq who speaks excellent English. She has been in Scotland for five years and has the temporary status Exceptional Leave to Remain. She is sociable and friendly, but often feels isolated and alone. However, she told me of many instances which made her feel she belonged here. For example she had problems sleeping and would often go for long walks in the city centre during the early hours of the morning when few people were around. On one particular occasion a taxi stopped and the driver asked if she was OK and did she want a lift somewhere. She proudly told me that it was a Scottish driver, and how thrilled she had been that someone Scottish had stopped to ask her, a foreigner, if she was OK; "I really felt like I belonged in this country, and it made me feel very safe and happy". On another occasion she was offered a part-time temporary job in a city centre store and she told me of her surprise and astonishment because; "There were two Scottish women being interviewed at the same time as me and I just thought that I had no chance, but I got the job and can hardly believe it - why did they give it to me and not to a Scottish woman?" The importance for
Bibiya was that these situations involved a direct and positive contact with 'Scottish people'. Had the taxi driver or employer also been 'foreign' the feelings would not have been the same.

However, just as small incidents can lead to feelings of belonging, so can equally small incidents lead to misunderstandings and feelings of alienation. Nasrin did not like being asked where she was from: "When people hear the word 'Iraq' they think only of Saddam Hussein, and then they give me a dirty look. Now I always say I am from Spain or Greece, because then there are no funny looks or questions." Bibiya had arranged to have a carpet fitted on a Wednesday morning, but nobody turned up. When she phoned the shop she was told that they don't fit carpets on a Wednesday. "Why did they say they were coming if they don't fit carpets on Wednesdays?" I asked, "Don't ask me, they're your people not mine" said Bibiya in exasperation.

However, often feelings of alienation reflect an apparent gulf between the understanding of the host society towards the intensity of the refugee experience. Aun describes the experiences of Estonians in Canada:

One of the most irksome questions that was always asked by Canadians was whether Estonians were now happy in Canada, having left behind war torn Europe for this land of peace and plenty. The question was asked usually in a way that presupposed an affirmative answer. Indeed often it was not a question but a statement to be confirmed. But the refugee was not happy in Canada. He considered himself lucky that he had escaped the many dangers and survived the hardships of war and its
dislocations; he was satisfied that he could earn his living and have a more or less normal life without fear and wants, but how could he be happy when he had been deprived of his friends and relatives? He had been forced out of his homeland to which he was emotionally attached, and a brutal destruction of this land, its people - his people - still went on. (1985: 144)

These feelings mirrored many of those expressed by refugees in Scotland today, especially those of a young Bosnian woman who, when asked if she felt isolated, replied: "It does not matter how many people you know or do not know, because when you are forced apart from family and friends you are isolated and alone." These sentiments, when voiced, inevitably threaten our sense of well-being and faith in the 'steady, anonymous and simultaneous activity' of the imagined community (Anderson 1983) - hence the 'affirmative answer' expected of Estonian refugees. The reason why these sentiments worry settled people so much (and often so abstractly) is that they expose the relative nature of certainties inscribed in the soil, therefore exposing the vulnerability of community for us all.

Notions of affiliation and loyalty are not only contingent, but often multiple, presenting an unsettling image to both the individual and the state that reflects the reality, but contradicts the ideology of 'belonging'. When imagining a community you begin by attempting to place yourself in that community both as you imagine yourself, and how you see the community imagining you. Many refugees in Scotland were already in the country on temporary student or visitor visas before they became
refugees. Having already crossed a geographical border and lived in the community as say, a postgraduate student from Ethiopia here on a course for a year, they now have to re-adjust to their changed status as an 'asylum seeker' which immediately involves the reality of prolonged separation from family, the insecurity attached to applying for asylum, dependence upon welfare benefits from the British Government, and having plans for the immediate and foreseeable future disappear into a cloud of uncertainty. The personal readjustment necessary to deal with this monumental change in circumstances is considerable and when coupled with an awareness that this new status is perceived by those living here as a negative one, presents particular problems regarding the image of self in society and the image society has of refugees. The pragmatics of belonging to a group and the choices that some refugees have regarding this is illustrated by Talai (1989) who describes how Armenians in London only come together at specific social events. The choices that can be made by refugees about when and why they may decide to choose one identity over another are, for some, dependent upon their 'visibleness' as a foreigner, but it also reflects the pragmatic avoidance (where possible) of stigmatisation and discrimination.

Refugees are transnationalists in the sense that links normally associated with national identity may disintegrate or become so tenuous that they stretch allegiances far beyond any notion of an 'imagined community'. "I am a Yugoslavian, so how can your government say they will send us back when the war ends?" asked a young man from Sarajevo, in response to a
television announcement on the possible future repatriation of Bosnian refugees, and he continued: "I have no country now, so I will have to stay here". Although Farhad's elderly parents still live in Iraq, all his brothers, and many of his friends, have had to leave, and are now scattered throughout Europe and the USA. He told me that at the moment he feels he has no country, and doesn't know where he will eventually settle: "I may go back someday, who knows." And Isodore felt that while he belonged to no country he belonged to all countries. However, these experiences also illustrate the lack of power and control that some refugees have over nationalist allegiances, unlike those transnationalists who can comfortably operate in their own particular economic, social and geographical space of transnationalism (Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 1994). Indeed although there are many resonances of refugee experience with transnationalists and exiles such as Edward Said and V.S. Naipaul,14 who vividly describe the fluidity and processual form of national allegiances, ultimately the difference between them is one of power and control that generally eludes refugees during these first uncertain years in a new country.

'What does it mean to be Scottish?'
It is in the social milieu and in the perceptions of others that ideas of community either form or fail. Nationalist rhetoric can, and does, have a considerable influence on such perceptions through the debates and media interest that surround legislative changes and the

effect these have on relationships and understanding. But although all immigration legislation comes from Westminster, refugees living in Scotland were aware that they were somewhere 'different' to England and their expectations were gauged accordingly.

Scotland is a territory, a place on a map with a long historical pedigree and it has a border that distinguishes it from its southern neighbour; but it is also a 'landscape of the mind' (McCrone 1992: 16), a landscape that by its 'boundedness' is translated into a defining attribute of personal identity which is at the core of 'belonging' (Jedrej and Nuttall 1996: 19). The nationalist sentiment of 'Scottishness' can therefore be understood as providing a boundedness of identity which, for refugees, suggests something tangible and fixed that can be 'discovered', which will, in turn, provide them with the possibility of belonging. Consequently what appears important for refugees is the sense of community and cohesiveness that they expect from 'Scottish society' and their desire to know and to share it. For many of those interviewed the reason they gave for participating in the research was the expectation I would be able to tell them what it is to be 'Scottish', to help them understand and begin to 'belong' - a somewhat ironic situation as I am from England (although I have lived in Edinburgh for eighteen years).

Most refugees coming to Britain arrive at the ports and airports of English cities (Manchester, Liverpool, Heathrow and Gatwick airports), and therefore do not arrive in Scotland 'automatically' - the exception to
this is the possibility of eastern European shipworkers claiming asylum at ports on the west coast of Scotland or on the Shetland islands. This means that most people have quite specific reasons for being in Scotland. Nasrin, Bibiya and Farhad had members of their families already living here, for others the decision was based on a perception of Scotland as qualitatively different to England. For example, after spending a few months in London, Yelena decided to come to Scotland because, as an English teacher in Russia, she had always been interested in the Scottish dialect and she told me that she thought she would be 'more at home' here. Peter had been living in Newcastle, but had moved to Aberdeen to find work in the oil industry and although he had found people in the north of England friendly, he said he would not have considered moving south to London, because he had been told that people there were 'cold and distant'. And Bibiya was determined to find an affinity with all things Scottish telling me she 'naturally liked' local dishes such as stovies and haggis and she proudly announced that her efforts at learning colloquialisms meant that very soon she would be talking 'Scottish'. However, many refugees felt that an understanding of 'Scottishness' was evading them.

The attempts made by refugees to establish contact and make relationships with Scottish people will be discussed in chapter 7, here I want to concentrate on the particular aspects of nationalist sentiment that would appear to have influenced how refugees understand Scotland. However, it should be acknowledged that Scottish nationalism is not simply the assertion of
linguistic or cultural distinctiveness, but is a political challenge to the authority of the central British state (McCrone 1992: 211). It is therefore as part of this political challenge that some of the nationalistic assertions regarding Scottish attitudes towards immigration and refugees should be considered.

Scottish egalitarianism and friendliness are regularly mentioned by refugees, as is the expectation that racism is less of a problem than it is south of the border. Although it difficult to pin down how certain feelings regarding a country are formed (and refugees were generally unable to express why they felt as they did) some indication of Scotland as a friendly and egalitarian place, lacking in racism, can be gleaned from local press coverage. For example two Bulgarian seamen recently took refuge in Shetland and were initially clothed and fed by the islanders, with one of the islanders stating: 'This is their home now' (Scotland on Sunday 4/8/96), and a young Bosnian refugee is reported as saying: 'People in Scotland have been very kind to us' (Evening News 27/8/95). There is also frequent reference in media reports of Scotland's history of providing refuge, and a pride in continuing this tradition:

Edinburgh has proved to be a popular destination for asylum seekers from around the world. Scotland's standing as a friendly nation and Edinburgh's global reputation have proved big factors in attracting a community of around 3,000 refugees. (Evening News 10/10/94).

Refugees inevitably respond to this by imagining themselves as part of a separate Scottish nation. A
very young Bosnian was interviewed with his mother and the story ran: 'Edin, proudly wearing his Scottish football strip, said "I don't speak English, I speak Scottish" (Evening News 27/8/95). This type of reporting is often in direct contrast to some of the national tabloids (who rarely personalise the 'bogus' refugees) and therefore it sustains and promotes Scotland as a welcoming place - even when it sometimes falls short of these expectations. For example, diaries were published containing graphic details of a violent and vitriolic racism directed at a woman and her family over several years (Scotland on Sunday 14/7/96). Yet although statistics show that racist incidents in Lothian, Central and Tayside Regions have risen sharply between 1990-1995, they also show a marked decline in all other areas, particularly in Strathclyde.15 But feelings and perceptions pay little attention to statistics especially when they are counteracted by publicity that directly compares the situation in Scotland with that in England:

Unlike some Bosnian refugees in Essex and Birmingham who have been harassed, attacked and have even tried to return to war zones, Sladjan has nothing but praise for his neighbours and his life in Scotland. (Scotland on Sunday 6/8/95).

However, refugees do suffer racism, although it was often difficult to get them to admit it because of their desire not to appear ungrateful or critical.16 Elizabeth (an African refugee) told me of many instances of racist harassment that she and her children had suffered, but

15Source HM Chief Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland on Sunday 14/7/96
16See Walsh, McFarland and Hampton (1994)
when her husband read what she had told me he demanded that I erase all references to it. Situations such as this could be interpreted as the power of the imagined community of Scottish non-racism, or, as already suggested, such harassment could be rationalised as further confirmation of being stigmatised by the label 'bogus'. But, whatever the motivation, the myth of a non-racist Scotland survives and continues.

Although there are an estimated 3,000 refugees in Scotland, the exact figure cannot be established because all asylum claims go directly to the Home Office and no statistics are kept as to where the applicants are living. Considerable numbers of refugees also leave and arrive from other parts of Britain therefore making it impossible to identify how many are in Scotland (or any other region) at any one time. Considering the emphasis placed on the numbers of refugees by the government, this lack of numbering may inadvertently be to the advantage of refugees in Scotland. Certainly it is the case that those refugees who are detained or threatened with deportation are, as yet a tiny minority: "Most detentions have taken place in England, but we are increasingly seeing this come into effect in Scotland" (Evening News 28/10/94), and "A warning was given yesterday that Scotland could soon be seeing the first deportation of asylum seekers" (The Herald 28/4/94). However, regardless of the 'numbers' of refugees in Scotland it is the attitude and commitment, shown by those such as the Shetland Islanders, towards the humanitarian principle of offering asylum that is generally recognised and supported by nationalist rhetoric in the Scottish press.
and to which refugees in Scotland overwhelmingly subscribe.

Conclusion
It is no longer viable to view nations as discrete units that have naturally constituted populations whose allegiances are solely defined within a single defined territory. The coherence and sustainability of a monolithic national identity is therefore being challenged by the increasing diversity of its populations and by the transnational realities of economic, political and social commitments that extend beyond the boundaries of any one nation-state. Britain's efforts to retain sovereignty and national identity, have therefore resulted in refugees becoming the latest targets of an official racism that has been an integral part of immigration legislation this century.

Although the construction of the 'bogus' refugee Other may be seen to reflect the challenge of transnationalism upon nationalist discourse, it is through the experience of refugees that the full implications of this 'imaginary concept' can begin to be understood. The ambiguity of refugees towards their own national feelings can then be countered by the belief that being in Scotland does represent a different perspective on their place in society. Although the notion of Scottishness, and its evocation in the press and media gives the impression that there is indeed something 'out there' to be recognised, it should nonetheless be understood that some
of what may be referred to as being 'Scottish' may also represent a political challenge to the authority of Whitehall.
CHAPTER FOUR

PARTICIPATION AND EQUALITY:

EXPERIENCES IN A RESEARCH RELATIONSHIP.

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to record not only what I did, but what I thought I was doing, before, during and after fieldwork. Plans and expectations of my fieldwork were generally fulfilled, but some issues anticipated never materialised, and others which were unforeseen demanded to be addressed. I initially felt confused about my understanding of anthropological method as being primarily concerned with participant observation in a 'bounded' community, which would have been easily accommodated for example, by researching the Bosnian refugees who had arrived to stay in Scotland's only reception centre, or by studying groups of established Vietnamese now living in Edinburgh or Glasgow. If I had made this decision I would have been able to link into clubs and associations where such groups meet and been able to observe and participate in these settings. I would also have been able to use 'snowballing' and networking techniques to increase my contacts, and I would have been able to compare and contrast how individuals from a particular country adapted to their new lives in Scotland. But, as a volunteer with the Scottish Refugee Council (SRC) in Edinburgh, my experience was that the refugees coming to the office were disparate individuals from many different countries living scattered throughout Edinburgh and the East of Scotland. Making a decision to talk to these refugees
meant that there was no 'community' to study, and no chance to unobtrusively observe or participate in their lives except by making prior arrangements to meet them individually.

The issue of gatekeepers was therefore very important and my connection with the SRC was vital in establishing refugee contacts. The SRC specialise in helping newly arrived refugees and so it was these refugees who became the focus for my research. My involvement as a volunteer had meant that some refugees had already 'seen' me in the office and this, together with SRC co-operation and approval for my research, was very important both in facilitating contacts with refugees and in creating an atmosphere of trust between us. When I had become a volunteer I had no plans to do research, but my active participation in refugee issues was a route well travelled by others who had researched refugee issues in the West. For example, Gold (1992) spent eight years as an English teacher, resettlement worker and ran a 'job finding' class for Vietnamese refugees while researching the lives of Jewish and Vietnamese refugees in California, and Gilad (1990) became a volunteer and prepared briefs for the House and Senate Committees (who were, at that time, examining refugee and immigration legislation), while researching newly arrived refugees in Newfoundland.

The personal component of my research was therefore particularly important and needed to be directly addressed in my methodology. My experience as a volunteer had alerted me to the level of trust that would
need to be established for the conversations to take place, and the isolation of some refugees had prompted discussions with the SRC caseworker as to the 'time limited' nature of research relationships and the expectations and intensity of the 'one to one' relationships which would occur. The ethical and political issue of researching the category 'refugee' and the emotional commitment envisaged between myself and individual refugees also heightened the tension between the personal and professional. I therefore believe, as does Okely (1975), that there is generally a need for a more explicit recognition of fieldwork as personal experience instead of sacrificing it to a false notion of scientific objectivity in order to facilitate a fuller understanding as to what happened, and how and why it happened. Atkinson writes:

The personal narrative of ethnographic exploration does not, therefore, detract from the credibility and plausibility of the ethnographic account. On the contrary, its very confessional quality can help to reinforce the narrative contract between the text and the implied reader. (1990: 110)

The participatory nature of my research was therefore very important because not only did it allow for a fuller exposition of the personal, but it highlighted issues of equity and involvement that sometimes proved problematical both professionally and personally. I was aware that, for a small number of refugees, some information that I made public could actually endanger their lives or that of their families and I therefore felt that it was imperative to give them the power of veto over the texts of our conversations. However,
although facilitating this shift in the balance of power between researcher and researched is well documented by feminist researchers I was not prepared for the consequent professional and personal tensions that arose from the adoption of this strategy - prompting several re-negotiations during the research process.

Notions of equity and participation also mean that everyone involved in the research (including the ethnographer) is recognised, in the text, as affecting, and if necessary changing what went on. But, as Clifford warns, these dialogical modes should not lead to autobiographical instances of hyper self-consciousness or self-absorption (1986: 15). As relationships in the field are usually tempered or explained by periods of 'passive' participant observation, where the ethnographer can 'merge into the crowd' (for example at social gatherings), there is the opportunity to create some distance between the researcher and individuals - giving an opportunity to contextualise and evaluate relationships away from the intensity of one-to-one situations. However, the geographical, cultural and social disparity of refugees who took part in this research meant that such an 'indirect' stance was impossible, making the contract between the researcher and the researched of paramount importance.

An emphasis on participation and equity also helps promote the dismantling of cultural typifications. As suggested by Abu-Lughod aspects of ethnographic description traffic in generalisations, but the drawback is that this often makes Others appear coherent, self-
contained and different from ourselves; but by shedding the language of objectivity, power and expertise, the construction of the Other may be avoided (1992: 7). However without this active dismantling of the Other as simultaneously different and inferior, there will be a fixing of boundaries between self and Other. Becker gives some indication of how these boundaries are maintained by suggesting that there is no need to engage in any kind of 'research bargain'; for, as those studied cannot know what to expect, any kind of research bargain is obviated (Becker 1964: 276). Although all eventualities cannot be anticipated the process can and should be negotiated and renegotiated to facilitate a 'bargain' or understanding that informs everybody involved - including the ethnographer. Without such an agreement reactions to the research process will increasingly be suspicious and lead to those who are being researched being offended by the private becoming public and asserting their right to lead 'unexamined lives' (Scherper-Hughes 1982: 13). Although no refugees were directly involved in the initial formulation and design of this research their full participation in its execution was encouraged and expected.

**Pre-fieldwork**

As a mature student I had just completed my MA and was looking for a change of direction from that of my previous occupation as a residential childcare officer in the Social Work Department, and I became a volunteer at the Edinburgh office of the Scottish Refugee Council (SRC) in October 1991. During my first year with the
SRC I became aware at the dearth of information regarding refugees who were not part of a government quota scheme and, with the backing of the SRC, began to devise a questionnaire research project. During the fund-raising for this, I was encouraged by the anthropology department at the University of Edinburgh to apply for my own funding through the ESRC, which I received in 1992. Ironically having received an ESRC award I was consequently unable to devote my full attention to the SRC research, which now received funding from local authorities and charities. Consequently, although I carried out most of the questionnaire interviews, the questionnaire design, information collation and the final report for the SRC was produced by SEMRU (Scottish Ethnic Minorities Research Unit).

During 1993 I visited over forty refugee families for the SEMRU questionnaire giving me an invaluable insight and overview of the situation as experienced by refugees in Lothian region. For the SEMRU research I often had to work with an interpreter, and I therefore met many refugees who fell outside my research parameters, including Vietnamese and Bosnian refugees who were part of government quota schemes and some elderly Polish refugees. On several occasions I attempted to 'recruit' some of the SEMRU participants for my research and whereas this did result in two participants it was generally not very successful. During the SEMRU research I also began to notice the importance of how I was being perceived. For example when interviewing several families from the Middle East I felt that my credentials as an academic were important for the men who then
appeared to relate to me on that level. If their wives were present I felt able to ask them questions directly - a situation I am not sure would have been possible with a male interviewer.

In preparation for my fieldwork I was able to reflect upon the different attitudes and expectations that I experienced while interviewing refugees for the SEMRU research. I was in my early forties, English and married and I spoke without a strong regional accent - all factors that, at different times, with different people, impinged upon and affected the research relationship - and I attempted to incorporate this knowledge into my research strategy. However, I also needed to compile a research outline that would be supported by prospective gatekeepers. The patronage of the SRC was vital in contacting refugees as they are the only refugee organisation in Scotland, and when I attempted to contact refugees through ethnic and overseas student organisations I was frequently referred back to them. Negotiations with the SRC as principal 'gatekeeper' were relatively straightforward, although having to negotiate with any 'gatekeeper' means working within particular agendas and parameters that are not your own. The caseworker at the SRC was helpful and supportive, but rightfully cautious about how contact could take place without breaking confidentiality, so we agreed that she would initially send out ten letters to refugees who she thought would be prepared to talk to me. At this time the SRC did not have any records or addresses on computer, which meant considerable time was spent, by the
caseworker and others, in contacting refugees on my behalf.

I had decided to collect life history narratives from a small number of refugees and I asked only that those contacted by the caseworker should speak enough English for us to be able to communicate without an interpreter. This I felt was important as my experience of working with interpreters for the SEMRU research had alerted me to the possibility of a relationship developing between the refugee and the interpreter rather than between the refugee and myself; which, over time, I envisaged as becoming intrusive, confusing and impractical. I did not put forward any request to the SRC for male or female respondents, or stipulate any countries of origin, as I knew that the numbers I would be interviewing would be limited because few refugees arrive competent in English. The caseworker said they would enclose, with my letter, a covering note saying that non-participation in the research would not affect the refugees' relationship with the SRC, as she felt that some people may interpret it as having to respond positively, or risk jeopardising the help and support given to them by the SRC.

I wrote a letter of introduction and attached an outline of my research proposal which included the following:

My research will take the form of life histories collected from a small number of refugees. I intend to meet people regularly (possibly twice a month, over a period of about a year), and talk to them about their experiences of coming to this country. For such a project to be a success it is necessary that a relationship of trust, equality and
understanding develop between us. I do not intend to use a questionnaire, and any information given to me will be at the discretion of the individual. The refugee will have access to the script of our conversations.\(^1\)

I also emphasised the 'openness' of the project as I understood it, and the control that those participating would have over the initial content of the scripts. The caseworker also asked that I undertake to meet everyone who responded to my letter, so that no-one should feel let down after making the decision to talk to me. I agreed that I would do this, and also reassured her that I would not abruptly end contact at the end of my fieldwork, but that contact could be continued if so desired. It would be several weeks before I got any response from these letters, and out of the ten letters sent I had three phone calls, all of which resulted in participation in the research.

This process was repeated at the SRC office in Glasgow, but of the two contacts made, only one continued after the first meeting. After further discussion with the manager at the Glasgow office it was decided that I could 'advertise' by putting a small poster on the waiting room wall, and that I should visit the art therapy project. Subsequently there was one response from the art group, and two responses from the poster. Finding people outside Edinburgh and Glasgow was even more problematic as there were no Refugee Council offices for me to contact. My approaches to Community Councils only resulted in being referred back to the SRC, but I eventually made contact.

\(^1\)See Appendix IV for full text
with two people through university and college overseas student associations. This was a long drawn out process as I began interviewing the first refugee in April 1993 and the last one in May 1994.

Between the spring of 1993 and the autumn of 1994 I met and interviewed twelve refugees; five of those interviewed had been here for less than three years, with the others living here for four or five years. Three refugees were from Iraq, one from Somalia, two from Ethiopia, two from Russia, one from Macedonia, one from Tajikstan, one from Bosnia and one from Croatia; six women and six men. However, although two of these refugees did not contact me again after the first meeting, I continued meeting the others throughout my fieldwork, and they will be referred to by name (pseudonym) in the text. I also had regular contact with eight other refugees who knew of my research, but who did not wish to be individually identified in any way and they will be referred to, in the text, by gender and country. I also had the opportunity to meet some refugees as they visited the SRC office, or when they participated in social events organised by the SRC providing the opportunity for a wider perspective on issues that were of concern to refugees at this time.

The often tenuous circumstances for refugees in this country rendered my research politically and personally 'sensitive' - as having potential consequences or implications, either directly from participation in the research or for the class of individuals represented (Seiber and Stanley, quoted in Renzetti & Lee 1993: 4).
This awareness of the research process as 'sensitive' is useful in bringing ethical considerations to all research, but it fails to address those studies which may be threatening for those participating, where the 'costs' go beyond the incidental or merely onerous. Renzetti and Lee (1993) suggest that it may be more pragmatic to look at the circumstances of the research and evaluate its 'sensitivity' following these criteria: 1) the research intrudes into the private sphere or delves into some deeply personal experience; 2) the study is concerned with deviance and social control; 3) it impinges on the vested interests of powerful persons or the exercise of coercion or domination; and 4) it deals with things sacred to those being studied that they do not wish profaned (ibid: 6). Although this is a useful guide, I do not consider that 'sensitive' research can or should evaluated purely in these terms, but that the criteria should be extended to recognise the personal relationships between the researcher and participant and the sensitivities of all those involved.

I felt a particular responsibility that my research should be as open and honest as possible, with no hidden agendas. This stemmed not only from a personal commitment to such research, but also from the very nature of researching such a sensitive topic. Like Kirby and McKenna (1989) I wanted to place emphasis on the full participation of those involved in the research process. They state that participants need to know enough about the research focus to want to participate, to be able to share in the information gathering process, and ultimately, to see themselves in the final report of the
study. This approach was crucial for me, both from a moral standpoint, and as a consequence of doing research with those who lived in my city, and in my country. I also agree with Mishler who suggests that the empowerment of the respondents is a vital ingredient of the interviewing process if they are to be able to 'name' their world (1986: 122). Mishler stresses that without respondents taking an active role in the interpretation of their narratives they lose control over 'what they mean by what they say', which can distort, or even deny, the socio-cultural and political significance of what is said.

In order to begin to address these problems, I had stated in the letter that those taking part would be able to read the scripts of our conversations and that they would (at this stage) have control over what I wrote. Apart from an attempt to address the points raised by Mishler, I did this for three further reasons. The first was that, in order to avoid misunderstandings, there should be discussion and negotiation over what they wanted to say as people would be talking in a language that was not their own. Secondly I was very aware that details of some people's lives, if made public, might actually place them in danger, or inadvertently disclose where they were, and so I wanted them to check what I wrote to avoid such consequences. And, thirdly, this would be a validation of my interpretation of what had been said.

Researching a group of people who had recently arrived here from different countries and who now lived scattered
throughout the principal cities of Scotland, did not initially appear to have much resonance with traditional anthropological fieldwork methodology. But, as noted by Gilad, the 'field' was the city, since there was no neighbourhood that belonged to the refugees (1990: 14). For me this raised several questions: could I describe my fieldwork as 'anthropology at home' when I would be talking to people from very different countries and cultures? and could my research be 'anthropological' if I had to rely on face-to-face contact and could not engage in participant observation? It would appear that anthropologists who work 'at home' have, in the past had a predilection to explain this phenomenon in terms of resources and funding possibilities. Accordingly to Jackson (1978) factors that 'pull' one home includes the reduction of time and money needed to enter the field. This may be often be the case, but what concerned me was Jackson's further comment that there is an 'ease of access to one's own society' - was he suggesting that 'home' and 'own society' were synonymous? Classical anthropological method as established by Malinowski, is described as 'intense fieldwork in an exotic community' (Kuper 1983: 1), which does suggest that everyone has a 'home', including the anthropologist, and that this definition is unproblematic. However, Lederman suggests that fieldwork is more a state of mind than a geographical location, describing it as involving a shifting of attention and sociable connection within one's own habitual milieus (quoted in Sanjek 1990: 94). This approach gave me a valuable insight into the strategies and problems that were likely to arise in my fieldwork situation not least of which would be the
difficulty of 'shifting attention' between home and field.

**Interviews, participation and power**

Participant observation is generally perceived as being unintrusive, but although the activity of the ethnographer may be little different from the sort of activity that any lay person engages in when faced with the practical need to make sense of a particular social setting (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983: 88), it can also be aligned to that of 'intensive interviewing':

Classic participant observation always involves the interweaving of looking and listening ... of watching and asking - and some of that listening and asking may approach or be identical to intensive interviewing. Conversely, intensive interview studies may involve repeated and prolonged contact between researchers and informants, sometimes extending over a period of years, with considerable mutual involvement in personal lives, a characteristic often considered a hallmark of participant observation. (Lofland and Lofland in Ely 1991: 42)

However, the word 'interview' seems particularly absent from ethnographical accounts. For example even though Turner (1967) regularly met with Muchona for 'eight months of exhilarating quick fire talk', these meetings were not described as interviews or presented as such, and although Shostak (1990) did describe her meetings with Nisa as interviews there is no indication in Nisa's narratives of what questions had been asked by Shostak. The view that ethnographers actively solicit accounts both by asking questions informally in the course of their contacts with participants, or more formally
through arranging interviews (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983: 108), suggests that there can, and should, be a clear division between the two situations, both in their presentation and analysis. For example, although Turner referred to his meetings with Muchona as 'seminars' (1967: 138) he has subsequently been criticised because he reduced the multiple voices of himself, the interpreter and Muchona to a single dialogue (Marcus and Fisher 1986: 71). It may be that the perceived informality of some situations results in the specific formulation of questions and answers being overlooked, but the analysis and presentation of the various 'voices' are an integral part of research and should be recognised in all situations - both formal and informal. I am not suggesting that every question should be recorded, but clear indications should be given as to who was leading the discussion and what questions were being ignored or answered. Such an approach is essential if respondents are to 'see themselves' in the text, and be able to 'name their world', as only by retaining some of the specificity's in analysis and writing can we move towards a more total knowledge (Okely 1996: 214).

Linde also suggests it is a mistake to make a sharp distinction between the interview situation and so-called real life, or between the interview situation and non contrived social interaction, as the interview is part of real life too (1993: 60). This blurring of the boundaries between 'interviews' and 'real life' brings into focus the need to examine the relationships (intended or unintended) between those talking, and the consequences of such interaction for the research
process. But an acknowledgement and understanding of research relationships still largely remains hidden under the stones of 'interviewing' and 'participant observation'. Overturn the stones and the tension between the contrived and non contrived, the formal and informal, and the fieldworker and the Other, makes the examination of research relationships a pragmatic imperative. The necessity for reflexivity and autobiography in fieldwork is about expressing lived interactions, participatory experience and embodied knowledge (Okely and Callaway 1992: 3), which confronts both the static terminology of research techniques and the implicit power relations that lie behind them.

My methodology appears closely aligned to that of some feminist researchers who use multiple interviews as an important part of their methodology to create strong interviewer-interviewee bonds, and who then use this opportunity to share the transcripts with the interviewee (Reinhartz 1992: 36). These characteristics of feminist research helped to clarify my own approach where I would take no notes during the interview, but 'write up' as soon as possible afterwards and then give the scripts to the refugee for comment. This strategy would avoid the tension between what people said 'during' the interview when notes were being taken and what they said afterwards, which was usually considered to be 'outside' the interview. Reinharz also suggests that to achieve an egalitarian relationship, the researcher abandons control and adopts an approach of openness, reciprocity, mutual disclosure, and 'shared risk' (1992: 181). The 'shared risk' comes from the collaboration of decision making
during the research process, which I hoped to achieve by incorporating the refugees' experiences of the research into my methodology.

I have never been sure how to label my relationship with him ... If I call Ali a 'friend' or 'informant' both labels would say too much and also leave something important out. (Crick 1992: 177)

The above conundrum highlights the emotional and conceptual problems I was facing. Because of the intensity of the relationships between myself and those I interviewed, I expected and anticipated that these people would automatically become my friends. However, whilst actively attempting to dismantle the boundaries of difference, inferiority, inequality in the research process I subsequently encountered some uncertainty as to the appropriate boundaries I needed to work within, both professionally and personally. For me both friend and informer are inadequate, because friends don't record their conversations, and 'informant' suggests a detachment and objectivity that I felt would be both undesirable and impossible in my research situation. However, the term 'friend' is often used in anthropological literature - even if it is only to establish that this is not the case. Marcus (1992) writing about her relationship with Louisa acknowledges a mutual recognition of shared interests and a certain rapport between them, but gave up hope of ever being able to negotiate what she regarded as a genuine 'friendship' of any kind and wryly acknowledges that although liking one another was perhaps a prerequisite, it had nothing to do with their 'relationship' - it was simply the
condition which made them ripe for mutual exploitation (ibid. 109-10).

By giving precedence to equity and openness, over the constraints that usually surround the methodological paradigms of interviews and participant observation, I hoped to make explicit the importance of the research relationship in the gathering of data. My intention was to avoid these relationships falling into the categorical distinctions which perpetuate tensions between formal/informal and contrived/non contrived. I wanted to give a voice to those refugees who agreed to talk to me by focusing on individuals, or more specifically on the 'individual moments' (Okely 1996: 213) that constitute the research process. Although I will present several narratives (Isodore in chapter 5, Yelena in chapter 6, and Georgis and Nasrin in Chapter 8), there will also be frequent reference to other refugees who contributed to this research and I feel it is important to briefly introduce these refugees here, in an attempt to counter some of the inevitable fragmentation of these individuals when they appear in the text. This will also provide an opportunity to indicate the variable nature of our research relationships:

**Farhad** - was the youngest person I talked to, and he appeared very vulnerable as time went on. Farhad is from Iraq and in his early twenties. He had only been in the country for eight months when we first met, and he had already received ELR status. He was enthusiastically curious about how people lived here. He wanted to know about relationships, especially about how families related to each other having become aware, for example, of teenage homelessness, the problem with drugs and the 'James
Bulger case'. He had a strong sense of what he felt to be good and right but he was also able to listen, learn and show tolerance towards those who thought differently. Farhad missed the closeness of his family and was looking for a girlfriend - using our conversations as a 'sounding board' to talk about how his expectations of relationships may differ from those of other young people. When I first met him he was full of optimism and confident in his ability to make friends and feel at home here, but, over the months, this optimism slowly seeped away and he became disillusioned and depressed. We met four times over five months and still have contact by phone.

Ahmed - is a tall man in his late thirties, a proud son of a village chief. He is married with several children and he taught English at a local school until he came to Glasgow for a year's postgraduate study. It was at the end of this year (1990-1) that the situation in Somalia deteriorated and he was warned by his father not to return because his life would be in danger. Ahmed spent a lot of time reading newspapers, UNHCR leaflets and Refugee Council bulletins about the situation 'at home' and although he always smiled and greeted me warmly I felt as if there was a constant heaviness about him. When we met he talked at great length about his childhood, but when he tried to talk about his life here his eyes filled with tears. His apparent inability to easily discuss his situation eventually led to him refusing to acknowledge my letters which asked him to arrange a time for us to meet. After several months we did have a 'chance' meeting in the street and although he greeted me warmly he did not mention the research or meeting me again - and so neither did I.

Peter - is from Tajikstan. He has a great sense of humour, but could easily get very angry and emotional when talking about the political situation that had resulted in him becoming a refugee. He lives in Aberdeen, moving there from Newcastle in

'James Bulger (3 years old) was abducted and murdered by two young boys (10 and 12 years old) in 1993. There was a lot of publicity around this case during the latter months of 1993.
order to find work in his profession as an oil engineer. He had already received Convention status when we met. He is very intelligent and proud (if not occasionally a little arrogant) and he was frustrated with the situation in this country which made it so difficult for him to find work and be independent. Peter's volatile personality meant that our meetings often became a catalyst for his emotions and frustrations and therefore often difficult for both of us to handle. I would travel to Aberdeen by train to meet him and we would go to a cafe on the sea front promenade for a coffee. After meeting him for six months, he said he did not want to meet me again.

Elizabeth - is from Ethiopia. A proud and resourceful wife, mother and sister who constantly rises above the adversities of racism and discrimination that frequently intrude upon the life of her family. She is a religious woman with a wonderful smile and positive outlook on life. Elizabeth is living here with her sister and children, but without the support of her husband who, although he is a doctor, has only been able to find employment doing short-term research work abroad. However, she has managed to find work in her local school and has overcome the prejudice of many of those who had met her by her intelligence and good humour. Elizabeth told me she enjoyed our meetings because it was an opportunity for her to 'study' me and learn 'how to do things'; watching what I said and did, and listening carefully to my English so that she could improve her own. I appreciated her asserting her authority on the relationship in this way although intervention by her husband was eventually to obliterate any 'research bargain' that had developed between us. We met five times over a period of three months.

Bibiya - is a Kurd from Iraq and we met monthly for 10 months. She was tortured by the Iraqi police who wanted her to give them information about her brothers who had already escaped to the West, so she came to Scotland to be near one of them (although they frequently argued, and he has now moved). We had an easy, friendly relationship with Bibiya determined to 'become' Scottish, trying hard to
mimic a Scottish accent and frequently telling me how much she feels at home here - denying any attachment to Iraq, although she misses her mother and sisters who still live there. Our relationship became fraught and eventually ended when she began to constantly borrow money from me.

**Sousan** - is also from Iraq. I met Sousan two or three times a week for almost a year - much more than any other refugee. She referred to me as her sister and I believe we were close. My relationship with Sousan is discussed in the following section.

**Post-fieldwork**
A general overview would indicate that although the full and equal participation of those involved was an important part of my research I had not taken into consideration the emotional strength that this would involve both for myself and those reading the scripts. This understanding manifested itself in a number of ways, and had various implications for my methodology.

There are some instances, recorded in my fieldnotes, of considerable delays between the interviews and 'writing up', and the occasional hesitancy of actually handing over the scripts to some refugees. These situations cannot easily be explained, other than to suggest that the data - fresh and unsanitised by analysis or 'presentation' - was too raw and direct for myself or the refugees to deal with at this time. Although the delay in writing could occasionally be equated with a particularly intense or emotional conversation, this did not explain every instance.
My hesitancy in handing over scripts would appear to be directly related to those relationships where the roles of researcher and friend became particularly confused. For example after the first few meetings with Sousan she referred to me as a 'sister' and consequently wanted to meet several times a week (this intensity of contact reflecting the relationship that she used to have with her sisters in Iraq). My desire to have a successful research relationship resulted in my collusion with this request which in turn led to Sousan saying she didn’t need to read the scripts of our conversations because she 'trusted' me:

I was initially giving Sousan the scripts but she was not reading them. When I asked her why, she would answer that she had begun to read them but soon got tired and couldn't concentrate. She said it was not important for her to read them because she 'trusted' me. Because she wasn't reading them I stopped offering them to her, but continued to see her and told her I would be writing up the conversations as before - she seemed happy with this. Over the following months our relationship had, on occasions, become very tense. Sousan’s demands on my time and attention were unrelenting and we had had several disagreements over our very different perspectives on friendship. On one occasion she got angry because I had said I would not phone her (as she had requested) the following day because I felt I needed some time to myself, and after months of not mentioning my research she then asked if I was still writing down what she said. I said I was. She asked if I was still talking to other refugees and seemed surprised when I said yes. A week later she asked to read what I had written - it had been ten months since she had read, or asked for any scripts. I was very happy to give them to her because I felt this would help clarify our relationship which was becoming increasingly tense, difficult and confusing.
The next time we met she was very upset, and told me that she didn't want me to 'write' her story. I was devastated, and asked if what I had written was wrong, or needed changing, but she shook her head and said that what I had written was indeed how she felt (although she admitted she had not yet read all I had given her). She went on to explain that it had taken her many years to be able to talk about herself honestly and openly and to deal with the circumstances of her situation in this way. But she was not ready to deal with seeing her life written down, and therefore she would not give me permission to write her story. I explained that her story would not be exactly as I had recorded it, and that she could read the final version, but she was adamant that I should not write her story - she wanted 'Sousan', as she had been, to be no more. She then surprised me by saying that she didn't mind if I continued to write about our conversations as she may want to read them in the future. As she was explaining this to me she kept asking if this would change our relationship and would I stop seeing her as she did not want this to happen. I said no. She did, however, readily agree to me using 'bits' of her story to illustrate some point or other - exactly the position I had been wanting to avoid. I left the cafe devastated and confused.

Jaffe (1993) suggests that fieldwork in a place 'close enough to home' undermines the ethnographers ability to construct an unproblematic other and hence an unproblematic self. The blurring of boundaries between being a friend and carrying out research highlighted the tensions that eventually destroyed my friendship with Sousan and certainly dispelled any notion of self or other as 'unproblematic' in the research process. My own feelings and emotions were equally confused as I struggled to come to terms with my disappointment and frustration. The situation became particularly acute later in the year when I asked Sousan if she would reconsider her position. She immediately turned to me,
with a big smile, and said: 'What will you pay me for it?'. I reacted angrily at her apparent flippancy, feeling I was being used and manipulated; I did not have a 'thick skinned facility to withstand any discouragement in the quest for information' (Kumar 1992: 137). I felt confused and unable to distance myself from the very powerful emotions that were an unwelcome intrusion into the research process.

Sousan's understandable difficulty in reading the scripts also highlighted the emotional strength required, by all those involved, to realise my research ideals. Although I was finding the writing of these conversations very difficult, I had been, quite unconsciously, placing the heavier burden on the refugees, by asking them to read what I had written. I regularly met ten people who wanted to participate in the research, and I was initially enthusiastic about offering all of them scripts of the conversations - both as way of establishing equity, but, just as importantly, as a way of validating what I had written - but not everybody wished, or was able to participate in this way. I consequently had to broaden my approach and accept other ways of participation that were less demanding on the participants. By asking the refugees themselves to validate what I had written meant that when this did not take place all decisions as to what text to keep and what text to remove was left up to me. This responsibility weighed heavily upon my shoulders, and resulted in a much greater manipulation of places, names and other facts than was ever requested by those who did read what I had written.
Although I felt that people needed to know they could read what I had written, I had to allow them the choice of not doing so, and respond to the level of participation that they felt comfortable with. Reinharz suggests that if respondents are important to the researcher as individuals, and they cannot be studied uniformly, then the methods should change accordingly (1992: 209) and so I began to ask if people wanted to read the scripts, but as a suggestion rather than a prerequisite for participating in the research. The subsequent 'sliding scale' of participation meant that out of the ten refugees who wanted to take part in the research six received all the scripts; two received some scripts then 'opted out' of receiving any others, and two declined to receive any scripts at all. The comments of the eight other refugees took the form of fieldwork journal entries, and there was no exchanging of scripts.

The situation with Sousan reflects just how difficult it was for her to read and comment on what I had written, and she was not alone. For example, even though Isodore (see chapter 5) approached the interviews well prepared, and had read all the scripts, he considered opting out of the research because he felt he was not ready for 'this kind' of talking. He made a comment about being a 'guinea pig' which was a perceptive indication of his attempt to understand his position in the research process, and a recognition of my attempt to include him in a research methodology that encompassed the ethical and personal criteria outlined above. Although Isodore
actually asked for few deletions or amendments to what I had written this was not the case with everyone:

Elizabeth told me of the many instances of racism that she was experiencing here, and the difficulties she had trying to find a job and to 'fit in'. Because my printer was broken I was unable to give her a script of the first conversation, so it was only after our second meeting that she was able to read what I had written. She said she was embarrassed to tell me this but her husband (who had not been present during our meetings) had read the scripts and been appalled at what she had told me. She told me he had insisted that almost everything be deleted - not because it was untrue, because she assured me that I had only written what she had said - but because he felt it was 'unseemly' for a doctor's wife to express such feelings, and he felt that her comments may be construed as being 'ungrateful'. I felt that she would not have made this decision herself, but as she wanted to comply with her husband's wishes I deleted most of the text.

These examples also illustrate the tension I was experiencing between 'abandoning control' and 'sharing the risk'. The categorical distinctions of contrived and non contrived data were being stretched in the single direction of refugee control, and consequently any 'risk' was the risk I took of having information given to me subsequently retracted. However, although I did 'lose' some data, it was a small amount in relation to the information which was given to me.

Yet distinctions between control and risk, would appear to have as much to do with the guilt of the researcher than the perception of the participant. When Lieblich (1996) initially began collecting narratives she asks: Is
this a fair transaction? And what does the researcher give in return? However, at the end of her fieldwork although Lieblich feels 'gratitude bordering on guilt', she is surprised when she is thanked by those who gave their stories for 'collecting them for the sake of history' (1996:174).

Not just a researcher, but also a person

This subheading is one that is used by Omidian when discussing the effect of refugee research on the anthropologist (1994: 169). She goes on to say: "Working with refugees has an added difficulty due to the heavy emotional issues that arise. This puts the researcher at risk of emotional bombardment" (ibid. 172). Although I had expected to hear of trauma, pain, loss and loneliness I had not adequately prepared myself for the affects of the steady, persistent accumulation of such information. Becky Thompson records that;

I sometimes found myself trying to escape from the pain of their stories as they spoke....I also noticed that my immediate desire to comfort them was my wanting to escape the pain myself and wanting someone to comfort me. (in Reinharz 1992: 35)'

I also felt that I needed someone to help me deal emotionally with what I was hearing and so during the latter part of my fieldwork I approached a professional counsellor who I saw regularly for six months. These sessions helped me to understand and displace some of the emotional intensity I was experiencing. Although some interviews with refugees were particularly emotional and

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1Becky Thompson was talking to incest survivors.
stressful for me, I was aware that often those telling of some painful traumatic incident often appeared remarkably self-controlled. For example; Bibiya could be very emotional talking about the frustrations of living here, but when she told me she had been tortured by the Iraqi police she appeared calm and very controlled, and Yelena usually had a measured, quiet, way of talking which did not falter when she told me of the threats to her life and the fact that she had carried a knife with her for protection. It may indeed be the case that the ability to retell a traumatic story meant they had already survived the worst of the pain (Thompson in Reinharz 1992: 35), but I was always caught ‘off guard’ - with the images and emotions of these narratives slowly imploding in me in the hours, days, weeks and months after the conversation had taken place. Omidian discusses the practicalities of spacing interviews in such a way as to give herself time to recognise the stress that the information creates (1994: 173), but whereas she was often able to share the specific time set aside by the community for talking about loss and death, there were no culturally appropriate guidelines for me, or the refugees, to follow.

I had accepted that the ‘nature of the fieldwork belonged to the nature of the field’ (Gilad 1990: 14), and had taken some comfort from Ledermans (1990) wider perspective of fieldwork as constituting a ‘shifting of attention within own habitual milieus’ rather than the appropriation of a geographical location. But there were occasions when even a ‘shifting of attention’ became impossible and I felt I had to leave ‘my own habitual
milieus' in order to 'leave the field'. Having no 'guarantee' of not being phoned, or of bumping into refugees in the street (and my occasional desire to escape to a place where this could be guaranteed), brought into focus the continuing confusion and dilemma I was experiencing when trying to describe and understand these relationships:

I looked at my informants-brothers-friends, realising that I had at some point, without having planned it, erased the dividing lines between these categories. (Kumar 1992: 240)

During fieldwork it might be thought better to avoid expressing negative opinions about matters close to the hearts of informants. In other words one can only pretend to be a friend. (Hendry 1992: 172)

I referred to Isodore as my friend (for want of a better word), but he was always aware that our relationship was quite different to that of a normal friendship. For example when he asked me if I would get a book out of the university library for him it was because 'he had nobody else he could ask'; on another occasion, just after I had finished my fieldwork, I introduced him to a colleague at the university, and Isodore added to my introduction; "I'm one of Joan's cases". After continuing to meet 'post fieldwork' Isodore has expressed his relief that the nature of our meetings has now changed. He said that before he always felt like he was in an 'interview' and that he therefore had to have something specific and relevant to say. And I also feel much more relaxed and comfortable in the knowledge that we are meeting now as friends
However, the relationship between myself and Sousan was such that the boundaries were blurred from the very beginning. She desperately wanted a friend and the chance to speak English, and, as Marcus (1992) puts it, we were ripe for 'mutual exploitation'. I wanted to talk to her for my research and she wanted a friend, and our respective compromises to accommodate each others agendas have subsequently backfired on both of us. I have pages and pages of information which I cannot use as I would wish, and her desire for frequent contact was impossible for me to maintain. We no longer have any contact.

Other relationships fell somewhere in-between these two very opposites, but now (over two years since I completed fieldwork), I have remained in regular contact with only four refugees. Just as I had to re-evaluate my insistence that everybody should read the scripts of our conversations I now see that the possibility and expectation of developing close relationships in the field should not become an 'oppressive mandate' (Reinharz 1992: 68).

Conclusion
I wanted and expected refugees to be able to 'name their world', and yet initially had great difficulty in naming my own world in the research. The words 'interview' and 'informant' conjured up images of a formality and objectivity that I felt would be counter-productive, and yet using 'friend' and 'conversation' meant a blurring of boundaries and roles that confused the practise with the reality of what I was doing. Looking back over the way
certain relationships developed I can accept that I was initially trying to impose my view of how I understood the research on to everyone else, without being open to, or aware of, the many different perceptions and understandings that influenced this process. For example I now recognise that for Isodore our meetings were always 'interviews', whilst for Sousan we originally met and talked as friends.

As I subsequently adjusted my methodology to accommodate the various ways in which the refugees responded to the research process I slowly became aware of the insight this gave me into the relationships that were being formed. Reinharz sums it up thus;

Another way to think about the dilemma of closeness/distance is to acknowledge that each setting requires the fieldworker to take a different approach. Some settings require anonymous relationships while others require intensely personal relationships. From this perspective, any stance is acceptable as long as research findings are analysed in terms of the particular types of relationship that occurred. The setting, rather than methodological ideology, defines the appropriate role. (Reinharz 1992: 68)

Anthropological methods and concepts have been blamed for the failure to render the individual methodologically within our reach (Cohen 1992 and Abu-Lughod 1992), but maybe part of the failure has been the avoidance of acknowledging the relationship between the 'problematic self' and the 'problematic other' in the research process. Retrospection informs analysis but it also lays bare the incompleteness of the ethnographic reality as
strategies of ellipsis, concealment, and partial disclosure determine ethnographic relations (Clifford 1986: 7). The juggling and partiality of ethnographic 'truths' becomes glaringly evident when participation and equity are encouraged and the consequences of this cannot, and should not, be glossed over in an attempt to produce coherence, when coherence and completeness are not there.

The 'incompleteness' of ethnographic reality and the sometimes problematic relationship between self and Other in anthropological research will be highlighted in the following chapter as Isodore looks to the research process for an understanding of his situation.
CHAPTER FIVE

ISODORE

At the heart of my research were a number of people with very particular stories to tell. In the previous chapter emphasis was placed on the individuality of the research relationships as different 'research bargains' are implicitly or explicitly negotiated and recognised. My relationship with Isodore will illustrate how one such understanding came about. As one of the first refugees I interviewed, Isodore's reactions to the questions I asked, and the assumptions I made, often acted as a catalyst for changes in my approach. However, I am wary of referring to what follows as a 'case study' because of the implication that my interviews with Isodore were outstandingly 'different' because of the methodological issues they raised, or that only 'pertinent' information, abstracted from a larger picture, has been recorded here. This is not the case. All the narratives in this thesis are presented as a complete record of my version of what took place during the interviews, without any manipulation of what was said to fit into a 'case study' scenario. The narratives should therefore be seen as 'standing on their own'; giving a voice to the experiences of the refugees, that, in small way, also empowers them. Although the placing of Isodore's narrative (or any of the other narratives), does allow for particular points to be further illustrated, each narrative also reflects many other issues, and will be referred to accordingly throughout the thesis.
It is difficult to combine the processual nature of conversations held over a period of a year with a writing style that is not repetitive or unduly fragmented. Linde stresses the coherence that can be found in the relating of smaller stories to each other so that they can express a sense of what kind of people we are, without ever necessarily forming a single narrative that organises entire lives (1993: 25). I was not looking for, and I did not receive a 'single narrative' from any of those who participated in my research, rather the conversations reflect the coherence of a struggle for self understanding and self presentation that is clearly of concern to those who had recently fled their countries.

I have therefore chosen to keep the 'diary' style for Isodore's story both to illustrate the threads of coherence than ran throughout our meetings, as Isodore attempts to move from one language and understanding to another, and to enable the reader to directly relate to the often precarious nature of the research relationship, as we both grapple with the feelings I am attempting to write about and to understand. In retrospect Isodore appeared to have a much clearer perspective on this relationship than I had, only agreeing to meet me when he felt he had something to discuss, then thinking long and hard about what was said, before agreeing to meet me again. He always appeared in control. When I asked why he kept meeting me he answered that it was because he was interested in the 'research process', and I initially took that to mean my research. However, I later felt that it was his particular role in a research process
(any research process?) that prompted him to keep contact with me. It was as if he was using my research to enable him to stand to one side and critically examine his new status by bouncing intellectual, rather than personal, ideas and thoughts between us. This manifested itself in Isodore’s frequent references to others who wrote eloquently about their feelings of living in exile - those such as E.M. Cioran (a Romanian then living in Paris)¹ and Edward Said - yet the personal emotions of distance and displacement that our conversations struggled to comprehend were also constantly present.

Isodore had responded to one of the letters which were sent out on my behalf by the Refugee Council in Edinburgh, and was one of the first refugees I talked to. He was adamant that our conversations should not be tape-recorded, and he told me that he appreciated my not taking notes when we talked. His curiosity and intellectual vigour presented particular challenges to my methodological paradigms as he bombarded me with books and references that he believed could help us to understand him. Consequently I very much feel that this was a journey we were making together.

What follows are the scripts of our conversations, presented chronologically, and only slightly edited. Although I did not take notes during any of the conversations particular phrases that I was able to recall are presented as ‘direct’ quotes.

¹Cioran died in 1995
July 1993

When I had asked him on the phone how we would recognise each other he had told me that he was ugly, and that I would recognise him because he would be carrying a blue book. He had sounded confident and his English was good. We met for the first time in a theatre cafe - I had suggested a cafe near the university, but Isodore had scorned the idea, mentioning a couple of much more 'fashionable' places where he said he liked to go. He was waiting for me outside the building, and I immediately noticed the large blue book that he was carrying. We ordered coffee, and began talking about my research.

I was immediately aware of his intensity, his intelligence and his sense of humour. He seemed desperate to understand what it was to be a refugee - to be exiled - and was searching for books, autobiographies, films etc. that would help him to understand the situation for himself. He was reading books by the Romanian exile Cioran - had I read any of his books? I said no, and admitted that I had never heard of him. Isodore had one of Cioran's books with him ('The Temptation to Exist') and he had carefully marked out passages and sentences that he considered thought provoking or similar to his own feelings. I didn't write any of these down at the time, but they struck me as intensely deep, and possibly even morbid. He was also taping the Reith Lectures given that year by Edward Said, and collecting the scripts from the newspaper. I felt somewhat overwhelmed by this onslaught of intellectualising on the position of exile, when I suppose I had expected 'raw emotion'. He had also
gone over my research proposal very carefully (I could see phrases highlighted and words underlined), and he asked some very astute questions about why I was not using an interpreter, and what was I expecting from the research. I explained that if all I wanted was factual information then working with an interpreter would have been fine, but I was wanting to understand and get to know people, and I didn't feel this was possible through a third person. I also told him that all too often (as illustrated by recent newspaper headlines regarding 'bogus' refugees) refugees were only understood as an undifferentiated mass, and by collecting personal stories from refugees I hoped to help counteract this assumption. He nodded throughout my explanation, and then added that he was pleased that I would not be taping or taking notes as we talked (as I had suggested in my proposal) because he felt that such an approach would inhibit him.

It was only after this that Isodore offered some personal details about himself - although this was at my prompting. He was in his mid-twenties, single and came from Croatia. He had a Serb father and Croatian mother: "So, you see, I am not one or the other." He had been in Scotland for nearly two years: "I left before there were any terrible situations, but already friends were being called up for military service and I did not want to fight anyone, and anyway, who would I fight? I would find it easier to kill myself than to shoot another person." Leaving Croatia had been traumatic and difficult as the journey by train had been punctuated by checkpoints. At one of these he remembered being questioned by a young man of his own age who called him a
'Serb bastard' for travelling out of the country and not staying to fight. Isodore then looked straight at me and said: "Why did he choose to stay, and why did I choose to leave?" Later in the conversation he said that he had no strong feeling for Yugoslavia; 'home' was where he was at that moment in time. I asked him if he felt any different about the situation in Somalia to that in Yugoslavia, and he said: "No, it is all human suffering."

Isodore then continued with details of his family; his father is now dead, and his mother was in a psychiatric hospital. He has three older sisters, and regularly has contact with one of them. He had worked in Croatia as a mortuary technician, and said he had applied for the job because it had been vacant for a long time, then he smiled and said "Nobody wanted such a job". It had been well paid, but when the troubles started it got very distressing and he was pleased to be out of it. He didn't know what kind of a job to expect here - he hadn't really given it much thought because he said he had to concentrate on learning his English. He attended college for English lessons, but had also enrolled for a psychology course so that he would have a chance to meet other Scottish people.

Isodore had Scottish friends in Croatia who had previously lived in Edinburgh and they were able to put him in touch with someone here. He was able to rent a room with this person and so felt that he had little problem adjusting to life here. He said his English was poor when he arrived, but he was attending English classes, and he felt his language skills were now
improving. He said he often sat up late in the evenings talking to his landlord about 'everything' and he was very grateful for this introduction to 'Scottish life'.

Isodore then looked around the cafe and said "I couldn't work in a bar, or place like this, I want to be quiet and alone so that I can concentrate on my reading". He was excited by the number of books he could now read in English that had been unavailable to him in Serbo-Croat translations. He felt language could be a 'straightjacket', but that it was not the only way to express yourself, and he illustrated this by relating an incident that had happened to him whilst visiting his mother in the psychiatric hospital before he left Croatia. While waiting to see the doctor he was approached by a patient who asked him if he liked the picture on the wall. Isodore said that he felt nervous in these situations, so quickly said 'yes'. The woman then looked at him intently and said "I did that, that is my life", and then she walked away. When he looked at the picture he saw lots of reds and oranges all over the canvas, with the shape of a chair, and a figure sitting bowed over. "I did really see a life in this picture, and it left a big impression on me."

After talking to Isodore for a couple of hours I was exhausted. Even though I attempted to write things down as soon as I got home, I found it very difficult to remember in which order things had been said when the conversation had 'jumped around' so much, although it was interesting to note how many actual phrases I could recall verbatim. Isodore said he would phone me the
following month to arrange another meeting. I was a little anxious that he might not. But that was ultimately his decision.

**September 1993**

Isodore phoned saying he had been trying to contact me for a couple of weeks. I explained that I had been in Paris for a holiday, and we arranged to meet in the same cafe as before.

He said he was very envious about my trip to Paris as it was a place he would really like to visit - did I know that Cioran now lives there? We talked a little about travelling and he said how frustrated he was because he was unable to travel outside the UK until he got his status from the Home Office. I asked if he had heard anything from the Home Office regarding his claim for asylum, and he said no, but that maybe he should contact them because he had been here for two years now. He then said he had wondered if what he told me was useful for my research, because he knew he had had an 'easy time' here - he had a contact, good accommodation etc. I said that his experience was as valid as any other.

When we had first met I had forgotten to ask him for a pseudonym, and so had called him Yugo when writing up my notes. When he read the script of our last conversation he grimaced and asked "Why didn't you just call me Honda?" This seemed to touch a nerve, and he then asked "Do you have to say I'm from Yugoslavia?" I replied that his story would not make much sense if his country of origin was not mentioned, but I wasn't sure that this
needed to be the case - would have to discuss this again. I was also left wondering about his allegiance to no country (or to every country?), and how this was now tempered by his aversion to one (Yugoslavia). He chose Isodore as his pseudonym, a Russian name that he said was used in Yugoslavia - it was an unusual and exotic name, and it seemed a perfect alternative to Yugo.

Isodore referred back to his feelings of language being a 'straightjacket' and he corrected what I had written in the script of the last conversation. He said he did not mean that all language was a straightjacket, only a second language - it was his limited English that he considered a straightjacket. To illustrate what he meant he took a book written by Cioran out of his bag and showed me a sentence that read: "His face was as troubled as the universe and as happy as a suicide". This he said was the kind of writing he liked, the kind that had so many meanings that made you stop and think. Isodore then told me that Cioran suffered from insomnia, and often wandered the streets of Paris during the early hours of the morning when there were few people about, and things were very quiet. Cioran was writing in French, when his first language was Romanian, and it was his position as an exile and his struggle to express himself in this foreign language that fascinated Isodore. I remember being rather disturbed by the quote, it made me feel uneasy and uncomfortable. Isodore went on to say that Cioran now felt disdain towards his fellow Romanians, and said that he was able to identify with these feelings when he remembered the indoctrination that 'Yugoslavia is best' in schools and colleges, and the
apparent 'blind acceptance' of this by those around him.
He recalled having to write essays at school on how
wonderful Tito was: "I always got good marks because I
just copied out chunks from history books". He later
told me that when he sees the images of war in former
Yugoslavia on the television he can barely understand or
comprehend that this is indeed the country he was brought
up in - he feels estranged and separated from what is
happening, and feels he cannot look back to his early
history for any understanding or explanation of why
things are as they are.

He then went back to the subject of language, saying that
it was no longer possible to say that you spoke Serbo-
Croat - you had to speak either Croat or Serb, the
political separation of the country being reflected in
the naming of the language. Isodore mentioned that he
knew others from Bosnia and Croatia but that he didn't
mix with them very much because they were always talking
about what had been, spending their time reminiscing
about places and people they had known. He told me that
this makes him impatient "For five minutes it's OK, but
what is happening to us all now is more important." It
seemed that they did not share his desire to understand
their position of being a refugee, or want to talk about
philosophy.

Isodore phoned to cancel our next meeting but assured me
that my 'guinea pig' was not deserting me. He then
phoned to cancel the meeting after that, saying that he
was not sure he was ready for 'this kind' of talking yet.
He then admitted he had 'put off' our last couple of
meetings because he felt he was not sure what he wanted to say, and felt he had not enough control or understanding of English in which to say it. We arranged to meet just before I was due to go away for a month's holiday to talk about this, but unfortunately this time it was me who had to cancel because I was very ill.

Isodore's concerns became my concerns as I was also beginning to feel a little uneasy about my ability to record, in any meaningful way, the intensity of emotions and feelings that people were talking about. I had also not taken into account the incredible effort and self-confidence required to be able to read what someone else says about you, especially at such a stressful and uncertain time in your life. Yet this was a very important part of my research methodology, and this level of control and participation did seem to be an important factor in people being prepared to talk to me, although it was obviously painful and difficult for them to actually carry this out. I also realised that although I was finding the writing of these conversations very difficult I was, quite unconsciously, placing the heavier burden on those, such as Isodore, by asking them to read and validate what I had written.

I did not meet Isodore again until just before Christmas.

December 1993
I had phoned Isodore as soon as I returned from my holiday, and he told me he had been waiting for my call. We arranged to meet the following week. I was rather nervous as I didn't want our meetings to end, yet I was
beginning to understand just how difficult it was for Isodore to see these words written down, and how difficult it was for me to remember and record our conversations and present them in such a way as to be faithful to what he said and to what he was trying to convey. When we met it was as if we were both avoiding talking about the research, discussing instead my holiday and the leather bag I had been given for my birthday, which had come from the small workshop in which Isodore worked for a few hours every week. Isodore then began talking about the research and I tried to make him feel more comfortable about our conversations by suggesting that they did not have to be so intense. He replied by asking me why I wrote down the things that I did - why, for example, did I write down that we met in a cafe? Before I could answer, he said: "With all these details it feels like a police report". This shocked me and felt like an absolute rejection of my attempts at equity and participation. I struggled to explain that I wrote down everything that I could remember because I needed to be able to identify themes and threads, and that because I didn't have a fixed hypothesis I needed to write down all that I could remember. This didn't seem to satisfy him and so in order to explain things a little better I told him about how the concept of liminality had been used to describe the situation of refugees and how the small details that I had been recording may indicate whether this concept was a useful description or not. He nodded thoughtfully at this example, and seemed satisfied with my explanation.
Once again Isodore dug into his bag and brought out a book by Cioran, this time pointing out the phrase 'I can only exist in grammar'. I am really not sure what he expected me to say when faced with such deeply philosophical statements, and I am often left feeling somehow inadequate and useless as he grapples with such big questions. I don't recall what I did say. I later asked him if he often got the chance to talk in Serbo-Croat, and whether this allowed him to express himself freely. He said he had some friends to talk to, but that already he was forgetting words, or finding it difficult to express himself and this 'being between languages' worried him. I had just been reading a book about some Jewish refugees who had changed their names to signal a change of identity and a 'new' life, and Isodore thought that this was a good idea, and that everybody should change their names regularly to acknowledge themselves as different people. He was still worried about his ability to express himself in English, and I tried to reassure him that even between English speakers there was often a need for negotiation over what was meant by a phrase or statement, and that was one of the reasons why I appreciated him reading over the scripts of our conversations.

I asked him what he would be doing over Christmas and the New Year. He said he had a number of invitations, but he did not think he would go to many, because he found it difficult to cope with large groups of people, many the worse for drink. He said he drank only a little alcohol because he wanted to talk to people, not drink with them. He did say that he knew many more people than he had done
this time last year, and that he felt more confident about his English. He asked that I phone him towards the end of January.

I'm not sure we did deal with his uncertainties about talking to me - but maybe that moment had passed, I don't know.

**February 1994**

He said he had had a good Christmas and New Year, but didn't say anything more about what he did during that time. He said he had been thinking about our meetings, and he asked how many times I saw other refugees. I told him that some people I saw every week or fortnight, and others I saw only once every couple of months. He replied immediately that he would not want to meet me more than once every month or six weeks because he felt he wanted to have something to say, and to have time to think about what was previously said. Again he said that he wondered if he was ready to talk about his feelings in this way, as he felt that they are changing. Again I tried to reassure him that I wasn't looking for some kind of coherent, static picture of him or anybody else, but that I wanted to hear and learn about the changes in himself and his situation. I realised at this point that he does come to our meetings very prepared about what he wants to talk about, and he often has quotes, books or references that he wants to share with me - in fact he was often a great resource for articles and books. I then asked him what he was getting out of talking to me for the research and he said that he was interested in the research process, and that he genuinely wanted to
help me, but then he surprised me by saying that he had no interest in what the others involved in my research were telling me (?), which seemed somewhat contradictory given his fascination with Cioran and Said and others who talked about exile and displacement.

He then said that he thought a year was not enough time to get to know somebody, and I agreed, but said that was all the time I had. I asked him if we could ever use a tape-recorder and he emphatically said no, that he wouldn't be able to say anything, because "the words come out too quickly". He also restated that he was very glad that I did not take notes during the conversation as although he knew that I would write about everything (and he was often amazed at my memory), note-taking would give our meetings a different atmosphere and would be a distraction.

He then dipped into his bag and pulled out a folder with a photocopied interview with Cioran inside it; he said it was to be my Christmas present. I had told him previously that I found Cioran difficult to read, and rather depressing. Isodore said that in this interview Cioran explained himself clearly, and that he (Isodore) felt that they had a lot in common. When I asked him to explain what he meant, he smiled and said I should read the interview. He had also brought me a book about immigrants in Britain because he thought I might be interested in reading it. He then started laughing and said that he didn't think about all the other refugees I was talking to, and if they gave me books and articles to read as well - how could I possibly cope? I assured him
that this was not the case, because nobody else was giving me this kind of information.

Isodore had just bought a copy of Newsweek, which had former Yugoslavia on the front cover. He had pulled it out of his bag, quickly shown me the front cover, and then immediately put it away. He told me that when he first came to Scotland he read everything he could get his hands on about former Yugoslavia, but that now he feels it is very 'far away', and then, rather dismissively, said he may not even read this copy of Newsweek.

March 1994

Ever since I had known him Isodore had worked, for a few hours a week, in a small workshop. He said it was perfect for him because he could use his hands, and sit quietly and think about things, without having to deal with lots of people. However, now that Christmas was over there was very little work, but he said that this was OK because he was preparing for his sociology A Level exam. I asked him how he was finding the classes and he said he was really enjoying them - he felt it gave him the chance to stretch his English and meet people who were not foreigners. He asked me to get a particular book out of the university library for him for his project on suicide, but was very apologetic about asking me to do this, saying that he knew nobody else to ask. I was surprised that I had been 'the last person' he felt he could ask, and made me wonder how exactly he sees our relationship (?)
We briefly discussed the book he had lent me at our previous meeting on immigrants in Britain. He said he had not found it particularly useful or interesting, although I had felt that some interviews expressed views that had a certain resonance with Isodore's feelings regarding being 'between' languages.

After this meeting I read the interview with Cioran (Weiss 1982) and was immediately struck by the links to what Isodore had been saying over the months. Cioran talks about his insomnia which began in his youth and lasted for several years - it was the most serious experience of his life. Cioran talks about being 'outside mankind', 'in another world', and 'apart' from the 'new life' that comes from the break in consciousness that is sleep. He talks about his insomnia as a feeling of not belonging; as nobody understanding what he understood. He also talks of suicide and says; "One shouldn't kill oneself, one should make use of this idea in order to put up with life ... our only consolation is that we can quit this life when we want to ... I consider life a mere postponing of suicide." Isodore has told me over and over again that he feels a great affinity with Cioran. I don't really know what to make of this.

April 1994
Isodore could hardly wait to tell me that he had applied for a job at the Royal College of Surgeons here in Edinburgh. It was the first job he had seen that he felt confident of doing and was very excited about this. He said he felt 'ready' for a job now and he had talked to them on the phone, and he felt they were interested in
him. He had liked his old job as mortuary technician, but it had become 'bad' when the fighting had started and many damaged and disfigured bodies appeared in the morgue. He went on to say how much he would like his own flat and independence, and how this would make him feel so different about being here. As he now seemed ready to take on employment, I asked if he would consider moving from Edinburgh for a job, and he said yes. He was so animated and full of enthusiasm and plans for his future that I hardly recognised the ponderous, serious Isodore that I had come to know.

However, he was worried about the Royal College attempting to contact his old employer in Croatia for a reference, because he had told nobody of his plans to leave in case he was prevented from doing so. He was concerned that even if his employers were still there that they would say 'bad' things about him and jeopardise his chances of a job here. He then went on to tell me that he had been put in detention when he first arrived in this country, because he had arrived without a visa. He then talked about how he had been worried and scared in detention, and said it was 'fate' that he met a fellow detainee who told him he could apply for asylum. When he did this he was released.

I asked him what he missed about his home, and he said he felt no allegiance to country, profession or his family. He had written to his relatives when he first arrived here, but had had few replies. His father is dead, and he is unable to communicate with his mother. However, he does have regular contact with his sisters, and he had
told them to sell his part of the family land and house, because he no longer wanted to keep these things. He also said he missed a few friends with whom he could talk about art and literature.

He told me that identities and allegiances were difficult for him to talk about as he felt no attachment to groups and he doesn't like being asked where he is from when he first meets people here. He said he feels he is always on the 'outside'. I asked if he had brought anything special with him from Yugoslavia - he said he had brought a bound Serbo-Croat/English dictionary with him, but he now found it limited and had subsequently given it away. He had no 'memorabilia' in his room, unlike some friends from Croatia, and said that this was probably because he was 'mad'.

He then told me he had not brought any Cioran books with him this time, as it made him feel like he was doing 'homework' before our meetings. He also said that sometimes he was not in the mood to talk to me, and that he would phone me to arrange when we next met. We briefly discussed the most recent scripts of our conversations and he said he felt happier with these later ones, because he understood himself a little better now. He also pointed out (with reference to someone changing their name in the last script) that his name had been changed by his family and friends when he had been very young, and that he was happy with that change and felt no attachment to his 'official' name - having changed all official documents to erase it.
July 1994

We began, again, by talking about language, and Isodore told me that he had recently answered the phone to a Croatian friend in English, and this friend had been angry with him for doing this. He went on to tell me that he now thinks a lot in English, and sometimes he dreams in colours if his English is inadequate to express what he wants. He again used Cioran to explain how he thinks of English words as 'out there' - placed in the corner of a room - he then said: "I know where they are, and what they are, but I have to go and get them when I want to use them." Serbo-Croat words (on the other hand) may get buried, and not spring immediately to mind, "but they are inside me and with me always."

Isodore had gone for his interview for the job at the Royal College of Surgeons, and said that they had been impressed and interested in him, but, when they discovered that he was still waiting for a decision on his refugee status, they said they could not take the risk that he may have to leave, because they would be training him for the job. He was very disappointed, and I felt that he had been very angry at the time, but he appeared calm and rational about it when talking to me. But this incident did seem to spark off feelings of 'enough is enough', as Isodore talked about the 'price' of asylum being very high here. He told me that he has been here for almost three years now, waiting for status and adjusting to the life and language of Scotland, but that he is now ready to move on - to have a status, to get a job and participate more fully in society - so why was the Home Office dragging its heels over his claim for
asylum? We had also been talking about travelling and this is another restriction that Isodore felt was justified for asylum seekers, but felt strongly that there should be a limit on such restrictions; that they should not last forever, but be of a temporary nature. It felt to me that this job interview had been a catalyst for the change in Isodore's mood and feelings about being here. He went on to emphasise that he could not and would not return to former Yugoslavia, as he has no link with the land, or his 'home'; "Anyway, things there are so different now, I would feel guilty, and not a little strange about returning, I would hardly recognise anything anymore."

I asked what he had expected when he came here. He answered that he had had no expectations about coming to Scotland. His Scottish friends in Yugoslavia had told him that the weather was wet and horrible, and that Scottish people were friendly and he had found this to be true. I mentioned that others I had talked to (who lived around the Mediterranean) had said how difficult it was to adjust to the cold wet weather that prevented them from being outside and meeting people. Isodore agreed with this, but said that it was not such a problem for him. Throughout this part of the conversation I felt that I was 'pulling teeth', asking questions and receiving almost monosyllabic answers.

Isodore then reminded me that it would soon be a year since we had started meeting, and three years since he had arrived here, and that we should meet to 'celebrate' this. He said he had recently re-read what I had been
writing about our meetings and he was surprised that he still felt the same about things - I think this related to his concerns that his feelings are all mixed up and that he says many different things. He then laughed and said that he liked the idea of someone following him about writing about his life. He said he was still very interested in my research and what this could tell him about being exiled.

He then told me of a film coming to Edinburgh produced by a Croatian film director - it was to be a personal attempt to understand the present situation there, and Isodore recommended that I see it.

**September 1994**

We began by talking about the film. For me it had been a rather gruelling three hours of trying to read subtitles on some very old and poor quality film. There was some amazing archive footage showing the Croatian leadership with Nazis in the town where Isodore came from. As I had watched it I wondered what it had felt like to see your city on film when you are separated from it, but when I asked him, Isodore said that it had actually meant little to him because the city had been badly destroyed during the second world war, and the scenes on the film were therefore unfamiliar to him, although he was able to recognise some streets. I also found some of the recent film of the carnage and fighting very harrowing (some scenes I recognised from news bulletins, but here they were unedited and lasted longer). Towards the end of the film there were many clips from the director's own work interspersed with documentary footage - Isodore said that
he had seen many of these films and had a great deal of empathy with what the director was trying to show, especially the portrayal of confusion with which the film ended. It highlighted the incomprehension felt by Isodore as to why and how such a war had happened, and I felt he got some 'comfort' from seeing the expression of confusion that he was feeling.

As I was coming to the end of my fieldwork this was to be our last meeting where I would write down our conversation, and so we attempted a 'review' of what had happened. Isodore said he still felt as confused about his situation now as he had done when we had first met, although he could look back over the year and know that he did feel different about some things. For example he now wanted a job, and was 'ready' to deal more directly with people, as he felt that he now had more confidence in the English language and himself. He said he had recently been out with a Bosnian friend and all they had done was reminisce about former Yugoslavia and he found this really frustrating because he wanted to talk about what it felt like being here, but I was the only one who he could talk to about this. He then said that reminiscing was OK but that he no longer reads everything there is to read about the war, he felt that he was beginning to distance himself from things and this felt good for him. I said that I had thought he had been to a number of events in the Festival with Yugoslavian themes and connections - he just laughed at this contradiction, and said that he would probably do less next year.
We then talked briefly about his plans for the future, and it again became evident that he was definitely wanting to move away from the uncertain and temporary space that asylum seekers must live in. He had recently been actively gathering information on conscientious objectors in Croatia to send to the Home Office in support of his application for Convention status. He was also making plans to continue with his sociology course because he felt it helped him to understand our culture here and it helped his English. Again I felt very strongly that that he was emotionally ready to move away from his temporary position and look for permanency - again he said it was OK for the government to keep things unsettled for a couple of years, but he now felt this uncertainty should come to an end. He also restated that he had had no unexpected 'shocks' about living here - he had been well prepared by his Scottish friends in Croatia, and appreciated his 'easy time' adapting.

Although I would no longer record our conversations, we agreed that we would continue to meet now and again - Isodore saying that he would write my thesis for me! Therefore the comments that follow are from general journal entries.

For the next few months we continued to meet almost as often as we had done for my research. Early in 1995 Isodore had had an interview with The Refugee Legal Centre in London about his case, but had been angered by their apparent lack of knowledge about the situation in Croatia and said that he knew more about things than they did. He felt they gave him no encouragement or support
for his application and he felt very disillusioned. He asked to borrow a tape recording of a radio programme which contained interviews with Bosnian refugees in Britain, but then he returned it a couple of weeks later, saying that he could not bring himself to listen to it, because he had been reading a lot for his status claim and now he could not bear to listen or look at anything else on the former Yugoslavia. He spoke of the irony in that as the situation in Croatia deteriorated, this meant that his claim for refugee status became stronger - he obviously felt uncomfortable about this. His restlessness and frustration is becoming more evident as he talks about moving flat, (saying his room is small and looks out at a brick wall; "its like a prison"), and the job he went for at Surgeons Hall is still vacant.

We met again in April and Isodore told me how happy he was 'just to talk' and not be 'interviewed' for my research. He has heard nothing from the Home Office, but has applied to the University for a place on the Access course. He had applied last year and had not been offered a place, which he thought may have been because of his status as asylum seeker. He was carefully optimistic about reapplying - I hope he will not be disappointed.

In September (1995) Isodore had an interview for the Access course at Edinburgh University. He remembered me saying that I knew someone on the Access course and he asked to meet them, saying that this was recommended by the University "and would show them that I really am
serious about this". A month later he told me he had been offered a place.

We had 'bumped' into each other around the university on a number of occasions, but we did not meet again until May (1996). Isodore was working hard for his exams which would take place at the end of the month. He surprised me by saying that he may 'put off' taking up a degree place at university in October (he is allowed to defer for a year if he chooses to do so), as he still feels very uncertain about his future - he is still awaiting status from the Home Office.

Conclusion

I had offered participation and equity in the research process, and Isodore had utilised both throughout our research relationship. He read and commented on all the scripts and although he appeared generally happy with what I had recorded, this process was not personally or methodologically unproblematic. For example I was shocked when Isodore referred to the scripts as a 'police report' (page 180). Isodore was not objecting to our conversations being recorded, or saying that he wished to lead an 'unexamined' life, rather he was objecting to me recording information that he considered as outside our research bargain. As Scheper-Hughes (1982) warns, without a research agreement reactions to the research process will increasingly become suspicious, and so to allay further suspicions our agreement was renegotiated and I did not record anything other than my interpretation of our conversations. However, what Isodore's comment also highlighted was the sensitivity of
being observed in ways that appear as intrusive or unnecessary in a particular research context. Although I could offer some justification for recording details such as, for example, where we met, I needed to examine whether such information was really necessary?

This question was partially answered when I thought about the danger of inadvertently divulging information that could be used to identify individual refugees (although this was not why Isodore had made the comment), and so, consequently, I avoided recording what people looked like or what they wore, and I did not describe, in any great detail, the cafes, living rooms or kitchens where we met. But Isodore, and others, had also been adamant that it would not be acceptable to use a tape-recorder, and I began to understand this need for some personal distance in research of this kind. Although it was difficult for many people to see the scripts of our conversations, these were nonetheless veiled (apart from the odd phrase), behind my words, my memory and my descriptions. There was therefore already a very slight separation, or displacement, between the refugee and the 'fixedness' of what they had said. Without actually hearing a voice on tape, and therefore having an indisputable record of what had been said, there was greater scope between us for disagreement and negotiation over impressions, ideas and interpretations. Isodore also felt that hearing his voice on tape would confirm, and possibly exaggerate, his confusion and inability (as he saw it) to express himself coherently in English.
Isodore’s preoccupation with language, and its role in his understanding of his position here, has many parallels. For example a young Polish refugee remarked:

I’ve become obsessed with words. I gather them, put them away like a squirrel saving nuts for the winter, swallow them and hunger for more. If I take in enough, then maybe I can incorporate the language, make it part of my psyche and my body. (Hoffman 1989: 216)

Isodore wanted to make the English language part of his psyche, because for him this would be a ‘coming to terms with’ his exile - an understanding and acceptance of his situation, which, for the moment eluded him. For Isodore this meant immersing himself in learning the English language and using our conversations to explore his relationship with words and ideas that reflect his feelings of exile. Yet to do this extracted a painful price - the separation of himself from Serbo-Croat, and the ‘forgetting’ of some words - a process that worried him. He referred to being ‘between’ languages, and although he felt that a second language was a ‘straightjacket’ he nonetheless looked to those such as Said and Cioran (both writing in second languages) for answers and inspiration. Many of the other refugees had referred to being ‘between’ countries, but for Isodore (who had said he belonged to no country), his understanding and orientation was to be a personal odyssey.

When Isodore referred to himself as my ‘guinea pig’ (page 178) I thought long and hard about how I was conducting the research and the effect of my approach on those I was
interviewing. Was it my desire for equity in the research process that prompted this remark (as we were both 'guinea pigs' in that respect), or should this comment be linked to his description of himself as one of my 'cases', which appeared to reflect his perception of our research relationship as unequal? If, however, Isodore did feel we had an unequal research relationship he successfully countered this by his frequent 'appropriation' of the interviews. His references to books, films, articles and magazines that he had recently read, or seen, gave him a level of ownership and control over our conversations that allowed him to explore his feelings and experiences in these particular contexts. Consequently he was able to relocate himself in the much larger picture of exile and diaspora. Throughout my field work I therefore came to realise that equity was a moving and malleable concept, that reflected different needs at different times. Indeed, as mentioned in chapter four, there was often considerable tension between the ideals and the reality of equity, as myself and the refugees responded and reacted to each others agendas.

Isodore was interested in the process of becoming a refugee through an understanding of self in the language of exile. I was interested in exploring issues of being a refugee through the impressions and experiences that were shared with me. We were also both looking to 'name the world' we occupied together - the world of the research. With Isodores help, I believe I have been able to go some way to achieving this.
MY relationship with Yelena and Ivan reflected the careful and measured way in which they had come to an understanding of their situation here. When I met them they had Convention status, and had been in the country for five years. They were very easy to talk to, and they appeared to have a clear idea of what I wanted, and what they were prepared to tell me. In fact the interviews were conducted in a purposeful and pragmatic way - by this I do not mean that they were cold or detached, rather it felt that they had talked about these things often with each other and were subsequently at ease in discussions with me. When I had showed the first few scripts to Yelena she told me how surprised she had been because they were not at all as she had expected. She felt I had managed to represent her and her feelings in a honest way, and not written 'academically'. I only saw Ivan on a couple of occasions, so most of the conversations were with Yelena. Apart from one occasion we always met in her flat, where Yelena and I talked over coffee.

As Reinharz suggests the importance of multiple in-depth interviewing is the opportunity for relationships to develop, which in turn affects the information exchanged (Reinharz 1992: 36). It is therefore counterproductive to 'rearrange' information to fit either chronological or episodic imperatives, because this will inevitably mask this process. However, while keeping the processual

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essence of our interviews in tact, I have not kept to the
diary form as used for Isodore's narrative, and so there
is a 'fuzziness at the edges' between our meetings. This
I feel is appropriate for my interviews with Yelena
because she rarely repeated herself - rather the stories
built upon each other as we continued to meet.

I first met Yelena and Ivan in July 1993. Yelena had
phoned me in response to the letter sent out on my behalf
by the Scottish Refugee Council but had said that she was
not sure they could help me as they were happy here and
had had no serious problems. I explained that I was
interested in all experiences of being a refugee, and
that I would really like to meet them. When I later
asked Yelena why she had felt they would not be 'of any
use' for my research, she explained that many of the
problems experienced by refugees was because were due to
their having fled without any family, and she knew how
important it had been for her to have Ivan with her
during the first difficult years. She told me he had been
a good friend and they had been able to help and support
each other - making them more fortunate than many others
who she knew were here alone. Yelena said that they
wanted to help me with my research because they wanted to
'give something back'. She said that if their story
would help others then she would be happy to tell it.

My first impressions were of Yelena as fragile, timid,
and rather nervous, in contrast to Ivan who has an almost
'larger than life' presence. However, as I got to know
Yelena, I realised just how strong and purposeful she
was. Yelena told me that when they arrived here (three
years ago) she had to do all the negotiating and talking because Ivan did not speak English (Yelena had been an English teacher) and she said that this had been really difficult for her and very frustrating for Ivan. Although Yelena had a distinct advantage by being able to speak English, she, like many others, was going through a very traumatic time and found it almost impossible to understand what was happening. She told me she was so distressed that she had to force herself to go to all the offices to get Income Support and Housing Benefit. The Refugee Council helped fill in the forms, but could not accompany her to the offices. As her English was good, she was not provided with an interpreter. Yelena didn't know the system however, she found it very complicated and confusing, and consequently had to go to the same office many times which she found very dispiriting. Often she did not understand what was happening or why. "I was very upset about my daughter who we had left behind. I wanted her to be with us. I missed her so much. I don't know how we managed during that time because I was in such a terrible state."

I asked them if they had received status from the Home Office, and they told me that their application for status had been dealt with relatively quickly. They were, however, initially given ELR, but because these documents had been delivered to the immigration service at the airport (not to their home address), and consequently returned to the Home Office, they had the opportunity to obtain further documents supporting their application for asylum and with this extra evidence were granted Convention status.
However, their situation had been complicated by their daughter who remained in St Petersburg. Yelena told me they tried writing to their M.P. and contacting everybody who they thought could influence the decision to allow her to join them, but had initially felt let down by the people they contacted because they were aware of no immediate action. However, Yelena said they later found out that their case had been highlighted on Radio Russia (World Service), and that the Foreign Office had been 'looking into things'. She then smiled and said; "We weren't used to things happening so quietly". Their daughter was eventually allowed to join them (one and a half years after they had first arrived here). But, although talking about such a difficult time was still very painful, Ivan quickly pointed out that all that is behind them now, and that they both feel very optimistic about their future here. Yelena was quite philosophical about the problems of adjusting to a new situation saying that she understood why people without jobs would feel angry towards foreigners, and that her daughter had few friends because "she has little to offer them at the moment, until her English improves."

Yelena told me that their daughter had just received a scholarship to attend a music school, and my surprise at this achievement (after being in this country for such a short time), led to a discussion on the Soviet education system. I was immediately impressed (and continued to be so) by the many skills and the high level of expertise that Yelena and Ivan had in so many different areas, but they never presented themselves in a boastful way. Ivan
did say how skilled Yelena was breeding and rearing exotic birds, and how one particular bird, who was very attached to Yelena, would feed her like a chick, and jealously guard her from contact with others. They were both fascinated by the intelligence of the birds and proud of this successful venture - it must have been difficult and painful to recall all this, yet they gave no indication of bitterness or anger.

Yelena would later explain that the Soviet education system placed great importance on the availability of education for everyone through school and clubs. She recalled never feeling bored as a child, because whatever she was interested in doing there would be a club which would offer her the facilities and instruction for doing it. I remember her shrugging her shoulders rather dismissively and saying "So you see it was our education system - there is nothing special about us."

When I asked why they had come to Scotland Yelena said she had met some Scottish people in Russia. She had been fascinated by their accents and had subsequently written about Scottish accents in her college dissertation, and so coming to Scotland was a 'dream come true'. I asked if she wanted to work, and she told me that she used to have a job translating for business men in Glasgow, but got very upset when she realised that some Russian businessmen were selling the beautiful prestigious historical buildings in St. Petersburg to people in the West. She passionately talked about the houses and buildings that would have histories and connections for so many people, and yet the new entrepreneur culture
meant that some rich Russian business men were buying up such properties only to sell them as quickly as possible in a lucrative European market. Ivan joined in the conversation at this point to express his disgust and anger at the selling off of a peoples heritage in this way.

Yelena also did some work checking/editing Russian literary translations, and she and Ivan had written, in English, some of the many stories they told their daughter. They were hoping to get these stories published, and a Russian friend had produced some beautiful illustrations to accompany them. They asked me to read through a draft of the stories and I was struck by the pragmatism and unsentimentality which made them challenging and interesting reading.

On our second meeting I remember being really shocked when Yelena told me, in a 'matter of fact' way, that before she came here she had carried a knife with her and would not have been afraid to use it to protect herself and her family. I can't recall feeling that she was shocked by this, rather it was an acceptance (?) or resignation (?) of how things were at that time. The conversation had begun with Yelena telling me about her values of right and wrong, and how these were very important for her. She told me of her mothers strength when her father had died (15 years ago) and how she had instilled into Yelena how to think of others first, and to put others before herself, and how to always to be true to yourself. I asked if having her mother here now was a help and support for her, and she said no, not now,
because her mother is ill, cannot speak much English and needs support from her - their situation has been reversed. She told me her mother is over 70 years old now, she has cataracts and terrible arthritis, and she can no longer do the things that used to give her pleasure, like needlepoint. Yelena then said that she felt she had failed, because her mother was unhappy and she couldn't make things better for her. She also felt she had failed because she had not been able to survive their situation in St Petersburg, and had failed as a teacher because she had had to leave her pupils, and she had failed because she had left. Yelena said that she regretted that she was no longer the happy optimistic person she used to be, but felt that she had grown from the experience, although she had also become more circumspect.

She recalled her childhood as 'wonderful' with lots of clubs and activities and the chance to learn lots of interesting things - there was nothing to spoil or conflict with what she believed to be good and true. When she left college and began to work she realised that things were in fact tightly controlled, and that on the whole people did whatever they were told. She mentioned the 'herd' quality of the majority of Soviet people and she felt distressed at their apparent inability to see and realise just how they were being manipulated. She trained as a teacher, but did not like teaching the strict curriculum (which involved hours of reading Brechnev's memoirs to the children), so she left and became a technical translator. But because she worked hard and completed her work for three months in two
months, she was forced to be idle at her desk - not allowed to read or do anything else. She said she was beginning to feel disillusioned and concerned that morality (both state and personal) seemed very weak and malleable. So when an opportunity arose to teach in an 'after school' club she took it and began to devise a course on ornithology. The club was well attended with up to fifty students aged from seven to seventeen years. From this course grew the large collection of exotic birds that she and Ivan began breeding and selling.

She then told me why they had had to leave. I was rather surprised that this happened so quickly (on my second visit), as with some other refugees this period in their lives is almost taboo - I am also reluctant to ask about the reasons for leaving, and usually wait for these to be volunteered - with the result that I did not always receive this information. Yelena appeared to talk about what had happened in rather a 'flat' way, with little emotion. This was part of what I meant when I said earlier that it was almost as if they had planned what it was they would tell me, and what they felt was important for my research.

They had lived in St Petersburg, breeding birds for an 'out of school' project. Although there are thousands of such projects for young people, their project had received a lot of publicity and had been the subject of a film because of its uniqueness and success. Yelena said that working with young people and breeding the birds was the happiest time of her life, and that she could have wished for nothing more. But her idyll was shattered
and they were forced to flee, because they were approached by the Mafia (Yelena asked me if this was the correct word) and asked to 'pay' for the rooms that they used for the project. Yelena said that they did not hesitate to say 'no' because it was wrong to pay bribes for what is rightfully yours. But they began to be hassled for the money, with the intimidation increasing over the months. It soon reached the stage where they, and some of their students, began staying in the building to prevent the Mafia from occupying it and killing the birds. The confrontation then became violent with physical force being used by the Mafia as they tried to gain control and entry to the building. I remember Yelena looking really tired as she told me about this, as if the stress and strain of that time had instantly returned. She had a weary, resigned look as she went on to explain that they had tried telling the police and the government officials about this, but 'they were all part of the Mafia' and so there was no-one to turn to for help. For several months they occupied the building with the situation only getting worse not better. This is when she had begun carrying a knife around with her, because their lives had been threatened. Then, one day when she and Ivan had left to spend a few hours with their daughter, the Mafia broke into the building. They overpowered the students, killed every bird (over 7,000 parakeets and parrots) and destroyed every book and piece of equipment. Completely devastated, Yelena and Ivan decided to leave for a while to see if things would now calm down. They were able to get a visitors visa and came to London.
They initially stayed with a friend in London who lived in a small bedsit. Yelena told me this friend was worried that if his landlord discovered that he had people staying with him he would be thrown out, so they left the bedsit with him early in the morning and did not return until late in the evening - spending their days walking round the streets. However, after a couple of months, their money and visa were running out and they were told that as the Mafia were still looking for them it would be dangerous for them to return. They felt they had no other option but to seek asylum, and so they decided to come to Scotland.

Although Yelena says she was instantly relieved when they applied for asylum (she felt that, for the first time in many months, they could begin to think of their future), the first year was terrible. They had come to London on the understanding that they would return in a month or so, leaving their daughter behind with Yelena's mother. They then had to spend an anxious year waiting for the Home Office to make a decision on their status, before they could begin the process of getting their daughter to join them. After a year they were granted Convention status which allowed them immediate 'family reunion' and as Yelena's mother was living alone and had serious health problems she was also granted permission to stay here.

Although they had been relieved to get Convention status they told me how they didn't tell people about it because 'they can't understand'. Ivan gave me an example of a French friend who had been staying with them when the
document had arrived. They had been so happy they told him what it was, and were surprised when he told them that he thought refugees had to do something wrong to have to leave their country. Yelena said he was 'different' towards them for some time after that, but said that now he is OK. Yelena said that she understood his confusion, because until they had become refugees she thought that all refugees were 'poor people in rags walking along dusty roads, with all their possessions on their heads', and now she felt strange because 'I am one of them too'.

The reasons she had described their situation as 'good' were primarily because they had had each other for support, and that she felt they 'had come through' this terrible experience - it was part of their past now. But there were also more tangible parts of their lives here that promoted a sense of well being - Ivan had funding to do a Ph.D.; their daughter had received a scholarship for a music school; she liked their flat and they had some good neighbours. Although Yelena and Ivan seemed to accepted their lives here as 'good' it was almost always talked about in relation to what they had left. They could feel safe here and plan for their future, and they had the opportunity to work and feel a sense of fulfilment about their lives. I certainly never got the feeling that they were dissatisfied or bitter about the course their lives had taken - there was rather an acceptance and determination to make the best of things - and not to take anything for granted. Yelena spoke at some length about how changed she was by her experience, and how her trust in people had been shattered. She said
at one time she had wanted to tell her daughter not to trust people: "I wanted to tell her not to expect any good in people", but, she sighed, she could not bring herself to do it. "I just hope and pray that she does not get hurt too much."

During the summer, when we had both been away from Edinburgh for holidays, we talked about 'coming back'. I said how I loved coming back to Edinburgh because it was so beautiful and I now thought of it as my home. Yelena told me how important it was to know a place, and be able to walk around the streets not seeing things because they have become so familiar - and she said she was beginning to feel like this about Edinburgh - it was no longer a 'foreign' city to her. She had also found her daughter some friends - she laughed as she put her hands up to her eye, as if looking through a telescope, and said; "I was able to find her two friends that were not cruel - that was very important to me". But then she said both these friends had foreign born parents, and she wondered aloud about why she should have been drawn to them and not Scottish children. As Ivan is coming to the end of his studies the possibility of them moving for him to find work was mentioned - I asked if she would mind this (in the light of what she had just expressed) - and without hesitation she said no, because a job is so important.

Just before Christmas, I noticed something different about the living room - in the corner was a large cage, but I didn't recognise the two grey fluffy animals inside. Yelena told me that they were chinchilla's and that they were a present to her and her daughter from
Ivan. She was really happy and told me how important it was to her to be around 'live' things. She then explained to me, at great length, about how affectionate they were with each other; that they slept through the day and how she let them out of the cage in the evenings when they were very lively. Her delight at having the chinchillas around, and her enthusiasm to learn all about them, gave me an indication of how devastated she must have been when her birds were killed. A couple of times she had mentioned how they were trying to bring her pet parrot (who was being cared for by Ivan’s father in St Petersburg) over to Scotland, but the process had been dogged by bureaucracy.

She then proudly showed me their travel documents (that they had only recently received) and told me she would like to visit Paris, adding quickly that this was not because it was supposed to be similar to St Petersburg, but because she wanted to visit 'that kind' of city. When I asked her what she meant, she looked a little puzzled and said that there was a Russian word for ‘thinking with your feelings’, but that she didn’t know how to express this in English. Ivan had joined us at this point and was also excited about the prospect of travelling in Europe. He also acknowledged the importance of the travel document for future employment, and said that their daughter had her own document so that she could travel abroad with the school.

Yelena and Ivan had only very few Scottish friends "It is so difficult to meet Scottish people...", and although they knew some other Russians they did not spend much
time with them. Yelena said it was because they were always being asked how long they would be staying here - the expectation of those asking was that they were 'working' here and would eventually return to Russia. She said that on occasions when their position as refugees was known, she felt she had been shunned by some other Russians. But they did have a couple of good Russian friends living in this country, although not all of them lived in Edinburgh. I asked if Yelena felt isolated here, and she replied that she did, but that it was 'self imposed'. I asked her what she meant by this and she said it was because they eat only Russian food and speak Russian in the house. But she again said how hard it was to meet Scottish people and spoke of a 'drawing together' of those who share a history and a sense of who they are, and that this is difficult to participate in if you are from the 'outside'.

I asked her about 'home' and she said that St Petersburg would always be special and important to her, because it was her home, and that if she ever got the chance to return she would. But then she sighed and said; "It would be strange though, because things have changed so much". She explained that in Russia people were given 'citizenship' which allowed them to live in certain cities, and without this they would be unable to return to their flat. Yelena then talked about how the Soviet state placed emphasis upon people working together, and that it was through this unity that they had the strength to overcome fascism, but she said there was a price to pay for this, and that price was a feeling of the individual as irrelevant and unimportant. The example
she gave was of someone being absent from their work and the group/collectivity would absorb their tasks and continue - almost without noticing the absence. This she found distressing and difficult to deal with, leaving her with a feeling that as an individual she had little chance of changing anything.

During the last few months I had seen little of Ivan as he worked on completing his thesis, and had also seen less of Yelena as she had been doing some translation work. Our contact had been rather sporadic over the last few months of my fieldwork, and during the following year, but we kept in touch.

Ivan completed his thesis and he very soon got offered a job away from Edinburgh. They moved at the end of 1995, and I was able to visit them briefly just before Christmas. Then, at the beginning of the year, Yelena wrote to me to say that they had decided to apply for British Citizenship. Her letter read:

Very soon, in a weeks time, we may apply for citizenship. I thought it would not make much difference and that the most important thing was to be safe. But it is so very unpleasant to be a refugee - a person that does not properly belong to any of the countries. After the articles about the Russian spies, people spoke much about them, and it was so unpleasant to notice that they did not care much about the difference in the position of a spy and a refugee in this country. Maybe we are too sensitive and the best is not to pay any attention, but it is so hard!

Two weeks later Yelena sent their naturalisation forms for me to sign.
It's all behind us now

The experience of Yelena and Ivan provides an indication of just how important it is for a speedy decision to be made regarding a claim for asylum, and of the benefits of receiving Convention status (in particular family reunion). They are a remarkable couple, who have strived to overcome the difficulties they faced, but with Convention status they have been able to think ahead and plan for the future in a way that has, as yet, been denied to many of the other refugees I interviewed. There is no doubt that the greatest difference between, say, Ahmed and Ivan and Yelena, was the fact that they had received status relatively quickly and been joined by their daughter and Yelena's mother. In the following chapter I will discuss this time of waiting and uncertainty in terms of liminality, but for Yelena and Ivan, their liminal period (in terms of status) was over when I met them. Therefore they were able to share with me their experience of integration. Yelena rarely talked about how she felt during the period of estrangement from her daughter, and, during our first meeting when comment was made about this, Ivan quickly interjected and said, 'it's all behind us now'.

Although brief mention was made of the situation immediately before they had to leave St Petersburg, and of the first few months in this country, generally our conversations moved between Yelena's past (usually at my instigation), and their lives in the immediate present (which I believe Yelena was consciously doing in respect for my original question). In retrospect this question
probably had a much greater influence on what I was told than I had hoped or imagined (I had hoped that it was broad enough to encompass anything and everything that people wanted to say), but now I’m not so sure. Certainly Yelena rarely mentioned post-communist Russia - but I would suspect that this was not because she was disinterested or unconcerned, but because it was not what I had said I wanted to know.

Yelena and Ivan were, in many ways, a 'model case' of a successful asylum application. But yet what Yelena is able to convey is the sense of guilt and embarrassment she feels about being a refugee in this country. For example she is aware of the confusion between the images on television of refugees in Africa (which are designed to arouse sympathy and concern for 'those poor people in rags') and her experience as a refugee here, when she has often been made to feel unwelcomed, and that her motives for being here should be mistrusted. The passage I quoted from her letter indicates that although being safe was paramount, she felt strongly the need to rid herself of the refugee label by applying for British citizenship.

Conclusion
A brief comparison with Isodore will highlight the particular way in which Yelena and Ivan’s situation is very different; from a political, methodological and personal point of view. Without wanting to directly compare asylum claims, some generalisations about the political implications of claiming asylum from an 'Eastern Bloc' country are illustrated by the different
experiences of Yelena and Isodore. The legacy of the Cold War on attitudes towards those refugees coming to the West was highlighted in chapter 2, and Yelena's experience can be seen as part of that legacy (in that she received Convention status relatively quickly). The desire for western governments to make a political and ideological statement by accepting refugees from the 'Eastern Bloc' has since diminished, and this is reflected by Isodore's long wait to have a decision made on his asylum claim.

The implications of this political change, from a personal point of view, can be recognised in the ability of Ivan confidently to complete his PhD and gain employment, and the hesitancy of Isodore to commit himself to university study (and his future in Scotland). Isodore also wanted to be able to travel and to regain the independence of living on his own, but these were, for the moment, denied to him.

Methodologically Isodore approached the research as an opportunity to explore his feelings of exile, and this could be understood as part of our research bargain. As with other refugees who are here alone, the chance to voice thoughts and concerns about their situation, and explore how this may fit into their own life narratives, would appear to be few and far between. Yelena had, as she stated, had the opportunity to talk to Ivan about their situation, and her sense of confidence and understanding, regarding her feelings of being a refugee, did not therefore need to be explored in my company,
rather our meetings offered a further chance of incorporating them into her own narrative.

In the following chapter the feelings, experienced by all refugees during their wait for status and security of staying here, are explored by using the stages in a rite de passage.
CHAPTER SEVEN

AN UNLIMITED LIMINALITY: STRUCTURAL CONSTRAINTS AND REFUGEE EXPERIENCES

Introduction
My conversations with refugees conveyed an overwhelming impression of their feelings of being in-between and outside countries, status and relationships. In this chapter I will describe how these feelings stem from the particular structural milieu in which refugees are placed, and in the social relationships that these structures inform. The fusion of legislative procedures and the personal experiences of becoming a refugee will be presented following the stages of a rite de passage; by describing the processes of separation, liminality and aggregation and the resulting contradictions and incongruities of spatial and structural belonging. For example, many of the refugees who participated in this research are out of work and are experiencing acute isolation; they feel out of touch with Scottish society, often finding it difficult to meet and talk to Scottish people; they are out of time - often unable to deal with their past, or plan for their future while waiting for a decision by the Home Office that will provide them the security to stay in this country, and they are out of place - no longer where they were, and not yet able to feel part of where they are.
Although refugees may be perceived as occupying a place on the margins of our society, this produces a tension between their obvious presence and a post-modern understanding of marginality as a space of potential inclusion, strength, identity and power. Many groups within the UK have been, or may become, marginal at one time or another, with the fluidity of boundaries representing the possible manipulation and exploitation of power structures within society. Tsing (1994) suggests that marginality presents a paradox between the oppressive constraining quality of cultural exclusion and the creative potential of rearticulating, enlivening and rearranging the very social categories that peripheralize a group's existence (ibid. 279). But this 'creative potential' - however fleeting or sustainable it may be - ultimately depends upon the relations of power between the groups concerned.

The substantial shift in relations between the British government and those who may be affected by immigration legislation is highlighted by the measures which were contained in the 1995 Asylum and Immigration Bill which would have placed responsibility for checking the immigration credentials of new employees upon employers:

"An incentive, if ever there was one, for white employers to discriminate against black and Asian job applicants" (Guardian 25/10/95). With the government also under a barrage of criticism from some of the Tory press for playing 'the immigration card' (Daily Telegraph 16/11/95), these measures were subsequently 'watered down' even though, according to a Tory research director, similar moves had won votes in previous elections.
It is therefore noticeable that such moves against immigrants (which would inevitably affect many black or Asian's who are also British citizens) are now having to be (re) considered in the light of black and Asian voting intentions; with these marginal voices now challenging the centre and also showing its form (Okely 1991). As Hall notes:

Paradoxically, in our world marginality has become a powerful space, it is a space of weak power, but a space of power nonetheless. (Hall 1991: 34)

This perspective which embraces notions of hybridity and marginalisation as a necessary and constructive force, and identifies those on the margins identified as potential 'agents of change' (Hall 1991, Bhabha 1994). But what potential is there for refugees to become 'agents of change'? After crossing substantial hurdles to arrive here, and after being given temporary permission to stay while their asylum claims are being considered, refugees would appear to be at least guaranteed a place on the periphery of British society, but this is not the case. Unlike Simmel's 'stranger' and Park's 'marginal man' (1972), who were functionally considered as a necessary and integral part of society, refugees appear to be structurally excluded from the majority view and experience. For example, refugees are denied permission to work during their first six months in this country and are subjected to fingerprinting, and possible detention without ever having been charged with a crime - neither of which would apply to any other group

'As discussed in Shack W. and Skinner E.P. (1979)
in society. For refugees therefore, there is no paradox in their experience of marginality; it does not represent a sense of communitas with the creativity to empower and change their social and structural categories, rather it highlights their isolation and disempowerment.

Even without the paradox, however, the concept of marginality does not convey the intensity of uncertainty and emotional stress that is an integral part of refugees experiences during these first years. Although the physical journey of seeking refuge is over, the emotional and bureaucratic journey to acquire status and security is only just beginning. Those who apply for asylum in this country are kept waiting, usually for between one and two years (sometimes for much longer), for the Home Office to make a decision on whether or not they are to be allowed to stay. As indicated in the introduction, there are three decisions that the Home Office can make regarding a claim for asylum and although all asylum seekers experience the transitional stage of waiting for status for those who receive ELR their liminality will be extended by seven years until permanent permission to stay is possible. During these seven years the Home Secretary can, at any time, make the decision that those with ELR should return to their countries (when, or if, it is decided that such countries are now safe), automatically prolonging the period of insecurity for the refugee, and perpetuating the intensity and duration of their liminality. The numbers receiving ELR now far exceeds the numbers granted Convention status and, as the numbers of refusals have also increased substantially over the last few years, there is an added anxiety for a
growing number of asylum seekers whilst they await a decision. For example in 1982 59% of all those applying for asylum were granted Convention status\(^2\), but recent figures, quoted in both the Scotsman and Guardian newspapers (1/7/95), reveal that in 1994 only 2.57% of applications for asylum were granted Convention status. What these figures represent is the increasing level of insecurity experienced by increasing numbers of asylum seekers who now have a greater risk of being refused asylum or given ELR regardless of the validity of their claims for, as indicated in chapter 3, asylum decisions may often be based on political, rather than humanitarian concerns. During this time (while waiting for status or waiting for the seven years of ELR to elapse) refugees feel as if they are in some kind of suspended animation; in-between and outside the criteria of citizen or national; without the security of being able to stay for the foreseeable future, or between the status of asylum seeker and refugee - with all the uncertainty, disorientation and insecurity that accompanies such a liminal position.

Liminality, as the transitional stage in rite de passage, defines both time and space that is outside, or separate to, society and therefore provides a useful framework for the analysis that follows. The term 'liminality' was first used by Van Gennep (1960) when he described all rites of passage as having three stages: separation, the liminal phase, and aggregation. In order for a group or an individual to move from one stage in life to another

they must be detached from what went before, placed in an ambiguous situation that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state, and then be reaggregated or reincorporated into their new position. The ambiguity of the liminal phase highlights the particular situation faced by refugees as they find themselves no longer where they were, and not yet securely placed where they are. The definition of a refugee provided by Harrell-Bond and Voutira neatly encapsulates this position. They describe refugees as:

People who have undergone a violent 'rite' of separation and unless or until they are 'incorporated' as citizens into their host state (or returned to their state of origin) find themselves in 'transition', or in a state of liminality (1992: 7).

Turner (1969) further elaborates on the liminal phase outlined by Van Gennep by suggesting that: "The attributes of liminality are necessarily ambiguous ... Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between ..." (1969: 81) This transient stage can be recognised as an integral part of the refugee condition, but when this stage has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state, the consequences for remaining in it for a long period of time become considerable. If refugees do not know when, or if, they will be able to settle here, then their liminality becomes a negative and sometimes destructive force contradicting the idea that the process of liminality 'blends together homogeneity and comradeship' in a shared experience of communitas (Turner 1969: 82).
The potential power of marginality and the communitas of liminality depend upon a sense of group identity and cohesion that did not exist among the majority of refugees I interviewed. Because of the pervasiveness of the stigmatisation of refugees, individual refugees were understandably uneasy about openly declaring themselves as such, a situation which sometimes led to suspicion and avoidance not only other refugees, but also of those from their 'home' countries. So, although refugees can be perceived as marginal and liminal, both these concepts provide an incomplete and unsatisfactory understanding of individual refugees and the structural constraints under which they live. However, the stages in a rite de passage nonetheless provide a useful framework in which to locate both the individuals and the structures that affect them, and so I shall begin with the process of separation.

SEPARATION/DETACHMENT

The first phase of a rite de passage is characterised by separation and a detachment from what has gone before. However, although the circumstances of leaving and arriving may be anticipated, planned, unexpected, expected, dreaded or welcomed, the feelings and emotions at this time also become a catalyst for the tensions between past and present. Apart from Isodore, who described his feelings of confusion and apprehension as he travelled overland through former Yugoslavia, few refugees shared details of their actual journeys with me. For some the journeys were not actually part of becoming a refugee - seeking asylum was a decision that had to be made after travelling to this country - while for others
it appeared that this very real and tangible link between past and present could not be shared at this time: "I am here now, I don't even remember the journey" (Iraqi refugee). For those about to undergo a rite de passage there is often some obscuring of vision be it by the veil of a bride or new communicant, a blindfold or the natural darkness of the night (Turner 1969: 84), and it would appear that many refugees cope with their separation by 'closing their eyes', or by experiencing a temporary 'blindness' which prevents them from being able to visualise or describe their 'journeys'. Several refugees told me of their initial difficulties in 'seeing' and understanding what was going on around them; for example a young Bosnian refugee told me that he recalled his first few days in Edinburgh when the wind was so fierce that it made his eyes water and he couldn't see where he was going.

When I asked refugees about their first recollections of being here I was struck by the frequent references to the weather, and slowly became aware of how this was a poignant metaphor for their situation at the time of arrival. Turner describes how the heat or coldness of the body is often an indication of the transition about to take place (1969: 84) and when I read The Enigma of Arrival by VS Naipaul I was struck by his recollections of moving to a new place:

If I say it was winter when I arrived at the house in the river valley, it was because I remembered the mist, the four days of rain and mist that hid my surroundings from me and answered my anxiety at the time, anxiety about my work, and this move to a new place (1987: 11-12).
Yelena told me that after they had made the decision to apply for asylum she immediately felt so very cold, because they had only brought summer clothes with them, and they were not prepared for the weather here. Georgis also told me how one of the first things he did in Glasgow was to buy a 'thick' jacket to keep him warm. However, not only was the weather mentioned with reference to arriving, but it was also evoked as a memory of home. References to the weather here were often of the coldness which kept people indoors and isolated the refugee from 'Scottish society', so the weather 'at home' usually referred to warm, welcoming and comforting heat. For example Georgis would often reminisce about the warm balmy nights in his home town, when he would spend hours sitting in a pavement cafe, content to chat to friends and watch the world go by, Farhad recalled the warm weather in Iraq and the many barbecues he had shared with friends. Yet the weather was not only evoked for pleasant memories; Bibiya constantly referred to the 'oppressive heat' of Baghdad which she said gave her headaches, and said she much prefers the coolness of Scotland.

Refugees experience physical and emotional separation as they change both country and status, although these don't necessarily happen at the same time. Over 60% of claims for asylum in the UK are made by people who have already passed through immigration controls, and there are a number of very understandable reasons for this. For example; they may not have known that they could claim asylum at the 'port of entry'; they may have been too
traumatised; they may not speak English; they may want to contact friends or legal representatives for advice before making their claim. There are also those whose 'home' circumstances drastically change while they are here as visitors or students, who make their claim for asylum from within the UK. However, for all those who claim asylum the decision is traumatic, as the following stories reveal:

**Ahmed** came to Glasgow from Somalia in 1993 to study for a one year postgraduate diploma in computer technology. Towards the end of his course the situation in Mogadishu deteriorated, and he was warned by his father not to return, or he would be killed. Ahmed only had funding and a visa for the duration of his course, so he had no choice but to apply for asylum. Within these few months Ahmed's circumstances changed drastically. He was no longer an independent postgraduate student who was looking forward to seeing his wife, children and family again; he handed over his Somalian passport to the Home Office; his course ended; he lost all contact with his family and he became dependent upon state benefits. For several months after this, as the situation in Mogadishu continued to deteriorate, he was unable to contact his family. He did not know if they were dead or alive.

**Isodore** had been planning to leave Croatia for some time. The situation in 1990 was tense and young men were being called up to join the army. As a pacifist, with a Serbian father and a Croatian mother, Isodore felt he had no choice but to leave, and he began secretly planning for his departure. He knew a Scottish couple living in his town, and they gave him an address of a friend in Edinburgh. His overland journey was punctuated by checkpoints, and he could have been arrested at any time. When he arrived in the UK he was immediately put into detention because he did not have a valid entry visa. He spoke only a little English and didn't know what was happening to him. He was worried and scared and it was only after two days he was told,
by a fellow detainee, that he could apply for asylum. He was then released and caught the next train to Scotland.

Ivan and Yelena lived in the suburbs of St Petersburg and ran an 'out of school club' for about eighty children, where they bred and sold exotic birds. When the Mafia demanded money from them they refused to pay, and a frightening process of physical and emotional intimidation began. The intimidation was intense and unremitting and eventually culminated in the Mafia breaking into the school rooms, killing all the birds and destroying all the books and equipment. Completely devastated, Yelena and Ivan decided to come to Britain for a couple of months to see if the situation would 'settle', so they left their three year old daughter with Yelena's mother, packed a small suitcase and left. After staying with a friend in London for two months Yelena's mother told them that the Mafia were still looking for them, and that it would be dangerous for them to return. They were running out of money and their visa was due to expire, so they came to Edinburgh and applied for asylum.

Bibiya now lives in Dundee. She had been tortured by the Iraqi authorities who wanted her to give them information about her brothers who had escaped to the West. She left Iraq and began living in Scotland with her Scottish/Iraqi husband, but when they divorced she had no independent right to live here and risked being deported back to Iraq, so she applied for asylum.

The separation process in a rite de passage is characterised by the detachment from what went before. For refugees this is, of course, an emotional as well as a physical journey and it begins in this country by the surrendering of your passport to the Home Office. The connections and disconnection's associated with 'giving up' a passport are a complex mixture of the extremely
personal and the overtly political. For some, such as Bibiya, her Iraqi passport symbolised a regime that tortured her and an allegiance to a country that she wanted to forget; all she really wanted to talk about was how her life would be so much better when she had a British passport. For some Bosnian and Sudanese refugees their passports were a tangible and explicit statement of their 'belonging' to a particular country and they were adamant that there should be a clear division between allegiances to a nation and allegiance to a state. For example a young Bosnian refugee said: "I did not want to give up my passport and why should I? I am here because of the war, not because I do not love my country." But, as a symbol of detachment from what went before, the surrendering of a passport is something that every refugee experiences - a emotional journey they all have to make. However, the frequent reticence and apparent inability to talk about these very direct and immediate links with what connected them to their immediate past, are understandable when refugees are also faced with the uncertainty of their new situation.

For refugees their disorientation takes on a particular poignancy in the confusion of emotion, bureaucracy and day to day survival. The initial vulnerability and reliance upon others is described by Eva Hoffman as she writes about her arrival in Canada as a Polish refugee: "We are in Montreal, in an echoing, dark train station, and we are huddled on a bench waiting for someone to give us some guidance" (1989: 99). This represents a vivid reminder of all that has been left behind as some of the resources and knowledge that previously guided them
through their lives have now become painfully redundant, and refugees have to rely on others to help lead them through the maze of personal and practical issues that are necessary for their survival at this time.

The above examples give some indication of the process of separation from being a citizen in one country to becoming a refugee in another. However, the magnitude and consequences of such a decision only becomes apparent when refugees become enmeshed in liminality.

LIMINALITY/TRANSITION/WAITING

For refugees the period of liminality can be characterised by 'waiting for status', or by the uncertainty and insecurity of receiving ELR. But, during the first few weeks they must deal with the procedures necessary for them to claim asylum, find shelter and claim basic welfare benefits. For the foreseeable future their attention and energy will be on surviving and adapting to the considerable cultural changes and demands that face them on a day to day basis. The individual refugees interviewed had told different stories in response to my question: 'What is it like to be a refugee here?' and I was struck by the reticence many of them displayed towards talking about either their past, or their expectations for the future. So, although I have subdivided this section in order to consider refugee experiences of being out of work, out of touch, out of time and out of place, the pervading theme of being dislocated from the past, present or future is present throughout. During the first few weeks many refugees recalled spending little time on anything other
than filling out forms and finding a place to live, with these structural hurdles temporarily suppressing any other emotions.

When the refugees have handed over their passports, the Home Office sends them a Political Asylum Questionnaire (PAQ) which must be completed and returned within 4 weeks. The completion of this questionnaire is sometimes a very private and personal act but for some it may involve the use of interpreters, translators and lawyers. In the PAQ the refugee must give all the information they can to support their claim for asylum - a difficult and often traumatic task. This procedure may be the first (and only) time the refugee has to recall, in full, the events which have forced them to seek asylum. For many refugees who are here alone, it would appear that the pain of such recollections are then quickly buried. The only refugees who shared any of the reasons for their need for asylum with me were Nasrin, who (like many of the refugees in Gilad's study), had been living in two refugee camps before coming to Scotland, and who had therefore 'repeated' her story on several occasions; Yelena, who was able to talk things through with her husband, and Bibiya who understood our relationship as that between sisters. Georgis, Isodore and Farhad alluded to forced conscription, but gave no details of their particular situations; others remained silent. Lieblich describes the significance of listening to Kibbutz members as being promoted to that of 'witnessing' when they 'revealed' their pain and regrets and, by so doing, attempted to 'correct' what went before with the help of later wisdom (1996: 178). For refugees, their
precarious position in the asylum process and the trauma of having to recall such recent events, meant that for them, the PAQ could be their only witness.

During this time refugees also have to negotiate their way around the British welfare bureaucracy to secure a basic income and a place to live as they rarely arrive with financial resources of their own. Although many refugees are highly qualified skilled people who do not want to be dependent upon state benefits they have no choice because they are not allowed to work at all for the first six months. Unfortunately there is no co-ordinated strategy to assisting refugees during their first few months in this country and this has been recognised in a recent report which states that the early involvement of expert fieldworkers providing advice on legal and welfare rights is crucial to protect the rights and independence of refugees in the face of increasingly complex official procedures (Walsh and McFarland 1994: 48). The need for material and psychological support during these first months is therefore exacerbated by the lack of any overall co-ordinated structure, and this causes great hardship to those already in a very vulnerable position.

The necessity of securing a home and welfare benefits often places refugees in stressful and confusing situations at a time when they are at their most vulnerable. For example:

Yelena had a distinct advantage by being able to speak English, but she, like many others, was going through a very traumatic time and found it almost
impossible to understand what was happening. She told me she was so distressed that she had to force herself to go to all the offices to get Income Support and Housing Benefit. The Refugee Council helped fill in the forms, but could not accompany her to the offices. As her English was good, she was not provided with an interpreter. But Yelena didn't know the system - she found it very complicated and confusing, and consequently had to go to the same office many times which she found dispiriting. Often she did not understand what was happening or why. "I was very upset about my daughter who we had left behind. I wanted her to be with us. I missed her so much. I don't know how we managed during that time because I was in such a terrible state."

However, applying for assistance is only the first hurdle, for until a decision is made by the Home Office refugees are only eligible for 90% of the normal Income Support rate. The skill and fortitude needed to live on less than the basic level of benefits, which are seen by many as inadequate when paid at the full rate, is considerable, and this puts a strain on refugees as they also try to come to terms with the trauma of leaving family and friends behind. Although many of those I talked to were surprisingly resilient and knowledgeable about how to live very cheaply, this information takes time to acquire as they try to adapt and adjust to a different way of life. Many of them told me that until they discovered second hand clothes shops and discount food stores they were unable to keep warm or feed themselves adequately. A single mother from Iraq told me:

I cannot afford to buy anything new. All our clothes are second hand, but for many months I
didn't know I could do this because in my country there are no such shops.

The bureaucratic labyrinth can be a minefield for refugees. A Sudanese mother of two school age children told me how she frequently went without food herself so that she could pay for school meals for her children and it was only after talking to another mother at the school gates that she became aware that she was eligible for free school meals making a tremendous difference to her weekly expenditure. But some refugees are so isolated that any help or support is difficult to locate:

Ann is a young African student who is living in the north of Scotland with her sister. She is studying part-time at the local college. Not long after I met them Ann told me that her income support had been withdrawn because she had been confused and mistakenly filled in a form declaring that she was studying full time. The criteria for claiming income support stipulates that only part-time study is allowed and so her money was stopped. Ann soon realised her mistake, and approached the college for help. The college wrote to the Benefits Agency informing them that she was indeed only studying part-time but she still did not receive her entitlement. After several weeks Ann contacted me in desperation saying she had no idea what to do "They keep telling me that I will get my money soon, but it does not arrive and I am so desperate and worried that I cannot concentrate on my college work." I contacted the local Welfare Rights Office and asked them to take up the case, and Ann was paid her money within a few days.

Ann had only survived because she was living with her sister who was able to help. But, as her sister is also on Income Support and has three children, the whole family had suffered considerable hardship which lasted
for over two months. There is no Refugee Council office in their town and she had not known where to turn for help, or indeed what help was available to her. During these first months in the country asylum seekers are almost constantly occupied with their claim for asylum, sorting out their welfare benefits, finding accommodation and dealing with the practicalities of living in a new country. However, after the first few months their lives may begin to slot into some kind of routine, and they then begin the wait for the Home Office to give them permission to stay here. It was during this time, after the initial bureaucratic activity began to subside, that refugees began to try to locate themselves in the present by trying to make friends, find work, continue their education and 'get to know' the community with whom they were now living. Ahmed had only been here for eight months when we began to meet - but all the others had been here for between 1 and four years - all of them struggling to comprehend and come to terms with their own particular situation. I use the word liminality to describe this time of being 'in-between'; this is how two refugees described how they felt:

Everyday I wait and listen for the postman. Everyday I think maybe tomorrow, yes, it will probably be tomorrow. (Iraqi asylum seeker after two years waiting for status)

I know many others who came after me who have their status now. Its been four years, four years waiting and waiting and waiting. My body is burning up and I take aspirins every day to stop the headaches. I have written to the Home Office, but all they say is wait some more - but I don't know how long I can wait, I am burning up inside. (Sudanese asylum seeker)
Both these refugees were men; both were unemployed and both of them were living in a precarious liminality.

Out of work

Asylum seekers are not allowed to work for the first six months. After six months they can apply to the Home Office for permission to work, but authorisation for this can take up to twelve months (Carey-Wood et al 1995: 29). Refugees are often skilled people who want to work and be independent: a high proportion are highly qualified people, many with university degrees and professional backgrounds (ibid. ix). Research in Lothian Region in 1994 has shown that 66% of refugees interviewed had either a degree, postgraduate, or professional qualifications (Walsh and McFarland 1994: 25). Yet unemployment amongst refugees is at a higher level than that experienced by the indigenous population: in Lothian Region two thirds of refugees interviewed were currently unemployed (Walsh and McFarland 1994: 25). Like Gold, writing about Vietnamese refugees in the United States, I found little evidence to suggest that their difficulties in finding work were due to their own attitudes or behaviours, rather refugees prized decent jobs and employment opportunities offering a living wage and stability and these were pursued energetically (Gold 1992: 114). Trying to understand the frustration and incomprehension felt by refugees as they attempted to adjust to not working I was reminded of a statement made to me by a English 'incomer' who had recently moved to a small Scottish island: "I came here prepared to do anything, but I was not prepared for there being nothing
to do." Although this is not directly comparable to the situation experienced by refugees it does indicate the incomprehension of not being able to work, as many refugees came from cultures where 'unemployment' and having 'nothing to do' were unheard of.

Yet employment, as suggested by Jahoda, is a person's strongest link with reality, demanding a pragmatic orientation to the environment which precludes the excesses of fantasy and emotionality (quoted in Breakwell 1986: 53). For refugees who are desperate to have this link with their new reality, unemployment not only prevents them from regaining their status and identity as employed (only 2% were unemployed in their home country - McFarland and Walsh 1994: 24), but it also provides a barrier that prevents them accessing what they see as 'mainstream' society. In a recent report on the settlement of refugees in the UK it was identified that employment is the most important element in refugee resettlement (Carey-Wood et al 1995: 29). It was also acknowledged that in the first years here large numbers of refugees in work experience substantial and sudden downward mobility, and a failure to gain an economic level for which they feel they are qualified and that they might have been expected to achieve (ibid. 99). It is not surprising therefore that employment is of such great concern as refugees struggle to locate themselves personally and professionally in their new situation.

However, apart from the possibility of discrimination and racism, there are several structural and procedural constraints that also prevent refugees from getting work.
Isodore has been waiting for status for three years now. He recently applied for a job for which he was well qualified, and he had many years experience (see chapter 5). However, without status he could give no assurance that he had permission to stay in this country and he was unable to supply references or proof of his qualifications because he was unable to contact his previous employer in former Yugoslavia. However even having Convention status and accepted professional qualifications does not mean that refugees are allowed to 'play on an even playing field' as Peter's situation illustrates:

**Peter** is from Tajikistan, and has Convention status. He had been offered several jobs in his profession as oil engineer. The jobs involved working for long periods of time out of the UK, but because of travel restrictions placed upon refugees (only 90 days travel per year allowed out of the UK) he was unable to accept these offers of work. He was frustrated and angry when he told me: "I want to pay my taxes here and give Britain something back, so why do they have this stupid rule which stops me working?"

The Refugee Council in Edinburgh conducted research into the unemployment of twelve refugees doctors in Scotland and found a 'catch 22' situation preventing them from being able to use their valuable skills here:

At the moment refugee doctors are caught in a vicious circle of needing to do exams and training which other doctors either get through their jobs or pay for privately. Refugee doctors cannot afford to pay privately, and cannot access jobs because they cannot get training (Reiss 1994: 12).
I spoke to one refugee doctor who told me he had tried to get a job as an auxiliary nurse just to be able to work in a hospital, but he had not been successful, and he told me: "Every day that I am not a doctor I am being destroyed."

Questions of gender differentials in refugee employment have not been addressed in Scottish research projects', but national statistics indicate that 52% of refugee women declared themselves as economically active as compared to 41% for refugee men'. Although I only interviewed a small number of refugees, the numbers of women who were studying or in some form of paid employment, was substantially higher than that of the men. Eastmond (1993) states that for working class Chilean refugee women in the USA, their social worlds expanded as they gained a broader repertoire of roles, including a greater participation in economic and other public spheres (ibid. 48), but for the women I talked to it appeared to be the case that they either had skills in areas where work was available, or they were more amenable to retraining or working below their capacity (but none of the women were highly trained medical doctors or vets, as were several of the men). For example, a young female Russian refugee, having completed several additional courses in translation and interpreting, is now working as a waitress, and an African nurse with many years experience is working in an old peoples home - whereas all the men I talked to were either unemployed, in further education, or employed in

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1 Walsh, McFarland and Hampton (1994)
jobs comparable to what they did before. However, if refugees are to work at all they often have to accept employment well below their personal and professional capabilities and they are often rudely exploited. Nasrin and Georgis both felt unhappy with their employment experiences:

Nasrin, who had been an office manager, and was now a 'mothers helper' told me; "I don't mind looking after the child, but my brain is sleeping."

Georgis told me how he had accepted a job as a car valet because he 'needed to feel like a normal human being'. However, he was bitterly disappointed when, after working for a week, he was paid well below the agreed wage and when he confronted his employer about this he was told to 'shut up, or leave'. He had worked hard and felt cheated when the employer refused to pay him what he was due, so he left.

However, for many refugees who are unemployed, the dream of having a job of any kind takes on a mythical magic that appears to have more to do with the 'excesses of fantasy and emotionality' than the practicalities and realities of what having a job can actually mean for them. Employment is a crucial element of resettlement and therefore the expectations of having a job often become a panacea for all other problems. Many refugees would tell me that their lives would be very different if they were employed, for example: "I would not feel so lonely and depressed if I had a job": "If I had a job I would learn about Scottish life and have lots of friends"; "If I get this job (part-time temporary job in

'The exploitation of asylum seekers by some employers was highlighted in an episode of Undercover Britain - a Channel 4 Production (1996)
a local department store) then I can save up and bring my mother over to live with me."

The contact and feeling of inclusion that comes from employment would, for some of the younger refugees, be possible through the continuation of their higher education. However, for many younger refugees their education has often been disrupted by having to flee, and it is difficult, if not impossible for them to continue their education here because of restrictions limiting them to part-time study, which is usually not available in the subjects/areas that they have studied before. Full-time courses are available, but until a refugee has lived in this country for more than three years they would be charged 'overseas student rates' which are considerably higher than those rates charged to home students and those with Convention status. The plight of young students can be illustrated by the recent publicity given to two Bosnian evacuees living in Edinburgh. Both have completed their schooling in the UK, but cannot continue at college or university because of their status and the subsequent funding implications. A local newspaper highlighted their case; "In common with all Bosnian asylum seekers studying in the UK, Mirela and Miro do not qualify for a grant because the Government refuses to give them refugee status." (Herald & Post 8/6/95).

By looking at employment and education it can be recognised that the structural constraints of waiting for status or of receiving ELR influence, perpetuate and exacerbate liminality in both these key areas. This then
has considerable repercussions on the day to day experiences of refugees who are often isolated and lonely. Although much stress is placed on the value of having family members around to help adjust and settle into a new culture, refugees who are living here with relatives are not necessarily less isolated from the community than those who are living alone. I talked to five refugees who were here with members of their family who nonetheless experienced considerable isolation. Breakwell states that such isolation can also have massively deleterious consequences for the families concerned as self isolation tends to be accompanied by the desire to restrict the movements and friendships of others in the household (1986: 112). ' This was indeed the case for some family members of asylum seekers as the following examples illustrate:

A teenage daughter of a refugee, was talking about school, when she told me; "I don't meet friends after school because that would mean my mother was here alone - she doesn't have my company all day, so I must stay with her in the evenings."

A Ukrainian refugee who was here with her husband indicated that they led very isolated lives, and told me; "We are lucky because we have each other. We do not need other people".

Over half of the refugees participating in the research lived alone, and this reflects the general situation for refugees in the UK who have been here for less than ten years and have, as yet, been unable to have their families join them. It has been recognised that those

'Breakwell was writing about those who were unemployed
From stress, whether psychological or physical, are more likely to cope effectively if they have a large network of social contacts (Breakwell 1986: 110), but refugees have usually been separated from their family and friends and are therefore estranged from such networks. As the number of those eligible for family reunion declines, the problem of isolation will inevitably increase. This is a worrying prospect as already in Lothian Region almost half of the refugees interviewed were already living alone¹, compared to 30% nationally². Many refugees had previously lived with their extended families, and find it very difficult to adjust to living on their own as Farhad's story illustrates.

Farhad is from Iraq - a young man in his early twenties who, when I first met him, had only been in this country for eight months. Although he speaks English well, and wants to make friends, he is finding it very difficult to do so. Until he came to Scotland he had lived with his extended family, and had a busy social life: "I was never alone as my family were always around me. Every night I would be with friends, and we would have a barbecue or visit each others houses." Initially he lodged with a Scottish family and was very grateful for the way in which they welcomed him into their home. He did not want to talk about why he had left. He has since shared several flats with other students, but these arrangements have never lasted longer than a couple of months. He now lives alone.

Farhad frequently told me how much he misses the company of his family and friends and although he realises that he cannot recreate his family situation here he is looking for a close

¹In Lothian Region 43% of refugees interviewed were living alone (Walsh and McFarland 1994: 8)
relationship with someone. Farhad has tried really hard to make friends. He regularly visited his local pub, even though nobody spoke to him at all for several weeks, but his persistence paid off when the other regulars began to greet him, although he admitted that he was unlikely to find friendship there. He often talks about trying to find a girlfriend; "someone I can spend time with and talk too". He answered a personal advertisement in the hope of meeting someone with whom he could have a relationship. But that didn't work out either. He attended a job club, but was hurt and angry when a night out with one of his colleagues only resulted in this person asking for a large loan. He is confused and frustrated as he wants so much to have a circle of friends around him. However, he feels incredibly lonely and his confidence and enthusiasm for going out and trying to meet people is slowly ebbing away. He told me that he appreciated our meetings because I was the only one he could talk to about how depressed he felt.

Georgis had been in Scotland for two years and is still waiting for a decision from the Home Office. One of the first questions he asked was if I knew of any other refugees from Macedonia because as far as he knew he was the only one in Scotland. He said that he found it difficult to make friends here because he felt he can't joke or be himself in English; "I am a different person here; I cannot be myself in another language." He also told me that sometimes he feels so lonely that he begins to think that being in prison may be preferable, because then his parents and friends would be able to visit him. He then gave me a wry smile and said "But then I see some sense and I know I have to stay here."

The problems of isolation are therefore considerable and have led a small number of refugees to contemplate returning to dangerous or unknown situations. Georgis felt desperate enough to consider returning to Macedonia even though he would certainly face imprisonment, as preferable to the feelings of isolation and loneliness
that he was experiencing here. This would indeed be a
desperate solution, but it is not unheard of; a
Ukrainian couple who had been here for just over a year,
and who had not yet received status from the Home Office,
recently returned to a very uncertain future.

Out of touch
Being out of touch for refugees would appear to revolve
around two important issues; the aversion (by some)
towards making contact with people from their home
country and the perceived difficulties in making contact
with Scottish people and culture.

Without specialised and established refugee support
groups it may be very difficult for some refugees to feel
secure about contacting others from their country. This
concern reflected not only their precarious position in
this country, but the possible danger for relatives and
family who had been left behind. I was often told that
there were 'government' spies here; an Iraqi refugee told
me they would never consider meeting other Iraqis because
"Saddam has eyes everywhere, and I must not let him see
me". A Russian refugee also told me that when they met
other Russians they lied and said that they were here
'studying' or here on 'business' because they dare not
admit that they were refugees and have their
circumstances scrutinised by those they were meeting.
It is therefore not surprising that there was
considerable suspicion among some refugees about
socialising with others from their country, which
consequently exacerbated their liminality and isolation.
Because of the stigmatisation and demonization of refugees many refugees were understandably hesitant about telling anybody who they were and why they were in Scotland. This secrecy and hesitation often prevented them from being able to share this important part of their lives with other people and sometimes even stopped them from socialising. For example Isodore said how much he disliked being asked about where he was from and would avoid some social situations because of this, and Bibiya told me she would no longer go to her local shop because the shopkeeper had asked her how long she had been living here: “I don’t want people to know these things.” Yet this need, or choice, to keep themselves separate from others appeared to be countered by an equal need to find a way of legitimising their presence here. Several refugees expressed a desire to know and understand ‘Scottishness’, and consequently felt confused and frustrated when this knowledge appeared to evade them. It was as if this knowledge would provide them with a way of legitimating their presence here; a ‘key’ that would help alleviate the confusion and explain the uncertainties they were experiencing.

‘How do I get to meet Scottish people’ was the question I was most frequently asked. Expectations of making contact with ‘local people’ were seen as thwarted by the apparent inevitability of meeting ‘only’ foreigners at English language classes or by meeting ‘only’ refugees by attending the social evenings and employment training sessions organised by the Scottish Refugee Council. It is therefore not surprising to note that although I regularly turned up to the social functions organised by
the Scottish Refugee Council they were, on the whole, poorly attended by refugees. Only one of the refugees I was interviewing ever attended, and when I asked others why they didn't take this opportunity to socialise and meet people I was told that either they felt they had 'nothing in common' with other refugees, or that they did not want to be part of a 'large group of foreigners'. A Russian refugee told me "Why should I go? I do not want to meet other refugees, I want to meet Scottish people".

However, it would appear that, for some, this search for 'Scottishness' resolved itself over time. Yelena had been here longer than most of the others I was interviewing, and she told me that she was beginning to feel comfortable in Edinburgh because she could now walk along some streets and 'not notice' anything about them: "They had become so familiar, they had become part of me." And Nasrin proudly explained that she no longer minded sitting at home and watching the television night after night, because that is what Scottish people did.

Out of time

Being out of time, with broken connections with what went before and what might be expected in the future, is an integral part of liminality. Some feelings of isolation and loneliness can be understood as part of the transitional stage of refugeeness, but this would appear to be particularly acute in situations where refugees have become separated from both links with the past and links to the future. For example:
Bibiya is a Muslim and when she first arrived in Scotland she had a small circle of Muslim friends, went regularly to Friday prayers, wore a veil covering her head and did not drink alcohol. When her circumstances changed and she made the decision to stay in Scotland she began to discard what she considered were links and reminders of her past. She stopped going to prayers, discarded the veil, began to enjoy gin and tonic, consequently becoming estranged from her Muslim friends. She told me "I want to be more Scottish", and began speaking with a strong Scottish accent. When we talked about her loneliness she felt that she had created an unfilled void in her life; no longer part of the Muslim community and not yet part of the Scottish one, with both identities ultimately proving unsatisfactory. Her attitude towards the Muslim community was one of frustration in that she felt there was a rigid adherence to dogma that she had not previously experienced; "They are so strict here - not like at home." Her attitude towards the future was also frustrated by her feelings of isolation and disorientation.

Bibiya was not the only one who felt that to spend time with people from your 'home' country was ultimately unsatisfactory and confusing. A young refugee from Central Africa told me that when she went to a party, given by another African refugee, how disappointed she was to see no-one 'with a white face'. She insisted that she was proud of her culture, and that she would be returning to Africa as soon as was possible. But she could not understand why her African friend would, as she saw it, only want to be with other Africans to talk about Africa.

Out of place
For many refugees there is a tension between belonging to a group that constructs and reconstructs a strong,
focused identity as a means of support and solidarity, and the desire to emerge from the transitional ambiguity of their position here. This tension is highlighted by Malkki (1995) who discusses how, for Hutu refugees in Tanzania, the local, everyday circumstances of life in exile influence identity and allegiance in particular and specific ways. For those Hutu refugees who live in designated camps there is an emotional strength and vigour that comes from incorporating their 'refugeeness' into the 'mythico history' that constantly circulates throughout the camp (Mishamo) in order to consolidate a sense of Hutu nationness and identity (ibid. 3). However, there are also Hutu refugees living in the nearby town of Kigoma, who Malkki describes as 'borrowing' multiple and shifting identities in order to assist their assimilation (ibid. 3). By comparing camp refugees with those residing in the local township Malkki highlights the manipulation of identity in response to particular social pressures:

Whereas people in Mishamo readily and spontaneously introduced themselves as 'refugees', those in Kigoma did not do so. Indeed at the outset of the research it was singularly difficult to locate informants at all. Many denied that they were refugees - a pose made credible by the plurality of identities available. (1995: 158)

In Mishamo, one's self-identification was always made in reference to the large collectively of 'a people' in exile. Both the individual and the collectively were categorically defined (ibid. 156).

The articulation and rearticulation of group identity in the camp results in an idea of 'pureness' of identity...
which is formed in opposition to those Hutu refugees who live in the local town. This dialectic between pure and impure comes from the camp refugees perception of the town refugees as diluting their Hutuness by denying their refugee status (and sometimes their Hutu identity), and by being prepared to compromise and adapt in order to live and work in the town. Although I was unable to make similar direct comparisons, the experience of refugees living and working in the cities of Scotland would certainly attest to the contrasting elements, of visible/invisible, pure/impure, inside/outside, disparate/corporate as critically impinging upon the identities so formed. For example Nasrin took great pleasure in being mistaken as Greek or Spanish (when she was in fact from Iraq), and she frequently told me; "I never tell anyone that I am a refugee." The characteristics and problems associated with contacting and researching refugees who constantly borrow and change identities is one that I can empathise with.

For example, all refugees in Scotland are invisible as refugees, although they may readily be identified as foreigners by their accent and/or colour. Many refugees therefore chose to keep this part of themselves to themselves, or at least out of the public domain as illustrated by the strategies adopted to blur and disguise this part of their identity. The 'pureness' of an individual refugee in terms of a shared notion of national identity and 'refugeeness' was therefore difficult to locate among individual refugees, as evident in both my research and among the Hutu refugees in Kigoma. Yet the pressures to conform to group
allegiances (however tenuous) were often present; Bibiya was constantly chided by her brother for no longer wearing the veil, and Isodore told me how angry a Croat friend had been when he (Isodore) had answered the phone to him in English. Both examples highlight the sensitivity of Bibiya and Isodore to such comments and shows the situational and relational specificity of their position vis-à-vis the choices that they can make. Most of the refugees who participated in my research avoided contact with larger groups and were not part of ethnic/national networks. If such contact had been tried or considered the reasons for rejection were similar to those expressed by Bibiya i.e. the others were perceived to be dogmatic, inflexible and seen to represent the past rather than the future.

However liminality is also inextricably linked to the relationship and connectedness (or lack of it) that people have towards particular places, and I find Augé's (1995) idea of 'non place' a useful basis on which to further examine the transitional position of refugees. Augé describes non place as devoid of relations, history or identity. The examples he gives are of airports, hotel chains, shanty towns, train stations, refugee camps, motorways and supermarkets that he sees as representing the 'proliferation of transit points and temporary abodes' (1995: 78). Non places are separate from our normal sphere of interaction and communication with each other and they embrace an anonymity that can be derived from the shedding of all usual determinants, therefore incurring both solitude and similitude; Augé gives the example of an airline passenger who is freed
from the weight of his baggage and everyday responsibilities as he rushes into the duty free and silently watches the monitor for boarding instructions (1995: 101).

Although Augé is suggesting that we all move in and out of non places with increasing regularity, for refugees their liminality suggests that both emotionally and physically they may find any relation to place stretched and distorted at this time. As Mallki indicates the refugee camp (a non place in Augé’s terms) can play a vital role in the ordering and reordering of identity by incorporating and utilising the transitional nature of non place, turning it into a repository and a catalyst for history, relations and identity. However, for the individual and isolated refugee there is a paradox of non-place, recognised by Augé, which is particularly pertinent for refugees; “a foreigner, lost in a country he does not know, can feel at home there only in the anonymity (and multinationalist familiarity) of motorways, service stations, big stores or hotel chains” (1995: 106). I have two examples from my field work that supports this:

Ahmed made the following comment to me in relation to his feelings of 'otherness' in Scotland: "It is when I go to Kings Cross railway station that I really feel at home, it is good to see so many other black faces around". This not only poignantly illustrates the isolation felt by so many refugees in Scotland, but, by 'feeling at home' in a railway station, he was highlighting the temporary, transient, 'inbetweeness' of the refugee experience.
Bibiya used to regularly spend many hours in the lounge of a large city centre hotel; "I like it because I can feel comfortable here." She initially said this was because the coffee was cheap, but then told me that the people here were 'cosmopolitan', and she said: "It is not a local place - I feel uncomfortable in local places."

Such situations highlight the security of not having relationships with those around you for as suggested by Augé there is a sense of liberation in non-places that promotes a welcome sense of silent communitas - especially if those around you appear 'familiar' (as felt by the African refugee) or you feel you are sharing a transient place (as felt by Bibiya). However, while this relation to place may illustrate the position of refugees in the present it does not appear to provide an indication or expectation of the future as it does for those in refugee camps or for pilgrims.

Yamba (1992 and 1995) describes how West African pilgrims understand their particular relation to place as providing legitimisation for life in the present and for the future. This is not dissimilar to the position of Hutu refugees in the camp, where being a refugee becomes comparable to that of being a pilgrim as they both emphasise the transitional nature of such an identity and use it to legitimise the future: "If the past makes us what we are, it is the notion of the future that transforms us into what we are to become" (1992: 109). Yamba highlights how the pilgrims from west Africa may spend many years settled in one place, (he writes specifically about those who have reached Sudan) on their journey towards Mecca, and of the many who never complete
their pilgrimage. Yet the pilgrims perceive themselves and are perceived by the host country/village as those 'en route' - even though they may marry, bring up children, work and live in the same place for many years. Being a pilgrim has considerable emotional kudos, which needs to be balanced against the structural and social tensions that are inherent in the transient nature of such a position. Being a refugee in Scotland has no such kudos - either personally or socially - it is a liminality that is endured, not embraced. For refugees here their 'present' can no longer be simply envisaged as a break or bonding with the past and the future, no longer a synchronic presence; their proximate self-presence, their public image, comes to be revealed for its discontinuities, its inequalities, its minorities.

Aggregation
The position for almost all the refugees I talked to was of being 'stuck' in the waiting period that prevented them from planning for the future, or feeling secure in the present. The reaggregation of those involved in rites de passage is expected and planned, and their liminality is carefully controlled and time limited. But this is not the case for refugees as their liminality can last for months or years and is entirely out of their control. To accept Harrell-Bond and Voutira's definition of a refugee they are indeed liminal, and will stay liminal until they have the security of knowing that they can stay here indefinitely. At the time of writing (March 1996) the position of Isodore, Ahmed, Yelena and Bibiya was as follows:
Isodore has now been here over three years and has still not received status. His frustration and anger about this was growing, but was deflected a little when he was accepted to do the part-time Access course at the University of Edinburgh. His course ends the summer of 1996, but he told me he was not sure if he would be able to commit himself to a university course at this particular time.

Ahmed received ELR six months after we first met. He was initially thrilled to have status, but soon became angry and depressed when he realised that ELR did not entitle him to family reunion. "How can I settle here when my wife and children are in another country?" He registered for a part-time word processing course, but was finding it increasingly difficult to motivate himself and has increasing periods of severe depression. I have had no contact with him since he began this course in September 1993.

Bibiya had already received ELR when we first met. She did have a part-time job for a couple of months but her health suffered (she has serious mental health problems resulting from her torture), and she had to leave. She is now unemployed, and counting the days until she can apply for British citizenship and arrange for her mother to come and live with her. I no longer have contact with her.

Yelena and Ivan received Convention status after being in this country for fourteen months, and immediately began to arrange to have their daughter, and Yelena's ill mother join them. Two years after arriving in this country the family were at last united and Ivan was awarded funding to do a Ph.D. He completed his doctorate in 1995, and is now working in computer graphics. Although they no longer live in Edinburgh we have been able to keep in contact.

Conclusion
The constraining, oppressive quality of cultural exclusion and liminality that many refugees experience,
has highlighted the powerlessness and isolation that have become an every day part of their lives here. The consequences of having chances of family reunion, employment and education 'put on hold' for an indefinite period of time denies refugees the opportunity to move out of the structural constraints which promote and perpetuate their social exclusion and feelings of liminality. Refugees seek familiarity, security and a validation of personal knowledge and understanding, which is denied to them during this period. Although the concept of liminality cannot encapsulate all the intricacies and complexities of the social and structural situations that refugee experience, it is nonetheless a useful heuristic device which enables us to gain some understanding of the crisis of meaning and the disruption of cultural expectations that refugees face during these first years. In the following chapter two separate narratives further illustrate the implications of liminality.
CHAPTER EIGHT

GEORGIS AND NASRIN

This chapter contains two separate narratives and they have been placed here, after the discussion of liminality, because they highlight many experiences of being out of touch, out of work and out of time. Both of these narratives convey a strong sense of the isolation and dislocation that pervade the day to day experiences of many refugees, and yet they also illustrate the ways in which this is confronted, and occasionally deflected. I will begin by describing my meetings with Georgis.

Georgis

I first met Georgis early in 1994. Although he had been in Scotland for two years he found it very difficult to express himself, and spoke only faltering English. Because his English was poor I felt the interviews were particularly difficult to record, and there was no way of validating what I had written because he did not want to read the scripts. We met six times over nine months.

I had arranged with the Scottish Refugee Council in Glasgow to attend the Art Group that they run for recently arrived refugees, with the hope of recruiting participants for my research, as the letters sent out by the SRC in Glasgow had only resulted in one response. As Glasgow has a much larger refugee population than Edinburgh it seemed important to try to redress this imbalance and it was therefore suggested that I went to
the Art Group to ask people directly if they would take part in the research. This was not particularly successful however, and was complicated by several factors. The first was the small number of people who were attending at that time; there being no more than five people present during the couple of weeks that I attended. The second problem was that English was rarely spoken. The facilitator of the group was a Russian speaker and those attending were from Russia, Ukraine and Macedonia. English was not the chosen language of communication, mainly because of limited English spoken by most of the refugees present, but this was also through choice and the opportunity to speak a familiar tongue. However, Georgis did express interest in my research and in talking to me, and readily agreed that it was important to talk to individual refugees about their experiences and, most importantly, about their feelings. Although I had only planned to go to the art group once, because there were so few people attending I asked if I could return for a week or two so see if other refugees would attend. Although one new face did appear, during my few visits I only really talked to Georgis.

During our conversations in the art group Georgis told me that he had been in Glasgow for: "Two long dark and wet winters". As this was early in January he nodded towards the windows in support of what he was saying - it was indeed cold, wet and very windy. He had been a fisherman, and said that he enjoyed warm places where you could 'live on the street' because you always had the chance to see and meet friends. He then told me how difficult he found it to meet people here because they
were all in their houses 'to escape the dark and the cold'. He had been to some pubs but the price of beer meant that he could not afford to spend much time in them and get the chance to meet anybody - he felt very lonely sometimes. He does not feel settled here, and found it difficult to express what this meant, so he put his hand on his heart to indicate that it was a feeling beyond words.

Georgis said he enjoyed coming to the art group because 'in here you don't have to think about your home or family or problems'. The group was loosely structured with painting, sculpture and photography on offer, but there was no expectation that you had to become involved in any of them, and during the time I was there Georgis only got involved in photography.

When we began meeting outside the Art Group Georgis told me he did not want to read the scripts of our conversations. He initially said this was because his English was so poor, but he did not change his mind when I offered to read the scripts to him. He did not speak fluent English, but with his determination, and a little patience, it was not difficult to understand what he was trying to say. Later he would tell me he was not really interested in what I wrote, he would just enjoy talking to me. Georgis and I always met in a city centre cafe - one which was part of a prestigious indoor shopping area - it had an open outlook to the shops and central plaza which was often used for entertainers and exhibitions - it was as near to as a street cafe as Glasgow could provide. Georgis always chose to meet there, and
insisted that he bought the coffees. The first time he did this I objected, saying that it was an expensive place and I should pay. But this upset him so much, that I never tried to pay again.

As we watched the shoppers going in and out of the expensive designer shops Georgis admitted that he feels caught up in the materialism of our society and feels he is turning greedy. He then said he was not happy in the city, and that the happiest time of life had been when he worked in Greece - moving around the islands in the warm, welcoming sun. I was planning a holiday in Crete and Georgis took great delight in telling where to visit and what to do when I was there. He told me he used to laugh at the tourists who used to lie in the sun and turn red, but then he smiled, and said that after living here for two years he could understand why we did it. He then looked thoughtful as he recalled having no interest in money at that time and wondered if it was the warm sun that made you feel like that?

He was very aware of the stigma of being a refugee, and said that although he enjoyed going to the art group he would not feel so happy about going out with a 'group' of refugees as it was much more important to be doing things with Scottish people. He kept telling me that no-one chooses to become a refugee, and although he understood why people were against refugees coming here and 'taking jobs away' at the same time he felt that such attitudes were unfair, and that he was not given a 'proper chance' to fit in. He told me how he set out with great optimism about living here, but over the years he has been here
this has slowly ebbed away, and now he feels there is
nothing to look forward to. He had had a job as a car
valet, and when I asked him about this he said it had
been a bad experience, and he had left after a couple of
weeks because the owner had constantly short paid him -
he had worked hard, and was very disappointed that it had
not worked out. But Georgis has a philosophical outlook
on life. Whereas some people would have been hurt and
confused by his unfortunate experience with the car valet
man, he said 'there are people like him in any country -
some good, and some bad'. He is now doing a 'job
seekers' course for 6 months which he described as
interesting but he didn't feel it would be useful in
getting work - because there are so many doing this type
of course, so what advantage can it give you?

He is desperate to visit his parents, but has not yet
been given status from the Home Office, so has absolutely
no chance of getting a travel document. This seemed
distressing enough, but then he told me that they do not
know he is a refugee here; 'I could not tell them because
it would break their hearts'. I asked how he explained
his absence and he said that he would occasionally speak
to them on the phone and tell them that he was very busy
working. I asked if any of his family did know, and he
said he had confided in one sister, but that the pressure
of lying to his parents was a terrible burden to bear.
Although he often appeared resigned towards his situation
and rarely spoke of his expectations and hopes for the
future, he did, on this occasion, tell me that 'when' he
had status, he would be able to tell his parents why he
could not visit them. He also hoped that, with travel
permission, he would be able to see them again (although he knew that the likelihood of his parents being able to travel to meet him in another country was remote).

Georgis feels very strongly about his responsibility towards his parents - they are getting old, and as they looked after him when he was young, so he should now look after them, and he emphasised, he wants to do this. He told me he cannot understand our 'old folks homes' - why would we want to live separately to our parents? He told me he constantly sends things back to them, but he only has little money spare after his living expenses, and so most of what he can send is second hand cloths - but, he insisted, they are nice ones! However, he can't do this as after as he would like because he finds the postage restrictive, and he used to be worried that the parcel may not arrive, but this has happened only once. He also told me that he recently sent lots of second hand children's clothes to his friend who has nine children - and had heard via his parents that he had been very happy to receive this gift - this kind of contact seemed really important to him.

Georgis would often talk about how lonely he is, but not in a self pitying way. He told me he can't have friends in 'English' - because he can't joke or be himself in another language. He no longer has the chance to speak his own language, but he still 'thinks' in it. He feels a very different person here, and trapped without a passport. On one particular day he was so depressed he said that sometimes, at times like this, he considered
returning and risking imprisonment. He had left because he had been called up to fight, and the unstable political situation meant that the repercussions for not fighting could be severe - at best a lengthy prison sentence. But he was so lonely that sometimes jail seemed preferable to being here alone - if he was in jail then his parents could visit him, and he could have some contact with his friends, but here, by himself, he feels so very alone. However, he cheered himself up by talking about his home: he lives on a mountainside, near forests and a river. He told me that although he has not lived there permanently for many years, there is a bit of him in the soil, and he cannot imagine completely settling anywhere else. His parents living there, and the family home are also very important links for him. He talked again about cafes, meals, music, drinking and having a good time. He said he had been a strong person, and that he had been in control of his life, but 'these days' he was not so sure anymore - he then grinned nervously and said 'maybe I need a psychiatrist'.

The next time we met Georgis was particularly low. He talked about 'being on the edge' with his concentration and desire to do anything disappearing. He admitted that he did very little during the day - not even bothering to watch the television, or to read - just sitting and doing nothing. I had asked if he would consider talking to a doctor or counsellor, and he replied by telling me he had been to enrol in an evening class. He said he was interested in aroma therapy and using herbs and natural medicines so that he could help himself - the implication being that no, he would not like to talk to anyone about
how he was feeling. He was also in a lot of physical pain due a pulled shoulder muscle (although he did not tell me this until I was about to leave), and said that whereas this would normally not have bothered him, today it seemed like big thing and altogether debilitating. I was feeling guilty in that this was to be our last meeting for the research, because Georgis appeared particularly vulnerable. I told him (as I had told all the other refugees) that we could still meet, it would just not be as often. He smiled broadly and said he would like to keep in contact.

I haven't seen Georgis since my fieldwork ended. I had sent him some information on local Tai Chi classes (Chinese meditative movement) and aroma therapy. I have also tried to contact him by phone on several occasions to see if he wanted to meet for a coffee, but there was no answer.

'Unable to be myself'
Linde (1993) suggests that there is a personal need for coherence in situations where some new event has happened that we do not know how to form into a narrative (Linde 1993: 17). Georgis' narrative was unformed and often confused, laying bare emotions and thoughts that had, as yet, no coherence for him. Our conversations appeared to reflect his personal struggle to make the 'new event' of his position as refugee, fit his ongoing story. But his ongoing story has been emotionally and structurally frozen between the past and the present as he waits for status, and tells his ageing parents that he can not visit them because he is 'working hard'. Although
Georgis did have narratives about his obligations to his parents and his links with 'home'; passionately describing his home town, the street cafes and the mountain scenery, they were nonetheless located in a distant memory. He was, as yet, unable to form a coherent narrative that linked these memories to his present liminality.

Georgis' feelings and experiences of exclusion from work, exclusion from status, exclusion from socialising and his exclusion from meeting Scottish people, clearly reflect many of the elements of liminality identified in the previous chapter. He blamed the cold wet weather for keeping people indoors, preventing him from making contact with Scottish people. His attempt to work was thwarted by an exploitative employer and his own liminal status. And for Georgis, the opportunity for him to move forward and begin to construct a coherent narrative of his life in the present, was linked not only to his waiting for status, but to his guilt at lying to his parents about why he did not come to visit them. For Georgis receiving status would mean that he would be able to tell his parents about his situation (and resolve this painful aspect of his past), because he would then be able to 'make plans' to see them in a nearby country (allowing him to think of the future). ¹

What Georgis also manages to convey is his sense of being unable to be himself. Before he came to Glasgow Georgis

¹Refugees with Convention status can apply for travel documents which allow them 90 days travel outwith the UK, but not to the 'home' country.
described himself as employed, happy, and sociable - all of which escaped him now. For example, he tried to be a worker (and will no doubt try again), but he was cheated by a ruthless employer. Although Georgis was philosophical about this experience, it nonetheless highlighted for him his vulnerability and powerlessness; he felt helpless and did not feel he could do anything to address the situation himself. He knew he had been exploited, yet accepted this as another part of being a refugee; another episode that exposes what you are, rather than who you were:

Social and economic uprooting as well as the level of distress and poverty experienced at the initial stage, rendered the parameters of the old way of life, behavioural rules and value systems inoperative, or it destructured them (Kibreab 1995: 22)

There appears very little in Georgis' narrative that he feels connects the person he is today with the person who existed in his past. He was older than the other men I talked too (in his early 40's), and would appear to have had a clear understanding of the kind of person he was, which often conflicted with his understanding of the kind of person he is now. For while the behavioural rules and value systems of the past may become inoperative, they do not disappear, and remain a benchmark for an understanding of the present. Comments about his previous sociability, and memories of meeting friends in street cafes, therefore conflicts sharply with descriptions of himself as staying inside and watching television all day. I recall him talking about his love of football - but he cannot afford to go to matches here
and his comments about the expense of going to pubs, which prevents him from socialising. But Georgis did spend money on sending second-hand clothes 'home', even though the price for this (in monetary terms, considering he would be receiving less than the full rate of Income Support), could be interpreted as his isolation.

Georgis expressed a sadness that he could not be himself through the metaphor of his faltering English. When he said he could not make jokes or be himself in another language he was expressing a feeling of dislocation from his past and the uncertainty of his future. A young Polish refugee writes about her attempts at learning English and remarks:

This language is beginning to invent another me ... My voice is doing funny things. It does not seem to emerge from the same parts of my body as before (Hoffman 1989: 121).

The physical and emotional sense of a foreign language being outside, or separate to, a sense of self is one that was expressed by many refugees. For Georgis however, it would appear that the language of the present was a constant and painful reminder that this was not the language of the self. English language for Georgis was the language of his refugeeeness, with all its incoherence and disorientation. It was a language (and a situation) that denied him the possibility to be 'himself'. Although Isodore was absorbing and embracing English as a way of placing himself in the present, it would appear that for Georgis the 'invention' of himself in another language was a painful and uncomfortable experience.
Nasrin

The construction of a research identity may be facilitated by exploiting any relevant skills or knowledge (Hammersley & Atkinson: 1983: 80), and this was exactly the basis on which I began meeting Nasrin. Nasrin was one of the few people who I directly approached for my research, and she immediately suggested a 'research bargain', by asking me to help with her English homework. The 'bargain' was conscientiously adhered to throughout as Nasrin initiated 'homework sessions' in and around our interviews. I have kept the diary style for her narratives. Nasrin did not want to read the scripts.

Oct. 1993
Nasrin is a Kurd from Iraq and is divorced, with a young teenage daughter. They live on the outskirts of Glasgow. When I first met Nasrin I remember entering her flat and being asked to remove my shoes - something which I had expected to do on many occasions, but as yet nobody had asked me. Although it had taken only a short time to reach the flat from the city centre I had been aware of how isolated and remote the area seemed, and mentioned this to Nasrin. This comment immediately unleashed an incredible amount of anger and frustration - but not at the isolation of the flat - rather at her personal isolation. Her anger was directed towards her relatives
who also lived in Glasgow, but from whom she now felt estranged.

She explained that when she first came here with her daughter, they stayed with her relatives, and she did all of the cooking and cleaning. She also said that she contributed to the household expenses, but what seems to have upset her most is that she expected her relatives to play a larger part in the upbringing of her daughter to compensate for her growing up with only one parent in a strange place. When this did not happen, relationships broke down and she subsequently felt let down, isolated and very angry: they just didn’t seem to care about ‘family’ anymore - I felt that they were strangers to me. Her eyes had filled with tears as she told me this, but then she looked up defiantly and said “If anybody asks me if I have relatives here I say no, because that is now the truth of the situation.” Now I only worry about my daughter, like they only worry about themselves.

I felt responsible for unleashing this emotion and so stayed much longer than I had planned. I felt that Nasrin was very isolated and desperate to talk. She told me how scared she was of strangers coming to her door, and unless she is expecting someone then she will not answer the door. I had phoned to arrange our meeting, and noted that I should not attempt to ‘drop in’ unannounced in future. She said she felt particularly vulnerable after watching a television programme that showed situations where people had been robbed or raped by people coming to their door. Nasrin then asked me if I knew that this area had a bad reputation - I said I had
heard this, but tried to reassure her by suggesting that often such labels were unfounded or built on something that happened a long time ago; maybe it wasn't so bad anymore. She agreed, and said that although there were problems here, she knew there were worse areas. But she nevertheless felt very embarrassed when people asked her where she lived, because she felt that if they knew where she came from they would think that she was trouble as well, especially as she was a 'refugee'; 'people here do not like refugees'. Considering her isolation and feelings of vulnerability, she nonetheless appears very independent, telling me that she took driving lessons, passed her test, and has her own car. She would also like a job, but is aware that her English is not good enough - she says she is reasonably confident with face to face interactions, but she gets confused if people talk with very strong accents, or when she answers the phone. I ended up spending all afternoon with Nasrin. I had been shocked and somewhat overwhelmed by her anger regarding her family here, and felt I should stay until she calmed down. Because of the distress I seem to have caused I did not think it appropriate to arrange another meeting there and then. I decided I would ring her in a week or two.

I bumped into Nasrin in Glasgow two weeks later. She was out shopping for a school bag for her daughter. She asked how I was and what I was doing. I explained that I was on my way to the Refugee Art Group. She then changed the subject by pointing to the young homeless who were sitting in the shop doorways on this wet, cold, winter day, and she said 'I don't feel like a refugee when I see
these people - they are the refugees in this country'. She then asked if they were 'like this' because of drugs - I said that a few may be, but certainly not everybody. She answered by saying that she thought they could, and should, sort themselves out: "What is to stop them? they don't have to live like this if they don't want to". Unfortunately I did have to rush and so I asked her if she would be interested in meeting me again for my research and could I ring her? She said yes.

Jan. 1994

Nasrin began talking quickly as soon as I arrived, about how difficult it is for refugees here to feel settled because nobody will give them a job. She accepted that because her English used to be very poor she was unemployable, but now she feels her English is much better and that she should be given a chance. My heart sank a little as it felt like she had been waiting for my visit to vent more anger and frustration about her situation - although I had a great deal of sympathy for what she was saying, I wasn't sure how to respond, and ultimately felt guilty, and even responsible. (When I began my fieldwork I had compiled a comprehensive list of agencies, phone numbers and information that refugees may need, so that, where possible, I could put the refugee in touch with professionals who could help them with specific problems and difficulties. But there appeared to be no practical way of helping Nasrin or deflecting the frustration she felt).

She told me she had just completed a training course and had bumped into one of her ex colleagues who had asked
her if she was 'missing' the training course. She seemed really surprised by this saying that she misses her home and her country, but why should she 'miss' the training course - the implication being that missing was too important a word for this. She then spoke fondly of Baghdad, saying that she had everything she wanted there - a job, home and money - and she could do whatever she wanted. But as the war with Iran progressed the situation became very unstable and some members of her family (who were outspoken against the government) had had to leave. The government then began interrogating her concerning the whereabouts of her relatives, and they wanted to know if she had helped them leave. She was very scared about the possibility of being imprisoned, telling me that for a woman this would automatically mean rape, and that she would rather kill herself than be subjected to that kind of treatment. She said that as a divorced woman it would be easier for this to happen, because she did not have a husband to protect her, so she left Baghdad.

There was a refugee camp for Kurds in the North of the country, but the conditions were terrible. She told me she had to live in a tent, with her head completely covered. She said "I spent days and days just like this" (she curled up into a foetal position on the sofa). Nasrin described how the rains would flood the camp, and how, if it wasn't for her young daughter she would not have had the will to survive. After several months she was told that if she moved to the south of the country she would be given a house in another refugee settlement. She travelled with a group of Kurds, but not long after
arriving she realised that it was a big mistake: "There were no proper houses, only sheds, and it was so dry and hot I thought I was going to die". After bribing various officials she returned briefly to Baghdad in order to plan her journey to Scotland. "I came here because my cousin lived here."

The latter half of this story was difficult to follow, as Nasrin's English began to falter. I did not want to interrupt, as this story was being told as much for herself as for me. At one point Nasrin stopped and apologised for her deteriorating English saying she got very tired with the effort of speaking. She then told me briefly that she talks with her daughter in both languages, because some English phrases are gentler and she prefers to use them. They have been here almost five years now and she was proud that her daughter now speaks English with a Scottish accent.

**Feb. 1994**

Nasrin had just returned from college and had a prelim paper that she had been working on. She was a little dispirited because she was finding it difficult to understand the questions and answer them in the allocated time. I went through some of the questions with her, and, after about half an hour, she said 'that's enough, now let's talk for your research'.

The conversation immediately turned again to her not having a job - she had been for a couple of interviews as a childminder- and whilst one family had let her down gently, the other one had (in her eyes) been rude, by
saying that they had found someone of a 'higher standard' - She was slighted by this and said "They wouldn't have said that to a Scottish person". She then reminded me that last week she had said that all refugees should be given a job straight away so that they can learn some English quickly and feel part of the community - it was as if she was letting me know that she was actively trying to find work. I had explained that although it would be ideal for refugees to be given work, it would cause incredible problems because there were so many other people out of work. Nasrin then got angry that the government had supplied a house and a little money when she would rather have a job and be self sufficient - if the government did not want her to work and live as we do, then they should stop refugees coming into this country.

She then told me more about her life in Baghdad, but began by telling me that she came from a town in the east of Iraq where she lived until she divorced her husband. She then moved to Baghdad with her daughter, and began making a new life. She proudly told me that she never had anything second hand - and anyway here was not such concept in Iraq - she just saved for what she wanted. But here she could only afford second hand clothes for herself, although she bought new clothes for her daughter. At the beginning of the war with Iran some of her relatives came to Britain as refugees, while others moved away from Baghdad to live in rural Iraq. She said that if her family had stayed where they were, then she would not have been bothered by the government. But she was worried what might happen to her - she felt sure that
if she had stayed she would have been put in prison and raped. I asked her if she felt any resentment towards her relatives for being politically active and making conditions so difficult for her? She said no, but then she repeated that if they had not left, then she would not have needed too.

She then began to talk, at great length and with a great deal of anger, about women who wear the hajib (headscarf), in Britain. She felt very strongly that women should not wear it here - but if I was to go to Baghdad then I should wear it: 'Everybody should adapt to the country they are living in'. She had been talking about Britain being an 'open' country, but warned that 'these' people were trouble, as they made no move to adapt. Nasrin then went back to telling me how much she wanted a job and how she was feeling discriminated against. She knew she was stuck in the spiral where no experience means no job, and this frustrated her as she did have experience of office work, but because this was in Iraq, it meant nothing here.

It was time for her to go and collect her daughter from school. She told me that this was why she had a car, and had learnt how to drive, because she wanted to be able to collect her daughter 'just in case there is trouble'. She then said her daughter was the most important thing in her life and that if anything happened to her then there would be no reason to live.

March 1994
Nasrin told me that she knows that women here have a great deal of freedom, and that she appreciates it. I asked her if she could ever return to Iraq, and she said no, because her town is in an important oil area, and there will always be fighting there. But I got the impression that she used the situation in the town to deflect having to admit that maybe she didn't want to return. After a few minutes deep in thought she looked out of the window and said that too much has changed in Iraq, and her life could never as good as it used to be before the war with Iran. She then gave a wry smile and said that her daughter had told her she would never return to Baghdad - although she has recently said that she would maybe like to visit for a holiday.

Although Nasrin had smiled about her daughter not wanting to return to Baghdad, she seemed rather sad and disappointed that her daughter did not like traditional food (she thought it too spicy), and that she was so adamant about not returning. But then she had admitted that she could not return either. We spoke some more about the freedom women have here, and Nasrin told me about her marriage, and her divorce. She was angry about the fact that her husband's next wife just moved in to her beautiful house, with all her belongings, and so she had left for Baghdad with very little. When she had first moved to Baghdad she had lived with her sister, but this had not worked out, and so she had moved into her own place as soon as possible. She told me that as everything is controlled by the government, you are not allowed to leave one job for another without a very good
reason - because they will prevent you from working at all. But she had felt independent and been happy.

When Nasrin had first arrived here she told me she had been desperate to talk to people, and to have contact with them, in the same way she had had contact with people from her village. This had led to a couple of misunderstandings with men who had initiated contact with her (but with more than friendship in mind) - which she seemed to have dealt with easily, but she is now 'wary' and suspicious. Nasrin described this newly acquired wariness as becoming 'more like us' e.g. keeping herself to herself, and not being openly friendly towards people.

We then talked about the area of Iraq, where she had been brought up and her happy memories of picnics and local celebrations. She told me that everybody would help and support each other - not like here - but that she was learning to be more like us, and the terrible hurt she had felt when first arriving here (because of the lack of support from her relatives) did not matter to her any more. She felt happier being independent, and now only worried about herself and her daughter, and nobody else. When she had first arrived she said she would have cried and been very concerned about everything that had happened to people in her family - but she was not like that now. She then told me that some of her 'family' had begun to make contact again, and whilst she was happy with this, she was no longer looking for lots of visits and contact, as she might have wanted when she first arrived, or expected in Iraq.
Nasrin asked that I help her with her English homework, and we did a short exercise, after which she told me she had got a job as a childminder starting this following Monday. I was worried that she had given up her income support, and housing benefit for this part-time job - but Nasrin had already known that she couldn't afford to give up her benefits - so she asked me not to tell anybody. She said she didn't like 'cheating' but she was so desperate to work that she felt that she had to take this opportunity, because it may lead to something full time and permanent, and then she would be able to be independent. However, it turns out that she is being poorly paid, by a professional person, to look after their young child - it certainly seemed exploitative to me - but then people like Nasrin are often forced into these positions, I just hope it's OK.

April 1994

Nasrin told me again about when she spent seven months in a 'camp' in the north of Iran. She had been told that it would only be for a very short time, and that there would be houses for them to live in, but when she arrived there were only tents. She was very disappointed about what she found when she got there - there was little food, and the tents were small. Nasrin told me that she was even made to wear to hajib, and if it didn't cover her head and all her hair, then she got into trouble. She described how she used to spend almost all her time in the tent with her daughter (who was only five years old at the time) and again she curled up on the sofa to show me how she used to lie (in a foetal position). The winter had been harsh and there was lots of flooding
which damaged the tents - she said she was lucky because her tent was on higher ground - but she was worried nonetheless. She again told me that after seven months in the camp, she moved to south Iran where there were houses, but it was incredibly hot.

I asked her if she had managed to bring some things with her when she came to Scotland. She said she had a little gold, but not very much because when she was married she told her husband not to buy her gold, but to buy things for the house - she then laughed wryly and said that his second wife demanded all the traditional gold gifts, and he sold the video (that she had bought with her money) to buy them for his second wife. She then told me that here all her money goes to buy things for her daughter, and that she buys nothing new for herself. She reminded me that on my last visit she had put plastic bags on her feet before putting them into her boots because her boots leaked. All her clothes were second-hand.

However, she felt she could, with time, forget all her troubles and problems - all except the time she was in the tent - that she could never forget. She again told me that she felt happy and safe here, and that she could not imagine going back to Iraq and living without the freedoms that she had grown used to here. I then remembered to ask her whether she had been given Convention status. She seemed confused by this, and so I asked if she had to renew her visa to stay here. When she told me that she had already done this, and she had permission to stay here for another few years I knew that she had ELR. Either Nasrin did not know that this was
temporary and discretionary, or she didn’t see it as a problem, because she had never mentioned her status before, and would not do so again.

Nasrin then told me that when she first came to Scotland she didn't know how to buy sanitary towels and that she still didn't know her bra size - we also talked about the contraceptive pill and family planning services - it seemed incredible that she didn't know anything about any of this.

May 1994

Nasrin doesn't like it when people ask her where she is from - because when she tells them she is from Iraq she feels that they associate it only with Saddam Hussein, and this upsets her. I asked her how she answered this question - she said she would lie, and say she was Spanish or Greek because often that what people thought she was. However, she couldn’t wait till she was got her citizenship, then she could say she was British - although then she quickly said: “But I will always be a Kurd in my heart”.

She told me that she never used to be worried about the future, but is now constantly worried about money and how she will live if anything goes wrong. She said she needs to be in control, and so she plans her time carefully, and gets angry if she forgets things, as an example, she told me that she had just spent the day going to the Benefit Agency office and doing some shopping, but at the Benefit Agency she had arrived without her book and was very annoyed with herself because she had to 'waste time'
by coming back to the house for it. She had been eating a bowl of cereal when I arrived and said that this was because she was late. She went on to tell me that it was very important to her to be organised around the house - she needed to know where everything was, and that nothing was mislaid.

She had been burning incense and commented that her daughter hated this, then she laughed and said 'she could never return to my country!' Spoke then of young people denying their culture, but she said she doesn't force her daughter to do anything that she does not want to: "I knew people who would not let their children speak English in the house, and the children have all left home now and gone their own way." And then she reminded me that although her daughter had initially said that she would never go to Iraq. she now says that she would visit for a holiday. Nasrin smiled when she said this.

The childminding job is OK but family she is working for disappoint her occasionally. She gave an example: the child had a temperature, but the mother appeared dismissive and still intended to take the child away for the weekend - Nasrin said this would never happen in her culture, and things would be postponed if a child was ill. She also said the mother had talked for some time on the phone just after she (Nasrin) had told her the child had a temperature, and she said: "How could she talk on the phone when her child is ill, I would have told them to ring back another day."
Nasrin has two weeks 'holiday' as the family she works for are away. She says she feels exhausted, but cannot really relax because there are still two more English classes for her to attend and work for. She says she works sometimes well into the night on her homework, and is trying really hard to understand English grammar - she said that now she does think about it before she speaks, but she would just love it if it came 'naturally'. She is rather particular about how she wants to speak - she does not like it when her daughter speaks with a strong Scottish accent (which Nasrin can imitate very well) saying that it sounds hard - and she does not like slang, and feels that everybody should speak like the Queen. She then tells me that I speak very nicely, and I am very polite - and that she can learn a lot from me.

She said that since she had started working there had been other offers of work but many of these had been from other Iraqi families, and she had turned them down. She told me that she was happy with the family she works for now, and that even if others offered her more money she would not work for an Iraqi family, because she could not be able to complain or relax, or learn anything from them.

I phoned Nasrin on a couple of occasion after this to arrange further meetings, but each time she told me she was too tired and exhausted to arrange for us to talk. I suggested that she phone me when she felt she had some time, and she said she would. Although I sent her a couple of cards just to keep in touch, I have not heard from her since.
'More like you'

Nasrin’s anger at her relatives here, illustrates several issues relating specifically to women refugees. Many of the women I talked to had become refugees because of the political actions of male relatives - usually husbands, but occasionally brothers or first cousins. Although Nasrin said she did not feel any resentment towards her cousins, she did admit that it was because of them that she was now a refugee. It has been recognised that those, like Nasrin, who become refugees 'indirectly' (through the actions of others), often have greater problems adjusting to their situation, and therefore feelings of anger or frustration are not uncommon (Baker 1985: 9).

Nasrin’s frequent references to how happy she had been in Baghdad did appear to reflect that she did feel some resentment about having to leave. Yet, unlike many other refugees, Nasrin often chose to repeat both the stories of happy memories in Iraq, and those of the distress she experienced in the refugee camps. However, any resentment she may have had would appear to have been deflected a little by her daughters antagonistic attitude towards returning to live in Baghdad, making the decision to settle here an easier one.

Another aspect of being a woman refugee is the particular importance of social and family ties and the networks of support they provide. Nasrin had expected considerable support from her cousins when she arrived here, and was bitterly disappointed when this was not forthcoming. Her
explanation for their remoteness was that they had already become 'more like us'. Nasrin perceived Scottish society as insular. Like Georgis, she made comments about sitting in front of the television and not socialising, but whereas he felt saddened by this, Nasrin proudly announced that she understood this to be part of the Scottish way of life - and therefore it wasn't so bad after all. It was as if being lonely and isolated could be displaced by an understanding of this as a successful part of her cultural adaptation to living in Scotland.

Nasrin also seemed particularly vulnerable when she confided that she didn't know things like her bra size, or about some women's health issues. Although I was able to give her much of the information she needed (or give her details of where to get this information), it shocked me that after almost five years in this country she had either not been able to ask, or had had no-one to ask about these things. It may be that her conversations with me coincided with her confidence in speaking English, but it also reflected her isolation from the information and networks that would have been provided by her family.

Although Nasrin expressed many of the feelings of liminality discussed in the previous chapter, she rarely spoke of her situation in terms of being 'in-between' (as many of the other refugees had). She was angry about not being able to find work and be independent, and although she had, in some ways, come to terms with her isolation, it nevertheless appeared to be something she was tolerating rather than something to fight and overcome.
She did talk about the future and the possibility of persuading her daughter to 'one day' return for a visit to Iraq, and she acknowledged the worry about her lack of money and the insecurity this made her feel regarding her future (and that of her daughter). But possibly because Nasrin had her daughter with her, she did not express concern about her status being temporary - like Bibiya she was patiently waiting for the opportunity to apply for British Citizenship.

Conclusion

Two very different ways of experiencing, and coping, with liminality and isolation are illustrated by the reactions of Georgis and Nasrin to their particular experience of being a refugee in Scotland. For Georgis the more English he learnt, and the longer he stayed here, the more distant he felt from his past, and this distressed him. While for Nasrin, although there were times when her feelings towards Iraq and Scotland were ambiguous, she generally embraced her isolation as part of 'becoming Scottish' and isolated herself from her relatives here - accepting a considerable break with past memories of family and community cohesion.

The comparison drawn between Isodore and Yelena highlighted how significant it was for refugees to have family members with them during the liminal stage in the asylum process, as experiences can be shared and narratives rehearsed. Yelena also had convention status which increases the likelihood of obtaining access to employment or education. After three years of waiting for status however, Isodore was still denied such access,
and was becoming increasingly frustrated and impatient, as he was eager to travel and concentrate on his university course.

Many of the differences between Nasrin and Georgis could be similarly interpreted, although the comparison is not so marked. Nasrin did not have Convention status, but she apparently felt relaxed and secure about her future in this country. She was angry about not being able to find work, and was studying hard to learn English to improve her job prospects. While Georgis appeared much less able or willing to invest himself in a future that, for him, was still so uncertain.

I have used the concept of 'liminality' in an attempt to find some coherence and increase my understanding of the narratives that were shared with me. As an analytical tool it is useful, but it is not an entirely satisfactory concept with which to describe the exclusion, isolation and powerlessness experienced by individual refugees who have recently arrived in this country. The processual nature of becoming a refugee appears superficially to be well matched with an understanding of liminality as the stage between separation and integration, yet, for many refugees, their experience is of 'being stuck' in a liminality that, for them, is not controlled or time limited. It is this tension between movement and stasis which reflects the difficulty of using the concept of liminality in this context, and which suggests the need to find new ways of conceptualising and analysing the experiences of those who live such displaced lives.
CONCLUSION

There have been several threads running through the thesis - each one attempting to consider the emotional and spatial displacement of the refugees I interviewed, in the light of their right, and their need, to find some ground, some position on which to stand. This has consequently resulted in an often uncomfortable juxtaposition of the personal with the structural. One of the difficulties identified was of locating refugees in the new spaces described by the proponents of transnationalism and marginalisation, in which multifaceted identities are said to be located. Although ideas of an essential connection between culture and place may be challenged by different allegiances, loyalties, identities and feelings of belonging, the limited power that may result from such positioning was not possible for those refugees who had recently arrived, and especially for those who were waiting for status. Indeed, the attempt to position these refugees within any framework linking identities with place (or places) became confused in the ambiguities and contradictions of their structural and social milieu.

Describing individuals (such as refugees) who are enmeshed in particular structures, highlights the need to consider not only people on the move, but people who are still moving. Although many refugees may stay here indefinitely, they are, as yet, not in a position to realise this, and it is the ambiguity of their place and position which need to be addressed. It is therefore no longer possible to locate studies such as this in a
particular ethnic, geographical, or cultural group. The malleability of symbolic and social boundaries have been well documented, but the vocabulary used to relate culture to place now needs to move through and over these boundaries to explore new configurations of geographic space and social identity. Although it is acknowledged that refugees are still frequently stereotyped as an 'undifferentiated mass', their significance in the study of moving populations is methodologically and theoretically challenging.

I discussed the malleability and exploitation of the UN definition of a 'refugee', which many governments use to protect and control national borders, to indicate the apparent desire to exclude refugees from Europe. The subsequent tightening of immigration and asylum legislation, now being played out in the many treaties and agreements that exist between European countries, has therefore had catastrophic consequences, with many of those seeking asylum unable to breach the walls of fortress Europe.

Immigration legislation in Britain also took an ominous turn when legislation, originally designed to prevent spies from entering the country during the First World War, was regularly renewed. The 1914 Act had given substantial power to immigration officers to refuse entry and deport those who they considered as 'dangerous' - with this subjective reasoning (bolstered by public and political attitudes), subsequently being regularly directed at different groups, for different reasons at different times.
The standard rhetoric used to justify immigration legislation in Britain during this century, has been (and still is), that 'floods of foreigners' and 'invasions' are understood to 'threaten' either jobs, housing, or a perceived national identity. The identification of such foreigners has been based on the interpretation and exploitation of the real, or perceived differences between 'them' and 'us'. Although it is tempting to postulate on whether different policies would have emerged had the 'wartime' measures in the 1914 Act been terminated after the war, the fact that these have remained in force set a precedent for increasingly restrictive immigration policies. The recent focus on refugees in immigration legislation, however, would appear to signify a change in the way the 'immigrant Other' is now constituted, for, by utilising other structures and relationships, the previous concept of a deserving political refugee has been transmuted, through signification, into a really existing 'bogus other'.

The evocation of the 'bogus' refugee has therefore added a new element to the perception of the Other in British immigration policy. Previous legislation has usually been directed at specific groups (for example Commonwealth Citizens), and by the mid sixties had been linked with 'race' (meaning 'colour'). Refugees have many different nationalities and are from many different cultures, so by treating them as an homogenous category, the government can deny that it is involved in propagating racist policies. As it becomes increasingly difficult to define 'Britishness', nationalist rhetoric
has now been mobilised by the relative nature of its citizens into defining the refugee Other as 'dangerous', 'guilty' and 'bogus'.

Having been separated from their own local knowledge, many refugees have come to Scotland expecting (hoping?) to find a replacement - looking for something concrete and tangible to learn about, understand and feel a part of. A perception of Scotland as a place of equality and friendliness, where, for example, they might expect less racism, was one that was shared by the majority of refugees interviewed, but they nonetheless often felt isolated and excluded. Although such expectations were regularly reinforced by articles and letters in Scottish newspapers, neither the discourse of Scottish nationalism, nor the expectations of the refugees who had specifically come here, could counteract the structural liminality that they all experienced. The wait for status, or the prolonged insecurity of receiving discretionary temporary permission to stay here, not only affected the personal and social well-being of refugees, but placed them in a structural framework that impinged upon their lives on a day to day basis.

The refugees I interviewed did not personally (or categorically) gain from their liminality; for there was no opportunity for communitas or empowerment. Indeed the crisis of meaning, and disruption of cultural expectations was exacerbated by the essential ambiguity of a prolonged liminality. Making contact with others from their countries was often difficult for refugees because of the fear of retribution by 'home' governments,
and the scarcity of refugee groups in Scotland. As several refugees indicated, they felt culturally estranged from those from their 'home' countries and were therefore often isolated. Without a sense of communitas or cohesion among refugees in Scotland any possibility of empowerment is therefore extremely limited.

The delay in having their position as a refugee validated by receiving status, and the prejudice that prevents them being accepted as 'genuine' in the face of public and political perceptions of refugees as 'bogus', further denies refugees the opportunity to move beyond their enforced liminality to have their personal knowledge and experience of 'refugeeness' confirmed and accepted. Each individual is ultimately waiting for the security which will allow them to find their place here, allowing them to deal with the past, the present and the future in their own way, unencumbered by the structures that exacerbate and extend their liminality. The feeling of 'waiting' or being 'in-between' cultures, languages and relationships, therefore represents the ambiguous and precarious nature of refugee experience at this time. The dislocation of past and present, highlights the newness and uncertainty of their situation, reflecting the confusion of who they now are and where they now belong. Augés description of non-place as a 'measure of our time' therefore indicates how relevant the experience of refugees are to an understanding of the tension between personal relationships and place.

Refugees are not a homogeneous category and stereotypes can be dissolved under the impact of examples. The
refugee narratives presented here are, first and foremost, personal testimonies of a particular moment in time, in the process of 'becoming' a refugee. It is this structural process of 'refugeeness' which has brought them together in this thesis, and through this process certain experiences can be shared, (on paper at least), with others. Without forming a single narrative, many of the feelings and experiences expressed, convey a sense of the temporary discontinuity of a changing life story, with refugees sharing particular moments with me. Narrative is an important social resource for maintaining and creating social identity, and for refugees this was particularly important in order for them to begin to validate their position and legitimate their presence here. The opportunities for some of them to explore and negotiate their refugeeness through interaction with others was extremely limited, often preventing the rehearsal of narratives that would have helped them to locate themselves in relation to their past, present and future.

My methodology would also seem to reflect a 'process of becoming' where the relationship between researcher and researched moves through moments of location and dislocation, understanding and misunderstanding. Research bargains and research realities highlight the need for participation, equity and flexibility in situations where all those involved attempt to come to terms with their particular research relationship. An acknowledgement of such relationships can then improve the credibility and plausibility of the account, both for those who participate in it, and for those who may later
read it. Research bargains also expose the assumption of the 'unproblematic' self and Other in research relationships, by revealing the multi faceted levels of empowerment and control which must be approached with sensitivity and an awareness of the different interpretations put upon such concepts. My expectation that everyone would want to read scripts was therefore often a misplaced understanding of participation and control that needed to be reassessed and evaluated in the light of concerns about 'abandoning control' and 'sharing risk'.

The relative positioning of individuals in relation to their experiences and feelings, and the structures that inform these, does not (and cannot), produce a coherent or complete picture. Add to this the writer's constructions and interpretations, and the threads of cohesion and order inevitably become further entangled. Malkki (1995) wrote of her time in the refugee camp in Tanzania, yet her ethnography continues (in a lengthy postscript) beyond the first draft of her book (1989) to the recent events that unfolded during 1994; there can be no tidy endings when images and information cross frontiers with increasing speed and regularity. Over the last five years there has been considerable attention given to refugee issues by the British government, and consequently the events mentioned, the attitudes expressed and the publicity generated continues to inform how I feel and how I write.

This thesis has been about how twenty refugees feel about living in Scotland; what they have said, the experiences
that prompted their saying it, and their structural position vis à vis European and British immigration policy. Not only is the world shrinking in terms of the frequency and preponderance of social, economic, political and cultural contacts between countries, but it also appears to be shrinking in terms of upholding the humanitarian principle of the right to seek (in any country) asylum from persecution. It is unlikely that the global movement of refugees between countries will cease in the near future, and it is therefore unlikely that refugees will stop coming to Europe. Without the opportunity to seek asylum the very survival of the refugee is in danger.
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NEWSPAPERS AND WEEKLIES CITED

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The Guardian
The Independent
The Scotsman
The Daily Star
The Times
Edinburgh Herald & Post

The Daily Mail
Scotland on Sunday
Edinburgh Evening News
The Observer
APPENDIX I

STATES PARTIES TO THE 1951 CONVENTION
As at 6 October 1995

Total Number of States Parties to the 1951 Convention: 126
Total Number of States Parties to the 1967 Protocol: 126
States Parties to one or both of these instruments: 130

States Parties to the 1951 Convention only: Madagascar, Monaco, St Vincent, the Grenadines & Namibia

States Parties to the 1967 Protocol only: Cape Verde, Swaziland, USA and Venezuela

The dates indicated are the dates of deposit of the instrument by the respective States Parties with the United Nations Treaty Section in New York. In accordance with article 43(2), the Convention enters into force on the ninetieth day after the date of deposit. The Protocol enters into force on the date of deposit (article VIII(2)). Exceptions are noted below with an asterisk (*).

Most recent States Parties: Antigua and Barbuda: 07 September 1995

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NOTE:

- The succession by the Government of Croatia to the above-mentioned instruments took effect on 8 October 1991, the date on which Croatia assumed responsibility for its international relations.
- The succession by the Governments of Czech and Slovak Republics to the above-mentioned instruments took effect on 1 January 1993, the date on which the Republics assumed responsibility for their international relations.
- The succession by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia to the above-mentioned instruments took effect on 25 June 1991, the date on which Slovenia assumed responsibility for its international relations.
Geographical Limitation

Article 1 B (1) of the 1951 Convention provides: "For the purposes of this Convention, the words 'events occurring before 1 January 1951' in article 1, Section A, shall be understood to mean either

(a) 'events occurring in Europe before 1 January 1951'; or
(b) 'events occurring in Europe or elsewhere before 1 January 1951'.

and each Contracting State shall make a declaration at the time of signature, ratification or accession, specifying which of these meanings it applies for the purposes of its obligations under this Convention. The following States adopted alternative (a), the geographical limitation:

- Congo
- Madagascar
- Monaco
- Hungary
- Malta
- Turkey

Hungary, Malta and Turkey expressly maintained their declarations of geographical limitation upon acceding to the 1967 Protocol. Madagascar and Monaco have not yet adhered to the Protocol. All other States Parties ratified, acceded or succeeded to the Convention without a geographical limitation by selecting option (b), "Events occurring in Europe or elsewhere before 1 January 1951".
APPENDIX II

EXTRACT FROM THE 1951 UN CONVENTION RELATING TO THE STATUS OF REFUGEES

Article 1
Definition of the term 'refugee'

A. For the purpose of the present Convention, the term 'refugee' shall apply to any person who:

(1) Has been considered a refugee under the Arrangements of 12 May 1926 and 30 June 1928 or under the Conventions of 28 October 1933 and 10 February 1938, the Protocol of 14 September 1939 or the Constitution of the International Refugee Organisation:

(2) As a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his formal habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling return to it [emphasis added].

In the case of a person who has more than one nationality, the term 'the country of his nationality' shall mean each of the countries of which he is a national, and a person shall not be deemed to be lacking the protection of the country of his nationality if, without any valid reasons based on well-founded fear, he has not availed himself of the protection of one of the countries of which he is a national.

B. (1) For the purpose of this Convention, the words, 'events occurring before 1 January 1951' in Article 1, Section A, shall be understood mean either
(a) 'events occurring in Europe before 1 January 1951'; or
(b) 'events occurring in Europe or elsewhere before 1 January 1951', and each Contracting State shall make a declaration at the time of signature, ratification or accession, specifying which of these meanings it applies for the purpose of its obligations under this Convention.

(2) Any Contracting State which has adopted alternative (a) may at any time extend its obligations by adopting alternative (b) by means of a notification addressed to the secretary-general of the United Nations.

This Convention shall cease to apply to any person falling under the terms of Section A if:
(1) He has voluntarily re-availed himself of the protection of the country of his nationality; or
(2) Having lost his nationality, he has voluntarily re-acquired it; or
(3) He has acquired a new nationality, and enjoys the protection of the country of his new nationality; or
(4) He has voluntarily re-established himself in the country which left or outside which he remained owing to fear of persecution; or
(5) He can no longer, because of the circumstances in connection with which he has been recognised as a refugee have ceased to exist, continue to refuse to avail himself of the protection of the country of his nationality:

Provide that this paragraph shall not apply to a refugee falling under Section A (1) of the Article who is able to invoke compelling reasons arising out of previous persecution for refusing to avail himself of the protection of the country of his nationality;

(6) Being a person who has no nationality he is, because the circumstances in connection with which he has been recognised as a refugee have ceased to exist, able to return to the country of his former habitual residence.
Provided that this paragraph shall not apply to a refugee falling under Section A (1) of the Article who is able to invoke compelling reasons arising out of previous persecution for refusing to return to the country of his former habitual residence.

D. This Convention shall not apply to persons who at present receiving from organs or agencies of the United Nations other than the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees protection or assistance.

When such protection or assistance has ceased for any reason, without the position of such persons being definitely settled in accordance with the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, these persons shall ipso facto be entitled to the benefits of this Convention.

E. This Convention shall not apply to a person who is recognised by the competent authorities of the country in which he has taken residence as having the rights and obligations which are attached to the possession of the nationality of that country.

F. The provisions of the Convention shall not apply to any person with respect to whom there are serious reasons for considering that:

(a) he has committed a crime against peace, a war crime, or a crime against humanity as defined in the international instruments drawn up to make provision in respect of such crimes;
(b) he has committed a serious non-political crime outside the country of refuge prior to his admission to that country as a refugee;
(c) he has been guilty of acts contrary to the purposed and principle of the United Nations.

Article 2
General Obligations

Every refugee has duties to the country in which he finds himself, which require in particular that he
conform to its laws and regulations as well as to measures taken for the maintenance of public order.

Article 3

Non-Discrimination

The Contracting State shall apply the provisions of this Convention to refugees without discrimination as to race, religion or country or origin ...

Article 31

Refugees unlawfully in the country of refuge

1. The Contracting States shall not impose penalties, on account of their illegal entry or presence, on refugees who, coming directly from a territory where their life or freedom was threatened in the sense of Article 1, enter or are present in their territory without authorisation, provided they present themselves without delay to the authorities and show good cause for their illegal entry or presence.

2. The Contracting States shall not apply to the movements of such refugees restrictions other than those which are necessary and such restrictions shall only be applied until their status in the country is realised or they obtain admission into another country. The Contracting States shall allow such refugees a reasonable period and all the necessary facilities to obtain admission into another country.

Article 32

Expulsion

1. The Contracting States shall not expel a refugee lawfully in their territory save on the grounds of national security or public order.

2. The expulsion of such a refugee shall be only in pursuance of a decision reached in accordance with due process of law. Except where compelling reasons of national security otherwise require, the refugee shall be allowed to submit evidence to clear himself, and to appeal to and be represented for the purpose before competent authority or a person or
persons especially designated by the competent authority.

3. The Contracting States shall allow such a refugee a reasonable period within which to seek legal admission to another country. The Contracting States reserve the right to apply during that period such internal measures as they may deem necessary.

Article 33
Prohibition of expulsion or return ('refoulment')

1. No Contracting States shall expel or return ('refouler') a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where this life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion [emphasis added].

2. The benefit of the present provision may not, however, be claimed by a refugee whom there are reasonable grounds for regarding as a danger to the security of the country in which he is, or who, having been convicted by a final judgement of a particularly serious crime, constitutes a danger to the community of that country.

Article 34
Naturalisation

The Contracting States shall as far as possible facilitate the assimilation and naturalisation of refugees. They shall in particular make every effort to expedite naturalisation proceedings and to reduce as far as possible the charges and costs of such proceedings.
Article 1
General Provision

1. The States party to the present Protocol undertake to apply articles 2 to 34 inclusive of the Convention to refugees as hereinafter defined.

2. For the purpose of the present Protocol, the term 'refugee' shall, except as regards the application of paragraph 3 of this article, mean any person within the definition of article 1 of the Convention as if the words 'As a result of the events occurring before 1 January 1951 and ...' and the words '... as a result of such events', in article 1A (2) were omitted [emphasis added].

3. The Present Protocol shall be applied by the States Parties hereto without any geographic limitation, save that existing declarations made by States already Parties the Convention in accordance with article 1B (1)(a) of the Convention, shall, unless extended under article 1B (2) thereof, apply also under the present Protocol.
APPENDIX III

The following charter is a joint initiative by the British Refugee Council and the Danish Refugee Council funded by the European Commission’s Development Education Board. It was published in 1993.

A REFUGEE CHARTER FOR EUROPE

To respect the basic human rights of asylum-seekers and refugees we demand that European governments adopt asylum and settlement policies to effect the following principles.

1. EC members states should harmonise their policies for the determination of refugee status. These should fully reflect the humanitarian principles enshrined in the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, and the 1967 Protocol, and should not prejudice national legislation which extends the rights of refugees.

2. People seeking asylum should not be prevented from reaching EC members states by restrictions such as visas and fines on airlines.

3. Asylum-seekers should not be returned to any country where they might be persecuted, nor to a third country which might in turn remove them to the territory from which they have fled.

4. All asylum applications within the EC should be processed by qualified and trained officials knowledgeable about human rights situations in asylum-seekers' countries of origin.

5. Asylum-seekers and refugees should have access to free and independent legal advice and representation at all stages of the refugee determination process.

6. All asylum-seekers should have a right of appeal to an independent body against a negative decision, before removal from that EC state which is responsible for examining the application for asylum.
7. EC member states should work towards bringing asylum agreements within the competence of EC institutions including the European Commission, the European Parliament and the European Court.

8. Computerised information on asylum-seekers and refugees must be regulated by an EC directive to ensure the confidentiality of records.

9. All resident third country nationals, including refugees, should have the same rights as EC nationals within the European Community. This means the granting of civic, employment, educational, social and political rights and the freedom of movement. There should be Europe-wide legislation against discrimination on the grounds of race, nationality, ethnic group and religion, protecting both EC citizens and third country nations.

10. EC member states should make provision for the reception and settlement of asylum-seekers and refugees. This should cover housing, health and social services, welfare, host community language courses as well as mother tongue classes for children, and employment training to help them compete in the European labour market.
This is the full text of my initial research proposal that was circulated, together with a letter of introduction to those refugees chosen by the Scottish Refugee Offices in Edinburgh and Glasgow, in May and June 1993. I also used this outline when approaching community groups and overseas student organisations.

Over the Years there have been many people who have sought asylum in Scotland. Some have come in groups (often under a government quota scheme), while others have come as individuals. For quota refugees the government initiates settlement programmes, and their progress is monitored by the agencies who are responsible for their welfare. For those who arrive as individuals seeking asylum, the situation is very different, as they lack immediate support networks, and are obliged to cope as best they can. There are increasing barriers to achieving refugee status, and the Home Office can take up to two years to deal with an asylum claim. This can provoke great insecurity and distress, which is often exacerbated by feelings of isolation. For those refugees who come without their families, the stresses and strains of adapting to a new life are often hampered by concern for those who have been left behind (especially if it is impossible to contact them).

My research will therefore focus upon these individuals, and how they adapt to life in Scotland. I hope that the life stories I collect will provide an insight into the experiences of individual refugees in Scotland, and that these life stories can be used in the development of refugee policy in Great Britain.

The definition of 'refugee' is problematic. General medial usage of the term suggests it is any body fleeing war or famine who moves from their normal place of residence. This directly contradicts the government's definition which strictly adheres to the UN Convention definition - with the individual having to prove a personal well founded fear of persecution. However, statistics show that the government are now giving fewer people 'refugee' status, while they are extending the numbers granted.
the temporary status of 'Exceptional Leave To Remain'. At the present time there also appears to be a concerted effort in the press and by the government to denigrate the term 'refugee' by prefixing it with words like 'bogus' or 'economic'. Some refugees have reacted to this by denying they are refugees, while others have attempted to recover some the respectability and acceptability of the status by now pointedly describing themselves as 'political' refugees. Such manipulation and ambiguity of the term 'refugee' highlights the need for an open and flexible approach, and for the purpose of this research 'refugee' will refer to those who use the term to describe themselves.

My research will take the form of life histories collected from a small number of refugees; I intend to meet people regularly (possibly twice a month over the period of about a year), and talk to them about their experiences of coming to this country. For such a project to be a success it is necessary that a relationship of trust, equality and understanding develop between us. I do not intend to use a questionnaire, and any information given to me will be at the discretion of the individual. The refugee will have access to the script of our conversations, with pseudonyms used to protect their identity; Other details, such as where we meet, and when and how are conversations are recorded (using notes, tape recorders etc.) will be negotiated with the individual concerned. I intend at all times to conduct this research in an open and honest way, with the full participation of the individuals concerned.

Because of the need for a relationship to develop between myself and the refugee it will be counter-productive to use an interpreter, and so it will be necessary that the individuals concerned are able to express themselves in English. I am hoping to meet refugees from many different countries, and so it would be impractical for me to learn the many languages needed.

This research will be submitted as a Ph.D. thesis at the University of Edinburgh, and it is possible that I may write articles, or have the work published at some later date.
APPENDIX V

In the 1990s there has been an unprecedented onslaught on the rights and ability of those seeking asylum to do so in the UK. Although the implications of some of this legislation has been discussed, it would appear appropriate to provide further details contained in the Act of Section 3 (treatment of persons who claim asylum) here, and Section 4 (housing of asylum-seekers and their dependants).

Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act 1993
1993 CHAPTER 23

An Act to make provisions about persons who claim asylum in the United Kingdom and their dependants; to amend the law with respect to certain rights of appeal under the Immigration Act 1971; and to extend the provisions of the Immigration (Carriers Liability ) Act 1987 to transit passengers (1st July 1993)

Be it enacted by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

Treatment of persons who claim asylum

3.-(1) Where a person ("the claimant") has made a claim for asylum, an immigration officer, constable, prison officer or officer of the Secretary of State authorised for the purposes of this section may-

(a) take such steps as may be reasonable necessary for taking the claimant's fingerprints; or

(b) by notice in written require the claimant to attend at a place specified in the notice in order that such steps may be taken.

(2) The powers conferred by subsection (1) above, may be exercised not only in relation to the claimant but also in relation to any dependant of his; but in the exercise of the power conferred by paragraph (a) of that subsection, fingerprints shall not be taken from a person
under that age of sixteen ("the child") except in the presence of an person of full age who is -

(a) the child's parent or guardian; or

(b) a person who for the time being takes responsibility for the child and is not an immigration officer, constable, prison officer, or officer of the Secretary of State.

(3) Where the claimant's claim for asylum has been finally determined or abandoned-

(a) the powers conferred by subsection (1) above shall not be exercisable in relation to him or any dependent of his; and

(b) any requirement imposed on him or any dependant of his by a notice under subsection (1) above shall no longer have effect.

(4) A notice given to any person under paragraph (b) of subsection (1) above-

(a) shall give him a period of at least seven days within which he is to attend as mention in that paragraph; and

(b) may require time so to attend at a specified time of day or between specified times of day.

(5) Any immigration officer or constable may arrest without warrant a person who has failed to comply with a requirement imposed on him by a notice under subsection (1) (b) above (unless the requirement no longer has effect) and, where a person is arrested under this subsection,-

(a) he may be removed to a place where his fingerprints may be conveniently be taken, and

(b) (whether or not his is so removed) there may be taken such steps as may be treasonable necessary for taking his fingerprints.

before he is released.
(6) Fingerprints of a person which are taken by virtue of this section must be destroyed not later than the earlier of-

(a) the end of the period of one month beginning with any day on which he is given indefinite leave under the 1971 Act to enter or remain in the United Kingdom; and

(b) the end of the period of ten years beginning with the day on which the fingerprints are taken.

(7) Where fingerprints taken by virtue of this section are destroyed-

(a) any copies of the fingerprints shall also be destroyed; and

(b) if there are any computer data relating to the fingerprints, the Secretary of State shall, as soon as it is practicable to do so, make it impossible for access to be gained to the data.

(8) If-

(a) subsection (7) (b) above fails to be complied with, and

(b) the person to whose fingerprints the data relate asks for a certificate that it has been complied with.

such a certificate shall be issued to him by the Secretary of State not later than the end of the period of three months beginning with the day on which he asks for it.

(9) In this section

(a) "immigration officer" means an immigration officer appointed for the purposes of the 1971 Act; and

(b) "dependant", in relations to the claimant, means a person-

(i) who is his spouse or a child of his under the age of eighteen; and
(ii) who had neither a right of abode in the United Kingdom nor indefinite leave to remain under the 1971 Act to enter or remain in the United Kingdom.

(10) Nothing in the section shall be taken to limit the power conferred by paragraph 18(2) of Schedule 2 to the 1971 Act.

**Housing of asylum-seekers and their dependants**

4.-(1) If a person ("the applicant") makes an application under the homelessness legislation for accommodation or assistance in obtaining accommodation and the housing authority who are dealing with his case are satisfied-

(a) that he is an asylum-seeker or the dependant of an asylum-seeker, and

(b) that he has or has available for his occupation any accommodation, however temporary, which it would be reasonable for him to occupy,

nothing in the homelessness legislation shall require the housing authority to secure that accommodation is made available for his occupation.

(2) In determining for the purposes of subsection (1) (b) above, whether it would be reasonable for the applicant to occupy accommodation, regard may be had to the general circumstances prevailing in relation to housing in the district of the housing authority who are dealing with the applicant’s case.

(3) Where, on application made as mentioned in subsection (1) above, the housing authority are satisfied that the applicant is an asylum-seeker or the dependant of an asylum-seeker, but are not satisfied as mentioned in paragraph (b) of that subsection, then, subject to subsection (4) below,

(a) any duty under the homelessness legislation to secure that accommodation is made available for the applicant’s occupation shall not continue after he ceases to be an asylum-seeker or dependant of an asylum-seeker; and
(b) accordingly so long as the applicant remains an asylum-seeker or a dependant of an asylum-seekers, any need of his for accommodation shall be regarded as temporary only.

(4) If, immediately before he ceases to be an asylum-seeker or the dependant of an asylum-seekers, the applicant is occupying accommodation (whether temporary or not) made available in pursuance of the homelessness legislation, that legislation shall apply as if, at that time

(a) he were not occupying that accommodation; and

(b) he had made an application under that legislation for accommodation or assistance in obtaining accommodation to the housing authority who secured that accommodation was made available.

(5) Schedule I to the Act (which makes supplementary provision with respect to housing asylum-seekers and their dependants) shall have effect.

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