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Migrant families and their support
networks: Narratives of austerity

L H B Mort

PhD 2017

Migrant families and their support
networks: Narratives of austerity

Lucy Hannah Bradley Mort

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the requirements of the Manchester
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Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Social Care and Social
Work
Manchester Metropolitan University

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Abstract

Concerned with the experiences of migrant families in a time of increasing scarcity and anti-migrant rhetoric, this research set out to understand the impact of austerity on a demographic largely marginalised in the contemporary austerity literature. Ethnographic research in a voluntary organisation that supported migrant families and interviews with those that provided and accessed the service demonstrates the pervasive nature of crisis and the material and immaterial harms inflicted by austerity. An attention to narrative suggests ways in which austerity might be obscured, though not absent, in migrant family accounts of everyday life in the UK.

The thesis begins by placing austerity within a historical context of racialised and restrictive welfare, and charts the contemporary austerity literature. This highlights the ways in which austerity is understood as affecting policy and discourse, and how these come to affect particular social groups. A smaller, though influential, body of work that considers the impact of austerity on migrant groups is reviewed to contextualise this study.

Mixed-qualitative methods and the context in which they were implemented are discussed. Through reflexive engagement with methodology, this thesis highlights the rich and informative understandings that are developed through attending to spaces of crisis. Drawing on the 'Listening Guide' (Mauthner and Doucet, 2008) the analysis attends to the complexity of migrants' everyday lives, through multiple readings that put researcher and participant subjectivity, relationships and structure in dialogue.

The findings explore the interplay between policy, discourse and lived experience. An increasingly hostile environment toward migrants, funding cuts from central government, and a decontested space between local government and the voluntary sector coalesced in the closure of the organisation under study. Ethnographic observations and interviews with professionals highlight the affective nature of organisational loss. For migrant families, crisis is not a singular event. Austerity works to worsen transnational and historical inequalities, and existing inequalities work to obscure the effects of austerity. Through attention to narrative and the materiality of everyday lives, this thesis attends to both what austerity *does* and how it is *understood* by migrant families.

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Abbreviation list

A2 – Countries that joined the European Union in 2007 (Bulgaria and Romania)

A8 – Countries that joined the European Union in 2004 (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia)

DLR – Discretionary leave to remain

EEA – European Economic Area (EU states plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway & Switzerland)

ESOL – English for Speakers of Other Languages

EU – European Union

IAA 1999 – Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

ILR – Indefinite leave to remain

IS – Income Support

JSA – Jobseekers Allowance

LLR – Limited leave to remain

MFSP – Migrant Family Support Project (pseudonym)

NASS – National Asylum Support Service

NRPF – No recourse to public funds

RCO – Refugee community organisation

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“Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.” (Arundhati Roy, 2003)

I have learned that it takes a community to finish a thesis. Thank you to mine.

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1.1 Situating the researcher: fighting (and losing) against austerity

*...everybody you know was like recession, recession, deficit, deficit, deficit.
You go to sleep with deficit, you wake up with deficit, by the media, by
everybody and actually the deficit became more important than human life.
(Al, family support worker)*

While employed as a family support worker at ‘Migrant Family Support Project’ (from here on MFSP), a voluntary organisation that supported refugee, asylum seeking and migrant families¹ in Manchester, I felt as though I was regularly confronted with the effects of austerity. It was the stories of the families that I supported that influenced the focus of this project. I recall some instances vividly, such as being on the phone to the local authority ‘no recourse to public funds’ team, advocating for financial support for an asylum-seeking teenager and her grandfather, so that they could attend their asylum screening interview in Croydon, London. The social worker that I spoke to, no doubt financially bound themselves, exclaimed: *‘well, they managed to get themselves all the way to England... surely they can get from Manchester to London...’*. On another occasion - a Friday afternoon - I visited a family whose ‘right to reside’² in the UK had been disputed and their benefits stopped. The gas meter had run out, and without any income they could not afford to top it up. It was autumn and cold; I rummaged in my purse for some

¹ For reasons of brevity, I will usually refer to ‘migrant families’ throughout the thesis, though I am aware this is not a perfect shorthand – please see appendix 12 for a glossary (and critique) of key terms related to migration and legal status.

² A test introduced following concerns about the enlargement of the EU in 2004, and which sought to restrict access to benefits for A8 migrants in the UK (Kennedy, 2011).

money to give them, to be reimbursed from a small fund that MFSP maintained for emergencies. Another time (indeed, countless times) I made calls to a debt collection agency for a family that did not speak English and had not understood the threatening letters they had received. I negotiated a payment plan and cautioned that they should keep their windows and doors locked. Stories such as these are not isolated incidents. The effects of welfare bordering (Guentner et al., 2016) and funding cuts loomed large in day-to-day practice at MFSP. The staff were only too aware of the effects of austerity. It was apparent that, despite David Cameron's (2009:online) assertion that 'fiscal responsibility can go hand in hand with a social conscience'; austerity and cost-saving measures were implemented despite the harms to the settlement and integration of migrant families.

My intention in conducting PhD research was to understand the effects of austerity on migrant families, particularly in relation to accessing services in a time of austerity. My line manager at MFSP was supportive and enthusiastic, and agreed that the organisation would perform a gatekeeper function and introduce me to research participants. We talked animatedly about the potential of the project; I wrote a proposal that foregrounded concepts of social justice and equality and - inspired after reading the work of Paolo Freire (1970) - *conscientization*. I envisaged interviewing families and then informing practice, through feeding back to MFSP. However, shortly after starting the PhD it became apparent that MFSP's survival was under threat following the withdrawal of funding from the local authority. This altered the nature of the research; through ethnographic observations I recorded

the responses of the organisation to this funding crisis, and subsequently MFSP became not just a gatekeeper but an object of study.

Charting the journey of an organisation in decline necessitated understanding the political climate in which it was established and thrived and in which it closed. This thesis attends to the general move away from a politics of multiculturalism and partnership working between state and voluntary sector, and towards the marketisation of welfare and an increasingly hostile climate for migrants. These political moments, one dominated by New Labour and the latter by the Conservative-led governments, are not presented as binary but rather as a continuing project of neoliberal government (see appendix 12), that has situated voluntary organisations as service providers *within* rather than *against* the state (Milbourne and Cushman, 2014). Ethnographic analysis attends to the nature of organisational change and closure in a time of austerity and funding cuts. Findings address the structural context that precipitated the closure of the organisation; the affective nature of resistance, compliance and loss; the material effects of organisational change and depreciating work conditions; and the perceived implications of austerity for migrant families as articulated by professionals. These implications were unequivocal; austerity was corrosive and mobilised in organisational narratives as a time of unparalleled crisis.

While my own practice experience and the ethnographic study alerted me to the harms of austerity, it was the interviews with migrant families that attuned me to the diffuse atmosphere of austerity (Hitchen, 2016). Listening to the experiences of migrant families, the coherent story of austerity that I was accustomed to was, at

times, disrupted (Montgomerie, 2016b; 2016a). Utilising a life-narrative approach, and the 'Listening Guide' (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998; Doucet and Mauthner, 2008) to analyse interview transcripts, I have sought to pay attention to the multiple, and at times conflicting, narratives that participants tell about their own lives. These narratives indicate the constellation of historical and persistent crises that many migrants face, both pre- and post- migration. I started to understand austerity in a broader context, as a moment in time that was temporally and spatially contingent.

In this thesis I seek to bring the organisational and migrant family data together through dialogic (Frank, 2010) attention to the connections and divergences between stories and understandings of austerity. I examine and analyse the different narratives and positions of those who name austerity as a consuming problem, perhaps as *the* problem - those who, as a family support worker noted above: '*go to sleep with... [and] wake up with deficit*' - and those who do not know what austerity means, the participants in this study who do not speak in these terms, even as they experience the brunt of austerity and appear to narrate its effects in detail.

I started this project as a recently qualified social worker based within a voluntary sector organisation, motivated by a desire to understand the impact of austerity on migrant families, and to positively influence service provision. Now, I also identify as an activist, politicised (and for a time, bruised) through the affective nature of researching austerity and the injustice experienced by participants. Social work is

practising in a context where services are closing and a politics of *revanchism*³ (Slater, 2016) is evident. As such, it is imperative to think of modes of practice that seek to resist these processes, and which work in solidarity with those at the sharp end of inequality to effect social change. The final chapter returns to this and brings together the convergent and divergent narratives of migrant families, a voluntary organisation and a researcher, in a time of austerity.

1.2 Migrant Family Support Project and ‘migrant families’

MFSP was a service based within a larger charity that worked with the local authority education department in the city of Manchester to identify new arrivals and to support them to access appropriate school provision. More generally, it supported newly arrived migrant families, who were experiencing difficulties accessing health and welfare provision and who needed support with further and higher education, employment and orientation, to ‘settle’ in Manchester through a holistic assessment of needs and long-term outreach support provision. The organisation was funded almost entirely by the local authority, though in recent years it had been successful in acquiring funding through more diverse funding streams for work with the Roma community, one of the newest migrant communities in the city.

³ The ‘revanchist state’ is a concept that I was introduced to through Prof. Akwugo Emejulu in a plenary session at the British Sociological Association 2017 at the University of Manchester. Emejulu argued that illiberal politics have taken advantage of various crises to enact a politics of ‘revenge’ against those – particularly minoritised groups and migrants – that are thought to have made marginal gains in the preceding years.

Initially set-up to support refugee and asylum-seeking children in response to the dispersal programme of the New Labour government, MFSP was relatively unique within the asylum seeking and refugee charity sub-sector as it responded to the increasing diversity of Manchester's migrant community (in terms of both 'race', nationality and status) through working with families regardless of their immigration status or ethnicity. Accordingly, MFSP worked with: refugees, asylum seekers, EU migrants, and non-EU migrants on family, work and student visas.

As this research was conducted with and through MFSP the potential participant sample was diverse, and this has implications for the analysis of data. Though it could be argued that a sample with diverse nationality and immigration status affects the coherence of analysis, the participants in this study are connected via their status as low-income, non-citizens seeking access to support services and public goods in a time of austerity. Subject to cross-cutting forms of disadvantage (including race, gender, class, migrant status, language, disability), it was the confluence of these that denoted their relationship with MFSP. In a context of 'superdiversity' (Vertovec, 2007), migrant populations have become increasingly heterogeneous through diversifying migration channels, and myriad legal statuses are delineating the rights and restrictions of migrants. Vertovec (2007:1035) highlights some of the ways in which the everyday lives of migrants are fundamentally reshaped by this delineation:

...how people group themselves and where people live, how long they can stay, how much autonomy they have... whether their families can join them, what kind of livelihood they can

undertake and maintain, and to what extent they can make use of public services and resources.

My concern then throughout the analysis chapters 5-8 is to highlight the way in which migrants are positioned in relation to state practices (vis-à-vis immigration and austerity policies). Through attention to the everyday lives of migrant families I demonstrate how these policies and their accompanying narratives are enacted and felt in practice.

The focus on *families* is pertinent in a study on austerity. At a practice level, women and families with children are more likely to access public services and welfare (Women's Budget Group, 2010). Families have been the target of particular political messages in relation to austerity, for instance, through the '*Troubled Families*' programme introduced in 2012 with the intention of saving money for the state by intervening earlier with those families constructed as a burden⁴ (Bate, 2017). The construction of the migrant family is ideological and gendered, with the presence of women - seen only in their role as mothers - disrupting the trope of the ideal migrant as a 'sojourner' who is likely to return to their home country (Escobar, 2006 as cited in Tyler, 2013b:69). Policy might be directed at migrant mothers (see for instance, chapter 7 regarding English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses), and they are constructed as responsible for the social reproduction of 'good' neoliberal citizens (Lonergan, 2015). Gedalof (2007:92), referring to an image

⁴ It is indicative of the political climate that this programme started in Manchester as MFSP lost funding. MFSP was set up through funding from a Labour initiative to implement 'early-intervention' projects that would support vulnerable communities and promote social cohesion (see chapter 4). I was informed by a local authority manager that the migrant families that MFSP supported (though perhaps constructed as a burden by government rhetoric) rarely meet the threshold for support from the Troubled Families programme.

of the British nation as *home* and the racialised nature of citizenship, argues that migrant women embody ‘an unhomely threat’. They are often presented as passive victims of gendered violence, though Kofman et al. (2000:135) note that for some who face racism in the public sphere, ‘the family... is also a refuge and source of support’. Kofman et al. (2000) also point out that the exclusion of migrants from welfare has meant that migrants are often forced to turn to their own family and wider networks for support. Therefore, a focus on the family and the household in research allows for an understanding of gendered and generational experiences, and reveals the ‘complexity of everyday practices and relationships’ in a time of austerity (Hall, 2016:327).

1.3 Manchester: a city of diversity and (excessive) austerity

Manchester is a city with a diverse population; a recent report based on the 2011 census estimated that 16% of the population were international migrants (Bullen, 2015), though this is likely to include those who are students and those who have not settled permanently. Wards within Manchester are classed as ‘super-diverse’, for instance in Moss Side and Cheetham Hill, where no one ethnic group accounts for more than a third of the population (Jivraj, 2013). Manchester’s authorities present the city as a place that is proud of its migrant history:

Manchester’s greatest strength is its people who come from many different backgrounds and who make a positive contribution to the city’s economic and social life.
(Manchester City Council, 2017:12)

This is celebrated through various cultural events such as Chinese New Year, the ‘Mega Mela’ and the Manchester Parade, and by the funding of various voluntary

sector organisations to provide services that ‘the Council may not be able to directly provide’ (ibid:8). However, ethnographic observations indicate that it is important to treat these celebrations of ‘diversity’ with caution:

I was chatting to my managers at MFSP today and apparently a senior officer at the Council has been reported as saying that Manchester had been providing a “gold service” for migrant communities up until now, and now they are removing this perhaps migrants will stop coming to Manchester! We were talking about a disabled child who is funded by the Council to travel to his school in a borough outside of Manchester. We were incredulous... the idea that welfare is a pull factor to the UK is already ridiculous, we doubted that *local* public services were encouraging migrants to come here (extract from research diary, May 2013).

The changing relationship between the local authority and MFSP in a time of austerity and hostility (see chapter 2, section 2.1) are further explored in chapter 4, however here it is possible to see austerity as an ideological – as well as economic - project, one that is managed at various levels (central government, local government, voluntary sector) before filtering down to migrant families.

Manchester City Council faced a 28% reduction in central government funding following the Comprehensive Spending Review in 2010 (Manchester City Council, 2010), equating to a £170 million budget reduction. In the period 2013-2015 £80 million further savings had to be found (Manchester City Council, 2013).

Experiencing a greater cut to overall spending power than the national average, Manchester Council’s leader has been vocal about the disproportionate cuts that the already deprived city has faced (Leese, 2015).

The removal of ring-fenced grants to such areas as social care and education, on which Manchester was heavily reliant, has affected the allocation of spending priorities. Subsequently, public services and the third sector have experienced funding cuts and redundancies. Several reports have highlighted the adverse impact of funding cuts on the voluntary sector landscape in Manchester (Davidson and Packham, 2012; Martikke, 2012; Dayson et al., 2013), with small organisations particularly at risk of closure, many facing an uncertain future, and reports of an increased demand for services and an inability to meet the needs of service users. Chapter 4 turns to examine in-depth the experience of one such voluntary sector organisation in Manchester in relation to funding cuts.

1.4 Defining austerity

This thesis is illustrative of a reflexive engagement with the term ‘austerity’. While austerity is discussed further in chapter 2 (section 4), I want to situate this thesis within the expansive ‘austerity’ terrain. The beginning of this chapter illustrated that when this project began I felt I ‘knew’ what austerity was, and in turn I had preconceived ideas of how it would show itself in this research. Instead, I have come to realise the multifarious ways in which austerity can be understood and constructed.

Austerity is most often referenced as a set of economic policies that have had a significant and severe impact on the public sector and welfare provision through budget cuts and increased privatisation. Budget cuts from central government to local government have translated into spending cuts to public services, and central government has embarked on an ambitious and large-scale welfare reform project

with a view to reducing the welfare state. Accordingly, economic policy is interwoven with social policy, and most effects those who use public services and who receive welfare benefits (Women's Budget Group, 2010). Austerity is more than a set of policies however, as it is sustained by an ideology that emphasises the reduction of state spending and affirmative interventions, and the individual responsibility of citizens (Newman, 2017). It is sustained by nostalgic (Bramall, 2013) and nativist narratives (among others) (Vockins, 2013), that draw on the dichotomic and divisive rhetoric of the 'deserving citizen' and the 'undeserving migrant'. It is in this context that the 'hostile environment' (see chapter 2, section 2.1) has flourished. Austerity functions through governmentality, with the idea of 'living within our means' a pervasive edict (Bramall et al., 2016). Austerity is felt by those who are at the sharp end of welfare reform and funding cuts, but it is also felt as an affective atmosphere (Hitchen, 2016) – one that can be felt in theory (for instance, through hearing about the benefit cuts or foodbank referral of a friend) before it is experienced in actuality.

Given the above ways in which austerity can be enacted, the *experience* of austerity is dependent upon one's intersectional social positioning. The experience of some groups (see chapter 2, section 4) has been much (and rightly) studied, while migrant groups have received considerably less focus in recent years. With a body of work that presents a significant corrective to this, Emejulu and Bassel (2014; 2015; 2017a; 2017b) have put forward the question, 'whose crisis counts?' – and this thesis aims to contribute to a nascent literature that attends to this question through an

exploration of the austerity experiences of refugee and migrant families and a third sector organisation supporting them.

1.5 Researching migration and social work: theoretical lenses

This research builds on an inspiring lineage of critical social work research with refugees and asylum seekers (Bakewell, 2008; Masocha and Simpson, 2011; Robinson, 2014; Hardwick and Hardwick, 2015). This thesis extends this literature base through a focus on a broader group of migrants (Cox and Geisen, 2014), while also attending to the specificity of migrant status (see appendix 12). Though the literature drawn on in this thesis come from a range of disciplines, it is the tenet of social justice - uniquely claimed as part of the fabric of social work - that has been instrumental in the formation of this project (Humphries and Campling, 2008). Appealing to social work researchers to attend to the field of migration, Cox and Geisen (2014:161) implore:

There is no 'outside' of a society; everyone who lives in a society is always a part of it, because changes in a society influence individual and collective social practices... Thus, migration is a core business of social work, because social workers engage with individuals, families and groups and with their social relationships within their wider networks of communities, societies and nations.

While I do advocate for this 'common-sense' approach, I am also mindful of the reality in which social work can appear to disengage with the topic of migration and with migrants themselves. To this end, this research employs a critical standpoint that:

...interrogates policies and practices, that accentuates the voice of and highlights the position of marginalised minorities across Europe and research that turn a questioning lens on social work itself. (Williams and Graham, 2013:151)

Theoretical lenses are employed throughout this thesis which facilitate this critical standpoint. Discussed in more detail throughout the course of the thesis, these are critical 'entry points' for the research analysis and include a reflexive and multi-pronged focus on: narrative multiplicity (see chapter 3, section 4.1); translocational positionality (see chapter 5, section 1); and the concept of 'liveable lives' (Butler, 2012) (see chapter 3, section 4.2).

1.6 Thesis outline

The thesis has nine chapters, and following this introduction, chapter 2 presents a review of the literature. This situates migrant experiences of austerity in a context of historically racialised welfare practices, clarifies how austerity is constructed in this thesis as a practice and a discourse that has material and immaterial effects, and through reviewing austerity literature that has studied migrants and non-migrants, I draw attention to the less-explored narratives of migrant families in studies of everyday life in a time of austerity.

In chapter 3 I outline the philosophical underpinnings and methodological approaches that have directed this study. I outline the two stages of fieldwork; through ethnographic methods in a voluntary organisation that supported migrant families and narrative interviews with migrant families previously supported by the organisation. This is a necessarily reflexive chapter, that critically reflects on the

doing of research as an insider in a contemporary, shifting and *affective* context, and I carefully attend to the ethics of this research project.

Chapter 4 situates the ethnographic findings firstly through a literature review of organisational change. Moving on to present the ethnographic data, I chart the response of an organisation and the workers within it to a period of crisis and loss. This chapter draws on observations recorded in a field diary, organisational documents and interviews with management and frontline family support workers. Responding to a gap in the literature, I focus on the affective nature of austerity in an organisation facing closure due to funding cuts. Mobilising radical interpretations of loss, I consider the potential for both compliance and resistance in third sector organisations.

Chapters 5-8 present the findings from narrative interviews with migrant families. Together these address the everyday experiences and narratives of migrant families in a time of austerity. Chapter 5 starts by situating migrant narratives in a *translocational* context; that is, I consider how the nature of migration and legal immigration status influence narratives of austerity. I highlight the contexts from which people have migrated, the comparisons made between lives pre- and post-migration, and the effects of restrictive legislation and the *hostile environment* on everyday life. I close this chapter by attending to the connections between migrant and non-migrant experiences of austerity, particularly in relation to welfare conditionality, debt, and the provision of food. This chapter seeks to narrate both the specificity of migrant experiences and the commonalities with other marginalised groups, in so doing I attempt to avoid a reification of difference.

Chapter 6 attends to the precarity that is evident in migrant narratives. This is explored in relation to employment, but also as it extends into other aspects of everyday life, particularly its impact on relationships. This is further analysed in relation to gender, whereby care-work and care in the home were dominant features of gendered narratives. Finally, I convey the heightened narratives of care and isolation for families who had a child with a disability.

In chapter 7 I examine the services and support networks that participants described as enabling or constraining their settlement and everyday life in the UK. I highlight the effects of funding cuts and (hegemonic) policy narratives on the provision of services, particularly on healthcare, language support and voluntary support organisations. A section on housing illustrates the egregious effects of marketisation in the provision of a fundamental human right. Lastly, I look to the informal networks that migrant families relied on in times of crisis and daily life, and which were often small but vital.

Chapter 8 addresses the structural contexts within which narratives of everyday life and austerity are told. This chapter highlights six key narratives that participants invoked to make sense of their experiences; the 'worse-off' narrative, the duty to be grateful, individual responsibility, othering and being 'the other', identifying inequality and claims to justice, and precarious temporality. Finally, I attend to the way in which austerity was deceptively *elusive* in migrant family narratives.

In concluding, chapter 9 presents a discussion that dialogically brings together the ethnographic data and migrant family narratives. I end the thesis by reflecting on

the aims of the research, the limitations of the study and by stating my contributions to knowledge.

2.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to contextualise the study through a review of literature pertinent to migrant experiences of austerity. Key terms related to the study of migration and austerity are defined in appendix 12⁵. The literature review looks to answer two questions; what *is* austerity and what does austerity *do*. Firstly, I outline prevailing antecedents of austerity and place migrant experiences of welfare in their historical context. I highlight the racialised nature of welfare as both the historical and contemporary determinant of inequality for migrant groups. This will highlight the nature of the ‘hostile environment’; a policy that has material and immaterial effects, and which is a thread that weaves through this thesis alongside austerity. I then go on to critically discuss the nature (and normativity) of the *crises* that are said to shape the current moment: the global economic crisis and resultant austerity across Europe, and the ‘refugee crisis’. In the second, and more substantial, section I discuss the austerity literature that explores the effects, and the affective nature, of austerity in the UK. This examines key austerity texts, including theoretical explorations, policy analyses, and empirical studies that consider the nature of austerity for people at various social locations, both migrant and non-migrant. I conclude by suggesting the ways in which this study addresses the literature, and the emergent gaps.

⁵ The terms defined are: migration, refugee, asylum seeker, EU migrant, non-EU migrant, no recourse to public funds condition, destitution, racism, xenophobia, and neoliberalism.

Austerity has been a burgeoning field of study in the last few years, with the majority of the literature in the latter half of this thesis being published in the years since I started the PhD, and as such the search, collation and synthesis of literature has been an iterative process. The literature review has been planned and strategic; using a combination of key words⁶ to search electronic databases⁷, searching third sector and local authority websites for resources, key academic repositories such as the Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford. Given the contemporary nature of the study I regularly reviewed the British Library ETHOS site for relevant PhD studies. However, I have also found literature through intuitive and serendipitous means; through reviewing the bibliographies of key texts, searching prevalent authors published (and forthcoming) works, browsing library shelves, reports via email newsletters, via academics and organisations on Twitter, and through conference presentations. This has resulted in a vast and interdisciplinary corpus of literature; from sociology, social policy, economics, social work, psychology, and geography. These cover a range of literature types; academic journal articles, books, organisational, think tank and trade union reports, policy documents, Home Office reports, 'grey' literature, news articles and conference proceedings. In an attempt to manage this literature, I have largely focused on that which pertains to the 2008 economic crisis and subsequent austerity, rather than

⁶ Common key words included: *migrant, refugee, asylum seeker, newly-arrived, black/minority ethnic, race, ethnic/ity* and *austerity, welfare/reform, credit crunch, recession, economic/financial crisis, crisis, neoliberal*. I also searched for terms such as: *service, support, healthcare, ESOL, NHS, experience, access, mental health, poverty, families, disability, children* to locate literature that may refer to austerity incidentally and broader austerity studies.

⁷ Google Scholar, Social Care Online, ASSIA, SOLO, MMU library database

migrant experiences of services more generally. I also focus on literature that applies to the participants in this study (the parameters of which were discussed in chapter 1). This means, for instance, that the issues of destitution⁸ and ‘no recourse to public funds’⁹ are not covered in any depth (see appendix 12). This is not a reflection of the importance I place on these, but rather it is beyond the scope of the study and deserves adequate attention (see: Canning, 2017a; Canning, 2017b). Further literatures that informed the analyses and interpretation of findings are integrated through chapters 4-8.

I now turn to the historical provision of welfare to migrants, including a discussion on the way in which welfare has been, and continues to be, racialised.

2.2 Racialised welfare across history

Welfare has been designed and governed in relation to the idea of the *nation* and the construction of who does and does not belong (Lewis, 1996; Bloch and Schuster, 2002). This has been enacted historically through legislation such as the Aliens Act 1905, which racialised and discriminated against Jewish migrants fleeing Eastern Europe (Hayes et al., 2004). In the post-war era, despite formal rights, Commonwealth citizens faced substantive barriers to accessing welfare as racism (see appendix 12) and discrimination proliferated (Sales, 2007). The desirability of migrants has been delineated, such that there are hierarchies of ‘provision’ (Bloch and Schuster, 2002:394) and of ‘citizenship’ (Castles, 2007:35). The boundaries of

⁸ See for instance: (Bloom, 2016; Hintjens, 2012; British Red Cross and Boaz Trust, 2013; Crawley et al., 2011)

⁹ See for instance: (Farmer, 2017; Price and Spencer, 2015)

belonging are not static. Brah (1996:175) explains that these respond to ‘political, cultural and economic contingencies’. She argues that:

...when and where these borders are imagined and instituted,
or how they may shift, change, weaken or dissolve is critical.

These boundaries have become increasingly restrictive for asylum seekers since the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 (IAA 1999) which introduced forced-dispersal and the National Asylum Support Service (NASS), whose role, Cohen (2004:9) argued, was more about the ‘*withholding* of welfare’ than the provision of it. Since then, the use of detention and deportation as mechanisms of immigration control have also proliferated. For instance, in 2006, 2,540 people were detained in a detention centre (Sales, 2007); by 2016 this had increased to 28,900 people (Silverman, 2017). The example of detention is salient; despite the austerity narrative of the need to reduce government expenditure, the detainment of an individual for a year costs over £30,000 (McGuinness and Gower, 2017). This is indicative of the ideological power of the *hostile environment*, discussed below. Those dispersed and without any other means to support themselves are subject to subsistence rates officially set at 70% below mainstream benefits; though it has recently been calculated that these rates can be up to 50% lower for asylum seeking families (Refugee Action, 2017). The development of parallel and substandard welfare for asylum seekers signifies the antipathy and hostility toward them. Their exclusion from mainstream society has been orchestrated by a system that treats them as suspicious and problematic; and which looks primarily to removal over integration (Sales, 2007).

Though historically and contemporarily it is asylum seekers and those subject to the condition of 'No Recourse to Public Funds' (Farmer, 2017) who have faced the most substantive welfare restrictions, I also want to consider the position of migrants within the EU and EU migrants in the UK. To start with the latter, and as mentioned, the boundaries of belonging and exclusion are not static, and formerly liberal approaches to EU migration have become increasingly illiberal and bound up in anti-migrant rhetoric and subsequent welfare restrictions (Statham, 2004). This can be seen in the accession of eight Eastern European states in 2004, whose workers were required to register for a work permit, and which restricted access to welfare benefits for one year. Following the (unanticipated) high levels of Eastern European migration, the Labour government further restricted the rights of migrants from Bulgaria and Romania following accession in 2007; alongside restrictions to welfare, access to the labour market was curtailed (Fox et al., 2012). Though this was couched in economic imperatives, Fox et al. (2012:684) argue that these migrants face an institutionalised racism that is:

...implicitly embedded and reproduced in exclusionary...
practices, routines, and cultures that both draw on and
reproduce a logic of racialized difference.

For Roma migrants, this racism has been particularly marked, as well as anti-migrant rhetoric, they have 'stepped right into home-grown narratives about Gypsies and Travellers' (Fox et al., 2012:688). Discrimination towards Roma in welfare practices is discussed later in the chapter.

It is also necessary to think about the position of non-European migrants in the EU. Five families in this study are EU migrants, but have migration histories that extend to the global South. While the EU has been characterised as *Fortress Europe* (Sales, 2007), the trajectories of these families; from formerly colonised countries, with refugee status or as third-country economic migrants, complicates the fortress metaphor. To be clear, it does not dismantle it; rather it necessitates a look both at the mechanisms of (fatal) bordering¹⁰ that restrict entry *and* at the experiences of minoritised groups within Europe's borders. For instance, in relation to the extension of 'xeno-racism' to Muslim communities in Europe (Fekete, 2004), or the heightened effects of the economic crisis on Moroccans in Spain (Ennaji, 2014). Noting the ideological dimensions of the European project, Kofman and Sales (1998:384) highlight that persistent un- and precarious employment and restrictive welfare that minoritised groups face indicate the presence of an 'outsider population' intrinsic to western capitalist societies. It is in this context that migrants may migrate onwards, in order to 'find their place in the world' (Kelly, 2013:41).

2.2.1 The hostile environment

In 2013, the government created the 'Hostile Environment Working Group' – later renamed due to Liberal Democrat objections (Clayton, 2016). Later that same year the Immigration Act 2014 was described by Theresa May as having the purpose of creating a 'really hostile environment' (Travis, 2013:online). Legislative change has been couched in terms of being 'tough' on those migrants already in the UK who

¹⁰ See (Rooney, 2013; Squire et al., 2017)

may have insecure immigration status, and as a means of discouraging others from migrating to the UK (O'Callaghan, 2015). The Immigration Acts 2014 and 2016, have increased the reach of migration control mechanisms to a multitude of everyday spaces and endeavours, including through the NHS, banks, driving licence applications, and landlord checks. While ostensibly targeting irregular migrants, the *atmosphere* of hostility is such that discrimination based on race and 'foreignness' affect those who are 'lawfully present' (O'Callaghan, 2015:2). How this is performed spatially is examined by Jones et al. (2017), who note the affective nature of the 'Go Home' vans which spread fear and anxiety among migrants and non-migrants alike. The way in which the abdication of state responsibility has impacted on social services and interactions with migrants is described by Price (2014), who notes the social as well as legal implications of the hostile environment. Drawing on pertinent case law¹¹, he advocates for social work practice that is sensitive to the lives of migrants in the UK beyond legal/illegal demarcations. NELMA (2017) a London based campaigning organisation have recently reported on the bleaker reality of destitute migrant families' interactions with social services; between 69 and 88 percent of families they accompanied to social services faced hostility. A blog post by NELMA on the Social Work Action Network website acknowledges the imbrication of hostility and austerity, whereby negative social work practice is attributed to:

¹¹ 1) ZH (Tanzania) (FC) v Secretary of State for the Home Department (2011) UKSC 4. 2) Birmingham City Council v Clue (2010) EWCA Civ 460.

...the pressures placed on front-line social workers by a lack of dedicated government funding, severe staff shortages, impossible case loads and deep council cuts. (SWAN, 2016:online)

Hostility and austerity are described by Burnett (2017b:online) as ‘two flanks... of the same political project’; though each have their own histories, they fuel one another. The impoverishment of migrants and non-migrants, and the increased competition for scarce resources reproduce anti-migrant hostility. Mobilising public sympathies toward Syrian refugees, Anderson (2015:online) advocated; ‘it is necessary to make the argument that better services for Syrian arrivals must mean better services for everybody.’

2.3 Global crises

Austerity has been a phenomenon implemented across countries since the global economic crisis in 2008. For some, including the UK, austerity was a political choice by governments (discussed further below), while for others such as Greece, it has been imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), European Union and European Central Bank. These interventions have been classed a ‘spectacle of discipline’ (Tsilimpounidi and Walsh, 2014:8), and their effects have been punishing, particularly so for Greece which has been at the frontline of the ‘refugee crisis’ (Teloni and Mantanika, 2015; Matsaganis, 2012; Chalalet and Jones, 2015; Athanasiou, 2014; Carastathis, 2015). Indeed, Greece has been used as a portent of what might happen to other western states if they do not pre-emptively reduce social spending (Pentaraki, 2013). While it is not within the remit of this chapter to review the extent of austerity effects in a global context, it is important to note the economic

and social constraints that might act as a *push* factor for migrants. Two families in this study migrated from two Southern European countries – Spain and Portugal – that have been ‘heavily indebted and subsequently bailed out’ by the *Troika*, and which have been subject to ‘grim’ austerity measures (Ioakimidis et al., 2014:288). The human rights of people within these contexts are threatened, particularly so for migrants, asylum seekers, minority ethnic communities (including the Roma), women, children and disabled people (Lusiani and Saiz, 2013).

Some have noted the misnomer of *global* in the construction of crisis. Hay (2012:online) argues that in a truly global context, the economic crisis was in fact specifically ‘Anglo-liberal’ in nature. The inequalities between (roughly) Northern and Southern countries, in a context of imperialism, colonialism and global capitalism, have seen Southern economies in crisis since long before 2008 (Vickers, 2012). This directly relates to the ‘refugee crisis’; instability in countries such as Syria and Libya, coupled with tightened border controls at the periphery of Europe and a reduction in safe routes, have seen more people attempt to enter Europe, and more people lose their lives in doing so (Giglioli, 2016). Global crises and hostilities towards migrants are inextricably linked, and orchestrated by governments and powerful institutions. I will return to the political climate of crisis and how these are narrated by participants throughout the thesis.

2.4 UK austerity literature

The global economic recession has been described as a manifestation of a long-standing ‘crisis of capitalism’ (Vickers, 2012:4), and austerity, rather than an

economically common-sense response, is an ideological project that seeks to reshape the relationship between state, market and society (Taylor-Gooby and Stoker, 2011; Clarke and Newman, 2012; Taylor-Gooby, 2012; Blyth, 2013). It is suggested by Krugman (2012:online) that austerity is about ‘using the crisis, not solving it’. The political and media narrative of austerity has been to shift the locus of fault, and of deliverance from austerity, to households through the imagery of the national debt as household debt (Jensen, 2012). As Jensen (2012:2) illustrates; ‘national ‘solvency’ is aligned with the responsibility, thrift, and temperance of the individual household.’ The ‘cultural politics’ (p.13) of austerity, enacted through imagery such as the *troubled family*¹² and the nostalgia¹³ of post-war austerity, work to ‘take hold... psychically as well as socially’ (p.23). This imagery has particular gendered consequences for mothers; who alongside being disproportionately affected in material terms by austerity (Women’s Budget Group, 2016), are subject to moralising discourse that judges their parenting (de Benedictis, 2012; Lonergan, 2015). This literature highlights the extent to which austerity is a ‘discourse and a practice’ (Tosh, 2013), or, as Newman (2017) argues: austerity is a combination of policy, ideology and governmentality. These definitions of austerity, that reference both the material and symbolic, guide the analysis of this thesis.

Academics, journalists, think tanks and charities have warned of, and documented, the rising inequality that austerity has inflicted, particularly in relation to welfare and health outcomes (O’Hara, 2014; Dorling, 2015; Poinasamy, 2013; Bambra et al.,

¹² See (Crossley, 2017)

¹³ See (Bramall, 2013)

2015). Qualitative studies have looked in-depth at the consequences of austerity for particular strata of society. These have considered the effects of austerity on women (Raynor, 2016), children and families (O'Brien and Kyprianou, 2017; Hall and Perry, 2013; Hall, 2016; Stenning, 2017; Ridge, 2013), mental health outcomes (Mattheys, 2017), benefit claimants (Patrick, 2014; 2017), those who are disabled and long-term sick (Garthwaite, 2013), and black and minority ethnic communities (Sandhu et al., 2013). These offer rich insights into the daily lives of participants in a time of austerity. Studies have noted the changing support landscape, with an increased reliance on food banks (Goode, 2012; Garthwaite et al., 2015; Dowler and Lambie-Mumford, 2015; Lambie-Mumford and Dowler, 2015) and the importance of (and pressure on) informal support networks (Canton, 2016; Stenning, 2017). They speak of the stress and fear that welfare reform and debt engender (Garthwaite, 2014; Mattheys, 2017). The frustration and struggle of being un- and under- employed, and the ineffective (and negligent) support from the Jobcentre (Patrick, 2017; Jordan, 2016). Findings often report a general sense of insecurity and a lost ability to plan and prepare for the future, indicating the precarious state of many participants (O'Brien and Kyprianou, 2017). Finally, the survival strategies and cutbacks that participants make in straitened times (Pemberton et al., 2014), and the resistance tactics that some engage in are explored (Craddock, 2017). While not exhaustive, this is indicative of the multitude of issues faced by those (usually on a low-income) in a time of austerity. Few of these broader studies include migrants within their sample, or if they do so, it is not explicitly explored and is justified in terms of gaining a 'diverse' sample (Hall and Perry, 2013). While this is perhaps

understandable, given the added complexity that this may mean in analysing data, it is also worth reiterating that while there are specific issues related to immigration status and entitlements, their experiences also intersect with the areas described above. In an increasingly *super-diverse* society (Phillimore, 2011), their omission from research is notable. Particularly in those research studies that seek to influence policy and service provision; perhaps, as Phillimore (2011:24) suggests, it is necessary to ‘accept the new reality of super-diversity, and seek practical ways to adapt institutions and thinking’.

2.4.1 Making sense of austerity

A smaller proportion of the austerity literature explores the conceptualisations and meanings attributed to austerity by participants. In *Austerity Bites* O’Hara (2014:14-15) highlights the ‘fury’ and ‘bewilderment’ that those she spoke to expressed in relation to the project of austerity, with particular reference to the effect of welfare cuts, debt, food poverty, and unemployment. A study by Seabrook and Riisbjerg-Thomsen (2016) of online comments sections names five narratives that commenters draw on in relation to their ‘trying to make sense of austerity and what it means for their lives’ (p.259). These tropes consisted of: scroungers, living beyond our means, banker bashing, charity begins at home, and the need for a new politics. This echoes the work of Stanley (2014:895) whose research with middle-class homeowners found that they articulated austerity as ‘reaping what we sowed’. Both of these speak to the ‘*common-sense*’ story of austerity, in which state economics are translated as household debt, and consequently public issues are transformed into

private troubles (Wright Mills, 1967). Others have highlighted the impact of austere and stigmatising narratives, and how these are navigated – both reproduced and resisted – by participants (Pemberton et al., 2015). Finally, Thomsen et al. (2010:157) illustrate the value of family analyses for understanding how a ‘singular event’ can be understood differently according to generation, but also the power of the stories ‘family members tell about themselves’. Noting the value of a longitudinal method they conclude:

Just because individuals do not speak about the vulnerability of a family does not mean that the family is invulnerable, and vice versa. For some families hard times and survival are the norm and such conditions do not give rise to comment or self-conscious reflection. Within other families individuals are comfortable in narrating their fortunes in relation to broader generational and historical landscapes, and may be highly attuned to potential risk and loss, and uninhibited in expressing this. Longitudinal methods have the capacity to provide insight into this complex relationship between subjective and objective well-being.

In the next section I review the approach of studies that focus on everyday experiences and on the affective nature of austerity to explicate this ‘complex relationship between subjective and objective well-being’ (ibid). I return to the question of participant narratives of austerity in chapter 8.

2.4.2 Everyday austerity

Jupp (2017) advocates for the inclusion of time and temporality in analyses of crisis, as it is in crisis that individuals can only think of day-to-day survival; how to put food on the table, ensure there is enough credit on the gas meter, clear the damp from the walls. This is referred to as the ‘politics of daily life’ (Wekerle, 2004 as cited

in Jupp, 2017:5). A focus on time then allows researchers to trace ‘how families may move between problems, troubles, resolutions, coping and ‘normality’ (p.5). A focus on the everyday also attends to the way austerity is ‘expressed *affectively*’ (Hitchen, 2016:103); for instance in the expression of fear, anxiety or hope. This is particularly important when thinking about the ‘diffuse’ (p.103) ways that austerity might be expressed (as distinct from the kind of ‘fury’ that was articulated by O’Hara’s (2014:14) respondents, for instance). Hitchens’ attention to the ‘atmospheres of austerity’ (2016:102), in the lives of families with children with disabilities, highlights the affective *absence* of income, work, and welfare and the lost ability to be spontaneous or carry out family activities. She notes that austerity might materially affect one person, and that can spread fear and anxiety to others (say in a parental support group) not yet touched by it. The accumulation of ‘austerity affects’ mean that participants come to *expect* less from state support, and yet they might still be shocked when something (like reduced benefits) happens to them. She notes the suppression of fear and the need to simply ‘get on with life’ (p.113), and how this just *getting on* causes fatigue and can restrict the ability to contest austerity.

Similarly, Raynor (2016) evokes the affective nature of austerity in relation to a group of un- and under- employed women. Describing how the women said austerity did not affect them, but then would go on to describe its effects in detail, she contemplates the nature of austerity:

‘Sometimes austerity escapes its cause... sometimes its sources are difficult to identify, it gets everywhere, it disorients, it settles, it muddies connections between us, I try to grab it and

it escapes. It is breathed and gets inside different bodies differently. (p.184)

Hall (2016), studying the 'financialisation of everyday life' (p.305), highlights the emotional and relational practices of everyday family life. Through ethnographic research she sought to understand how families *get by*, the gendered and generational relationships within the family, interpersonal relationships outside the family, acts of sharing and reciprocity, and personal life histories and experiences shape understanding and meaning-making in times of austerity. Her findings note 1) the daily budgeting negotiations, anxiety of debt, the inability to purchase essentials and the way in which monetary decisions are made within the family. 2) How past experiences and family stories shape contemporary practices of financial decision making and the relationship to finance and debt. 3) The narration of aspiration and future planning, the burden of austerity on young people's futures and the disjuncture between the experiences of parents and children. The broader '*Everyday Austerity*' project within which this paper is based has toured various northern locations, and viewing the exhibition in Salford, I noted that one family, a mother and daughter, were Iranian migrants. The snapshot into their everyday life was brief yet vivid. Borrowing money from a cousin, the mother decorated her daughter's bedroom and purchased a phone so they could call their family in Iran; the family home is infested with mice; they buy meat at the beginning of the month to freeze and while the daughter eats her favourite rice and meat dish, the mother eats salad to save money. This family do not explicitly feature in Hall's academic texts to date. This indicates the paucity of literature that explicitly acknowledges the *everyday* lives of migrants; and I attend to this in chapters 5-7. The work on affect and the

everyday described here has been formative in analysing the austerity experiences of migrant families; in chapter 8 I return to the way in which austerity was (and was not) narrated.

2.5 Migrant austerity studies

The literature discussed in this section contextualises, theorises and empirically locates the contemporary migrant-austerity landscape. I firstly locate this study in the policy context; through consideration of the reform and stratification of welfare entitlements, analyses of funding cuts to service provision, the marketisation of the asylum system, and the punitive profiteering of the immigration system. I then move on to consider theoretical contributions; the anti-migrant rhetoric of austerity, deceit in the construction of '*crisis*', and the entanglement of austerity and citizenship. Finally, I review empirical studies that have sought to understand the impact of austerity on migrants in the UK; though this literature is limited, it contextualises the harms enacted toward varying migrant groups via austerity policies, practices and discourse.

2.5.1 Policy context

2.5.1.a Welfare

The reform of the welfare state has been a key vehicle in the administration of austerity. This has been at the heart of the 'alchemy' of austerity, whereby an 'unwieldy and expensive' welfare state has been recast as to blame for financial crisis (Clarke and Newman, 2012:300). The legitimacy of migrant claims to the welfare state have been vociferously challenged in media and political spheres, and this has

resulted in severe curtailment of migrant rights and entitlements. Restrictions have ideological underpinnings, and tangible effects that put migrants at risk of harmful outcomes. I address each of these: rights and entitlements, ideology, and their effects, in turn.

The stratification of migrant rights in relation to employment and welfare (Lewis et al., 2014; Morris, 2002) has developed a system in which there are multiple formations of entitlement dependent upon immigration status, and which are further intersected by a more general move towards a conditional and punitive welfare regime (for instance through the employment of sanctions (Mack, 2017). Morris (2016) argues that welfare is a key site in the management and control of migration, both of existing migrants and as a form of deterrence; with welfare envisioned as mobilising ‘a quest to undermine inward migration’ (p.2). Simply put, welfare restrictions are designed to repel potential migrants from moving to the UK and persuade those already here to return, through creating an inhospitable environment (O'Brien, 2015). To talk about welfare and migrants it is necessary to delineate between migrant groups. Dwyer and Scullion (2014) refer to three broad groups: asylum seekers (whose circumstances I return to below), EEA migrants (including A8/A2 and Roma migrants), and third country nationals (including refugees). O'Brien (2015) comprehensively warns of the restrictions brought to bear on EU migrants. These include restrictions on the length of time an EU migrant must have been in the UK before they can claim jobseekers allowance (JSA), child benefit and child tax credit; currently set at three months. The length of time that an EU migrant may claim JSA has reduced from six months to three months; if still

unemployed the claimant must demonstrate a 'genuine prospect of work' (O'Brien, 2015:115). All new EU migrants are unable to claim housing benefits, though existing claimants in 2014 could continue to do so¹⁴ (Dwyer, 2016). Subjective measures that calculate the likelihood of finding 'genuine' work, measurements that ascertain whether work meets 'minimum earnings threshold' (which take little account of reasons for part-time working, or exploitative working practices that may not pay minimum wage), and the withdrawal of interpretation services by the DWP all collide to form 'an intricate series of trapdoors' for EU migrants (O'Brien, 2015:121). Moreover, Oliver and Jayaweera (2013) have reported on the informal effects of these changes; where confusion and misunderstanding in the application of rules by welfare professionals increases the likelihood of incorrect interpretations of legislation and subsequently additional barriers to accessing welfare. A report that reviewed the experiences of migrant Roma in Glasgow found that:

...delays, inefficiencies, barriers and inequality are endemic within the UK public authorities... charged with administering welfare benefits... these... cause real poverty... and represent a fundamental denial of [Roma] rights under EU law (Paterson et al., 2011:5)

They highlight the discrimination and unlawfulness of welfare practices with Roma communities, whose claims are more likely to be subject to compliance checks by HMRC, documents (such as passports and birth certificates) are likely to be held for

¹⁴ This is relevant for those that I interviewed, who had all come to the UK prior to 2014 and so if they were EU migrants and otherwise eligible they were – technically - entitled to Housing Benefit.

significant periods of time, and erroneous decisions taken by officials (Paterson et al., 2011; O'Brien, 2015).

Though refugees are entitled to the same benefits as British citizens, the transitional period between asylum seeker and refugee is understood as presenting problems in relation to welfare. Delays in issuing national insurance numbers and biometric residence permits, difficulty navigating the welfare system and limited support to complete applications, lack of understanding about the circumstances of refugees by welfare professionals, and the abolition of the national *Refugee Integration and Employment Service* have all contributed to a substandard experience for many once they are granted leave to remain¹⁵ (Allsopp et al., 2014; Doyle, 2014) (see chapter 5). This has led to a recent report stating that there is a 'two-tier' system, which differentiates between those refugees who have been subject to the asylum system and those who have come to the UK as refugees through a resettlement scheme (All Party Parliamentary Group on Refugees, 2017).

The political and ideological premise of a stratified, contingent and punitive welfare state for migrants has variably been termed as signifying: xenoscepticism (O'Brien, 2015), welfare chauvinism (Dwyer and Scullion, 2017; Keskinen et al., 2016) and practices of welfare bordering (Guentner et al., 2016). In all of these we might recognise the words of Cooper and Whyte (2017:4) that austerity has brought in a 'detached administration of violence'; policies target the marginalised, and

¹⁵ See Gentleman (2012) and Hutton (2012) on the case of 'Child EG'; who died of starvation in Westminster in 2010, and whose mother died two days later. The family had been granted refugee status, but were not in receipt of benefits, due to multiple failings in this transitional period. The Serious Case Review is no longer available from the Westminster City Council website.

institutions implement political agendas in mundane and seemingly de-politicised ways, but with material and immaterial (harmful) effects. The effect of welfare changes, and the heavily publicised nature of them is said by O'Brien (2015:126) to send out a strong message that migrants are not 'equal human beings'. The ideological nature of tightening welfare restrictions is evident when considering that EU migrants in comparison with British citizens are *less* likely to claim out of work benefits; though more likely to claim in-work benefits (Sumption and Altorjai, 2016); this being indicative of the precarious, low-waged labour in which EU migrants are concentrated (Anderson, 2010).

The effects of such welfare reform have been, and continue to be, much studied. An ongoing project between six UK universities for instance has been conducting large scale, multi-methods research into the effectiveness and ethicality of welfare conditionality, with a significant strand focused on migrants (Welfare Conditionality, no date). An exemplar human rights and equality impact assessment conducted into the effects of spending cuts for BME women¹⁶ in Coventry found, among other things, that BME women receive a higher proportion of their income from welfare benefits and that BME mothers were disproportionately likely to face child tax credit and child benefit freezes compared to the general population (Sandhu and Stephenson, 2015; Sandhu et al., 2013). Oliver (2013) has highlighted the gendered impacts of welfare restrictions on spousal migrants, who face barriers to accessing welfare in their own right if they should divorce or leave an abusive

¹⁶ It is indicated that a high proportion of the participants and those assessed are migrants; with specific reference to refugees, asylum seekers, EU migrants, third country nationals and Roma women throughout.

relationship¹⁷. These gendered effects are also apparent for some EU migrants, particularly where one parent (likely a mother) has been caring for children, and therefore has not accrued their own status as a 'jobseeker' and as such is not deemed *habitually resident*; O'Brien (2015:115) illustrates this starkly:

In cases of domestic abuse, an unmarried partner with young children faces an unacceptable choice, between staying and keeping her children with an abuser, or taking her children, leaving and facing a total loss of social protection.

Unsurprisingly, deprivation and destitution are risks that befall migrants embroiled in the welfare system (O'Brien, 2015). A preliminary review of an as-yet unpublished study asserts that for asylum seekers, the effects of a substandard welfare system means that for some asylum seekers, their diet is 'comparable to pre- welfare state conditions' (Collins et al., 2015:online). Lewis et al. (2014) highlight that the precarious positions in which migrants are placed in relation to their immigration status and welfare entitlements means that they are more likely to be compelled to engage in low-paid and exploitative work. Some researchers have richly illustrated the ways in which welfare regimes are felt in the everyday lives of migrants; for instance, through ethnographic methods with a Roma family, Humphris (2016) reveals how borders travel from institutions into the home as frontline workers make moral judgements that can grant – or deny – access to welfare.

¹⁷ Though the Destitution Domestic Violence (DDV) concession should be applicable in such circumstances. See Oliver (2013) and (Marsh and Sharma, 2016).

2.5.1.b Funding cuts

Initiatives and organisations that support migrants at a local and national level have faced funding cuts and closure since the global economic crisis in 2008 and the Coalition government's comprehensive spending review (CSR) in 2010. Preceding this however, in the latter years of the New Labour government, a concern with *community, integration and cohesion* in policy arenas, saw the report '*Our Shared Future*' advocate a move away from funding 'single issue' projects, and place emphasis on 'mainstreaming' services (Commission on Integration & Cohesion, 2007). This was particularly detrimental to migrant specific organisations, who had to go to additional lengths to evidence the benefit of a 'single issue' focus (D'Angelo et al., 2010; Kofman et al., 2009). This trend has continued under the Coalition and Conservative governments, as governmental departments that funded integration programmes at a local level have faced severe funding cuts, terminating initiatives such as the *Equality and Human Rights Commission* grant and *Connecting Communities* programme (Collett, 2011; Sandhu et al., 2013). The *Migration Impacts Fund* was similarly scrapped in the first year of the Coalition government, despite the visa levy through which it was funded remaining in place (Collett, 2011) (see chapter 4). Instead, governmental funding for the '*Prevent*' strategy has seen an ideological shift toward counterterrorism and *securitisation* and away from *cohesion* (Thomas, 2014). Similarly, Emejulu and Bassel (2017a:199) note that the minority women that they interviewed found that they could often only find funding for work that reified BME communities as the 'racialised victim', for instance, through FGM projects.

Funding cuts to legal aid severely changed the national and local migrant support landscape, though this is largely beyond the scope of this thesis (see: Kleeman, 2016), legal aid changes mean that only migrants in detention or seeking asylum¹⁸ can access free legal aid (Amnesty International, 2016). Sandhu et al. (2013:66) note that the subsequent closures of national immigration advice organisations; the *Immigration Advisory Service* and *Refugee and Migrant Justice*, have placed 'increased pressure on local services' and have left migrants at an increased risk of destitution. Reduced access to legal aid for welfare benefits also detrimentally affects migrant groups (Sandhu et al., 2013), who are likely to be further disadvantaged due to language barriers, digitalisation of welfare, and a lack of information and knowledge of welfare.

Voluntary and community organisations (VCO) that have been a crucial source of support to migrant communities have been adversely affected by the CSR and the reduced funding to local authorities (Hemon et al., 2011). ESOL provision, interpreter services (see chapter 7), and refugee community organisations have all experienced funding cuts and sometimes closure (Sandhu et al., 2013; Hemon et al., 2011; D'Angelo et al., 2010; Refugee Council, 2010). The closure of specialist organisations leaves migrant groups reliant on generic services that may not have the expertise to provide effective support. For instance, the closure of the Refugee Integration and Employment service and subsequent move toward welfare-to-work programmes, where specialist understanding of the trajectories and barriers that

¹⁸ Though as Canning (2017a:71) notes: 'only those with a perceived greater than 50 per cent chance of success in appealing asylum refusal are able to gain publicly funded representation.'

refugees experience is lacking, mean that refugee claimants may be ‘coerced or even forced into jobs outside of their career trajectories’ (Gateley, 2014:1272). Migrant VCO’s have traditionally organised to address evident gaps in provision and knowledge in the public sector, yet austerity can be seen to have destabilised this as funding (and the independence of organisations) has been compromised. Chapter 4 turns to this through an in-depth analysis of one such organisation.

2.5.1.c The marketisation of asylum and immigration

The specific experiences of those participants that had been asylum seekers will be explored in more depth throughout the analysis chapters (5-8), however here I briefly highlight the comprehensive analyses of the asylum-austerity nexus. That asylum seekers have been subject to a grossly inferior welfare system is well-documented. Bales (2013:436) for instance, highlighted that despite government declarations that the subsistence levels provided to asylum seekers are set at 70% of income support rates, in actuality they work out at 65% of income support levels for an asylum-seeking couple, and at just 52% for a single person. This rate does not rise with inflation, and a recent *Guardian* article highlights the everyday lives of those who *survive* on £5 a day (Lyons, 2017). Canning (2017a) uncovers the collision of austerity and asylum in a chapter, ‘*The multiple forms of violence in the asylum system*’, in which she notes the structural and embodied violence which the asylum system inflicts. Canning (2017a:72) highlights that for those who make it past Europe’s deadly borders and to Britain ‘other forms of destitution and deprivation are enforced in the name of austerity’. Reduced access to services through restrictions and reductions in provision, legal aid reform, judicial review fee rises

(now reversed through ‘political and legal outrage’ (p.72)), and confinement in (costly) detention centres highlight the ideologically enforced social exclusion of asylum seekers (Tyler, 2013b). Since 2012, John Grayson has systematically reported on the ‘asylum market’ and the poor conditions of housing provided to asylum seekers through private (security) companies such as G4S (Grayson, 2012; 2014; 2017). Darling (2016) critiques the privatisation of the asylum-dispersal system as having multiple intersections with austerity and neoliberal governmentality. Dispersal means that asylum seekers are often forcibly-relocated to areas of ‘existing deprivation’, where ‘socially marginalised groups are placed in competition for scarce resources’ (p.5). The privatisation of the asylum system is couched in the language of a need for fiscal austerity; while the previous management of the dispersal system by local authorities was itself insufficient and unstable, political rhetoric in no way indicated that the private sector would improve the asylum experience. The move to a private provider has meant a ‘loss of knowledge and expertise within the local authority’ (p.10). Darling warns that the disappearance of ‘incrementally achieved knowledge’ (p.11) and spaces in which ‘moments of care *could* occur’ (p.10) put asylum seekers at risk as service delivery is more explicitly geared towards the ‘delivery of a profitable contract’ (p.10).

Finally, the marketisation of immigration is further exemplified in the increased charges and income requirements brought in by the Coalition and Conservative governments. The imbrication of *cutting costs* through austerity and *making money* through capitalising on immigration is explored by Sirriyeh (2015) in relation to the new minimum income rules brought in by the Coalition government. Though not

an issue for participants in this study (those who were non-EU migrants had joined an EU national and therefore were exempt from these charges), this policy is indicative of the immigration system being increasingly defined as a site of profit. Moreover, recent announcements of increased application fees also included a charge of £5.48 for email enquiries for those contacting the Home Office from outside the UK (Yeo, 2017). Described as reducing the ‘significant’ cost to the taxpayer (BBC News, 2017:online), once more Home Office policy is defended in the dual rhetoric of *cost* and *savings*, and in nationalistic discourse that constructs the foreigner as a problem to be managed and exploited.

2.5.2 Theoretical

Theoretical literature that illuminate the ideologies and rhetorics that connect austerity and migration have proliferated in the past two years. Here I briefly discuss two interwoven themes; anti-migrant rhetoric and the construction of citizenship, and the language of ‘crisis’ which are instructive in analysing the empirical data.

2.5.2.a Anti-migrant rhetoric

Anti-migrant rhetoric has been propelled by the conflation of austerity with imaginaries of ‘the nation’, explored by those concerned with the cultural politics of austerity (Forkert, 2016; Bramall, 2013). Appeals to an idealised and mythical past of ‘Blitz spirit’ are both succour to austerity’s material harms, and serve to distinguish those who are ‘British’ – supposedly racially and culturally homogenous – from newcomers who threaten social cohesion (Forkert, 2016). This has inflected politics, with UKIP, for instance, building on such imaginaries – of the migrant as taking

what rightfully belongs to the British - to further a right-wing, racist ideology (Lentin, 2016). The dialogic nature of the undeserving migrant and the scrounging welfare claimant have been much analysed in the aftermath of David Cameron's insistence in 2011 that immigration and welfare were 'two sides of the same coin'¹⁹. Anderson (2016:60), in an illustration of the production of 'fantasy citizenship' determines that there are two potentially threatening migrant figures (and one 'native' figure) conceived in this speech; the migrant who takes unemployment benefit and in so doing depletes the welfare 'pot', and the 'go-getting migrant' who acts as a disincentive to work for the 'lazy Brit'. This narrative discourages analyses that 'finds connections between migrants and citizens' (p.61) thus limiting social solidarity. Similarly, Burnett (2017a) highlights the dual hatred that is directed toward migrants and welfare claimants, which works to place the blame for the economic crisis on those who are its victims, with insistent anti-migrant messages placing migrants at risk of interpersonal everyday racist violence. Moreover, Burnett highlights the structural violence of the current moment; the intensive management of immigration that has sought to ensure the UK attracts the 'brightest and the best' and who otherwise are pilloried as drains on the welfare state, and the rhetoric of welfare scroungers, work alongside one another to propagate the dismantling of welfare and simultaneously 'satisfy an unquenchable demand for exploitable labour' (p.219). Bhattacharyya (2015:29), highlighting the nationalistic nature of welfare and austerity agrees that while there is dual hatred; the 'performative boundary marking' of immigration controls means that while those on the 'inside' (of citizenship) may

¹⁹ Transcript of speech available at (The Guardian, 2011).

not be equal, migrants are clearly defined as the 'other' through acts such as the 'Go Home' vans (Jones et al., 2017) or through practices of welfare bordering. The constant and overt defining of who belongs and who does not (one need only look at the tabloid headlines to understand who does not belong) 'serves as a reminder to citizens of their luck in avoiding such daily harassment' (p.29). Bhattacharyya (2015:29) argues that though the position of, for instance, British welfare claimants is 'disappointing and always precarious', it is this 'disappointing citizenship' which is crucial in justifying the logic of austerity and the hatred toward migrants; *I do not have enough and you – the migrant – take too much*. Anderson (2016) emphasises the mutual harms of those on the inside and outside of immigration control; noting that though it is the migrant who is subject to immigration control in everyday life (at the GP surgery, bank, university, letting agency) this does not mean non-migrants are unaffected by the in-sourcing of borders; they may not be *constrained* by borders, but neither are they *enabled* by them. Both Bhattacharyya (2015) and Dhaliwal and Forkert (2015) highlight the symbiotic nature of these structural narratives; they do not work one way – from citizen to migrant – but migrants too reproduce narratives that distinguish between *good* and *bad*, *deserving* and *undeserving*. These narratives can serve to distinguish oneself from the media construction of the undeserving migrant, or to express disgust at the 'lazy Brit'. This is highlighted as a product of the austerity project, in which government seeks to cause division and pit excluded groups against one another (Dhaliwal and Forkert, 2015). Lonergan (2015) through empirical research (discussed further below) also considers how such narratives come to bear on the everyday lives of migrant

mothers, through the imperative to be the ‘responsible’ and ‘good’ migrant so that they raise children who will be ‘good’ neoliberal subjects.

While most advocate for the need to make the argument that there is *enough for all* (de Noronha, 2016; Lentin, 2016), to challenge nativism, and make connections between migrant and non-migrant experiences (Anderson, 2016; Forkert, 2016; Lonergan, 2015) in order to counter austerity, a ‘speculative’ (and provocative) argument is put forward by Pitcher (2016:55). Similarly acknowledging the racialised (and racist) nature of the welfare state and the historical inequality experienced by migrants, the author speculates on a future that builds on neoliberal logics (the expansion of debt such as those seen in higher education to other arenas of life) to forge new paths of racial equality.

Chapter 8 returns to the discussion presented here through analysis of the ways in which participant narratives reproduced and challenged such distinctions between deserving/undeserving, and neoliberal versus collectivist narratives.

2.5.2.b The language of ‘crisis’

Some have called into question the language of ‘crisis’ that has been evoked to justify and explain austerity. Emejulu and Bassel (2017a:190) highlight that prior to the 2008 economic crisis, minority ethnic groups, particularly women, experienced persistent (and disproportionate²⁰) economic and social hardships. Discrimination, the non-recognition of overseas qualifications and experience, and geographical barriers all collide to disadvantage minority groups such that they are more likely to

²⁰ See for instance (All Party Parliamentary Group on Race and Community, 2012)

be unemployed or in 'low skilled, low paid and insecure work' and in poverty. They draw on the work of Strolovitch (2013:online) who asserts that the construct of economic 'crisis' and consequently of 'recovery' from crisis 'reflect, reproduce, and constitute prevailing attitudes and normative expectations about racialised and gendered labour and economic inequalities.' Similarly, Bhattacharyya (2015:197) notes that while there may be a return to 'economic growth', this is unlikely to 'reverse the decline in living standards for much of the population.' Emejulu and Bassel (2017a) contend minority groups are not taken seriously in the public sphere, until there is a rupture (say a riot) that demands their experience is discussed, albeit in frames that are pathologising and present minorities as a 'problem'²¹. In this way, for the most part, minority women's crises remain private and routinised; both pre, during and post austerity.

This conceptualisation of the *not-new* nature of minority women's crises was articulated at a seminar delivered by Akwugo Emejulu and Leah Bassel in 2014, where they posed the question (and continue to do so) '*whose crisis counts?*' (Emejulu and Bassel, 2017a). This has been instructive in this research as I recognised, contrary to my original research proposal, that it would be very difficult to determine a concrete turning point in 2008 in the daily lives of migrant families. That is not to say austerity does not have effects, indeed it is this 'existing precarity' that compounds the effects and disproportionately disadvantages minority women

²¹ The success of these analyses are often limited. See for instance; the Cantle Report which, in response to civil disturbances in northern towns in 2011, found that it was a 'lack of contact' between Asian and White communities that was root cause, rather than 'issues of racism, deprivation and extremism' (Worley, 2005:487)

(Emejulu and Bassel, 2015:88). Chapters 5-8 of the thesis highlight the negotiations made in this research when interpreting the effects of austerity for migrant families.

2.5.3. Empirical studies

Seven studies were identified that used qualitative methods to empirically explore the effects of austerity on migrant groups. In this section, I highlight which migrant groups were studied, the focus of each study, and the extent to which the studies consider the *everyday* experience of austerity. While there are significant differences in scope and approach, there are numerous crossovers in findings. The literature discussed have different origins, most are academic studies; both individual (MA or PhD studies) and collective research projects (Bynner, 2012; Kartallozi, 2014; Lonergan, 2015; Emejulu and Bassel, 2015; 2017; Rafighi et al., 2016) and two are organisational reports (Sosenko et al., 2013; Migrants' Rights Network, 2017). One publication indicates it is a preliminary review of the issues (Migrants' Rights Network, 2017) and two indicate they are partial analyses from a PhD study (Bynner, 2012; Lonergan, 2015).

Six of the studies included, in varying assemblages, participants with a range of migrations statuses, with just one that focused solely on refugees (Kartallozi, 2014). Lonergan (2015) and Rafighi et al. (2016) refer to samples that include asylum seekers, refugees and those with irregular status, for instance 'failed' asylum seekers in the case of the former study, and undocumented migrants in the latter. Migrants' Rights Network (2017) included all migrants (including asylum seekers, refugees, EEA nationals, students, and those with irregular status) except those on a Tier 1 visa (highly-skilled migrants), indicating a concern with those migrants on a low-

income. Bynner (2012) and Sosenko et al. (2013) are the least clear about the immigration status of those included in the sample. Bynner (2012) indicates that interviews and focus groups included ‘new migrants’ and the report goes on to mention EU migrants and asylum seekers. Sosenko et al. (2013), in their report *‘In it together? Perceptions on ethnicity, recession and austerity in three Glasgow communities’* stipulate that their sample are from Glasgow’s Scottish Pakistani/Asian, Chinese, and Black African/Somali communities. Referring to ‘specific barriers’ that affect recent migrants, the report stipulates the inclusion criteria as: to have ‘good or fluent English’ (p.9), and to have the right to work in the UK (therefore excluding asylum seekers). They also did not include EU migrants due to concerns around duplication. They do however note the importance of immigration in shaping the experiences of participants, and the focus of the report (discussed below), and that it forms part of the dataset for Emejulu and Bassel’s (2017a) research, means this was formative in the design of this study. Finally, the inclusion criteria of Emejulu and Bassel (2017a) is led by a concern for understanding the experiences of racialised women activists²²; the sample includes ‘women who self-identify as ‘Black’, a label they use politically... [and] women who self-identify as ‘refugee’, ‘asylum seeker’ or ‘migrant’” (p.187).

It is clear there is value in conducting a study that focuses on one immigration status; Kartalozzi (2014) uniquely and in detail explores the specific legislative and social position of refugees. However, the inclusion of a range of statuses is beneficial

²² A focus to which I return when considering the findings of this study.

in adopting an intersectional approach that looks to understand connections and divergences in experience, and this is a concern of this study. Reviewing the sample of these studies has indicated the importance of stipulating and defining the immigration status of those participating, and considering how this intersects with everyday life. This is imperative to avoid an over-essentialist or homogenous approach to the study of ‘migrants’.

The areas explored in the studies intersect with one another, and though a study might specify, for instance, that it was about ‘welfare reform’ (Kartalozzi, 2014), it inevitably remarked on other areas, such as housing and employment. The primary focus in the austerity-migrant literature is generally *welfare reform* and *employment* (Sosenko et al., 2013; Kartalozzi, 2014; Migrants’ Rights Network, 2017). This is unsurprising given the actual and symbolic reconfiguration of these spheres following recession and moralistic austerity policies (MacLeavy, 2011; Jensen and Tyler, 2012; Wright, 2012; Slater, 2014; Beatty and Fothergill, 2016). Sosenko et al. (2013) and Kartalozzi (2014), despite studying different groups, describe similar employment concerns for their participants; un- and under- employment, the difficulty of finding work and lack of appropriate state support, the non-recognition of qualifications and experience earned in the country of origin, and discrimination and exploitation in the labour market. Kartalozzi (2014) further notes the impact of unemployment on mental health, and Sosenko et al. (2013) additionally note the gendered experience, whereby caring and the expense of childcare prohibits women from working. The findings of Migrants’ Rights Network (2017) echo most of these findings, but also note the link between exploitation and limited English language

proficiency, the erosion of worker's rights more generally (zero-hour contracts, for instance), and the specific risks to EEA nationals of labour abuse and in-work homelessness. The consequences of welfare reform are very much related to immigration status; Migrant's Rights Network (2017:10) indicate that EEA nationals are 'more susceptible' to the effects of welfare reform, presumably because they have been the beneficiaries of regulation changes (unlike those with NRPF who were already excluded). Kartalozzi (2014) also details the geographic-specific harms of welfare reform for refugee families in London; the implementation of the benefit cap in 2013 placed families in poverty and at risk of forced relocation out of the city. Sosenko et al. (2013) note their participants concern about the financial constraints benefit changes would put on them, and the Somali community's lack of knowledge of the changes. The latter two studies, conducted three and four years ago, largely indicate the *threat* of benefit changes, while the 2017 study reports on the homelessness of respondents as a result of welfare reform. This indicates the continued need to be concerned with austerity.

Another prevalent focus was *service access*. These studies tend to be geographically localised and two highlight access to particular services such as the NHS (Rafighi et al., 2016) and library provision (Bynner, 2012). Analysing the healthcare experiences of 'vulnerable migrants' in relation to the '*NHS Principles*' which guide the delivery of the service, Rafighi et al. (2016) found that though participants largely reported positive experiences in interpersonal encounters with healthcare staff, ambiguities around entitlements presented a barrier to access. This was especially pertinent since NHS charges were introduced for non-EEA migrants without Indefinite Leave

to Remain in the Immigration Act 2014, and consequently the authors conclude that healthcare reforms will 'worsen equity and... compromise the health of vulnerable individuals' (p.595). The inclusion of participants who required an interpreter enabled the study to report the experiences of those who are linguistically isolated, and this is a particular strength of this social justice informed study. Through ethnographic methods in a Glasgow library and focus groups delineated largely by ethnicity, Bynner (2012) asserts that inequity in public service access is a result of: the 'professional adjudication' (p.7) that acts as gatekeeper to services, with it suggested these decisions may become more discriminatory in times of austerity, the prohibitive everyday cost of accessing services such as transport and childcare, and the lack of cultural awareness in service provision. Moreover, Brynner reports that local provision that supported migrants to navigate the neighbourhood had been cut and as such there was a lack of awareness among new arrivals about available services. Though this study only assesses the micro-interactions between service providers and recipients, it is useful in articulating the everyday ways in which power operates, as it considers decision making processes beyond legislative entitlement.

Most studies considered austerity in relation to a combination of public and integration-focused services. Lonergan (2015) focused on the difficulties that migrant women faced accessing NHS and ESOL; highlighting how access to these is undermined by discourse that portrays migrants as 'health tourists', and an individualising discourse that emphasises 'the importance of migrants learning English' while also enacting 'massive cuts to publicly-funded ESOL programmes'

(p.135). Sosenko et al. (2013:31) indicate that the issues raised in their research suggests that though participants faced hardship, this was 'identified as a problem predating the economic crisis'. Specific services had been withdrawn or reduced however following austerity measures, including childcare, ESOL, and welfare rights advice. Similarly, Bassel and Emejulu (2017:7) state that:

...cuts to... services, particularly at the local level, may further isolate women who are already in a precarious social and economic position.

These three studies Sosenko et al. (2013), Lonergan (2015) and Bassel and Emejulu (2017) consider the gendered effects of austerity, particularly vis-à-vis mothering and care-work. Through the lens of citizenship, Lonergan (2015) illustrates how migrant mothers are expected to parent and learn English with minimal government assistance. Moreover, in pursuing an intersectional approach the author highlights how an encounter with a service might indicate bias and practices of racialisation, for instance, through being presented with a bill for NHS charges despite being eligible for free care. Sosenko et al. (2013) note the gendered strain of decreased service provision and insufficient childcare options. This is developed by Bassel and Emejulu (2017:7) who explicate the effect of insufficient provision and caring responsibilities on migrant women; 'mothers describing ways in which they were de facto physically confined to domestic spaces', and further, their capacity to 'enact a politics of care and seek to build new forms of community' (p.8). They note the tension between these; for some austerity is a mobilising force, and for others, the private sphere becomes all consuming. The issue of resistance is one to which I return, specifically in chapter 6, and later in concluding.

Despite the studies all including migrant participants to varying degrees, as noted earlier not all outline the immigration statuses of participants and subsequently do not explicitly consider its impact on determining everyday life. Moreover, the migration histories and experiences in the country of origin (or of multiple countries), are rarely brought into analyses. Usually if they do the reflections are brief; Lonergan (2015) highlights the frustration for one woman whose qualifications and work experience were not acknowledged in the UK. Rafighi et al. (2016) note that the healthcare expectations of some respondents were shaped by their poor experiences in their country of origin. Kartalozzi (2014:21) *does* acknowledge the importance of a life history approach for understanding how lives are narrated and for determining ‘levels of resilience and ability to cope’. I expand on the importance of understanding lives in context and the narratives that are drawn on to make sense of everyday life (and in turn austerity) in chapters 5 and 8.

Finally, only one of the studies uses the language of the *everyday* in a similar way to that explored earlier in the chapter. Sosenko et al. (2013:12) highlight the ‘everyday ‘struggle’ of participants in making ends meet, rising food and energy costs, budgeting tactics, the strain on familial relationships of economic difficulties, the effect on their physical and mental health, and the informal social support networks that participants turned to in hard times. For the reasons highlighted earlier, I suggest this is an important lens through which to understand the negotiations of migrant families in a time of austerity, and I discuss this lens further in chapter 3.

To conclude this review of the migrant-austerity literature, it is clear there are persistent inequalities faced by migrant groups and this means ascertaining *what*

exactly is the effect of austerity can be a problematic ask. But that is certainly not to say it has no effects, and this review has touched on many of the worsening material harms. Rather than counterpoise my study with the existing literature, I have sought to situate it as 1) complementary, in adding to a small literature base on the experiences of migrants in a time of austerity, and 2) as extending and incorporating analyses (intersectional and everyday) in a narrative approach that considers the migrant experience in its entirety – not as if the migrant were a *tabula rasa*.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to contextualise this study within a historical, global and UK context through a review of contemporary literature. I have situated the current austerity moment in a historical and legislative frame, highlighting the perpetually racialised nature of welfare, and the continued restriction of rights to an increasing number of migrants.

A review of qualitative literature that seeks to understand the effect of austerity on various populations in society has shown that austerity enacts material and immaterial harms. This thesis corroborates this, but also – taking inspiration from those interested in *everyday austerities* – asks what is the *affective* impact of everyday life for migrant families in a time of austerity, and what meaning does austerity have for migrant families? Following an intersectional approach adopted by others concerned with the impact of austerity on migrants, I too seek to attend to the complexity of experience. In addition to drawing out the gendered, racialised

and classed nature of austerity, I attend to influence of nationality, migrant status, and disability in analyses of migrant lives in a time of austerity.

In chapter 4 I present the ethnography of an organisation that closed due to funding cuts. This chapter incorporates a literature review that attends to organisational change, the role of the voluntary sector in welfare provision, and the effects of austerity on organisations. In the next chapter I provide an in-depth account of the philosophical underpinnings, methodology and ethical considerations of the study.

3.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the methodological considerations and theoretical underpinnings of this study. An explicitly reflexive approach to methodology will make clear my learning and development as a researcher. I begin by summarising the aims of the research and how my epistemological framework has developed as I listened to the narratives of participants. I provide a detailed account of the methods adopted throughout the research; namely, ethnographic fieldwork in a voluntary sector organisation and semi-structured interviews with migrant families who had accessed the service. I explain how I approached analysis of the interviews using the ‘Listening Guide’ (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998) and finally I reflect on the ethical considerations of the research.

3.2 Research aims

Explanation of the research aims has to take into account the shifting nature of the project. In chapter 1 I identified my motivation for undertaking this research; to explore the everyday experiences of migrant families in a context of austerity and funding cuts to the public and voluntary sector. A concern with experiences of service provision in a time of austerity is reflected in my interview schedule (see appendix 1), though as the interviews progressed I focused more generally on the *everyday* (see 3.4.2) experiences of life in Manchester, eliciting richer discussion (Lewis, 2004). In response to the effects of funding cuts on the gatekeeping organisation (a voluntary project that supported migrant families to settle in

Manchester) it was proposed that I chart the journey (or decline) of the organisation in this increasingly difficult economic and political climate. Two periods of fieldwork were devised so that the study might provide an empirically grounded understanding of the effects (and affect) of austerity on the lives of migrant families and of an organisation that had supported these families. The inclusion of both professional and family narratives provides insight into the constructions and narratives of austerity from different social locations, and through highlighting the commonalities and differences between these offers a more nuanced understanding of austerity, and the lives lived in this period. In summary then the research seeks to:

1. Understand the experiences of migrant families accessing services²³ that support settlement in a context of austerity and funding cuts.
2. Understand how the everyday lives of migrant families are narrated in relation to austerity.
3. Provide insights into the effects of austerity on a voluntary sector organisation and how professionals narrate austerity.
4. Construct a dialogical²⁴ narrative of austerity for migrant families and those

²³ Services taken to include specialist migrant, refugee and asylum support, and general welfare, education, health, housing and leisure services, provided by the public, voluntary and private sector.

²⁴ A narrative concept, dialogical interpretations recognise that an individual voice will contain multiple voices, and that stories told are told in anticipation of who might hear, and influenced by the stories of others (Bakhtin, 2010). Frank (2010:102), influenced by Bakhtin, writes: 'rather than carrying the monological message, *this is all you are*, dialogical research can offer the possibility, *this is what you are connected to*. A participant's story is no less his or her own for that connection; it is more.'

who support them.

3.3 Epistemological and ontological perspective

This study is underpinned by a constructionist epistemology²⁵ that refutes the idea that there is an objective truth waiting to be discovered by an intrepid researcher. Rather, individual actions and understandings are subjective and socially constructed in a historical and cultural context (Crotty, 1998; Berger and Luckmann, 1967). This perspective assumes that there are potentially multiple interpretations of the 'object' of study (in this case *austerity*). It should be noted that though I wrote about social constructionism in the first year of my studies and in the first draft of the methodology I did not fully appreciate the way in which this multiplicity of understandings would materialise through the study. For instance, in chapter 4, most of the professionals interviewed talk about austerity as having apparent consequences on their lives, and on the lives of the families that they support. Conversely, in chapter 8, I highlight the *elusive* nature of austerity in some migrant family narratives. For instance, in one interview, after speaking with a migrant woman for over an hour (following discussion of the aims of the study and what I thought to be topics related to austerity), I came to ask how she thought austerity had affected her²⁶, and she asked only '*what is austerity?*' Moreover, accounts could be contradictory, participants might say that they had not been affected by austerity

²⁵ Epistemology is a theory of *knowledge* that provides a 'philosophical grounding for deciding what kinds of knowledge are possible and how we can ensure that they are both adequate and legitimate' (Maynard, 1994 as cited in Crotty, 1998:8).

²⁶ See the interview schedule in appendix 1.

while also lamenting the loss of a support service and advocating for recourse to support for all migrants.

Following the interviews with families, I found it quite overwhelming to be faced with accounts that did not name or centre austerity, and yet when looking at the context in which these accounts were made, it appeared to me that austerity discourses and policies could have been influential. This illuminates my ontological²⁷ position; I recognise that there are structural constraints that mean ‘people make their worlds but do not make them as they please’ (Charmaz, 2008:409). Though worlds may be socially constructed, inequality and oppression have material and real effects. The enactment of austerity policies for instance has been described by Cooper and Whyte (2017:3) as being seemingly de-political and ‘their harmful effect made to appear normal and mundane.’ In these circumstances, the ‘violent’ nature of austerity may not be understood or narrated as having consequence.

Austerity is furthermore intersected by the oppression directed at people on the basis of race, gender, class, nationality, disability etc (see chapter 2). Here I make explicit *whose side* I am on (Becker, 1966) as I am concerned with research informed by social justice (Pannett, 2011); specifically that which is feminist and anti-racist (Humphries, 1997) and which elevates stories less often heard (as described in

²⁷ Ontology is the theory of *being*, in the context of this research it asks: ‘the question of whether social entities can and should be considered objective entities that have a reality external to social actors, or whether they can and should be considered social constructions built up from the perceptions and actions of social actors?’ (Bryman, 2012:32).

chapter 2). This is aligned with a constructionist perspective that recognises that while there are no 'true' interpretations, there are 'liberating forms of interpretation' that 'contrast sharply with interpretations that prove oppressive' (Crotty, 1998:48).

Narrative methods represent a particular kind of paradigmatic choice, one that I place alongside a critical analysis. That is, this thesis traverses the 'borderland' between narrative and critical inquiry (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007, whereby it is:

...simultaneously acknowledged that an individual's experience is shaped by macrosocial processes of which she or he is often unaware and that the same individual's experience is more than the living out of a socially determined script. (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007:31-32).

My aim in this study has been to appreciate the views of participants through a multi-level analysis that incorporates the micro, meso and macro (see section 3.7). Adoption of narrative analysis has allowed for recognition of: multiplicity (in an individual narrative and across the data), the relational nature of narratives (recognising the context of the account, who it is told to and who it is told about), the constraints and influence of structure on narratives, and the influence that the researcher has on the analysis and representation of narratives (Doucet and Mauthner, 2008; Smith, 2014; Burningham and Cooper, 1999). Ultimately, it is my intention not to *know* reality, but to:

...address narratives' different and sometimes contradictory layers of meaning, to put them in dialogue with each other, and to understand how narratives operate dialogically between the personal and the surrounding social worlds that produce, consume, silence and contest them. (Esin et al., 2014:204)

3.4 Theoretical framework

Here I explain and justify the theoretical underpinnings of this thesis; *narrative* and *the everyday*.

3.4.1 The turn to narrative²⁸

Above I have explained how my appreciation of the multiplicity of narratives challenged my understanding of austerity and indeed the nature of how we (as researchers) can *know* anything. Here I want to expand on the role of narratives in constructing meaning and significance in everyday lives. Narratives are constructed between participant and researcher (and reader (Frank, 2010)), and in this way they are relational and co-constructed (Squire, 2013). The consequence of this is that they are also partial and contingent on this relationship. The positionality of the researcher for instance is likely to affect the story that is told. For instance, in chapter 7 (and below, in relation to ethics), I consider how my association with the voluntary sector organisation through which I made contact with participants may have restricted the stories that could be told about that organisation. At times, participants specifically referenced the nature of constructing a persuasive narrative, either for the benefit of the actual audience (the researcher present) or for an anticipated audience (potential readers, policymakers, etc). For instance, more than once Mina²⁹ prefaced a response to a question by saying '*oh, this is a long story!*' and

²⁸ My own turn to narrative was solidified in June 2014 when I attended the 'Troubling Narratives: Identity Matters' conference at the University of Huddersfield. There I saw Ken Plummer give an enlivening keynote presentation. He spoke of the power of narratives, their political potential and implored the audience to '*tell stories that generate a better world*'.

²⁹ See Appendix 9 for an introduction to the participants of the study.

Sara who implored (perhaps to an audience beyond me) when I asked about *her* life in Manchester that '*support is really helpful for the people, they really need it*'.

Narratives construct and assign meaning to lived experience as it relates to place (where we have been and where we are), temporality (past, present and future), and the personal and social world (Leggo, 2008; Clandinin and Connelly, 2000).

Importantly, I do not understand a narrative as a conclusive representation of lived experience, rather as Plummer (1995:168) notes:

Whatever else a story is, it is not simply the lived life. It speaks all around the life: it provides routes into a life, lays down maps for lives to follow, suggests links between a life and a culture. It may indeed be one of the most important tools we have for understanding lives and the wider cultures they are part of. But it is not the life, which is in principle unknown and unknowable.

Narratives, particularly as they are told by migrants, may reveal the disjuncture between hopes and reality, and this will be evident in chapters 5-8. In bringing multiple narratives together, it is possible to see that stories are not 'merely unique individual experience'; instead they can construct an overall picture of systematic inequality and oppression (Lawson, 2000:174). In this way connections can be drawn between personal narratives and social structures; narratives tell stories not only of the individual but of the society in which they live (Riessman, 2001). Narratives both reflect dominant narratives and challenge them, in multiple and contradictory ways, and I will return to the process of delineating such narratives in chapter 8.

3.4.2 Understanding the 'everyday'

Through ethnographic observations of a voluntary sector organisation and semi-structured interviews in the homes of participants, I have utilised methods that have sought to illustrate the conditions and construction of the *everyday life* of migrant families in a time of austerity. Attending to the materiality of the everyday complements a narrative approach, as through practices of the everyday the effects of the political can be understood. Back (2015:834) advocates for a ‘sociological attentiveness’ to everyday matters in order to ‘link the smallest story to the largest social transformation.’ Similarly, Neal and Murji (2015:813) assert that it is through attention to ‘mundane’ emotions, relationships and interactions that ‘wider social factors, forces, structures and divisions’ can be understood. Attention to the everyday might be through the narratives of participants, but the everyday is also illuminated through emotion and place, for instance in the tears of a mother describing her isolation and the daughter that brings a tissue, or in the draft blowing through a broken living-room window (see chapters 6-7). Attention to the everyday in this way extends narrative analysis, as the everyday:

...points to the material actuality of living through conflict and change. It’s often the site of invisible hurt of discrimination, of constant negotiation of a changing world, of our attempts to live. (Yuval Davis, 2013:10)

In operationalising ethical research, I have made value judgements when analysing everyday lives, and this has been informed by the concept of a *liveable life*. Butler (2009; 2012) has questioned what is necessary to consider a life as one that has been assigned worth. She contends that a liveable life is not only survivable, but one that

is supported by social conditions to persist and flourish. A liveable life is one in which a (hopeful) agency can be exercised:

I must have a sense of my life in order to ask what kind of life to lead, and my life must appear to me as something I might lead, something that does not just lead me. (Butler, 2012:10)

Social conditions that enable a liveable life are those that enable a person to access their basic needs (food, shelter, healthcare), and that provide a safety net that will 'catch me if I fall' (Butler, 2012:10). In a time of crisis and austerity, these have depleted. Through analysis of everyday life, I highlight the ways in which processes of financialisation are embedded in household and family life (Hall, 2016), and moreover, how demonisation and 'practices of bordering' (Bhattacharyya, 2015:121) risk exposing migrants (at times) to conditions that fall short of a *liveable life*.

3.5 Ethnography

Ethnography is a method of research that has its origins in anthropological studies and has been employed historically to study the 'other'. Skeggs (1994:74) notes that prior to undertaking 'ethnography by default' with young working-class women she was convinced that it was a methodology beset by 'imperialism and sexism' (p.73). In more recent decades it has been adopted by critical researchers and, following introduction to the tradition of feminist ethnography, Skeggs highlighted it as a method that could:

...make the links between structure and practice, between the macro and the micro; a method which could link everyday interaction to history, economics, politics and wider cultural formations. (Skeggs, 1994:74).

As a method, it allows for study of everyday life; through immersion in a particular setting, participant observation, the collection of ephemeral materials, and interviews (Bryman, 2012). Ethnographers pay attention to the conversations, sights, sounds and emotions of the setting they are researching (Kenny, 2008; Coffey, 1999), and through the process of writing (Humphreys and Watson, 2009:40) construct an account of a cultural setting over a sustained period of time.

Ethnographic research should make explicit and visible the role of the researcher in the environment being studied. Studying a familiar environment, such as in this study, is an ‘opportunity to capture something that might be uniquely different’ (Leigh, 2013b:83), and a discussion of my insider role below will further explore the opportunities and challenges experienced. Ethnographic texts engage with ‘connectedness between self and the fieldwork’ (Coffey, 1999:6) and consequently I see myself as being under study in this research alongside professionals in the voluntary organisation and migrant families, and this will be particularly apparent in chapter 3, section 8 and in chapter 4.

Ethnographic research was not envisioned in the initial proposal for the PhD research; instead this developed in response to a context that rapidly changed from the moment I was accepted onto the PhD Programme. Between application to the PhD in February 2012 and enrolment in April 2012, the organisation (MFSP) that had agreed to be a gatekeeper to migrant families was informed that their local authority funding was unequivocally in its final year of funding. This seemed to me a kind of cruel irony as austerity loomed more ominously over the project; threatening to both derail it and be an overwhelming presence. My existing role as a support

worker at MFSP was an opportunity to become ‘participant-as-observer’ (Bryman, 2012:410), and to chart the response of the organisation to funding cuts and austerity, and in this way, explore the ‘general through the local and the particular’ (Yanow et al., 2012:335). The ethnographic study and interviews with professionals provide an insight into the process of the research, and work dialogically with the narratives of the migrant families who participated in this research, offering a more holistic view of austerity as it affects migrant support organisations and the individuals and families they support.

3.5.1 Organisational ethnography

Organisational ethnography seeks to understand workplace cultures and narratives. They shed light on the ‘hidden’ aspects of workplaces, those things that are tacitly known by the actors within, elucidate the emotional work that goes on, and the political dimensions of an organisation. They articulate the interplay between the subjective experience of workers, and the broader societal settings within which they go about their work (Yanow et al., 2012). Van Maanen (1979) is a key theorist of organisational ethnography, and his work sought to:

...uncover and explicate the ways in which people in particular work settings come to understand, account for, take action, and otherwise manage their day-to-day situation (p.540).

Organisational ethnographies have been conducted in relation to child protection social work practice (Leigh, 2013b; Ferguson, 2016), the voluntary sector (Vanderbeck, 2009; Carey et al., 2009; Ehrenstein, 2012), and in relation to austerity (Lumsden and Black, 2017; Garthwaite et al., 2015; Goldstraw, 2016; Mason, 2015).

Ethnographic studies are often named as an ethnography of the field of study, and may be conducted over several years, multiple sites, and are usually conducted by ‘outsider’ researchers.

In this study, the ethnographic fieldwork has been combined with other methods and as such is one constituent part of this thesis, with the ‘ethnographic tale’ presented in chapter 4. I was immersed in the project for a substantial period (see below, section 3.5.2), and as an insider, on most days that I was at MFSP I was also a support worker (see section 3.8.2 for further discussion of the ethics of my insider position). The ethnography charts an organisation in upheaval, and while I perhaps cannot claim to be a neutral observer, I would assert that an insider approach allows for a unique perspective in a time of austerity and increased pressures on voluntary organisations. The analysis is, of course, refracted through a researcher with intentions made known; with a commitment to research that is politically aware and motivated by social justice. While I initially envisioned the ethnography as simply ‘contextualising’ the interviews with migrant families, whose narratives I sought to foreground, the concept of dialogism (Bakhtin, 2010; Robinson, 2011; Frank, 2010) has been critical to understanding the connections between the narratives of austerity that are told in different social locations (see chapter 9, section 4). Moreover, the literature review – presented in chapter 4 alongside the ethnography (reflecting the ‘accidental’ nature of this line of inquiry) – indicates that there are significant gaps in the literature base which this thesis goes some way to address.

3.5.2 Access

This study has utilised an ethnographic approach within a voluntary sector organisation where I was employed as a family support worker. The ethnography developed in an organic manner as a response to the funding crises that the organisation was experiencing³⁰. Because of this, the ethnographic timeframe was somewhat complicated, reflecting research that Plummer (2001:122) notes: ‘in the real world... is a messy, human affair’. The insider status that I held however enabled privileged access to the organisation, and reflections from my research diary prior to university ethical approval have been valuable for understanding the changing nature of MFSP. Below is a timeline of key dates that inform the ethnographic period:

- **September 2012:** receive consent from management at MFSP to conduct research with staff and service users
 - **March 2013:** MFSP loses local authority funding (see chapter 4)
 - **September 2013:** Granted ethical approval from University
 - **January 2014:** MFSP closed, most staff made redundant or employed in alternative projects
- 4 **January 2015:** Interviews with MFSP managers and support workers

Though this is an attempt to formalise the boundaries of the ethnographic fieldwork, Yanow (2000, as cited in Dobson, 2009) notes that the boundaries of an insider ethnography are often not clearly bound, with interpretive and analytical

³⁰ Forsey (2010:569) argues that such opportunism and flexibility in research methods are necessary to respond to a world that is itself chaotic and unmanageable.

processes taking place prior to and after the period of fieldwork. I negotiated access to conduct research within MFSP while employed at the organisation. Having an existing and warm relationship with the manager, who had actively supported my application to undertake a PhD, meant negotiating access to observe the organisation was unproblematic. I was a support worker for 1-2 days per week between September 2012 and September 2013, and in this time reflected on changes experienced by the organisation through reflection in a research diary. I was able to review a large number of documents; case notes, group emails, monitoring and evaluation reports, annual reports, consultation and research documents, official letters, funding bids, service level agreements, leaflets, the project website and other ephemera outside of the four-month window. The timeline could be extended back further as I was a full-time employee for almost a year before undertaking the PhD. These periods cannot be completely disentangled and are likely to have influenced the interpretation of the data, as I reflect on changes in the organisation. Interviews with staff members after the closure of MFSP enabled a space for dialogue and reflection on organisational change and closure. Ethical considerations in relation to access to the field of study and my position as an 'insider' in the organisation are discussed further in section 3.8.

3.5.3 Interviews with professionals

One year after the closure of MFSP I conducted interviews with six professionals who had worked at the project. Table 1 indicates the roles of participants and how long they had worked at the organisation. I interviewed managers and frontline support workers with the intention of understanding their perception of the impact

of funding cuts and austerity and their evaluation of the steps taken by MFSP to respond to these. While the questions asked were not identical, I loosely followed a semi-structured interview schedule (appendix 2) and participants responded often at length, which can be seen in the presentation of the data in chapter 4. One participant, Dee, had worked at the project at its inception and had left several years previously. While this helped to understand something of the context (and conflicting understandings) of the organisation, this interview did not relate as such to the period of organisational change that I address in this thesis.

Table 1. Staff roles and length of service

Participant	Kirsty	Linda	Celina	Ibrahim	Al	Dee
Role	Manager	Manager	Family support worker	Family support worker	Family support worker	Manager
Length of service	5-10 years	10+ years	0-5 years	10+years	5-10 years	0-5 years

Interviews were conducted in a variety of places; at participant's homes, at the university, in a pub, at a community centre and even at a McDonald's restaurant. One lasted for 35 minutes (Dee), otherwise they lasted between 70 and 90 minutes. I recorded and transcribed the interviews, though two (Ibrahim and Dee) I could not record. Instead, I have relied on extensive notes, including verbatim quotes. The former was not recorded due to being in a bustling community centre where I felt it would be too intrusive and risk breaching confidentiality; a number of people came over to speak to us as we sat down for the interview and it was clear that Ibrahim

was fitting in my questions among a number of pressing commitments. I did not record the interview with Dee as it was more informal and framed as a conversation to help gain an understanding of MFSP at its inception over ten years previous.

3.5.4 Data analysis and representation of findings

I recorded my observations and reflections on MFSP in a research diary between January 2013 and January 2014. These were sporadic and brief initially, capturing snippets of conversations that I thought pertinent, but developed over time to be more detailed and analytical as I became more confident and aware of the need to record and convey the *sense* of the organisation. I wrote about the physical space, the people involved in the organisation, conversations related to funding and austerity, actions taken by staff and management, notable events, and my emotional relationship to the field.

I collated documents that were both in-house and publicly available and reflected on how these evidenced austerity and funding cuts both in the organisation and in the wider Manchester context. In documents in which austerity was mentioned, I analysed the rhetoric of the text. A non-exhaustive table of documents reviewed are in table 2.

Table 2. Documents collated and reviewed

Document type	Number
Emails	34
Internal monitoring and evaluation reports	7

External reports	3
Funding bids	1
Supervision/Case notes	16
Communication with funders/service level agreement	4
Minutes of meetings	2
Letters from HR	4
Leaflets	2
Documents from external events (presentations, agendas, minutes)	6

Fieldnotes and document analysis enabled me to understand historical context and the changes in the organisation over a sustained period, the decisions and actions that were taken in response to funding cuts, and indicated the tension and emotional intensity of the time. However, these do not enable analysis of the subjective experiences of those employed within the organisation, and as such the interviews were imperative in the research design.

The interviews with staff enabled me to attend to the subjective interpretations of individuals, the multiplicity of voices, and disrupted the production of an omniscient or realist ethnographic tale (Van Maanen, 2011; Creswell and Poth, 2017). Data analysis of the interviews began at transcription as I recorded my initial reflections and thoughts. I developed a long list of codes that were refined through multiple readings of the data and connections were made between the interview data, the fieldnotes and the documents. This process was informed by a constant-

comparative method (Creswell and Poth, 2017) as I iteratively compared codes across the dataset until coming to a resolution about the key themes. An initial analysis and draft of the ethnography was over 20,000 words long and the four themes identified were:

- Narrating austerity and neoliberal politics
- Responding to funding cuts
- Partnerships, relationships and emotions
- Change, acceptance and moving on

3.5.4.a A post-submission addition: on conducting ethnographic analysis

The analysis of the ethnographic data has not been straightforward, and this has been compounded by my closeness to the object of study and my affective relationship with the organisation. Subsequent redrafts of the ethnographic data have meant continuing negotiations with my shifting position in relation to MFSP. Acquiring appropriate distance to write the final analysis has necessitated taking seriously my own role(s) within (and outside of) the organisation, as I negotiated my own emotional response to loss and my fluctuating professional identity (an identity which remains in a constant state of flux – as I continue to work between academia and the voluntary sector). Consequently, following a viva discussion it became evident that I had tried – despite my own assertions above – to write as though I was a distant observer. A welcome opportunity to revisit chapter 4 has enabled me to both get closer to the data and the analysis. Through being more open about my own subjective experiences and their

influence upon analytical processes, and gaining a broader insight into the organisational change field, I recognised the uniqueness of this study. This approach has enabled me to incorporate the subjective and the intersubjective and place it within a wider context. The final ethnographic reading then explicitly attends to organisational closure through a theoretical engagement with the concepts of loss and grief.

3.6 Migrant family interviews

In the second phase of the research, I undertook interviews with migrant families which sought to understand their experiences of services in the UK and how austerity had affected their everyday lives. My intention was to elicit narratives that would provide rich insight into the lives of those interviewed, and I adopted an in-depth semi-structured interview schedule to facilitate this. I understood the interview as a space in which the participants could interpret and make sense of their lives in (austerity) UK, and in line with a social-constructionist perspective, that these would be situated, contextual and dependent on the relationship between me and the participant(s) (Edwards and Holland, 2013). As noted in chapter 2, little research has addressed the everyday lives of migrants in relation to austerity (though several have specified that they are perniciously affected), and as such I wanted to address this gap, through understanding the ‘subjectively created reality’ of the participant (Josellson, 2013:3). As other social work researchers have noted (Lucas, 2014; Morriss, 2014), I also felt a – perhaps naïve - sense of familiarity with the process of interviewing through my experience as a qualified social worker working with migrant families. Experience of visiting families in their homes and

building relationships with them encouraged me to design a research project that would build on such practice encounters. I gave participants the opportunity to meet twice, with the intention of building rapport and asking follow-up questions that occurred to me following transcription of the first interview (Josellson, 2013). Though not all agreed to this (see Table 3), the narratives constructed over two meetings were most in-depth and participant feedback suggested they had trusted the research process (and me) more the second-time round.

Conducting the interviews in the homes of participants, with one or more participants (see Table 3), was ethnographic in nature and presented opportunities to talk more specifically and *see more* about everyday lives. For instance, I (rudimentarily) helped one participant while she cooked a meal for her family as she told me how she felt she had too much to do in the home. Another participant showed me her son's school report and this document enabled a natural discussion about the multi-agency support the family had encountered in Manchester. On reflection, I recognise the somewhat 'illusory' (Shaw and Holland, 2014:126) nature of this assumption of interviewing expertise. Being in the (privileged) position of listening back to recordings, I recognised for instance the need to limit my responses in order to allow more space for the respondent and I attempted to address this through ongoing critical reflection during the fieldwork stage.

3.6.1 Access and sampling

All the families that participated (n=9, individual participants = 12) in the research had been supported by MFSP in the five years prior to the interview. I was permitted

access to the project's archived case files, whereby I recorded some basic data that were the basis for deciding who to contact. This data included:

- The reason for referral
- The support offered
- The services referred to
- Outcomes and reasons for case closure

I looked for cases that had received substantial support; that is, they had been assigned a family support worker for needs beyond (but not excluding) a school place. This did not always correlate to a longer period of support; support ceased for two families because the organisation closed, for instance. The reliance on case files for conducting sampling presented a potential for bias toward those case files that were well organised. The files were of varying standard and at times, it was unclear if this was dependent on the assigned support worker, or that the case was only open for a short time and had not received substantial support. Either way, I discovered a new-found enthusiasm for typed case notes! After three days in the basement, working through the files, I developed a potential sample of twenty. MFSP contacted the families on my behalf via letter, informing them of the research and requesting their support (see appendix 5). I then followed up these letters with a phone call or an email, in which I explained the research further, answered any queries and offered to meet with them to discuss the project further. If their first language was not English, I offered to have an interpreter to reiterate these. Table 3 gives an overview of the context and composition of each interview for clarity.

Table 3. Interview composition

Name	Length of time case open	Present at interview	Number of interviews	Interpreter & language
Theresa	18 months	Mother	1	n/a
Sara	18 months	Mother	2	n/a
Florica	12 months	Mother	1	Romani
Mina	4 months	Mother	1	n/a
Sahir and Naheed	8 months	Mother and Father	1	Urdu
Hamid and Laila	4 months	Mother and Father	2	Arabic
Zeynab and Fidan	6 months	Mother and daughter	1	Azerbaijani (daughter interpreted)
Sheena	24 months	Mother	2	n/a
Adriana	5 months	Mother	2	Portuguese

There are strengths and limitations, both pragmatic and ethical, to this approach.

Pragmatically, issues arose where mobile phone numbers recorded in the files were no longer in service, which happened on numerous occasions. Those that I did speak to had sometimes not received the initial letter sent out, as they had moved home, reflecting the mobility of migrant communities. The ethical considerations are explored further in section 3.8.

Conversely, there was also an extensive archive to which I had access and could return to as necessary to determine potential participants. After an iterative process of letters, phone-calls, and returning to the case files for further sampling, I was able to conduct interviews with nine families (12 individual participants). The small number of participants is warranted due to a desire for depth of understanding rather than breadth, and this is facilitated through a narrative approach, described

later in the chapter. I met each family at home, with an interpreter if requested, and explained the project to them again by going through the participant information sheet. If they agreed to continue I asked them to sign a consent form, and we began the interview.

One participant (Hamid) did not agree to my recording the interview, however we agreed to continue, as he was otherwise keen to participate. Some of the texture of the interview is lost, specifically when it comes to the questions that I asked as the researcher, and while I do not think that this precludes inclusion in the sample, this does present some limitations for narrative analysis. However, the presence of an interpreter meant I was able to take extensive notes and verbatim quotes, as while the interpreter and the participants took their turns in the conversation I could write (see below, section 3.8.6, for further discussion of the role of the interpreter).

The diversity of the sample is indicated in Table 3 above; with four interviews conducted through interpreters sourced through MFSP. A fifth interview (Zeynab and Fidan) took the form of a joint-interview with a mother and her eighteen-year old daughter. Zeynab spoke Azerbaijani, and though I offered to visit with an interpreter, she preferred for her daughter, Fidan, to interpret for her. Further diversity is apparent in participants' country of origin, immigration status and length of time in the UK. I have not included these in table form, to preserve the anonymity of participants to some degree. Instead these are interwoven in the analysis chapters as participants are introduced and further contextual information is available in appendix 9.

Here, I will note that three families had refugee status, four were EU migrants and two families were a combination of EU migrant and third-country nationals. Five of the six families from the EU were *onward migrants* (Kelly, 2013) whose country of origin were in the majority world. The remaining family were from a European-minority community. By accident rather than design, none were white. Nine mothers took part, two fathers, and one adult daughter. Several children milled in and out of the rooms where we conducted the interviews; excited for the change in routine, they would tell me stories and one young girl shared a newly-learned magic trick.

I also want to briefly note who explicitly refused to participate in the research. I spoke to one man about the project over two phone calls, he told me that he was a doctor and had come a long way in the UK. This country had given him a lot of opportunities. He suggested that his wife might be interested, though in the end he told me that she was busy with a college course where she was learning English, and unfortunately neither would she be able to participate... and besides, he stated, '*we are fully integrated*'. As well as highlighting the (gendered, in this instance) role of gatekeeping, this conversation foreshadows two key narratives of this thesis; firstly, the suggestion that there is somewhere and something worse than austerity; and secondly, that austerity is something that happens to others; this man saw that austerity was a project of differentiation (Bhattacharyya, 2015).

3.6.2 Semi-structured design

Though I wanted to elicit narratives from participants, I also wanted to cover specific topics in the interview, so I devised a semi-structured interview schedule

that allowed for specificity and flexibility (Bryman, 2012). I designed this with reference to the *biographic-narrative interpretive method* (Wengraf, 2004); which involved developing a central research question, and breaking this down into smaller, indicative questions. I conducted a pilot interview with a colleague whose first language was not English in order to judge whether the questions and language used were appropriate. From this interview, I decided not to open with a 'single narrative question' (Wengraf, 2004:2) but rather using the prompts and suggested topics in the interview schedule hoped to engage in a conversation with participants about life in the UK. These topics included: everyday life, access to services and support, financial and employment experiences, the differential experiences for individuals in the family and how experiences are gendered and racialised, media and political discourses, and comparisons with the country of origin (see appendix 1).

As the interviews progressed I asked more specific questions that related to the everyday experience, as these elicited relevant and fruitful discussion; for instance, *are you always able to purchase the food you would prefer?* Similarly, asking about concrete and recent events, such as Eid celebrations or the recent birthday of a child elicited discussion of financial negotiations and priorities. As stated, the interview schedule was flexible, and together the participants and I shaped the interview to those topics that were important to them; and I incorporated learning from each interview into the next.

3.7 Transcription and analysis

Reflection on, and therefore analysis of, interviews started the moment I left the home of the participant and wrote down my reflections on the interview. These were scribbled in the car, often for some time and over many pages as my mind was whirring post-interview, and later transcribed alongside the interview. I transcribed all of the interviews, which is in itself a form of interpretation (Bailey, 2008). This was done within a week of the interview in order to maintain a closeness to the interview as it happened and attempted to capture some of the non-verbal and affective sense of the interview encounter. In (re)presenting the data I have made decisions to omit selected repetitive terms such as ‘*you know*’ that are scattered among some interactions. I have also omitted some false starts and edited some distinctive patterns of speech. This is ethically motivated; firstly, the cadence of speech may be recognisable to some given the small numbers of participants and secondly, while I value the linguistic nuances of the spoken word, to represent it verbatim in the written form risks portraying respondents as ‘inarticulate’ (Bailey, 2008:129). Extracts from the raw transcripts are in appendix 7 and 8.

3.7.1 The listening guide and four readings

To understand the multiplicity of migrant family life in a time of austerity I have adopted the *Listening Guide* method to analyse the interviews (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998; Doucet and Mauthner, 2008). Below I describe the four readings of the transcripts, and how these have enabled me to construct the key threads that run through and across the accounts of participants, and the narratives that give meaning to experiences of life in the UK. This is a tactile process (Smith, 2014), as each ‘reading’

is underlined, and I then inputted these into an Excel spreadsheet to allow for an overview of the data. This was a working document that evolved over the course of the research project.

3.7.2 Reading 1: Relational and reflexively constituted narratives

The first reading focused on the reflexive response to the text and those elements that were immediately apparent to me; themes, plots, context, metaphors, contradictions, emotions and silences that permeate the text (Loots et al., 2013). This explicitly detailed my assumptions and subjective interpretations of the transcript, and this has been a critical and cyclical process that did not only occur at the first reading of the text and consequently cannot be confined to a column on a spreadsheet. As my understanding and knowledge have developed, so too have my assumptions and the way that I have narrated participants. For instance, at one stage I reflected that I risked oscillating between ‘fixing’ participants as either heroic or victimised (Wroe, 2012), similarly I have reflected on the unwitting (and consequently uncritical) way in which I drew on ‘tragic conceptualisations of disability’ (Goddard et al., 2000:205) when I first outlined the plot of participants for whom disability features. A conscious engagement with reflexivity allows:

...the researcher to examine how and where some of her own assumptions and views – whether personal, political or theoretical – might affect her interpretation of the respondent’s words, or how she later writes about the person. (Doucet and Mauthner, 2008:405)

3.7.3 Reading 2: Tracing narrated subjects

Also known as ‘reading for “I”’, this element looks to how the participant talks about themselves through highlighting the personal pronoun and the immediately surrounding text. These (usually) short segments are then (re)presented in the form of a poetry stanza. This is a creative and effective way to present data, though the extent of its applicability should be noted. As Smith (2014) noted the use of “I” is culturally specific; not everyone refers to themselves through the pronoun “I”. Similarly, the participation of interpreters in some interviews could significantly alter the way in which “I” is present in the conversation. In this way, I note that this reading is not a way in which to locate an ‘authentic inner truth’ (Smith, 2014:146), but rather to co-construct and creatively interpret the way in which a participant presented themselves in that moment. These were particularly illustrative of the seeming tension between an agentic self and wider social constraints. Akin to *found poetry*³¹, I have experimented with this form on occasion, through tracing repeated words and placing these in stanza form, the consequence of these are to be found in chapters 5-8.

3.7.4 Reading 3: Relationships

This reading related directly to the research aims of the project, as it focused on how participants spoke about their relationships with others. This included their interpersonal relationships with partners, children, friends, distant relations, colleagues etc; and secondly, their relationships with services, professionals and broader institutions (such as benefits agencies or the asylum system). Attention was

³¹ ‘Found poetry is the literary version of a collage. Poets select a source text or texts... then excerpt words and phrases from the text(s) to create a new piece.’ (Found Poetry Review, no date:online)

given to whether relationships were narrated as supportive or as restrictive. Though this is interwoven throughout the analysis, chapter 7 is most evidently shaped by this reading.

3.7.5 Reading 4: Structured subjects

Reading for structure was particularly formative in this project, as it situated individual participant narratives in relation to ‘macro-level processes and structures’ (Doucet and Mauthner, 2008:406), and considered the mutually constitutive nature of these. In wanting to understand how austerity (as practice and discourse) shapes the lives of migrant families, I also explored how participants understood and narrated austerity. These two elements are intertwined, and chapter 8 looks specifically at the ways in which individual narratives might be limited by structural constraints, and conversely how participants rejected or subtly challenged dominant narratives.

3.7.6 Writing the analysis

As Smith (2014:151) notes there is ‘very limited guidance’ about how to subsequently bring these four readings together into a coherent analysis. I found this was further complicated by the sheer pragmatics of a project that looks at the experience of those with differing immigration statuses, and subsequently varying experiences of accessing support in the UK. As espoused by Doucet and Mauthner (2008) I initially approached the analysis thematically and sought to discuss each service or aspect of life that was a feature of the interview schedule. This produced an uninspiring and unwieldy analysis. Returning to my spreadsheet and reflections made throughout

the project, I came to understand that the points that kept recurring and which I kept reiterating across the dataset - memo's that alerted me to '*the grateful service user*', or to an inability to narrate the future - *were* the narratives that shaped how austerity is present in the lives of migrant families, and were not merely interesting footnotes. Chapters 5-8 are the result of this reappraisal of the narratives.

3.8 Ethics

3.8.1 Institutional ethical approval

The research was granted ethical approval by Manchester Metropolitan University's Faculty of Health, Psychology and Social Care. All participants signed consent forms to participate in the research and were informed in writing (see appendix 3 and 4) and verbally of the right to withdraw without penalty or prejudice. Participants were informed that pseudonyms would be used to protect their anonymity. Data has been stored commensurate with the Data Protection Act 1998 with interview recordings kept in a password protected folder on a secured laptop. Transcripts have been anonymised and pseudonyms used throughout. Paper copies of transcripts and other sensitive data have been stored in a locked filing cabinet.

Below I explore some of the key ethical tensions and considerations present in the research project.

3.8.2 'Insider' research: boundaries, distance and an epiphany

Conducting insider research within a voluntary sector organisation at which I worked as a family support worker, and later as a project coordinator and supervisor, has raised several ethical considerations for the PhD project. Insider

research is that which is undertaken in a setting or with a shared-identity group (Kanuha, 2000; Al-Makhamreh and Lewando-Hundt, 2008; Taylor, 2011) with which the researcher is familiar. The challenge in insider research is to make 'strange' knowledge that is perhaps tacit and assumed, so that it might be interpreted and analysed. In an organisational setting, there are particular ethical issues that arise, and in this section, I explore tensions related to the relationship between researcher and participants, and the emotionality and boundary work between my roles as practitioner and researcher. I reflect on researching an organisation in crisis, which has presented insights that are unique in the practitioner-researcher literature, whereby ethical issues in the existing literature often pertain to settings that are ongoing (with or without the practitioner-researcher) after the period of research. I specifically consider how I sought to become disentangled (Adam, 2012) and distanced in the process of writing up the ethnography and think ahead to the (ethical) dissemination of a research text.

Conducting research in a researcher's own organisation or in their own professional field (cf. Morriss, 2015), raises issues of positionality, and presents a challenge to traditional understandings of objectivity (Taylor, 2011). What one gains, for instance, in terms of ease of access (which, in this study was unproblematic as a result of a very supportive supervisor), will be tempered with the challenges of seeking an appropriate detachment at analysis stage (Hewitt-Taylor, 2002; van Heugten, 2004). Below I reflect on the tensions, such as this, that were present in this study.

Relationships with colleagues with whom I had worked for some time prior to the PhD study were both professional and personal. I conceived of my role during the

research as that of an 'intimate insider', which Taylor (2011:9) defines as a study in which:

...the researcher is working at the deepest level, within their own 'backyard'; that is a... space with which the researcher has regular and ongoing contact; where the researcher's personal relationships are deeply embedded in the field...

These relationships were key to the positive reaction I had from colleagues to my studying the organisation. Consent to observe and interview was sought and gained from peers willing to support me in documenting what was happening to MFSP and to the families with which we worked. The extent to which my colleagues understood the project as something which was supporting my personal development I do not know, though I would hazard a guess that they did to some extent and wished to help on this basis too. The close relationships formed between colleagues were central to many participants narratives of MFSP as a special place to work. Indeed, the relationships also extended to friendships outside of the work space, as we socialised often and celebrated one another's birthdays and weddings. The inevitable flipside of this familiarity was a foreboding sense of betrayal when it came to analysis and writing the research. As Taylor (2011:14) notes:

...emotional attachment to their friends, may make [researchers] resistant to an unsympathetic critique of the field, or if they brave an unsympathetic critique, they may be at risk of damaging or losing their closeness to the field and/or someone within it.

Though my account of MFSP in a time of crisis is by no means scandalous, I, similarly to the reflections of Morriss (2015), Leigh (2013), and White (1997) in relation to their insider positions within social work contexts, felt fear, shame, and

anxiety in the aftermath of fieldwork. I was proud of the work that MFSP had achieved, and yet there was a tension between this and the sense that I was also engaged in critique. While this tension may not have been wholly resolvable, some distance has naturally been acquired through the passing of time, which has lessened my anxiety. As passive a resolution as this may seem; the passing of time has made me more aware of the spatially and temporally bound nature of workplace friendships. With this distance, I have found an increased capacity to disengage and analyse, to straddle the boundary between insider and outsider.³² Moreover, viewing the ethnographic and professional interview data alongside the migrant family data has enabled a rounder vision of the story that this research needs to tell. Reflection, through journaling and in conversation with academic colleagues and others distinct from the MFSP space, has also honed findings to those which are most relevant.

Maintaining an ethics of care to those with which I worked, or what Floyd and Arthur term 'relational responsibility' (2012:176), also means careful consideration – alongside my supervisory team – of that which may be omitted; a reality of insider research which though 'tricky' (Taylor, 2011:14), is sensitive to the real lives of those represented in text. Moreover, my director of studies and I have discussed placing

³² It is also important to disrupt this binary thinking of being only an 'insider' or 'outsider'. Mercer (2007) notes that these are better understood as a continuum, along which we move back and forth depending on the relationship and particular situation. This pendulum effect was apparent to me in an interview with one participant from the organisation who, remarking on the closeness of the team, drew on the idea of an insider and an outsider group. Those that were on the outside (who didn't 'fit') were those who 'didn't think that we maybe shouted enough about certain things' and were more antagonistic in their challenging of other agencies. While my advocacy style is certainly not antagonistic, my sympathy with this perceived 'other' was perhaps symptomatic of my enhanced appreciation for radical modes of practice with refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. I began to feel that I could become this outsider, someone who did not 'fit'.

an embargo on my thesis for a period of time following publication so that I can offer a 'first-look' opportunity to participants. Floyd and Arthur (2012:178) suggest that these tensions will not dissipate completely, rather researchers must:

...accept the challenge of anticipating the moral and professional dilemmas they may face not just in the research design and implementation, but in the years following the research when personal and professional relationships will need to be sustained.

This perspective does somewhat assume that there is an organisation within which one is still based (or that exists) at the end of a piece of research fieldwork. Indeed, the authors are writing from the perspective of conducting research in their own higher education institutes. Despite this difference, I continue to consider how presentation of my data represents participants. Others similarly note the difficulty of gaining the distance necessary for analysis when they are 'permanently present' in the research site (Greene, 2014:11). In this instance, the closure of the organisation has enforced my distance from the field of study. No longer actively engaged with MFSP (and with reduced intimacy with colleagues), I have been able to stand back and survey the evidence - a difference that has been likened to 'building sandcastles and looking at a coastal map' (Drake, 2010 as cited in Floyd and Arthur, 2012:6).

A discussion of the relationships navigated in the research necessarily highlights the heightened emotion that is present in insider research (Arber, 2006; Darra, 2008), and which was especially the case in observing an organisation in crisis. Maintaining a 'marginal position' between practitioner and researcher, and thus, insider and outsider, has been highlighted as one which can cause strain (Arber, 2006). I found

this an especially difficult balancing act in a moment of acute crisis for MFSP. In a time that was certainly not 'business-as-usual', remaining impartial was untenable. Arber (2006) notes that strategies to manage this emotionality include reflecting in a research journal, formal and informal supervision, debriefing, self-care and counselling. I maintained a research diary and undertook regular meetings with my supervisory team in which we discussed the emergent findings *and* the impact of the research. However, eventually – following the closure of MFSP and the completion of my fieldwork – the emotional impact of the research necessitated the suspension of my PhD studies, a period in which I sought therapeutic support. Others have similarly noted the personal consequences of upsetting one's 'equilibrium' when undertaking insider research (Moore, 2007:29). This period of stasis enabled me to *choose* to return to my PhD studies, rather than feel as though I had been caught on an uncontrollable riptide. I share this to elucidate the ways in which undertaking insider research shaped the (messy) path of my PhD studies in ways inconceivable when I first sought ethical approval from the university for this study (see also: Floyd and Arthur, 2012).

The issue of 'leaving the field' (Coffey, 1999:106) is one that is often spoken about in relation to researchers knowing when to end ethnographic research. However, as MFSP wound down operations following funding cuts it seemed to me that it was rather the field leaving me. As staff hours were reduced, we had become, as an email from management said, '*like ships in the night*'. In the latter stages of the organisation's life, individuals came in on different days to ensure phone cover, and it became a rarity to have more than two people in the office. I was in a position of

relative privilege; as others were made redundant, I was able, due to my PhD bursary, to survive working only a few hours (at one point working 3.5 hours per week) and later accept a position working one day per week in a management capacity on another project within the overarching charity. I could not shake the perverse feeling that I was 'benefiting' – both in my capacity as practitioner and researcher – from the closure of MFSP. As the research progressed, it seemed I was observing not my colleagues, but more often an empty office. This was a painful and guilt-ridden period, and it became usual to sign farewell cards and wave colleagues off on their last day. In a presentation delivered to a MMU faculty conference in July 2015, I confessed that during and following this period I had felt consumed by austerity – that is, I was experiencing its effects in my lived reality at MFSP, following its portrayal in the media, reading about it, analysing its impact on participant lives, writing about it, discussing it at conferences, etc – and I had subsequently suffered from a kind of extreme inertia.

It was only once I resigned from the broader organisation that I was able to get the distance and time I needed to allow the intense emotions of the research period to fade. Moreover, this was the impetus I needed to contact colleagues from MFSP to arrange interviews. Leaving the organisation had reduced the guilt I felt about staying in the field. For some these interviews were cathartic. For instance, one participant said that it was '*therapeutic really to talk about it.*' Distance from the organisation, and follow-up interviews, meant I was able to manoeuvre between 'experience-near' and 'experience-distant' concepts (Geertz, 1974); that is the intense

and shared feelings of loss and the abstractions based on my review of the literature (White, 1997).

3.8.2.a A coda?

The above discussion of the ethical dilemmas raised while conducting insider research may suggest that the process of reflection and analysis had been resolved by the time I submitted this thesis for examination. I would like to dispel this myth here. The process of creating the boundaries and distance necessary to adequately reflect on the meanings of this insider ethnography have continued – even in to the PhD viva itself. During a lively discussion (and on-action reflection) on the nature of insider research – particularly in a study which had changed so far from my initial vision of the research – I realised that I had wanted the research to *save* MFSP. This, it was noted, was an extraordinary burden to bear. Through articulating this, I have come to recognise that though I do still wish MFSP could have continued, it is not reasonable to expect this research to have been significantly influential in this. The motions were already set in place for MFSP's unfortunate closure prior to the undertaking of this research. What this thesis can do, and to which I turn in chapter 4, is interpret and present a record of the processes and affective nature of crisis and loss as it relates to a voluntary sector organisation in a time of austerity.

3.8.3 Small organisations: protecting anonymity

Related to the above concerns, are the particular difficulties that come with researching a small organisation in a local context. There are multiple ways in which anonymity of the organisation and participants might be breached:

- 1) My own employment biography 'outing' the organisation
- 2) Local stakeholders recognising the description of the organisation which was unique in terms of those it supported (and which may also be conspicuous for having ceased operations)
- 3) Participants within the organisation recognising the words of others, breaching inter-participant anonymity

Regarding the first concern, I have taken reasonable steps to reduce this possibility, such as removing my work history from a publicly available online professional-networking site. However, Floyd and Arthur (2012:177) note that engaging with the internal ethics of an insider research project means working 'on the assumption that the site of... study cannot be anonymised', as it is likely that a reader *will* be able to identify an organisation if they wish to. One tactic for ensuring that individuals then are not identifiable in this case is to alter identifying details (i.e. through gender, age, background, position within the organisation), however this is problematic in an interpretivist study such as this, in which the intersectional positioning of participants is significant, for instance, in their experiences of precarity and austerity. As such, I have not altered such details, but I have been mindful not to overshare identifying details (i.e. the precise nationality of non-British colleagues).

Regarding the latter concern, the reflections of Taylor (2011) on dealing with concerns around anonymity and confidentiality indicates that it is not an infallible science. Strategies can be implemented which address these, such as giving participants the opportunity to review transcripts, allowing additions and

revocations, and to view written work in which they feature and are interpreted prior to publication. The issue of 'member-checking' (Creswell and Miller, 2000) is one that raises conflicting views however. While it is understood by some as bolstering the validity and reliability of a study, or – in a less post-positivistic reading (Cresswell and Miller, 2000) – addressing power imbalances between the researcher and participant, it is also the case that member-checking should be considered for the impact it might have on a participant (Hallett, 2011).

My concerns in relation to member-checking have been multi-pronged. I feared putting participants back in a space which they had often articulated as necessary for their wellbeing to 'leave' in the past. I did not want to cause unnecessary harm to participants. Moreover, the ongoing reflexive process has significantly refined the ethnographic analysis and write-up. I was consequently reluctant to share drafts of work that included everything and analysed little. Finally, it is at the point of sharing the work with participants that the risk of inter-participant recognition becomes a likely reality. I would suggest however that the risk of this having significant consequence - three years after the interviews were conducted and four years since MFSP closed – are limited. Participants are now employed in broad-ranging organisations, some remained in similar work, and others have not. As I remarked earlier, I intend to give participants the opportunity to have privileged access to the thesis initially, however this is with the acknowledgement that it is on the basis of our researcher-participant relationship, rather than as something which can alter the final research text (though it is not to say that any responses cannot be reflected on for future publications).

3.8.4 Case file archives: who to choose, how to use

Moving on from the ethical issues that the ethnographic research raised, I look now to the relationship between myself and the migrant families that participated in this research. Firstly, this necessitates an exploration of the way in which I chose the sample and approached potential participants. As stated earlier, MFSP was originally conceived of as performing a gatekeeping function to access potential participants through their archived service user case records. Having access to these records was a crucial element of the research design and I faced several issues requiring ethical appraisal, namely:

- 1) Choosing which records and families to approach to request their participation
- 2) How to approach recruitment of families to the study
- 3) Having read a family's case record, how to align the data from this with their interview narrative(s)

Retreating to the office basement to access the case records, and spending hours poring over these documents, I came to realise that, as Cockburn (2000:61) states, 'the contents of case files vary as much as the type and quality of case worker.' While there was a risk of 'cherry-picking' the most orderly and comprehensive case files, I tried to ensure that there was not an over-representation of any support worker in the final sample. The cases of five support workers were represented in the final sample of nine families. As noted in section 3.6.1, the presentation of case files did have an influence on my ability to understand the issues with which a

family were supported and subsequently affected my decision to approach the family to request their participation. Had there been opportunity it is likely I would have provided feedback to the organisation about the potential for standardising the quality of case records.

Moreover, it is important to note that I did not choose families that I had supported in my capacity as a family support worker. It was apparent that this would have significantly compromised the boundary between researcher and practitioner. Having discussed earlier the difficulties I faced navigating this boundary, this was one decision that seemed self-evident, so as not to jeopardise or exploit the trusting relationships that I had developed with families that I had once supported.

Engaging with identified families was undertaken initially by the manager of the organisation who agreed to send a letter on behalf of MFSP introducing my research project and requesting their participation. On reflection this letter is rhetorically persuasive (see appendix 5), and perhaps even tacitly reproduces the burden of the 'duty to be grateful'. Introduced in chapter 8, this is a narrative device upon which refugees, asylum seekers and migrants are obliged to draw, due to uneven power relations between (in this instance) service and 'service user'. The letter does however stipulate that participants could withdraw/refuse to participate without penalty, and I reiterated this verbally on the phone, in-person, on participant information sheets and when participants completed written consent forms. The benefit of this method of sampling has been the inclusion of a number of isolated families that may not have been captured through other sampling methods such as 'snowballing' or public-facing advertisements.

Finally, in relation to the third ethical dilemma, I returned to my ontological and ethical foundations in navigating the sometimes disjuncture between that which I had read in a family's case record and what was said in interviews. At the point of conducting the interview, participants were made aware that I had had access to their case file, but that I would not refer to information from this record during the course of the interview, and that they were under no obligation to disclose anything that they did not want to during the interview. In adopting a narrative approach to understanding the interviews, in which participants (and researcher) are making sense of and ordering their life stories, it is expected that there will be discontinuities and inconsistencies from the recorded 'reality' (Todorova, 2007). The interview is a space in which participants could enact some agency, to construct a story of their lives that was appropriate for them, in that moment. To 'cross-check' a participant's story with data from case records would be to enact epistemic violence (Teo, 2010); reducing the participant to a 'mere source', and as Frank (2010:101) notes, holding 'the story hostage to its mimetic value.' Instead, I have adopted a dialogic approach, that traces connections between participant narratives and ethnographic findings so as not to undermine the stories told by participants of their own lived experience (Frank, 2010).

3.8.5 The interview encounter: power and positionality

Undertaking research across difference, in terms of citizenship status, race, gender, class, disability (etc) has methodological, interactional and political implications (Gunaratnam, 2003). Reflexively exploring how I am situated in relation to research participants, recognising that I am not a neutral vessel through which facts are

gathered or an ‘impersonal machine’ (England, 1994:244), is imperative for ethical research. My social positioning affects how I make sense of the world *and* how others make sense of me. It is this intersubjective space, the relationship and the power dynamics between myself and my participants, to which I now turn.

I noted earlier that the position of insider and outsider were not dichotomous, but more akin to a continuum. While I negotiated a largely insider position within MFSP, this shifted considerably when I went into the homes of the migrant families that participated in the research. My relationship with the organisation meant that I assumed some familiarity for participants who perhaps saw me as representing MFSP. However, because I had never met the participants before in my capacity as a support worker, this familiarity was marginal. While being seen to be a representative of a voluntary sector organisation that had supported them may have inhibited participant’s range of responses – indeed, I reflect in chapter 8 (section 3) on this in relation to the ‘duty to be grateful’ – it was also the case that participants shared experiences that were not wholly positive and which spoke to some of the unhappiness they faced. For instance, in relation to MFSP, participants spoke of their disappointment at the closure of their family’s case, or of the relatively unremarkable support they had received in the period preceding the closure of the organisation. This suggests that any perceived positioning of myself as a representative of MFSP did not (always) prohibit participants from responding frankly. I sought to assure participants of the confidentiality of the interview, and that their participation would have no repercussions on the services and support that they currently received or would receive in the future.

The encounter between a researcher and those who participate in research is further mediated via the social locations of those present at the interview. Engaging with the 'complex reality' of my positionality (Coffey, 1999:28) means recognising the way in which my gender, race, class, age, nationality and citizenship status (among others) shape the research design, the relationships within it, and the analysis of data. However, while it is possible to note that my social positioning as a young, white, British, able-bodied woman, undertaking PhD study in a 'professional' occupation (signifying a particular class position), is very much likely to have influenced relationships in the field and my analysis, it is more difficult to say precisely in which ways these have shaped the research.

Intersectional analyses, in which race, gender, class, etc are understood as indivisible from one another, and rather as co-constituting and overlapping (Carastathis, 2014; Gunarsson, 2017), mean that it is impossible to 'match' interviewer and participant on the basis of identity markers or social positioning. Gunaratnam (2003:80) for instance, highlights that matching practices on the basis of race reify the idea that racial identities are "pure", mono-cultural and unaffected by differences of gender, class, disability or sexuality'. While participants may have chosen what they did and did not share with me, it is not possible to say what would have been shared with another interviewer. Rather than ascribe to essentialist notions of identity as dictating the outcome of the interview, I instead focused on attempts to build rapport with participants. I did this through offering to visit participants prior to the interview to meet and discuss the research project, and through conducting two interviews with participating families. Though this was not

possible in all cases, for those that I did meet more than once, feedback offered in the course of the meeting suggested that this approach enabled participants to feel more at ease and increased our rapport.

Finally, in thinking about the shaping of this research project in relation to my own positionality, I want to mention the uncomfortable resonance I felt on encountering the term ‘complicit sister’ coined by de Jong (2017) in her analysis of women from the Global North intervening in the lives of women in the Global South. Though this work is geographically specific and focused on the field of International Development, the charge that engagement with marginalised ‘others’ is premised on normative embeddedness within ‘the inequalities and power relations they seek to address’ (p.1) is one that could also be directed at social work and charitable work with refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. Undertaking this research has enabled me to reflect on some of the limitations of normative engagement that seeks primarily to support refugees, asylum seekers and migrants to ‘navigate’ existing welfare and institutional structures, without due attention to the critique - and dismantling of - oppressive systems. I return to these reflections – and potential ways forward - in the conclusion of this thesis (section 9.7).

3.8.6 The interview encounter: joint interviews and interpreters

To make participation in the research project as widely accessible as possible I included in my research design the potential for interviews to be conducted with more than one member of the family. Beyond accessibility, this also served the purpose of harnessing multiple perspectives of experiences of welfare and life in the UK. Additionally, the inclusion of participants who required an interpreter – and

who are often excluded from social research (Frayne et al., 1996) – meant that there were, for some interviews, a group of people present in the interview encounter.

Here I discuss the ethical implications of these two decisions.

While I conceived that joint-interviewing might increase the accessibility (and appeal) of the interview for some participants and would allow a focus on the shared experiences of the ‘household’ (Valentine, 1998) and relational subjectivity (Bjørnholt and Farstad, 2014), this was not without ethical and pragmatic tensions. One third of the interviews included more than one member of the family. In two cases mother and father were present, and in one instance a mother and (eighteen-year-old) daughter. The benefits of this are that the interview becomes an effort to jointly construct a story about life in the UK, in which participants can validate, challenge, contradict and supplement the insights of the other, allowing for an exploration of the ‘complexities and contradictions of the contested realities of shared lives’ (Valentine, 1998:73). However, within joint interviews, power circulates between participants, and this may result in unbalanced participation and conflict (Arksey, 1996; Voltelen et al., 2017). In the interview with Sahir and Naheed, while Naheed told a story describing multiple negative experiences with the NHS, Sahir interrupted saying: *‘in short, NHS is not good.’* Gendered power relations between husband and wife risked not only the fragmentation of narrative but indicate how – directly or indirectly – one may be silenced by another. I sought to manage this within the research encounter by being mindful of the need to facilitate an environment that attended equally to both participants (Voltelen et al., 2017), for instance, through verbal and non-verbal prompts to ‘bring in’ both parties to the

conversation. In the two interviews in which both husband and wife were present, an interpreter was also present. The linguistic isolation of these participants, alongside a more general sense of social exclusion, indicated to me that taking steps to facilitate their inclusion through joint-interviewing and the presence of an interpreter – outweighed the limitations of these interviews.

The interview with a mother and her daughter was established because of the participant's request that her daughter interpret for her. While I offered Zeynab the opportunity to have an independent interpreter, she stated that she preferred to speak about her experiences alongside her daughter, who usually interpreted for her. This presented an opportunity to speak with a young person who had migrated to the UK about their experiences of life in the UK – a perspective which I was keen to understand. Though I was not able to pursue this with any other young people, it enabled an insight into the multi-generational experiences within the household.

The presence of Fidan is likely to have influenced which stories were told and how, and I was aware that there were avenues and detail that I did not pursue – such as the family's reason for leaving their home country or the separation of Zeynab from her husband – in order to avoid the potential for distress. While it was not the case that difficult topics were not explored all together – see for instance Chapter 5 (section 3) – there was an in-action reflection process as to what was likely to be appropriate to discuss. While this interview has not discouraged me from the potential of parent-child narratives (indeed, my post-interview reflections note how much I enjoyed the interview), especially in highlighting the position of child-language-brokers within their family context, in future research I would like to

pursue the experiences of young people separately to facilitate a more open and age-appropriate environment for discussion.

3.8.6.a Interpreters

The exclusion of those who do not speak English from research is something which concerned me, especially considering the more general disadvantage, social exclusion and deprivation faced by those migrants who 'speak little or no English' and who 'can be significantly constrained' in their relations with welfare services, employment and the wider community (Alexander et al., 2004:1). My own experience at MFSP had indicated that the migrant families with which the organisation worked were finding it increasingly difficult, in a time of funding deficiencies, to access interpreter provision when accessing welfare services.

I recruited experienced professional and community interpreters through MFSP's interpreter database. Five families did not speak, or were not confident to speak, English. Four interpreters were recruited to conduct interviews with these families, and, as above, one participant stated her preference for her adult daughter to interpret for her.

I have recognised that interpreters have an active role in the construction and interpretation of the research (Temple and Edwards, 2002; Smith, 2014; Temple, 2002). Before each interview, I sent each interpreter – all women who had migrated themselves – the participant information sheet and briefed them on the aims of the project. Interpreters were usually enthusiastic about taking part in the research process, remarking on their studying of the information sheet, and sharing their

experiences of funding cuts – in their own lives and gleaned through accompanying clients to services and institutions - both before and after the interview. After each interview we would spend time debriefing; I asked interpreters about their perceptions of the topics discussed, and reflexively engaged with their social location, values and beliefs, and relationship with the participant (Temple, 2002; Temple and Edwards, 2002). For instance, after the interview with Sahir and Naheed, the interpreter indicated that in her opinion the family were '*doing okay*', and that the way in which they had migrated (father first, wife and children joining him later) was the '*correct way to do things*'. Where I had seen exceptional circumstances of family separation, the interpreter had seen a normal account of transnational family life.

While these reflections do not seek to privilege interpreter knowledge, I do seek to make their positionality accountable in the same way that the researcher makes themselves accountable in the research process (Temple and Edwards, 2002). I have included reflections where appropriate in the analysis, indicating where and how an interpreter influenced meaning-making. While there may be limitations in cross-language analyses of narratives, for instance through the loss of intended meaning (Temple, 2008), or as a result of financial constraints that meant I could not translate the recordings of interviews, I contend that the inclusion of those who are linguistically isolated is, on balance, a strength of this project.

3.8.7 The interview encounter: creating safe spaces and reciprocity

As I went through the participant information sheet with Theresa, she asked 'I want to know what you can give me for

participating in the research'. This took me aback, though I know it shouldn't have. As we talked it became apparent that it was not monetary reward she was looking for, but just... general support... this is where the association with MFSP becomes complicated. Theresa told me that her support worker 'used to do all these forms, take me places, and do all these things'. (Extract from research diary, 3 March 2014).

I want to end this discussion of ethics through a reflection on the nature of conducting research with individuals facing marginalisation and exclusion in a time of austerity. The organisational change that occurred during the process of the research meant that my initial plan for signposting and referring participants to MFSP should they present with significant support needs was not possible. Instead, I collated information about relevant local service provision into a folder and thought that I could simply signpost a family as necessary to the appropriate service. However, it became apparent during the interviews, that the difficulties that some families faced were so multiple and significant and the provision of local services so marked by funding cuts, that it would take a more proactive effort to be able to help the families in any discernible way. The boundary between my role as support worker and as researcher, once again, become decidedly indistinct.

Hall (2017:305) argues that in conducting research in the economic climate of austerity, an attention to the practical ethics of the research process acquire heightened resonance, in which one should approach 'the research encounter... as a form of care work'. This builds on a feminist ethics of care (Edwards and Mauthner, 2002) whereby listening, empathy, practical and financial support are named as ways that a researcher might practice ethical relations with participants. While I was not able to offer financial recompense to participants, I did provide practical

support to some. For some it was sufficient to signpost them to local welfare advice organisations, and to give them information regarding locally available ESOL classes. Other situations however, particularly relating to housing and welfare, necessitated a more active advocacy role. Indeed, supporting participating families in this way was illustrative of the effects of austerity, as I noted in my research diary:

We rang Shelter when I visited a second time to try to address issues with the repair of the house. We were informed by the advisor that they can no longer support as they once might have been able to due to legal aid cuts. They were apologetic and said they are no longer able to advocate practically in regard to private rented housing standards. They used to offer inspections and more support around repairs. They could however invite Hamid to a session where they support people to find a new property through Manchester Move, and where they can check people are on the right banding and supply them with a list of reputable landlords. (Extract from research diary, 25 July 2014).

The importance of listening and providing a space to share stories and experiences is also a form of care, and while I reiterated to participants that they should share with me only as far as they were comfortable, several shared emotive and powerful stories: of difficulties faced in the UK and elsewhere, and of the impact of social exclusion, precarity, and isolation on their mental health. This has resonance with the idea of the research encounter as a potential space for restorative care work (Darra, 2008; Garthwaite, 2013; Smith, 2014).

It is also important to state the limited extent of such interventions. Returning to some among the first words that my first participant said to me: *'I want to know what you can give to me'*, indicates the necessity of the role of reciprocity in qualitative interviewing, but also of the uneven power differentials. I have to

conclude that whatever support I was able to offer participants in the one or two times I met them, it is almost certainly likely I have gained more from these encounters than the families that I interviewed. It is my hope that at the very least I have taken the necessary steps in the design of this research study to ensure that no harm was done to participants, and that in my reflections I have appraised the strengths and limitations of the approaches taken, so that I might continue to develop my practice in ways that centre the relationality of ethics in research with those experiencing material and immaterial harms in their everyday lives.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter has reflexively engaged with the guiding philosophical and theoretical principles of this research project, and provided an account of the fieldwork and methods undertaken. I have sought to illustrate the epistemological and methodological negotiations, challenges, refinements and successes, to give an insight into the process of doing research, particularly research that seeks to understand a contemporary and continually shifting context. I have described the processes of undertaking ethnographic research in an organisation and of interviewing migrant families. I have closed with an in-depth exploration of the ethical tensions inherent to the project, with a focus on the challenges of (not always) maintaining a balance along multiple insider and outsider positionings. It is hoped that in the next chapters the rewards of such positions will also be evident. The next chapter introduces the organisation 'MFSP' and presents the ethnographic findings of an organisation in (a time of) crisis.

4.1 A prologue about loss

I told my counsellor about my research, about the organisation and the families that we worked with, I spoke about loss and how it related to my research. How I felt an overbearing sense of loss. She remembered a training course she had undertaken with Cruse Bereavement Care and started to rifle through a stack of papers. She found what she was looking for, a worksheet filled with circles. Circles within circles. The first had a large black dot, the size of a two-pound coin, filling up most of the inside of the outline of another circle. She explained: most people think that the black dot – representing grief – will become smaller and smaller until it takes up less space in the larger circle – that is, our wider lives – and in this way it becomes manageable. She motioned to the second image: it is not, in fact, the grief dot that becomes smaller – that stays the same size - but it is the life circle that grows as we process loss. (January 2016)

Section one

4.2 An introduction to organisational loss

This chapter presents the ethnographic analysis of a voluntary sector organisation in a time of crisis. The organisation, referred to here as MFSP, supported refugee, asylum seeking and migrant families to settle in the city of Manchester through an outreach model. MFSP closed operations at the end of 2013 following a funding cut from its majority funder, the local authority, and unsuccessful bids for adequate alternative funding. Drawing on the concept of loss, this chapter will explore the latter stages of this organisation's life, the time preceding it and reflect on what remains after its closure.

This is an intimate analysis, one from which I – as researcher and practitioner – cannot be disentangled. As the prologue to this chapter alludes to, in this ‘embodied’ ethnographic practice (Conquergood, 1991), loss is something that I have felt keenly and that I have had to comprehend reflexively so that I could ‘reorient’ (Ybema and Kamsteeg, 2009) myself from the intensity of affect to the task of analysis. The loss of the organisation, and the emotive responses of professionals, signify that a critical analysis of loss is one that has traction beyond my individual experience.

Split into two sections, this chapter firstly considers the literature on organisational change and closure, with particular emphasis on studies of organisations within the economic and social context of austerity. Following the articulation of a significant gap in the literature, I illuminate the value of a theoretical appreciation of loss as it relates to the closure of an organisation in a time of austerity. The second section of this chapter looks to the ethnographic findings of organisational loss.

4.2.1 Organisational change

Organisational change is understood as an inevitable outcome of living in a period of accelerated globalisation, technological innovation, deregulation and shifting societal and demographic trends (By, 2005). In business, management and human relations literature, change is conceived as a ‘normal and natural response to internal and environmental conditions’ (Leifer, 1989 as cited in By, 2005:371), and is characterised as something which can be planned (the majority of the literature) or as an emergent response to crisis (By, 2005). The latter recognises that change occurs in response to ‘dynamic and unpredictable environments’ (By, 2005:376).

Change within an organisation implies a process of learning, and the success or otherwise of this as fundamental for positive change (Doyle, 2002; By, 2005).

The implicit consensus within the literature is that change is progressive (Wolfram Cox, 1997), often 'necessary and long-overdue' (Mack et al., 1998:219), and good for business. Neoliberal and market values are depoliticised and are assumed to be neutral, as business success is given primacy over workers that inhabit these organisations. Smith (2005:152) for instance, notes that while people are essential to change, they 'can also be the biggest obstacle to achieving change'. Through means that pathologise resistance and anxiety toward change, workers are constructed as problems to be managed (even coerced and manipulated) into compliance with organisational change (cf. Waddel and Sohal, 1998; Bovey and Hede, 2001; Vakola et al., 2004; Smith, 2005; Van Dam et al., 2007; Branson, 2008; Terry and Jimmieson, 2011). In this literature, emotion and conflicting individual-organisational values are perceived as a hindrance to effective change (Bryant and Wolfram Cox, 2006). The material conditions on which resistance and anxiety may be predicated are rarely attended to, and subjective experiences are subsumed by quantitative approaches (Smollan, 2015).

Smollan (2015) recognising some of the above limitations, highlights the need for qualitative research that emphasises the subjective; how employees make sense of organisational issues, suffer the consequences, and struggle to cope – both before, during, and after change. In a study of public healthcare in New Zealand, the author highlights the role of uncertainty, workload changes, lack of information, poorer relationships, and inadequate resources in causing stress, and the risk of physical

and mental health problems occurring as a result of change (Smollan, 2015). Also attending to the subjectivity of workers, Bryant and Wolfram Cox (2003) explore the 'atrocities' of employees in response to change within primary industry in Australia. They found that workers perceived change as violent and consisted of: exclusion from decision-making processes, insufficient information and training that risked safe working conditions, facing isolation and bullying tactics if resistant, 'gestapo' like management, and conflict between previously harmonious colleagues who were pitted as in competition with one another. Atrocity tales might be resolved through 'shifting' the narrative to one of 'choice' to resign, though this was not usually depicted as an easy decision to make, but rather one that left residual feelings of 'guilt, sadness and concern for the welfare of colleagues...' (Bryant and Wolfram Cox, 2003:580). These examples highlight the potential for qualitative studies to attend with nuance to organisational change in ways that are critical and mindful of its affective nature.

4.2.2 Third sector organisational change

As a heterogeneous sector, aptly described as 'a loose and baggy monster' (Kendall and Knapp, 1994), the study of change within third sector organisations is broad-ranging. The literature in this field is generally more critical of the exogenous factors that necessitate change, particularly of the role of neoliberalism and marketisation in shaping inter-organisational relations, transformation of organisational forms, and changing work practices. Here I briefly navigate the literature related to third sector change and locate this study in relation to significant gaps in the field.

Organisational change within the third sector is inextricably linked with the social and economic policies of government, particularly as these relate to welfare provision and the perceived role of voluntary and community organisation in the mixed economy of welfare. The outsourcing of public services to the third sector has been a key site of wholesale change within the third sector (Cunningham, 2001; Bennett, 2008; Aiken and Bode, 2009; Macmillan, 2010; Buckingham and Rees, 2017). This outsourcing has seen a shift in the mode through which organisations are primarily funded, with commissioning and contracts usurping grants and donations (Rees, 2013).

The capacity for voluntary organisations to remain distinct in their identity is questioned by those who have theorised that the process of isomorphism enforces the homogenisation of the state/voluntary sector and leads to tensions between sector independence and interdependence (Carmel and Harlock, 2008; Acheson, 2010; Alcock and Kendall, 2010; Crouch, 2011; Milbourne and Cushman, 2015; Goldstraw, 2016; Egdell and Dutton, 2017), and promotes ‘mission drift’ (Egdell and Dutton, 2017). Milbourne and Cushman (2014:14) highlight the form that these tensions take, as:

Suppressing more direct forms of advocacy... promoted through isomorphic pressures and induced through acceptance of the way things work. [There is] tension for a sector which attempts to provide services on behalf of government and advocacy on behalf of its users, seeking to influence policy-making and decisions, but hesitating to ‘bite the hand that feeds it’. This tension around operating both *in* and *against* the state is evident in trends towards increased use of insider tactics: adopting mainstream discourse and modes of operation to gain legitimacy and influence.

Beckert (2010) however maintains that despite isomorphic processes, including unequal power relations, institutional logics and local actors (that is the prevailing values/culture and workers within an organisation) can maintain divergent and distinctive organisational identities. Similarly, Bennet and Savani (2011) argue that mission drift is not a one-dimensional phenomenon, but one that is actively deliberated upon and shaped within voluntary organisations. These latter two texts indicate the value of looking at how theoretical hypotheses work in practice, so that nuanced analysis responds to agency as well as structural constraints.

The third sector has been shaped by its responses to various governmental policy initiatives. For instance, during the tenure of Labour (1997-2010) partnership working was understood as the 'leitmotif of New Labour policy' (Alcock, 2010:6). While New Labour shaped the sector in ways commensurate with neoliberalism, Buckingham and Rees (2017:41) note that this was developed with 'generous funding and capacity building programmes.' This period accelerated the formalisation of third sector organisations and placed the sector firmly within the mixed economy of welfare. A change of government brought a continuation of neoliberal reshaping, but this time, the professionalisation of the sector was undermined by the Conservative's flagship policy initiative of the 'Big Society' (Buckingham and Rees, 2017). Though this policy has been side-lined in political rhetoric, it has continuing relevance as volunteers – constructed as socially-conscious, active citizens - are narrated as able to provide appropriate services within their communities. This, coupled with austerity measures and funding cuts, have had the effect of attempting to de-professionalise the sector (Buckingham and Rees, 2017). Increasingly,

organisations are incorporating business values in to their operations, drawing on an enterprise culture (McGovern, 2016; Emejulu and Bassel, 2013; Bassel and Emejulu, 2017) that seeks to ensure sustainability through income-generation, or else risk 'extinction' (Bassel and Emejulu, 2017:10). McGovern (2016) has argued that an almost-subconscious adherence to a neoliberal orthodoxy means that the voluntary sector is unable to think beyond the boundaries set in 'the interests of the powerful' (p.94). In this way, neoliberalism is seen as the 'natural' order and alternatives almost inconceivable.

Depending on where voluntary organisations are situated in relation to the broader welfare market, they may be typified as service delivery organisations or as oppositional, campaigning organisations (Emejulu and Bassel, 2017). An organisation may move between these as they respond to funding and policy changes. Tensions between the organisational values and individual values of employees may become apparent during change processes (Nevile, 2010; Stride and Higgs, 2013). Conflict and convergence can be understood through qualitative means that privilege the experience and narratives of workers within organisations.

In the contemporary context, the third sector has been severely affected by austerity, and specifically by the comprehensive spending review which significantly reduced the funds of local authorities; a major funder of third sector organisations. Coupled with this are the increased need of many due to the impact of the welfare reforms of the Coalition and Conservative governments (Macmillan, 2011).

Cunningham and James (2014), in a longitudinal study of the change in social care

provision, note that austerity has reinforced 'New Public Management' (NPM)³³ trends and altered the nature of state-voluntary relationships; moving away from partnership toward 'arms-length' (and cost-focused) relations. Hemmings (2017) highlights that the voluntary sector is restricted from expressing a 'critical voice' in what amounts to a pressurised and fear inducing funding environment. These conditions risk putting organisations in competition with one another, and worsening work conditions of employees as organisations try to keep costs low (Cunningham, 2008; 2015). Some organisations are not able to effectively respond to arduous procurement and commissioning procedures and intensive monitoring and evaluation processes (Myers, 2017). Some have noted, both pre- and post- austerity, the inadequacy of resources to support the learning necessary to respond to significant change (McKinney and Khan, 2004; Colley, 2012). There also exists optimism about the state of the third sector in times of austerity, with sector-leaders anticipating the resilience, innovation and relationship-building of some organisations in responding to the 'new economic reality' (Wilding, 2010), findings that suggest there is 'continued resistance to isomorphic tendencies and co-optation' (Myers, 2017:102), and the collaboration of organisations to maintain funding streams and service provision jointly (Myers, 2017). I return to this below through an exploration of empirical studies researching the effects of austerity on organisations.

³³ New public management – emergent since the 1980s and so not all that 'new' - is a mode of management that has been superimposed into the public sector from private business management. It sought the reformation and normative vision of government agencies, such that they would 'eliminate inefficiencies, and impose fiscal discipline' (Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff, 2015:223).

Given the vast nature of the third sector, it is necessary to briefly locate this study within the asylum seeker, refugee and migrant sub-sector. A study by Terry (2017), into organisational change within asylum seeking and refugee (ASR) organisations in a time of austerity notes that the third sector has been a key player – especially following the 1999 dispersal programme that sent asylum seekers away from the ‘over-burdened’ London and South East - in providing services to ASR communities. This primacy has been defined as both a consequence of privileged knowledge, access and trust within such communities, and as a form of exploitation of the sector’s sense of responsibility to support these groups in the face of discontinuous, hostile and insufficient state support (Sales, 2007; Wren, 2007; Lonergan, 2017; Terry, 2017).

Key moments of conflict within the ASR sector have resulted from funding tensions, particularly regarding the acceptance of Home Office funding (Zetter et al., 2005; Briskman and Cemlyn, 2005; McGhee et al., 2016). The availability of funds to ASR organisations, particularly in the context of a Labour government that (relative to the current context) celebrated multiculturalism, meant a process of professionalisation and formalisation for many small, local organisations (Terry, 2017). However, the consequence of reduced funding streams broadly speaking, and the specific consequence of the hostile and anti-migrant context in which ASR organisations operate, mean that contemporarily there are significant constraints for the sector.

Studies into the ASR third sector have tended to focus on refugee community organisations (RCOs) – usually small informal organisations set up ad-hoc, by and

for ASR - or on the large, national players: Refugee Action and Refugee Council. This means that there is a dearth of information about the experiences of those organisations that are situated between these two poles. Terry (2017) similarly sought to address this gap, undertaking ethnographic research in formalised local refugee organisations which have roots in informal RCO provision and/or are faith-oriented. A study of MFSP, enables a unique focus on an organisation that had formal, 'top-down' beginnings. While sharing some traits of those described above, in that it was set up as a response to the dispersal programme, the project was devised by the local authority in collaboration with a charitable organisation in Manchester. It was funded by a 2001 New Labour initiative - the 'Children's Fund' - which sought to reduce social exclusion and bridge the gap between Sure Start and Connexions. The fund's ambitions were to: alleviate poverty and disadvantage through the provision of support services, to encourage children and young people to realise their potential, and build strong local communities (Ofsted, 2003). Understanding this history and the organisation's form is key to an analysis of the factors that led to the closure of MFSP, particularly when read alongside the changing interorganisational and outsourcing landscape (Cunningham and James, 2014). This chapter then significantly contributes to the literature on ASR (and migrant) organisations and organisational change in a time of austerity.

Finally, despite the wide-ranging and critical literature pertaining to organisational change in the voluntary sector, there is little research that attends to the closure of organisations, and how this is experienced by employees. The protracted period between funding loss and closure seems to me an important focus for analysis of

organisational change. This study then also extends the organisational change literature through an analysis of an organisation before, during and after the ceasing of operations. Following a review of empirical studies that analyse organisational change in a time of austerity, I further consider the limited literature on organisation closure.

4.2.3 Organisational change in a time of austerity

Studies on the effects of austerity on organisations, though nascent, have been broad-ranging. Research on public sector organisations and institutions have included analyses of: a police force control room (Lumsden and Black, 2017), Connexions service (Colley, 2012), the ‘reassembling’ and resilience of local government actors (Lowndes and McCaughie, 2013), senior management within a social services department (Cohen and Duberley, 2015), mechanisms of local government budgeting and accountability (Ahrens and Ferry, 2015), the hyper-marketisation of the asylum dispersal system (Darling, 2016), and - in somewhat of a hybrid of organisational form - the emergence of volunteer-run library services (Forkert, 2016).

Third sector research that assesses the impact of austerity on organisational change are numerous, though given the range of organisation types, there is significant scope for further research. Often research has undertaken geographical analyses, with both national and regional reach (Sepulveda et al., 2011; Unison, 2013; White, 2014; Jones et al., 2015; Clayton et al., 2015; Clifford, 2017), and in one instance, a comparative study of the non-profit sector in Canada and Scotland (Cunningham et al., 2016). Some have approached an analysis through considering the impacts on

third sector sub-sectors, using case studies and multi-site qualitative approaches, to draw conclusion about specific sector trends. For instance, this has been undertaken in regard to: the women's voluntary and community sector (Vacchelli, 2015); youth service provision (Youdell and McGimpsey, 2014); HIV and AIDS organisations (Dalton, 2016); the LGBT voluntary and community sector (VCS) (Mitchel et al., 2013; Colgan et al., 2014); children's charities (National Children's Bureau, 2016); social care VCS (Cunningham and James, 2014); and the asylum seeker and refugee VCS (Lonergan, 2017; Terry, 2017). Some have reported in-depth on the case of an individual organisation in a time of austerity, for instance, in relation to a youth-sport charity in Liverpool (Kenyon, et al., 2018), a youth organisation in a pseudonymous Northern English city (Mason, 2015), and a mother-child support programme for those with experience of domestic abuse in London (Sanders-McDonagh et al., 2016).

Further literature in the austerity-organisation nexus relates to the neoliberalisation of social enterprise (Wheeler, 2017); activist-VCS relations in anti-austerity campaigning in London (Ishkanian and Ali, 2018) and financial workers in the City of London (Kahn, 2017).

Given the breadth of the literature, in which different approaches are taken and a range of disciplinary fields represented, there is not one clear conclusion about the effects of austerity on organisations. There are however trends that thread throughout the studies. These refer to: the macro-structural context and deficits that influence change; the nature of changing organisations – what happens as a result of the macro-structural context; the impact of organisational change on

individual workers and the employee collective; and the overall implication of these effects – that is, what macro-insights can be inferred from the micro and meso context.

In relation to the structural context, the depreciating and changing funding landscape is most-regularly cited. Research has noted, for instance, the impact of the move from grants-based funding to commissioning and payment-by-results (Lowndes and McCaughie, 2013; Vacchelli et al., 2015; Clayton et al., 2016; Sanders-McDonagh, 2016), and the increased competition between organisations as a result (Youdell and McGimpsey, 2014). It is argued that the comprehensive spending review, and the response to this, has facilitated a shift of accountability from the state to the local level (Ahrens and Ferry, 2015; Vacchelli, 2015; Clayton et al., 2016) – termed ‘austerity localism’ (Featherstone et al., 2012; Clayton et al., 2015b) – this goes hand-in-hand with the changing relations between local authorities and the voluntary sector. Cunningham and James (2014) caution that while the changing relations between the two does not mean there has been an all-encompassing shift from ‘partnership’ to ‘control and subordination’, austerity has ‘reinforced a tendency towards New Public Management prescriptions and encouraged the pursuit of a more ‘arms-length, cost-based contracting’ (p.14). Structural issues also centre on pervasive inequality, which is conceptualised by some as geographically situated (Jones et al., 2015) and by others whose client base are located at the intersections of inequality. Terry (2017), in a study of asylum seeker and refugee support organisations, found that there was a propensity for organisations to ‘keep a low public profile’ (p.168) due to the hostility directed toward the client group.

Youdell and McGimpsey (2014) similarly note the reducing provision for youth work, arguing that the funding of early-intervention projects for (innocent) children is more politically salient in a context in which young (working class) people are viewed as deviant. Finally, Sanders-McDonagh et al. (2016:71), quoting the director of a national women's organisation, highlight that the 'invisible' nature of domestic abuse victims places severe constraints on their lobbying and campaigning capacity.

At an organisational level, a consistent theme in the literature is the destabilisation of vital services as a result of austerity measures (Colgan et al., 2014; Youdell and McGimpsey, 2014; Sanders-McDonagh, 2016). Observations on the specific ways in which change is manifest include the increasing use of enterprise strategies and the expansion of business values to promote organisational longevity (Sepulveda, 2011; Emejulu and Bassel, 2013; Myers, 2017; Kenyon et al., 2018), as well as the co-option of creativity and values of citizenship in the maintenance of public services (Forkert, 2016). Governance responses to structural change include narrating the resilience, resistance and coping strategies of organisations. These – such as the potential for maintaining consultative relationships with the state, and promoting unity and partnership working within the sector - are seen in cautiously optimistic terms by Wilding (2010) and Vacchelli et al. (2015). Somewhat more pessimistically, Youdell and McGimpsey (2014), referring to the youth work sector, see organisational responses as 'quietly conservative, attempting to keep services, something, in place...' and in which there are few avenues for a 'radical departure or moment of political possibility' (p.128). Similarly, Sanders-McDonagh et al. (2016) note the apparent uselessness of demonstrating the effectiveness of a service in a context of

vast funding cuts, in which evaluation reports will be disregarded. Finally, organisations in a time of austerity reportedly have fewer resources for training and development of staff (Colley, 2012; Mason, 2015) and are experiencing difficulty recruiting volunteers in a context of reduced employment progression opportunities (Mason, 2015).

At a personal and interpersonal level, studies have analysed the effects of austerity on employment conditions (Unison, 2013). Cunningham et al. (2016:468) note that:

At the coalface of frontline practice, the experience of austerity policies is a common one unquestionably dominated by insecurity and precarity and changes in workplace control.

Worsening material conditions are explored for their impact on staff morale and wellbeing (Dalton, 2016) and the resultant coping strategies of workers are covered (Goldstraw, 2016; Lumsden and Black, 2017). Given the potential for organisational ‘mission drift’ (Bennet and Savani, 2011; Sepulveda, 2011; Colgan et al., 2014), tensions between personal values and shifting organisational values are analysed (Colley, 2012; Cohen and Duberley, 2015). Of most relevance for this study, and to which I will return in below (section 4.4), are those studies that attend to the emotional impact of austerity and organisational change. For instance, a study of social services managers – that is, relatively socially and economically privileged participants – notes that austerity and funding cuts were positioned as ‘traumatic’ in narratives relating to their decision to take early-retirement and voluntary-redundancy (Cohen and Duberley, 2015). Noting the ethical conflicts for those who find themselves in vastly overhauled organisations, Colley (2012) illustrates the

intensive emotional labour of front-line practitioners. The author evocatively claims that:

In the heat of austerity, the field has become like a warmed glacier, riven with crevasses – chasms between practitioners' ethical values on the one hand, and economic value on the other, which halt them in their tracks and threaten descent into a void... of existential crisis. (Colley, 2012: 332)

A study of social care delivery in the North East of England similarly foregrounds the place of emotions in an analysis of austerity's impact on organisations (Clayton et al., 2015). The authors argue that there is a particular accord in studying emotions in the voluntary sector, because strong emotional ties and values often shape work in this context. Emotions are described as the impetus for resistance and organisational defence – that is, 'the fight' - against funding cuts (p.23). However, they also note that the 'shock' of crisis can inhibit resilience. The impact of austerity on 'mood, morale [and] ability to perform roles' (p.16), mean that some will not so easily – or successfully – fight funding cuts and organisational change.

Finally, authors discuss the broader implications of organisational change in a time of austerity. Of primacy is the observation that austerity has dual effects – of heightening need and reducing provision, thereby reinforcing inequality and having further marginalising effects on those already precarious (Dalton, 2016, Jones et al., 2015). Accounts might be pessimistic or hopeful. For the latter, emphasis is on the potential for tactical and oppositional resistance (Dey and Teasdale, 2015; McGovern, 2016), the re-politicisation of the third sector (Ioakimidis et al., 2013), and third sector care as radical in times of entrenched hostility to those deemed

undeserving (Lonergan, 2017). For others – though these are not wholly binary - the constrained voice of the third sector in the wake of austerity (Hemmings, 2017; Myers, 2017) is a worrying indictment of depreciating sector independence. The limited vision, or prevailing neoliberal hegemony, within the public and third sector means that the edict: ‘there is no alternative’ is, for some organisations, near irrefutable (Youdell and McGimpsey, 2014; Forkert, 2016; McGovern, 2016; Wheeler, 2017; Ishkanian and Ali, 2018). Finally, heightened rhetoric reminds us of what is at stake when public services and third sector organisations are ‘hollowed out’ (Aiken and Harris, 2017). Appeals to recognise the de-funding and de-prioritisation of women’s domestic abuse services are named as ‘state-sanctioned violence’ (Sanders-McDonagh et al., 2016), and Colley (2012) invokes Hannah Arendt’s ‘banality of evil’ in depicting how austerity might carve out ‘a future of increased conflict and symbolic violence’ (p.332).

The literature discussed here alerts us to the importance of organisational change at a micro, meso and macro scale. While there has been significant focus on the broader trends apparent in the third sector, far fewer have studied the impacts of organisational change at the everyday level. The value of those studies that do has been in showing the affective nature of austerity, and the material implications for the individuals that *make* organisations. No studies of organisations in a time of austerity have significantly focused on the closure of an organisation, and the effects of this at a personal and interpersonal level.

Following a brief review of analogous literature on organisational closure and loss, I turn to consider the potential of utilising the concept of loss as an analytical frame in a study of organisational change in a time of austerity.

4.2.4 Organisational closure

The phenomenon of third-sector organisation and service closure has not been significantly studied in the existing literature. Local and national news outlets have reported on the closure of organisations such as: women's organisations and refuge provision (Corfe, 2015; McClenaghan and Andersson, 2017), a (Manchester) drug and alcohol charity (Brindle, 2017), and – eliciting the most controversy – Kids Company (Beresford, 2015). The latter, a London based organisation supporting young people, has received considerable attention and posthumous analysis, due to the political influence of the organisation and founder – Camila Batmanghelidjh, dubious neuroscience claims (Beresford, 2015), and subsequent accusations of poor governance (Molina, 2018). It is apparent that this story of organisational closure is much more sensational than the one described in this thesis. Looking to broader trends, Kane (2015), writing for the NCVO³⁴, notes that though in 2013 there was an upsurge of charitable organisations closing and de-registering from the Charity Commission³⁵ website, this is apparently tempered by the fact that many more new charities registered in the same year. Meanwhile, this sense of overall sector equilibrium is disrupted by Bennett (2016) who found that a majority of new

³⁴ A national organisation that 'champions' the voluntary sector

³⁵ This is not a reliable method of understanding contemporary organisational change, as service and project closure within organisations are not captured via Charity Commission records.

charitable organisations will close their doors within a few years. Following a survey study addressing the factors that lead to the closure of new organisations (including: lack of founder experience, low financial capital, few employees and resources, sector competition), Bennet concludes that ‘in-depth case studies of particular charity failures would be valuable, focusing on critical incidents that led to an organisation’s demise’ (2016:345). Clayton et al. (2015:28), for instance, convey the atmosphere of a women’s centre that was on the brink of closure:

The mood of the participant representing this centre... was stoic yet clearly downbeat. In addition the atmosphere of the centre during the middle of the day was noticeably quiet with a sense of resignation in the air... the issue of low morale is raised as a significant concern as remaining staff faced the prospects of the project closing but were applying additional effort to ensure its continuation... the impact of austerity is tangible in terms of mood, morale, ability to perform roles and additional efforts required to do so... Shortly after this interview, the centre was forced to close.

The ‘critical incident’ to which the participant referred in this instance was the impact of private sector competition in the community-education sector, meaning that the organisation were unable to hire staff on comparably low wages. As such, Clayton et al.’s (2015) study offers one example of the potential of qualitative and in-depth approaches for attending to the lived experience of organisational closure (at least partly) resulting from the macro (neoliberal) context. This thesis then contributes to an exceptionally limited literature that focuses on the in-depth analysis of service closure, with the assertion that this is a vital perspective in a time of austerity (and continuing crises).

The broader literature on organisational closure has been valuable for situating this study. Empirical, qualitative studies are, as with the third sector literature, relatively few – especially considering the enormity of the organisational change literature in general. Earlier I described how a vast proportion of the business and management literature has a normative appreciation of neoliberal values; consequently, it is perhaps the case that studies of organisational loss that consider the worker – and affective - experience are not a priority³⁶. Offering a conceptual and theoretical correction to this, Walter (2014), critically assessed the metaphor ‘organisational death’, reflecting on the nature and symbolism of death (and life) in organisational contexts. He notes that the hyperbole of the metaphor ‘death’ in this context ensures that accounts of organisational loss are not sanitised, but invoke the potential pain associated with closure. Moreover, Walter reflects on whether the causes of organisational death are natural or a consequence of ‘external blows’ (2014:70). Walter’s exegesis sensitises the reader to the need to appreciate the meanings attached to the ending of an organisation by those within it, and the need to attend to structural factors that might cause a life-threatening blow alongside agentic causes.

In this section, I briefly reflect on the empirical studies of three disparate organisations and their closure: the closure of a residential institution in Australia (Johnson, 1998), the closure of a nickel mine in Australia (Pini et al., 2010;

³⁶ Or, as I note below, that researcher access to such spaces of decline are not easily negotiable with organisations.

McDonald et al., 2012) and on the site closure of a car manufacturing company in the UK (Bell, 2012).

Firstly, Kelley Johnson's (1998) study 'Deinstitutionalising women', followed the lives of a group of women that resided in a secure unit in an institution for people with learning disabilities. Intending to understand the lives of women in such units, Johnson notes how the focus of the research 'instantly changed' in response to the decision to close the facility. The project developed into a study of deinstitutionalisation and its effects on the women and staff that lived and worked in the institution. Johnson foregrounds the importance of reflexivity in the research process, in which the researcher is also understood as a subject of study. Noting the enormity of this task, the author reflects:

I became aware that I was holding many of the anxieties and some of the pain which individuals and groups were experiencing at Hilltop [the institution]. It became a matter of personal survival and an important part of my research to examine these reactions. (Johnson, 1998:12)

Though Johnson was an 'outsider' in that she was not already familiar to the institution prior to the research, over the course of the project she becomes an ally and an advocate for the women subject to deinstitutionalisation. This study is therefore vital for situating the intensity of emotional responses, and boundary-blurring, that can occur in studying the closure of an organisation. Johnson conveys the complexity – and value – of studying in evolving research contexts with which we become entangled. Moreover, the convergence between Johnson's study and this one – in that the study of organisational loss was fateful, a case of 'being in the right

place at the 'right' time' – indicates that this may be one of the key ways in which such studies come to fruition. Given that perhaps few organisations would allow access to researchers in times of crisis and demise, for those who are able, such a responsiveness is vital. As Forsey (2010:569) notes: 'life in postmodern spaces in a globalized world is often chaotic, uncontrolled and unmanageable... and our methods need to respond to this reality'.

A study by Barbara Pini, Paula McDonald and Robyn Mayes (Pini et al., 2010; McDonald et al., 2012), on the closure of a nickel mine in Australia is a comprehensive insight into the co-constitutive nature of work, family, household, community and social reproduction. Following an ethnographic study of the opening of the mine and the community that developed around it, the researchers conducted in-depth interviews and focus groups with workers and their families to understand their response to the sudden closure of the mine. They found that the sense of uncertainty, loss, betrayal and anger were felt as strongly as if there had been a bereavement (Pini et al., 2010). Specifically, participants' sense of loss extended to their 'future imaginings of the possibilities and potentialities of home, work and community', and the pain of losing what 'may or could have been' (Pini et al., 2010:571). The study centres the affective nature of organisation closure – mindful that such events do not only concern the individual worker, but families and communities too. It is cognisant of the differential impacts of closure: for instance, highlighting the particularly precarious positions in which migrant workers are placed. The intimacies of everyday life following the closure of the mine are situated within broader labour relations and the globalisation of capital

(McDonald et al., 2012) and are an exemplar of how critical analyses can – and must – attend to the affective and lived experience of those ‘on the ground’.

Finally, Emma Bell (2012), exploring the closure of a Jaguar manufacturing factory in Coventry, highlights the ways in which organisational narrative may contradict those of individual workers within the organisation. Using visual analysis, Bell considers how memory and nostalgia are evoked in making sense of ‘organisational death’. The sense of loss in such contexts evoke such feeling for those made redundant that wreaths may be laid at the gates of closed factory doors. This study illustrates that key to understanding organisational endings are narratives of community, memory and nostalgia. Bell also usefully notes that in a context of globalisation, it is too limiting to understand organisational death as a phenomenon that only occurs when an ‘entire organisation ceases to operate’ (2012:5). Instead, given that sociological understandings of death are ‘open to interpretation and contestation’, a more ‘ambiguous definition of organisational death is required’ (ibid); one that is more pluralistic and can incorporate mergers, acquisitions, relocations, etc. In the context of this thesis, it is important to make clear that the loss of MFSP was not the sort of loss that would be marked on the Charity Commission database. Rather, the closure of a service within a wider charitable organisation (that continued following the closure of MFSP, and which MFSP had an ambivalent relationship with) is the site of this study of organisational loss.

Having looked at some of the ways that organisational literature has conveyed the experience of organisational closure, I now turn to theoretical conceptualisations of

loss and grief and consider how these can be operationalised in a study of organisational closure.

4.2.5 Loss as a frame of analysis

As articulated above, a focus on the micro-level of organisational change necessitates an exploration of the affective nature of change and (impending) loss. While existing literature of organisational change in a time of austerity marginally attends to the employee perspective, the study of the loss of a third-sector organisation or service has been insufficiently explored. Studying the emotion of loss is particularly pertinent in a study in which I have been intimately entwined. As Johnson (1998) found, studying organisational change necessitates a reflexive engagement with our own subjective positioning in the study. The vignette that opened this chapter alludes to the way in which my own sense of loss has shaped and directed the analysis.

Loss and grief in organisational contexts have been explored in the business and management literature, in ways commensurate with the neoliberal governmentality described earlier (4.2.1), for instance exploring the ways in which employees can be supported to 'grow' and avoid 'maladaptive' emotions following organisational loss (Conroy and O'Leary-Kelly, 2014). Bell and Taylor (2011:9) for instance point to how the Kübler-Ross 'five-stages of grief' model is typically invoked as a means to manage a 'problem to be solved', and that if only employees are adequately supported to grieve they will successfully come to accept organisational closure and 'let go'. The Kübler-Ross paradigm is dominant in approaches to grief-work, and it was suggested to me early on in supervision that it might be of relevance to my

analysis of organisational decline. The early model posited that someone who learns that they are going to die, and those grieving, will experience sequentially; denial, anger, bargaining, depression and finally; acceptance. The model has been criticised for the implicit assumption that there is a clear structure that is followed universally following a loss, with Currer (2009:61) stating that it is 'very deterministic and passive.' Kübler-Ross and others have developed the model to suggest that it can be applied in contexts other than bereavement, that one can move back and forth between stages, and that it should not be rigidly applied (Currer, 2009), however I contend that it does not sufficiently attend to diverse experiences, structural factors or the meanings attached to loss; instead it conceptualises grief in functionalist terms as only a problem to be overcome.

Critics of the Kübler-Ross model have instead looked to a 'continuing bonds' perspective to comprehend loss – first in the bereavement literature and latterly in relation to organisational loss (Bell and Taylor, 2011). Bell and Taylor are critical of organisational literature that largely continues to draw on stage models of grief to understand closure. These are assumed to be 'comforting' theories, easily remembered and reproduced, and – as discussed above – in line with a literature base that is overwhelmingly managerialist (p.5). A continuing bonds paradigm considers the ways in which relationships are maintained beyond death, for instance, through 'sensing the presence of the deceased, and behaving in ways that take their presence into account' (ibid:4-5). It disrupts the idea that there are neat distinctions between before/after loss, and instead looks to the relatedness between past, present and future. This reflects the nature of organisational change which is

'continuous rather than linear and episodic' (Bell and Taylor, 2011:6; Wolfram Cox, 1997). Other benefits of such a perspective include: the emphasis on organisational death as a socially constructed process – in which expectations and responses are individually and collectively mediated; the role of memory in individual and collective meaning-making and future imaginaries; exploration of the potential variety of responses to loss, including representation of marginalised voices; and, importantly, emphasising loss and grief as a process of meaning-making, rather than as a problem to be solved.

While the theorisation of continuing bonds points to the ways in which organisational loss might be engaged with from a critical perspective, I have also taken influence from theories of loss that, drawing on and extending the work of Freud's '*Mourning and Melancholia*', look to the structural and relational ways in which loss is shaped and granted legitimacy (or not) (Butler, 2003; Eng and Kazanjian, 2003). Butler writes that loss is shaped by 'social, political and aesthetic relations' and that such a perspective guards from confining loss to the 'purely psychological' realm (p.467). Loss, in this frame, is understood as something that is shaped in relation to others. In a collection titled '*Loss: the politics of mourning*', Eng, Kazanjian and Butler speak of the catastrophic losses that come with such things as forced displacement, war, genocide, and entrenched inequality. Of course, organisational loss is not these things. However, if we contend that theories of loss might have significance for understandings of organisational (and more ambiguous) loss - which (as described above) are felt viscerally - then an explorative approach to more radical theories of loss is a warranted tangent.

Melancholia was understood by Freud as a ‘mourning without end’, in which the person grieving was unable to resolve or move on from their grief (Eng and Kazanjian, 2003:3). However, in their re-evaluation of this process, Eng and Kazanjian contend that:

...melancholia’s persistent struggle with its lost objects [is] not simply a “grasping” and “holding” on to a fixed notion of the past but rather a continuous engagement with loss and its remains. This engagement generates sites for memory and history, for the rewriting of the past as well as the reimagining of the future. While mourning abandons lost objects by laying their histories to rest, melancholia’s continued and open relation to the past finally allows us to gain new perspectives on and new understandings of lost objects. (2003:4)

In this sense, loss does not only hold a negative value, but also has productive potential. For me, it allows one to hope (Eng and Kazanjian’s ‘reimagine’ in the above extract) *through* loss. Given the extent of my own emotional engagement in the field, described in chapter 3 (section 8), this was for me a pertinent and welcome discovery. I wrote in my research diary, in 2016 and while my PhD studies were suspended, that perhaps I had found a theoretical lens that would allow ‘*something good to come from the bad*’. It enabled a re-engagement with the thesis, as I had the sense that I could capture the ‘enigmatic trace’ of loss, and that this could be ‘an animating absence in the presence’ (Butler, 2003:468).

It is important to state the limitations of this, this sense perhaps reproduced and perpetuated the disappointment that I had not been able to ‘save’ MFSP from closure, described in chapter 3 (section 8.2). Perhaps I had confused the potential of melancholia with a conservative nostalgia; critiqued for constructing a romanticised

vision of the past which while comforting to the individual, is resistant to trying or contemplating new ways (Donehower, 2009). Instead, an engagement with the past should allow us to think about future imaginaries; in this instance, how might we organise to support the (liveable) lives of refugee, asylum seeking and migrant families?

In summary, analysis of organisational closure through the frame of loss has three potential benefits. These include: a reflexive engagement with the analysis of an intimate-insider project and researcher subjectivity; an attention to the affective nature of organisational change at the individual and collective level, and an appreciation of how this is situated in the broader social, political, economic and relational context; and to think about how the future might be produced and shaped through a (melancholic) engagement with the past.

Section two

I now turn to explore the experience of organisational loss in a third-sector organisation that supported refugee, asylum seeking and migrant families. The structure of the analysis is similar to that which is described in the review of the literature in section 4.2.3, as such, I start with an exploration of the structural context that contributed to the closure of the organisation.

4.3 Structural context of organisational loss

We had this report that absolutely proved that we saved the local authority millions – you know a lot of money, so for every pound that they spent, we generated like [tails off] ... And you just couldn't believe that they could say: 'there's no money'. (Linda)

In an interdisciplinary article that explores the potential through lines between death studies and organisational studies, Walter (2014:74) asks: 'in what circumstances might employees assume that their organisation is immortal?' This is a pertinent question in the context of the closure of a voluntary sector organisation that was understood by those who worked within it as providing a vital service to support increasing numbers of newly-arrived migrant families in the city of Manchester. It is also pertinent in the context of a voluntary organisation that worked in *bona fide* (if suppliant) partnership with its main funder: the local authority. The closure of a service that was seen to be doing the right thing(s) – for both service users and commissioners – presented something like the 'existential crisis' of which Colley (2012) warned. In this section, I explore the structural context within which MFSP was situated. I illustrate its beginnings, under New Labour's

vision of partnership working between the state and voluntary sector and consider how this – through the emphasis on service delivery - is implicated in its ending. I look to the latter years of its existence, at changing commissioning practices and the effects of ‘austerity localism’ (Featherstone et al., 2012), and to the broader socio-political context: the election of the Coalition government and a period in which UKIP³⁷ made ideological gains and an explicitly hostile and anti-migrant environment was (and remains) pervasive.

4.3.1 Starting up: partnership and moving with the times

The beginnings of MFSP are positioned between two New Labour policies. On the one hand it was funded by a Labour initiative, the ‘Children’s Fund’, described in section 4.2.2, which sought to disperse funds to alleviate poverty and disadvantage and build strong communities through local partnerships of voluntary and statutory agencies (Ofsted, 2003). Paradoxically, MFSP was conceived and necessary because of the dispersal policy (IAA 1999), which fractured asylum seekers and refugees from their support networks in London and the South East (Zetter and Griffiths, 2005), caused isolation and social exclusion and positioned asylum seekers as undeserving (Sales, 2002), and which had consequences for local social cohesion (Phillimore and Goodson, 2005). Recalling this policy context in functionalist terms, a manager noted that MFSP was needed because the local authority has recognised:

³⁷ The UK Independence Party is a right-wing populist party that campaigns on an anti-European Union and anti-migrant platform. They made significant electoral gains at local, European and national level in the years 2013-2015, leading to an in/out EU referendum in 2016. The UK electorate marginally voted to leave the European Union.

...that all these families were being dispersed to Manchester and there was nobody actually there doing the outreach or picking them up.... the Home Office paperwork was coming and coming and coming, and we had all these hundreds of children who were supposed to live in the city, but nobody knocked on any doors... we went and knocked on doors to find out who was really there... (Linda)

Accordingly, MFSP was established through a joint proposal between the local authority and a BME children's charity in the city. It sat comfortably and competently within a service delivery model through a 'top-down' establishment that meant it was always a formalised service (rather than the 'becoming-formal' of many RCO's, discussed in section 4.2.2), and did not occupy a significantly oppositional position vis-à-vis government policy³⁸. In a national evaluation of the Children's Fund (Edwards et al., 2006), MFSP was recognised as a success story, commended for: its holistic approach to family support; challenging barriers to social inclusion through awareness-raising activities and membership of strategic forums; responsiveness to individual need; and the quality of relationships between support workers and families.

The statutory-voluntary partnership was constituted by a shared overarching goal: to ensure newly-arrived migrant children had appropriate school places, and with the understanding that this was achieved through whole-family holistic support to enable access to education, healthcare and welfare in Manchester. Additionally, this collaborative partnership (Cunningham and James, 2014) consisted of: a manager in a boundary-straddling position between the local authority and MFSP, staff

³⁸ MFSP was not however funded by the Home Office, the source of much controversy for some refugee organisations (McGhee et al., 2016).

secondments between the two teams, regular meetings and cross-networking, and comprehensive monitoring and evaluation that provided evidence for the effectiveness of the service. This is a pertinent case study of a period in which the government ‘hyperactively’ sought to bring the voluntary sector into the mainstream of welfare provision (Kendall, 2009), and which embodied a purchaser-provider relationship ‘marked by a substantial degree of mutuality... high levels of trust, and which accord a priority to quality (rather than just cost) issues’ (Cunningham and James, 2014:4). Accordingly, and as we will see below – for some at MFSP, the local authority was their preferred ally.

The first charity that MFSP was situated within (2002-2004) positioned itself in explicitly political terms (Mayblin and Soteri-Proctor, 2011). It established services for black and minority ethnic children and families, spoke from a specifically anti-racist and politically-black platform, and raised money from diverse non-governmental funds. One manager, Dee, that had worked for this charity in these early days on other projects and with MFSP recalled that they were much more constrained in the work that they could do with MFSP because it was government-funded and ‘*had set parameters and a specific task to do.*’

Following inter-organisational tensions, MFSP sought a new home after two years. Linda recalled that she had ‘*desperately wanted the local authority to take on the staff*’, alluding to the alignment that MFSP had *within* the state, much less so against it (Milbourne and Cushman, 2014). This was perceived as a more progressive approach to meeting social need; indeed, it was Linda’s belief that the first organisation had closed because of its ‘race’ focus and because ‘*it hadn’t moved with*

the times.' A second charity however took over the service, and though this organisation had activist beginnings, it was more aligned with a commissioning and service-provider model, specifically focusing on healthcare interventions with BME communities. MFSP and the second charity had an ambivalent relationship. MFSP was one of the highest value services that the broader organisation held, however there was not always strategic unity between the two entities. Linda noted her sometimes frustration with the board who didn't always understand the newly-arrived migrant communities with which MFSP worked. She recalled, for instance, that '*they didn't identify Roma as being a marginalised community*', and '*felt it wasn't for them.*' Housed in separate offices, MFSP retained a distinctive identity – and autonomy – for much of its life.

In 2011 however, following the election of the coalition government and the 2010 comprehensive spending review, the charity sought to consolidate its expenditure to weather the effects of austerity. MFSP was brought under one roof alongside the charity's other projects and its core functions. While the overarching charity was occupied with a major rebranding and restructuring programme that ensured its sustainability, it was in these offices – the aesthetics of which I return to below – that the demise of MFSP became much starker.

4.3.2 Running into the ground: austere relationships and the undeserving

Commissioners were brought in from private companies, from British Gas, from E.ON, from banks. But you cannot sell families, you cannot sell children's lives. I believe one hundred percent there were other areas they could have cut. But instead they took a massive cut from children's services and from vulnerable adults as well. (AI)

This section attends to the way in which depreciating funding, changing relationships and expectations between MFSP and its funder, and the heightening hostility towards migrants coalesced in the closure of MFSP.

When the Children's Fund ended, MFSP secured continued funding through the local authority, however this marked the start of funding insecurity. Kirsty noted:

For a number of years – before the final nail was in the coffin – we've been fighting for funding... for the entirety of the time that I was manager, so I was manager for five years. At the point that I took over the management we had to fight for funding then, we secured two years funding. And then it was always the same thing again and it was always a reduction in funding, so you're constantly having to streamline your services, adapt, look for other sources of funding... (Kirsty)

MFSP looked to other sources of funding beyond the local authority, many of which ensured a tangential (and brief) legacy through Roma-specific support services³⁹.

Though short-lived, the biggest injection of funds came in 2009/10, with the establishment of Labour's 'Migration Impact Fund' (MIF)⁴⁰. Raised through increased levies on non-EU migrants, and which sought to 'ease tension' in locales that had experienced high levels of migration (Wintour, 2010), the framing of MIF was indicative of the souring migration rhetoric (in which migrants are constructed as burdens) in this period⁴¹.

³⁹ Similarly, Guma (2015) found in his study of Czech and Slovak migrants in Glasgow that services and initiatives increasingly directed their attention towards 'the Roma'. This is highlighted as emblematic of a European wide move to single out the Roma community for explicit measures and a targeted approach to 'fight against poverty and exclusion' (European Commission, 2011:4).

⁴⁰ Shortly after coming to office the Coalition government axed the MIF, though increased visa levies remained in place.

⁴¹ The scrapping of the fund and increased focus on immigration enforcement and compliance are, of course, more problematic than MIF – though this should not prohibit it from critique.

The insecurity of the last two years of MFSP were marked by changing relationships with the commissioning team. As Cunningham and James (2014) noted, austerity – and the imperative on the local authority to make funding cuts – brought with it changed commissioning practices. Where there had once been a close relationship with commissioners, who had been involved since the Children’s Fund partnership, institutional pressures had accelerated NPM trends, and – following the hiring of commercial sector staff in the local authority to facilitate lower-cost change – interpersonal relationships with the commissioning team diminished.

Insecure funding was accompanied by changing contracts and service level agreements (SLA) which were impossible to meet, or certainly impossible in ways that felt congruent with the previous work of the project. A letter from the local authority notifying MFSP of a 25% funding cut in 2012 indicated that there would likely be more as they were facing ‘*significant financial challenges*’ due to the need ‘*to make £110million of savings last year along with savings this current financial year*’. Following a new SLA in 2012, MFSP were forced to alter the thresholds for service provision, and work with families for a time limited period only – changing from an unrestricted time period to four weeks (and twelve weeks in exceptional circumstances, which were to be agreed beforehand by a manager within the local authority commissioning team). In bold typeface, the SLA emphasised that:

Families who have other sources of support from e.g. their own families, statutory sector, other third sector organizations, employers of academic institutions will not be eligible for support from MFSP. (Bold in original)

This seemed to prohibit many, if not most, from service provision, and in March 2013, after twelve years, the funding from the local authority ceased. In the next section I report on the ways in which MFSP and the overarching charity responded to this.

In a study of the ASR third sector, Terry (2017) found that organisations had to maintain a 'low profile' due to the politicised nature of the work and a climate of hostility toward the client group. This was seen to have everyday impacts – through the racist utterances of the boiler man, for instance. On a broader scale, it also had funding implications, as individual donations towards case study organisations were an unviable source of funding, and organisations faced increased hostility from funders who responded unsympathetically to ASR needs and positioned some migrants as undeserving.

For MFSP, new commissioning processes and an increased 'arms-length' (Cunningham and James, 2014) relationship between the organisation and the local authority, also brought with it a sense of rising hostility. It was widely reported within MFSP that a new commissioner had stated that surely Pakistani families did not need a support service - because there was a large existing Pakistani community in Manchester on which they could draw. This signalled the disavowal of need for a key demographic that MFSP supported. Families from Pakistan were consistently one of the highest service user groups throughout the life of MFSP. A defensive retort to this can be seen in a monitoring document in late-2012 following the revised SLA:

Pakistan is consistently the top country of origin for families settling in Manchester, and despite Manchester having a large South Asian community; many families from Pakistan feel socially, economically and linguistically isolated. A significant number of asylum seeking families flee from Pakistan due to political violence. Within MFSP, we have observed that many families seeking asylum from Pakistan may be single parents (typically lone mothers) and as such the isolation highlighted previously can be more acute. (Internal monitoring report, Oct 2012)

I will return to this sense of fighting an unpopular (and losing) battle in the next section.

To summarise, I have sought in these two sections to indicate the ways in which organisational loss was situated within a structural context. The loss of MFSP was not only about austerity and funding cuts. While these were the fatal blow, it was also the history of the organisation: its beginnings emblematic of New Labour values - multiculturalism, community cohesion, partnership working – that contributed to its limited success navigating a new austere and hostile context. The reliance of MFSP on the local authority as its main funder and simultaneous macro-level devaluing of the formalised voluntary sector (in favour of the ‘Big Society’ and volunteer-led public services); commissioning processes that turned to cost-saving over collaboration; and general and localised hostility toward migrants coalesced to spell the closure of MFSP. In the next section I look to the ways in which MFSP sought to overcome these obstacles and prevent the closure of the organisation, and the impact of this on employees.

4.4 From change to loss: the sense of an ending

Though this section focuses largely on the final ten months of MFSP's life, it is necessary to start by noting that a sense of loss – through the worsening broader context – was tangible long before this time. Asked about whether MFSP could have done anything differently in hindsight, Kirsty noted that the loss of the organisation was not a swift one and emphasised the organisation's resilience in the face of a continuing assault:

I think we did well to hang on for as long as we did... because when you think, I remember getting a phone call in 2009, and the person on the phone, a council officer, said 'I'm just letting you know that you've got three months' notice' and I was like 'what, what are you talking about?!' because I just started crying on the phone. And that was when it really started, and when you think that that was 2009, the project's kind of officially ended 2013 – you know that's a long slog really, it was a war all that time! (Kirsty)

At a ten-year celebration of the service in 2012, an accompanying report stated that:

The economic climate in which we operate is unsympathetic to rising levels of poverty. The onset of austerity measures has affected the level of funding for the project. However MFSP remains unrelenting in the level of passion it has for improving the lives of children and families in Manchester... The commitment to equality has driven MFSP forward for a decade and will continue to be the driving force in the foreseeable future.

The report – which contained the success stories of several families with which MFSP had worked at its inception – was a bid for recognition of the service.

Management hoped that commissioners would come so that they could hear first-hand the benefits of the service. This report and the event drew on an emotive narrative of MFSP's history to persuade stakeholders of their centrality in

‘improving the lives’ of those impoverished by austerity. This was one of the only public facing initiatives from MFSP that challenged head-on the effects of austerity and their reduced funding. There was disappointment that this event - and by extension, their work - was not acknowledged:

...we had that big celebration and produced that amazing report, it's such a lovely report... I think there was one person from the commissioning team who came to that celebration, he wasn't even... he wasn't high up enough. None of the commissioners came. (Kirsty)

In the next two sub-sections I chart the ways in which MFSP moved on to respond to further funding cuts and the new reality of a depreciating partnership, and secondly, how organisational change and loss were narrated. Consequently, I address what MFSP *did* in response to austerity, how it was *felt* and what *meanings* were attributed to it.

4.4.1 Resisting loss: in and against neoliberalism

In the wake of funding loss, the key action taken by the organisation to sustain its future was via fundraising activities. To enable this, the board of the charity agreed to release funding to MFSP from organisational reserves. This was a reprieve from closure - in his experimentation with organisational death metaphor, Walter (2014) might have termed it a stay of execution. This decisive action enabled a skeleton-service to remain in place, though with significant limitations. Family support workers were prohibited from working with families for the most part (discussed

further in section 4.6) – barring exclusions for time-limited work commissioned through local schools and the Roma support services⁴².

Following the withdrawal of local authority funding, staff were consulted as to how they would prefer to proceed; via a redundancy process or through reduced hours across the team. Perhaps prompted by a continued (though waning) hopefulness, employees agreed to reduce their hours, in the anticipation that a functioning service could be rebuilt once a sustainable income was renewed. The management hoped that the local authority would soon see the error of their ways due to the continuing support needs of the client base. Passive hope was supplemented by active means, as the submission of an application to the Big Lottery was the key action upon which success hinged. This was an intensive period of bid-writing for management, with a group email in July 2013 imploring the staff team to *'keep fingers crossed'* for six funding bids that had been submitted. A manager reflected on the affective nature of dedicating her time – beyond contracted hours – to writing funding bids:

...applying for funding is a real skill and takes so much time. And that was a massive burden, and for me, I felt that really personally, cos I felt that all the burden was on me. And I think that was really difficult because you'd be thinking about the thousands of families that we'd work with, because we would work with about a thousand families a year, you'd think about the staff, that could potentially lose their jobs, you're thinking about your own security, and it was just... it was so much pressure. And you'd constantly have people saying: 'why don't you look at funding here and here'... and... you've only got so much time. (Kirsty)

⁴² Funded variously through grant-giving charitable organisations and a city council equalities fund.

As well as funding applications, the measures taken to sustain the organisation and resist closure were manifold. Operating across a number of different and competing institutional logics (Bertels and Lawrence, 2016), these measures tentatively spanned a continuum between ‘insider tactics’ (Milbourne and Cushman, 2014) and resistant, oppositional tactics. Insider tactics are those that can be seen to be compatible with the prescriptions of a pervasive NPM culture. At MFSP these included: producing persuasive monitoring and evaluation reports, cost-benefit analyses, and enterprising activities. Oppositional tactics – riskier to implement - could include: seeking external support and promoting the organisation’s cause through counsellors and local politicians, visible protests and demonstrations, press releases, etc. In this section I explore the tensions inherent in navigating this terrain – a time in which staff were often reminded that it was ‘*political*’ and as such it was necessary to tread carefully.

The following vignette, drawing on my own experience, illustrates the way in which the support workers were involved in the project of enterprise (McGovern, 2016; Emejulu and Bassel, 2013) and diversification of funds following the cessation of family support work:

We’ve come in to an email from management with a table of tasks for each of us to complete in the week. We don’t normally need managing in this way – we’re able to be fairly independent in planning our workload, but that was when we knew our role. Now it feels like we’re all flailing a bit. My tasks include speaking to all the staff about the families that have continuing support needs, so that we can hand a list over to the education department, who will – apparently - assess each case and continue support where appropriate. I’m dubious about whether they will take on the mantle – and so is

everyone else - but at least this is a task that I can comprehend. When I do this, I find myself writing persuasive notes for each family on the list, trying to convince whoever is reading it that these families shouldn't be forgotten. Later I turn to the next task assigned to me. I am to draft a letter to 'wealthy philanthropists' to ask for financial support. I have no idea where to start, and I don't want to disturb the manager from working on funding applications. I google 'approaching philanthropists for funding' and come across a lot of advice that doesn't make a lot of sense to me. The only fundraising I've ever done is a sponsored run! It doesn't appear from the search that you simply write a letter to your chosen philanthropist. Who would I ask? We talk in the office about Mo Farah and a local second-generation migrant businessman who owns a large seafood company... That's as far as I ever get with this task. While it has kept me occupied, I don't feel like I've done anything useful and I feel completely out of my depth.

Others were assigned the task of market-research: gathering information about schools and other services in Manchester that might be appropriate to visit to pitch and sell services, and to look for potential funding opportunities that could be passed on to management.

In the context of organisational change within the third sector, in which workers are allotted tasks much different to those for which they were employed, the lack of opportunity for training and development becomes pertinent. This is an issue that the literature review determined has been observed in other studies of organisations under austerity, with Colley (2012) highlighting that stakes are introduced in such times which are more interested in the quantity of work undertaken, rather than its quality. However, in this case, the training needed was not to undertake more competently and expertly (or expediently) the role for which workers were already trained but related to an entirely different field of specialism. The imbrication of a

marketing and fundraising role for staff, alongside the loss of the family contact and support role, meant a kind of alienation⁴³ from the work undertaken in this period (Musto, 2010), and the emergence of a professional identity conflict (to which I return in section 4.6).

As well as marketing the family support work – which had limited success in a couple of schools who ‘purchased’ support for newly-arrived children for whom they might be concerned – MFSP had previously established a commercial interpreting service. While there were arguably marketable services within MFSP, and a nascent customer base – largely from the local voluntary and public sector - the income from innovation activities (Chew and Lyon, 2012) represented marginal gains in the broader context. As Dart (2004) indicated in a study of a Canadian non-profit organisation, the implementation of business-like goals in the voluntary sector is most often articulated as a necessity in the face of resource scarcity following government funding cuts. While business approaches are generally justified for their potential to maintain the core mission of a voluntary organisation, there are limitations of the extent to which commercial means can meet the long-term goals of voluntary sector organisations (Dart, 2004; Eikenberry and Drapal Kluver, 2004). Management also spoke of the ways in which they resisted the funding cuts and prospect of closure through means that were viewed as more oppositional.

Approaching local councillors for support and to alert them to MFSP’s plight was,

⁴³ Alienation, in Marxist terms, is to feel as if an instrument in the capitalist mode of production, and in which the worker may feel separate from their working activity – as if their labour does not belong to them (Musto, 2010).

Linda reported, seen as causing ‘*conflict*’ and ‘*trouble*’ for the local authority. The partnership that MFSP had enjoyed with the local authority became not only arms-length (Cunningham and James, 2014), but a barrier to expressing their independent interests or critical voice (Hemmings, 2017). As such, though management took steps to challenge the removal of funding in ways that could be seen to be more ‘dissenting’ (Waterhouse and Scott, 2013), they were made to retreat from such action. MFSP’s public face was mindful of the potentially deleterious effect of oppositional activity on a partnership which they wanted to maintain, as such they refrained from further such activity. However, in section 4.4.2 it will be apparent that in the backstage – to borrow a phrase from Goffman (1959) – resistance and opposition remained seductive, if out-of-reach.

To return then briefly, to a final ‘insider’ tactic, it is necessary to be reminded of the start of section two of this chapter, which began with a quote from Linda, in which she references a report that ‘*absolutely proved*’ how much MFSP saved the local authority through its early-interventionist approach to supporting migrant families. This report was a key symbol in a narrative which proposed that since MFSP had played by the logics of the local authority and was financially effective, that it was wrong – on a business level - to defund the organisation. Kirsty reiterated this point:

One of the things that really pissed me off about the whole thing, is that we paid a lot of money to have a report done... that showed the local authority that we make... I can’t remember the exact figures... but we basically bring in around one million pounds into the city of Manchester, and with that in mind we were still cut. (Kirsty)

It was at this point that, as Kirsty noted, the battle seemed lost, as calls for recognition – first through emotive means in the 10-year celebratory report, and then through cost-benefit analyses - *‘fell on deaf ears’*. At this juncture, Linda similarly lost faith that the future of the organisation could be secured, and she recalled that she realised: *‘there’s no point in trying to hang on to something there’s no way we can hang on to.’*

The period of reprieve came to a long-drawn-out conclusion in December 2013, almost ten months after the funding cut from the local authority. Following notification in November of the unsuccessful second-round bid to the Big Lottery, the charity’s board decided to cease funding MFSP from reserves, and final redundancy notices were issued to most (with a minority staying to work at the wider charity on projects related to Roma-only provision). While this section has focused on the governance and management responses to prospective and actual organisational loss, the next section sketches some of the ways in which the loss of the organisation was felt and narrated at both a management and family support worker level.

4.4.2 Organisational loss: a structure of feeling

Analysing the ways in which the frontline staff and management responded to the structural context and to the actions of the organisation in a period of change necessitates attention to the affective nature of loss. Here I highlight three key interrelated themes that relate to the emotional ties that staff had with the organisation and with one another. These are: the confluence of an ethics of care, emotional labour, and the apportioning of blame that circulated within the

organisation in response to crisis; the ways in which individual and collective values converged, or were in tension with, the organisation and the broader context; and the ways in which participant narratives of the organisation and the wider socio-political context of the early-millennium are imbued with nostalgic memory, and the implications of this for participants' future imaginaries.

Firstly, it is important to emphasise the strength of care that was narrated by participants when reflecting on the closure of MFSP. This care was extended towards one another, the organisation more generally, and the families it served (the latter of which is discussed further in section 4.6). This is reflective of the close relationships and friendships that had been established over the years. For instance, a frontline worker who had been with MFSP from its inception, reflected on whether or not MFSP could have done anything else to secure their future:

The only thing to be critical about... everything was left to Kirsty, and that has put her under a lot of anxiety. She put in so much effort, so much time, so much love... She did so much to keep MFSP alive. She was very stressed and loved so much MFSP and thinking about everyone. She took on everyone's anxieties. (Ibrahim)

This finding is much stronger through analysis of participant interviews, rather than through ethnographic observation during the period of crisis itself. This may be due to the nature of the depreciating work conditions, whereby part-time working hours (staff hours ranged between 3.5 hours and 14 hours per week in this period) meant that there were few instances of staff coming together in the period of most intense decline. As noted earlier, I found myself increasingly observing an empty office during the final months of the organisation. This is mirrored by an email from

management which remarked that the staff team were like *'ships in the night'*.

However, even within these emails a sense of care and understanding of the difficulty of the period is extended to the staff, as, for instance, Kirsty acknowledged that *'things are feeling very disjointed at the moment and its tough on a day to day basis to not see each other.'*

The observation of reciprocal care between management and staff is unique within studies of organisational loss. In the studies of Pini et al. (2010), McDonald et al. (2012), and Bell (2012) the overwhelming sense is of conflict and discordance between management and service/frontline workers in the process of organisational change and eventual loss. This suggests that there may be something particular about the experience of organisational loss in the third sector. Accompanying the emails (depicted above), and many interactions within the office in that period, was the invocation to *'think positive'*. This can be understood through the concept of 'emotion management' (Hochschild, 1979), in that it served to motivate staff and promote the functioning of the organisation despite the threat of closure. Feelings of positivity are rarely associated with loss, and as such to evoke feelings of positivity was laborious; suggesting the relevance of the concept of emotional labour. Eschenfelder (2012:174) notes that this is a particular facet of work in the non-profit sector, in which:

...emotional labor involves the efforts of workers to understand others, have empathy with their situation, and internalize their feelings... Such behaviors are demonstrative of the ethic of care many expect from nonprofit workers. Beyond their impact on worker performance, emotions and

emotional labor are equally important for worker identity, work relationships, and overall job satisfaction.

However, the imperative to think positively was not only an edict from above to frontline workers, but something that circulated among the office at all employment levels. Cards on the noticeboard in the office from ex-staff, students and volunteers implored the same to the remaining staff team: '*Think positive!*' Though there may be elements of truth in Walter's (2014:70) supposition that workers may cooperate in times of impending organisational closure 'to make the death as peaceful as possible', in this case I argue that it was also a shorthand for hopefulness in the face of adverse conditions. This was a relational process, in which individuals – believing in the value of the organisation and in one another – performatively enacted positivity with a view that the organisation might yet return to its mission of supporting migrant families in Manchester to be able to live 'liveable lives' (Butler, 2012). The nature of this emotional attachment and emotional labour in the voluntary sector, in which people often (and certainly in this case) are passionate about particular social causes is one that has further relevance in the relationships between frontline workers and service users (Eschenfelder, 2012) – and this is discussed further in section 4.6.

Accordingly, blame was not directed toward the immediate line management within MFSP for its downfall. Instead, as Ibrahim's above quote illustrated, there was sincere empathy for their position. Celina, another family support worker similarly emphasised the continued support of her line manager at critical junctures despite the increasingly infrequent contact. An extract from my interview with Celina in

which she spoke about a (necessarily confidential) distressing turn of events for one family whom she had previously supported illustrated this:

Lucy: That must have been so hard hearing what happened...

Celina: Uh-huh.

Lucy: Did you get support at the time? Was a manager still there?

Celina: Yeah... Kirsty was very supportive and everything. You know Kirsty, she would ask me like do you want the rest of the day off? Yeah it was perfect.

While we can see in the extract below that Celina does highlight the precise difficulties of organisational decline on her practice, this is framed as a consequence of the broader economic context '*the complete lack of money*' – not as a result of management decisions:

... then we've been decommissioned and that was obviously very bad, because everyone was worried. And then actually, when people stopped working and the office – you'd just come to the office and there's nobody there, that was really bad too. And then on top of it, management left... and then it was like... there's nobody... to get any support from. You just have to count on yourself... It's all different when you're sitting on your own, you have to figure out some issues for yourself, rather than sharing it with other people who might be much more experienced than you. It's hard... (Celina)

It was roundly acknowledged that MFSP's immediate management had '*done everything*' (Celina), but that '*it still didn't work*' (Ibrahim). Instead, blame (in multiple and contradictory ways) was apportioned higher up: to the overarching charity, to the local authority, and to the government (and most specifically to the

Conservatives, the refrain '*blame the Tories*' was often said to lighten the atmosphere in the office during this period.)

Some sentiment of blame was directed toward the overarching charity for the apparent lack of support toward MFSP, with Al reiterating the distinctiveness of the two entities and that '*we were left to deal with things ourselves*', and arguing more challenge was needed from the directors of the charity to the local authority.

Similarly, Ibrahim, while he noted that personally he had been well supported through the process of redundancy, felt that the charity could have done more to secure the future of MFSP:

...if I had been the chief executive... I would be regularly applying and having a team looking for funding, I would be going to central government and explaining the importance of the project, I would be lobbying for MFSP. (Ibrahim)

This was an ambivalent location for blame however, with Kirsty noting the strengths of governance structures that offered an '*amazing finance team*' and '*a great communications team*.' Both Kirsty and Linda spoke of the '*outstanding*' support of one board member, who had been involved in the setting up of MFSP. Otherwise however it was conceded – and as described earlier by Linda – that MFSP was left largely to their own devices.

Looking to the local authority to assign blame, Al emphasised the distance between council leaders and the '*real lives*' of people who lived in Manchester. He passionately underscored the inequality and injustice that he saw between those 'at the top' and those who benefited from the services that were cut:

I think maybe a lot of politicians have not seen – they are far away from real life, from the real situation... Richard Leese [leader of Manchester City Council], he earns a lot, they all earn a lot... but people who run Manchester they don't care anyway about Manchester... if they felt Mancunian then they would always fight to improve the lives of people who live in Manchester... I think the decisions made were more political. And I think they were careless. They cared, less. They didn't care enough about Manchester, they care more about what is happening in politics... But you cannot sell families, you cannot sell children's lives. I believe 100% there were other areas they could have cut. But instead they took a massive cut from children's services and from vulnerable adults as well. (Al)

However, there was also sympathy with the local authority position expressed by participants, especially from those in management positions. Linda noted that despite the cuts the city '*provides over and above what it has to provide, a lot over and above*', and she recognised that the city was in an era now where it simply couldn't afford to maintain MFSP which was understood as a '*Rolls Royce service*'⁴⁴. Despite a generalised sense of disbelief and anguish at the fate of MFSP, Kirsty reiterated that this was not a zero-sum game in which MFSP lost out and the local authority gained:

You know the people who... the council officers that we were involved with, we ended up having quite good relationships with them. You know you asked about blame before... but there was always, it always felt like there was a sadness in the local authority, like they weren't happy about what was going on either. (Kirsty)

However, the one place at which blame was squarely and unequivocally located was with the Conservative government (despite this period being under the coalition

⁴⁴ Ironic, given the closure of Rolls Royce factories, and the work of Bell (2012) describing such industry losses earlier.

government, there was no mention of the Liberal Democrats). Ibrahim, for instance, emphasised the detriment of a Conservative ideology to poor and migrant communities:

They only looked on the side of austerity, about how to reduce expenses, they only think about the money side... Deeply we don't know if it [austerity] is true. The only person who 'knows' is the exchequer. We just accept it. Labour could find the money... Conservatives have a paranoia that money is being wasted in wrong place, wrong people, wrong community and any project they don't understand they just cut. (Ibrahim)

Similarly, Linda felt that the Conservative government were interested in implementing policies that promoted '*the survival of the fittest*' and that subsequently it would be the '*the bottom of the pile that will fail*'. Noting the affective nature of austerity (as opposed to its material impact, discussed further in section 4.5), Kirsty reflected on how she felt towards the government:

I think austerity has more impacted on your way of thinking and your perception of society and your emotions around society and your emotions around your government. So I think it has probably made me a more bitter and angry person... It affected my ideals and my morals. (Kirsty)

The examples shown here indicate the limited success of what has been termed 'austerity localism' (Featherstone et al., 2012). Though participants expressed disappointment with the local authority and argued that cuts should have been less severe or made to other areas, they also had sympathy with the scale of the cuts that they had to implement following a reduced budget from central government. Accordingly, where participants were asked about who or what they blamed, they looked to the broader political context and drew on the perceived harms of a

Conservative ideology toward migrants and poor communities. Attributing blame to the ‘*Tories*’ enabled the locus of anger and negative emotion to be directed outside of the organisation, and as such an ethics of care prevailed within MFSP and, to some degree, with local authority stakeholders.

The presence of values in the third sector, while causing much debate as to whether or not they are more present than in other sectors, are argued by Baines (2011) to have particular dynamics in relation to practices of resistance. The values held by the workers within MFSP could be broadly categorised as social justice oriented, pro-migrant and anti-poverty. These were in tension with the broader context: and consequently they are implicated in both challenging and reproducing neoliberal subjectivities. For instance, having asked participants what people could learn from MFSP, Al responded:

It’s important for people to know that MFSP didn’t have - it had no borders. The project was white, black, yellow, green, red whatever, it didn’t have anything... and MFSP fought poverty. (Al)

Though MFSP can be seen to have distanced itself from a more radical reading of ‘race’ and inequality (see section 4.3.1), it was unique in its remit of working with refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants regardless of their legal status or country of origin (two ways in which migrant and refugee support are often organised). In this extract, Al celebrates this universalism, and positions the organisation as ‘fighting’ against poverty caused by welfare injustice (the metaphors of *battling*, *fighting* and *war* are prevalent throughout participant accounts.)

However, the same values invoked in the metaphor of ‘fighting’ for migrant’s rights, were also implicated in the restraint shown by the organisation toward public campaigning following funding cuts. Participants spoke of how in different circumstances they might have been more confrontational, however the strength of anti-migrant sentiment meant that this was not a viable or responsible option to secure the future of the organisation. Kirsty highlighted how modes of campaigning had to take into account the danger posed to migrant families by being visible:

...you’re working with a service user group who don’t have a voice. Don’t have much of a voice. And we were always very careful in how we’d maybe ask families to fight for us, so we’d direct families maybe to their MP’s, but we wouldn’t actively encourage getting out on the street and rioting! Like we would always joke about how we were going to chain ourselves to the town hall... we used to laugh about it and I think that was more of a defence mechanism and a coping mechanism. And as members of staff you are in a position of power, you have some influence, but families don’t have any influence really whatsoever and that’s what makes me... for newly arrived families it felt like it was such an easy target to get rid of because they don’t have a voice. (Kirsty)

Moreover, this account suggests that the anti-migrant sentiment was capitalised on by those making funding cuts, because of the disenfranchised nature of the client group and the view that the loss of such an organisation was unlikely to cause much public dissent. Celina similarly noted the difficulties of publicly campaigning on migrant issues, and she compared this to her experience of the domestic abuse sector, which – she felt – had more opportunity to organise public demonstrations because:

Obviously, no-one will criticise them because they are domestic violence, and you know, with domestic violence people have lots of compassion. (Celina)

These examples show the ways in which organisational and individual values were severely at odds with the pervasive anti-migrant context, and that this same context deterred the organisation from taking public action to publicise their plight.

Some participants also inadvertently reproduced rhetoric that contributes to the othering of migrants, although this was narrated in ways that sought to emphasise the value of the organisation. For instance, one participant stated that the loss of MFSP may be felt in the short and long term when:

Children could get into crimes, are not going to school, we see radicalisation... and these things will cost more than just funding MFSP.

Some invoked the prosocial and multicultural workspace as a '*case study of... how you wanted the city or the country or the world to be*' while, as above, also commenting on the potential for the work of organisations like MFSP to prevent radicalisation and terrorism. Invoking the 'figure of the migrant [who] has come to be seen as a potential terrorist' (Nail, 2016:158), these narratives sit somewhat at odds with the pro-migrant and 'no borders' vision espoused earlier. However, these were used in ways that sought to warn of the potentially harmful implications of losing MFSP in a broader context (an idea to which I return, below). These sentiments might be read as a consequence of MFSP's position, in which it was aligned with, rather than against the state – and consequently oppressive discourse is uncritically reproduced. It might also be an example of 'tactical mimicry', whereby organisations perform in ways that appropriate state norms in order to mimic

‘compliance in one space’ and ‘more radical action in another’ (Dey and Teasdale, 2016:17). That is, appropriating the tools of the state (in the hope that it may lead to funding), and subverting this for the needs of the client group. For instance, Linda spoke of the possibilities of this form of subversive resistance in relation to the Troubled Families⁴⁵ programme:

I think the good people are taking the money, taking the approach and tweaking it... You’ve got to work with what you’ve got. You just tweak your approach. And if you meet some of the outcomes that the government want, but what you’ve done is something different, what’s it matter?

In responding to the loss of MFSP, participants narrated values that both posed an explicit challenge to exclusionary discourses (i.e. no borders), and which reproduced them (i.e. the neglected migrant as potential future terrorist)⁴⁶. However, these were both invoked in order to provide an argument for the continuation of MFSP. The restrictions (i.e. not being able to publicly campaign due to anti-migrant sentiment) and possibilities (i.e. ‘taking the money’ of initiatives that may be at odds with organisational values) presented by the current political moment were narrated by participants who – grasping at multiple arguments - were moved to defend MFSP by any means possible.

Finally, moving from an analysis of how participants narrated austerity to how they narrated their relationship with MFSP, is illuminating for understanding the

⁴⁵ The stigmatising nature of this programme (among other critiques) are explored in depth by Crossley (2018).

⁴⁶ See Davison and Shire (2014) for a comprehensive articulation of the way in which race and migration are implicated in neoliberal exclusionary discourses.

affective structures that bound worker to organisation and the subsequent magnitude of its loss. These narratives had a temporal structure that, ultimately, looked to the past as a time full of promise, unity and multicultural cohesion, and to the future as either unknown, or as a place in which the optimism of the past has been lost. For instance, in describing the strength of attachment to the organisation and to her colleagues, Kirsty invoked the time before the office moved to join the wider charity:

I liked the early days when we were in [a separate office]. The office was really dingy and there would always be leaks, the carpet stunk... it was a disgusting office, but it was... I don't know, we felt... I don't know what it was - because it was in a really rough area of Manchester - completely out the way, there used to be fights next door, so it wasn't a nice area where we were. But it was just... it was all about the staff, there was so much laughter, and I think when we did move that did change, and I think we moved shortly after - about a year after we'd lost funding, so integral members of the team had left..."
(Kirsty)

This is a stark contrast from my own reflections on the office space in the months leading up to the closure of the organisation:

This space feels very negative today and I find myself feeling tearful. Maps of Manchester are peeling off the wall, the clock is wrong, and someone's forgotten mug is gathering dust on the desk next to mine... (Extract from research diary, 23 August 2013)

While both reference the physical disrepair of the organisation, these are assigned differing significance depending on the broader context. Kenny (2008:384) writing on the significance of aesthetics in organisational ethnography, highlights how attention to the space in which we inhabit can draw attention to feelings 'of

belonging, of warmth and of solidarity' with others. In these accounts, though both signal the 'dinginess' of surroundings, they are imbued with different meanings. The move to the new office, which was narrated earlier as a consequence of austerity, was seen as a defining moment for the team – one in which laughter was replaced by sadness.

The ways in which participants narrated how they came to work at MFSP and what they found when they came there were generally very emotive. Al explained how, prior to coming to the UK, he had worked with refugees displaced due to conflict in his home region. Once in Manchester he could put his experience and language skills to work at MFSP, first through volunteering as an interpreter, and later as a family support worker. He described how he found what felt like a home:

...it was fun to work at MFSP, they were all diverse, it wasn't something that was very structured, in that it was about the family *and* us, supporting together, that's why I loved it and still do. (Al)

Similarly, it was because of Ibrahim's lived experience that he spoke of wanting to '*give what I can*' to other refugees. He reflected that he had been relatively privileged as he was granted refugee status within four months (in the 90s), and from there he went on to work as a community interpreter with a Citizen's Advice Bureau and in local schools. He received a phone call notifying him of the upcoming project that was to be established and was encouraged to apply for a role as a family support worker. He recalled that:

I was thinking I won't stay a long time, but I enjoyed it. The people made me love the job. (Ibrahim)

For Linda, though her trajectory into work with refugees and migrants was significantly different to the above stories, there was no less a strength of attachment to the work. She spoke about her realisation of the difference that could be made to people's lives in this role:

People would be on the floor, literally you'd walk up they'd be devastated, they'd be crying, because they'd left everything behind. With a very small intervention, they'd be on track. I'm not saying everything would be sorted, but you could kind of see - mentally you're devastated - and you'd forgotten all your strengths and your resilience because of your journey. Not all, but quite a lot... I remember one family... they'd not ventured out because they were scared, they didn't know Rusholme existed, they didn't know it was a multicultural city, and just the fact they drove along Wilmslow Road and saw things that they recognised, meant that their life was completely different forever. So something quite small, the outcomes were massive. So actually, as a job - it was a dream job. Because you were working with... I go from [area of] Manchester, in quite a closed Manchester community... to working with the whole of the world! (Linda)

Finally, Celina – one of the newer members of staff – reflected that it was only with the benefit of hindsight and *because* of the loss of MFSP that the past began to look like a richer place than the present:

...[Working as a family support worker] was just what I wanted to do, and the team was really nice, the management, you know MFSP was working really well, you were there five days a week. You didn't think 'wow, how great is that', because you didn't know that all that money, all that team and all that support would be taken away from us. So maybe we didn't appreciate it as much as we should. (Celina)

These extracts, evocative and nostalgic (defined by Tannock (1995:454) as a 'structure of feeling' in which 'the 'positively evaluated' past is approached as a source for something now perceived to be missing), have the effect of narrating the

past as a place of possibility, and especially of conviviality. As well as contrasting with extracts that describe the empty office and fewer avenues for support in the midst of organisational change and loss, these also contrast with – at times almost dystopian - visions of the future. For instance, Al reflects on the potential for a future atmosphere negatively tarred by austerity and the hostile environment:

For me for example, losing my job, it wasn't – I mean I'll always have my skills, but thinking... you know about the families, and thinking about the future of Manchester, it's sad.... Often parents would come with skills, but they needed help with English and we would help, we would signpost them and take them to the places where they would take the next step, the next step, and then go on to implement them. That was MFSP. And now when those people would be in a job in two years, now it might take six years or seven years... And that's sad because you lose so much. When the houses are empty, the council tax is not being paid, the streets have no people... that is what I find very sad, because people in charge couldn't see they needed MFSP. It actually feels a bit like BNP or UKIP policy... It matters about your neighbours, if everyone around you is poor, everyone on your street is poor, then it will impact on you as well. If everyone is healthy, everyone is doing well, then you will be alright. (Al)

Kirsty was similarly sceptical about the future landscape of welfare provision in Manchester:

I think the focus of MFSP was always about children at the end of the day... And I suppose we shouldn't see children as from different communities, children are children, it shouldn't be about what background you're from, it should be... I don't know how to say it articulately enough. The main focus was children, but the main focus was equality, and striving for equality. And with austerity we can see you know that there's increases in the level of inequality in this country and that's not going to change anytime soon. It felt like the work that MFSP did over that time, and the work that other voluntary sector organisations did with the local authority in Manchester, really made a difference to the quality of people's

lives and it feels... that's why it makes it quite difficult for me to talk about MFSP, because it feels like regressive steps have been taken, way beyond even when MFSP was started. So all of that good work has been completely undone, in a matter of months it was undone. (Kirsty)

MFSP is mobilised in narratives as epochal. It was a time in which good, meaningful work could be done with migrant families and children, through a combination of support from the local authority, the value base of the voluntary sector, and the diversity of the workforce. While most participants spoke about how they sensed that their own future would be okay without MFSP (discussed further in 4.5), it is the future of the migrant families with which MFSP worked – and by extension the city of Manchester – for whom participants were most concerned. Tannock (1995) in a study of nostalgia, argues that while nostalgia should be assessed for distortions and limitations, it should also be recognised as having productive elements that allow for an interpretation of the past and action for the future. I return to this idea in closing this chapter and in chapter 9.

4.5 Material loss: organisational change and precarity

As per the literature review of organisational change in a period of austerity (Unison, 2013; Cunningham et al., 2016), staff spoke about their worsening work conditions and the effects this had on their personal lives:

Lucy: Would you say austerity has affected you personally?

Ibrahim: That's why I lost my job! And it's still affecting me actually.

Following this snippet of conversation, Ibrahim went on to tell me about the multiple roles he occupied following redundancy from MFSP. He worked for a small

RCO on a part time basis, volunteered with a large refugee organisation (in the hope of securing work), was studying for an interpreter qualification and intended to train – just in case – as a black cab driver. While Ibrahim was ultimately content with his current situation, perceiving that he was at a stage of life (with all his children grown up) where he was happy to work part-time, austerity nonetheless had an abrupt effect on the stability of his employment.

For Celina however, a woman with a young family, the future was more concerning:

Obviously you're constantly worried about what's going to happen... You can't really get a mortgage or plan for the future because you don't know. You can only hope that everything's going to be fine... I don't have money for deposit. I'm saving up, but I can't save up, because there's always something... Now I just stop smoking... because we can't really afford it with [my partner working] part time. If there was any more money at the council then he could work full time, but he's working part time because of austerity... I was worried because you think 'how am I going to pay the bills?' and everything. You know, you don't want to be like going to work when you're stressed yourself with your personal life because you're worrying about bills and everything. (Celina)

Here, Celina not only expressed concern about her future, but illustrated the ways in which austerity impacted on her work as its material effects brought her own experiences and the issues with which she supported families closer together. Celina speaks of the precarity which she faced as she could not plan for the future and was in a constant state of anxiety. While she speaks of the affective role of 'hope' in protecting against anxiety, she also spoke of the transnational support networks upon which she may have to draw – by inviting her mother to the UK from Europe

to live with her – in order to be able to meet the demands of motherhood and precarious work.

Conversely, the managers that I interviewed had not experienced material difficulties in the same way. While it was noted by Kirsty that '*you think about what buy, you don't buy treats all the time*' and by both Kirsty and Linda that they had latterly started to shop at Aldi over larger supermarkets, they both admitted that they remained relatively secure in public sector employment. However, this material security was overlaid by the activation of emotive language which sees austerity 'viewed as the construction of a threat and as a means of regulating behaviour' (Clayton et al., 2015:25). While they were not facing imminent material insecurity, both spoke of being '*more careful*' (Linda) and a collective sense of having '*to cut the cloth accordingly*' (Kirsty).

As I noted in chapter 3 (section 8.2), my own relationship with austerity and material insecurity was complicated as I was studying for a PhD with a monthly stipend. Because of this I was able to undertake a one-day per week role at the overarching charity once MFSP closed. The tension between the focus of the PhD, and witnessing the material effects of austerity on colleagues (alongside my own sense of professional identity loss as I became unable to work with families), caused me to feel substantial guilt in this period. Similarly to Kirsty who remarked on the anger she felt toward the government, in my own experience it has been the affective nature of austerity which has been most consuming.

4.6 Bearing witness: austerity, service loss and lost families

Finally, I close with a brief look at the ways in which participants at MFSP narrated austerity as affecting the migrant families with which they worked and the impact of organisational change on the relationship between support worker and family.

These are important for three reasons:

- 1) To offer an empirical overview of the types of issues that migrant families faced over a period of significant socio-political and economic change
- 2) To understand the ways in which the affective structure of the organisation extended to the families supported, and how decreasing contact hours with families impacted on professional identity and wellbeing
- 3) Ethnographic observations situate the kinds of discussions I anticipated having with migrant families in later fieldwork (convergence and dissonance are further discussed in chapter 9, section 4)

I start this section with a vignette, drawn from observations in the field and a review of case records, that highlights the scale and breadth of the issues faced by the families with which MFSP worked:

At the beginning of March 2013, we've started to inform families about the fate of MFSP. I offered to go on a home visit with a social work student to speak to one of her families about the closure. We met a single father who is very disappointed and who promised to speak to his MP to oppose it. He is a single parent; his son has learning difficulties and has been out of school for many months. MFSP have advocated for an educational psychologist assessment, and have helped with childcare, parenting classes and applying for benefits. He told me, 'I'd have been suffering in silence without you'. I write this at the top of a page in my notebook,

underlining it several times. Later I find myself thinking about a family on my caseload who I am so worried about what our closure will do to them. They are not refugees nor asylum seekers, and they have no recourse to public funds. Their child is in hospital with a life-threatening illness, and they are receiving extortionate bills from the NHS for hospital care. I note the two referrals I've made to social services for support under s.17 of the Children Act 1989, but so far – and incomprehensibly – they have decided that they have no remit to support the child and his parents. I contact Coram's Migrant Children Project, a legal advice helpline in London for advice, in desperation to get something in place before I have to close the case. We've already been to a law centre in South Manchester for immigration advice. They had a notice up about a fundraising event in the waiting room as they're at risk of closure due to legal aid cuts. Looking at a spreadsheet of key issues faced by families, the picture is stark: risk of – or actual – eviction, referrals for clothing and food parcels, delays of 26 weeks or more in receiving benefits, the closure of local citizen's advice bureaux, lack of ESOL provision, and the refusal of services to provide interpreters for families who do not speak English. It is overwhelming to think that we are closing when the need for advocacy seems higher than ever.

The issues that faced the migrant families with which MFSP worked were understood as a direct and tangible result of a context of reduced provision, welfare reform, anti-migrant hostility and increased welfare bordering. For instance, Linda noted the increased impunity with which private landlords could operate:

A landlord was talking to me on the phone and I was absolutely shocked. I said you're trying to evict this family and he said yes, and I said well they're not going anywhere, and he said well you're giving them the right advice, but you tell them – if they don't move, I'm going to evict all their family members... [The family] legged it, rather than risk all these people being evicted. So rather than fight what was wrong – but how can that landlord get away with that? But he can, can't he?! Because of all of the cuts... There's one [solicitor] in Manchester that I am able to go to – one person in the whole of the city – so yeah of course they can get away with it, because who's got the resources or the capacity to challenge it? (Linda)

There was a sense that the scale of the losses associated with welfare changes and depreciating services was incomprehensible, for both staff and families. Ibrahim recalled the anguish caused by the loss of MFSP to some of his families:

They were absolutely not happy. I remember some families cried when I told them. They were so sad to see MFSP closed and gone. Three months before we were warning them, and when we stopped visiting and could only work in office and still they were ringing and insisting because they thought MFSP was part of them actually. (Ibrahim)

He went on to highlight how these issues had only become starker in the one year since the closure of MFSP and since he had started to work at a smaller RCO with just six families:

I try to read for people who bring their letters here and then advocate for them. It is hard because ESOL classes are being cut, and even to challenge problems and grievances that they have, the ESOL would not teach them the language that they need. And how do you teach a fifty or sixty-year-old who cannot even read their own language? ... People come here and they are crying because of benefit sanctions and ask 'what will I do now?' (Ibrahim)

Eschenfelder (2012) notes that it is the confluence of emotional labour and passion that can contribute to the burn out of those working in the voluntary sector. In a field such as asylum seeker, refugee and migrant support, in which accounts of injustice fuel worker-commitment, the potential for increased desire or pressure to work above and beyond contracted hours is evident. Celina, who continued to work part-time in a supportive role for a Roma-only service at the time of the interview, spoke of feeling unable to sufficiently meet the needs of families:

They ask for help, but you have to say to them: 'I'm sorry I can't come see you' and then you just don't go, and then the relationship is not as good as maybe it was before... [One family] was calling me, but other people were calling me as well: 'please come and this and that, we don't have this, and we don't have that...' (Celina)

Though Celina suggests in the above quote that her relationships with families depreciated because of her reduced capacity, she also sought to ameliorate structural deficits through exceptional individual effort (Clayton et al., 2015), and she noted the strain that this took on her own wellbeing:

[You become] overworked as well. Because obviously with all the cuts, the need for [the] service is still there, it's just that you have to just work much, much harder. So instead of giving like hundred percent, you give like two hundred. And that's how - hurry up with this, hurry up with that - so you're just overworked. Stressed. Stressed with work. (Celina)

Returning to the affective nature of these changing relationships, and the broader context of depreciating provision in Manchester, Celina considered how a critical incident that happened with one of her families following the closure of MFSP might have been avoided, had she been able to do something that would '*maybe make a difference*' to the outcome. This case had a lingering hold throughout the interview, indicating one of the key ways in which the loss of MFSP affected workers – through the loss of relationships with families. The loss of the ability to offer support despite increased need, and the niggling feeling that - despite the structural constraints – perhaps we could have done more.

4.7 Conclusion: reclaiming hopeful alternatives

And I think of the wages they get at the council, and if you just gave those wages to families they would be okay, they wouldn't need our help, would they? (Al)

This chapter has analysed the impact of organisational change in a time of austerity.

Many findings correlate with the existing literature base, which finds that the external socio-political and economic environment is having a detrimental impact on the working conditions and wellbeing of those working the voluntary sector.

However, my position as an 'insider' within an organisation facing severe funding cuts has also enabled an in-depth look at the affective nature of organisational loss.

This is relevant in a context of austerity, in which organisations are facing increased financial challenges, and is also a substantial addition to a limited literature on the lived experience of organisational loss in the third sector generally.

While organisational studies have been conducted that consider the loss of organisations no longer deemed viable in the market, this study attended to the loss of an organisation which – by the monitoring and evaluation metrics of the state partnership from which it emerged – was effective qualitatively and quantitatively. However, the increasingly hostile environment towards migrant groups and their needs altered the institutional logic by which the state-voluntary partnership was governed. As the client group came to be constructed as undeserving, MFSP found it increasingly difficult to make the case for funding, and without sufficient resources to enable alternative approaches, the service closed its doors after twelve years.

In concluding, I want to return to consider the prologue – the idea of ‘growing the life circle around loss’ – and to the theoretical lens of loss as having a productive quality, in which a ‘continuous engagement with loss and its remains’ can facilitate a ‘reimagining’ of the future (Eng and Kazanjian, 2003:4).

Through an analysis of organisational change and loss in a third sector organisation working with refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, I have illustrated the relational and affective ties that bound the workers and the organisation. The strength of emotion that participants narrated in relation to the workplace, to one another, to management and to the families with which they worked meant that while the closure of the organisation was felt enormously, some of the traits that the existing literature on organisational loss observed were not present in the same ways (i.e. related to worker/management conflict). Narratives mostly looked to the most macro-context and exogenous factors as the locus for blame and anger for the fate of MFSP, with the Conservative government characterised as dealing the ‘fatal blow’ (Walter, 2014).

The losses analysed in this chapter, I would argue, cannot be neatly understood through a stage model of grief. While the meanings attributed to the organisation through remembering and narrating its closure demonstrated a continuing ethics of care and warmth towards the organisation, there is also a sense of a more limited future without MFSP, as participants expressed pain at the loss of what ‘may or could have been’ (Pini et al., 2010:571). This indicates that organisational loss is not something which is merely a ‘problem to be solved’ (Bell and Taylor, 2009:11), but one that has continuing resonance and perhaps no resolution or ultimate ‘closure’.

However, this reading should not foreclose future imaginaries completely.

Attending to the things that people said, as well as the things that the organisation did, illuminates the potential for future ‘radical departures or political possibility’ (Youdell and McGimpsey, 2014:128). While radical action was not possible in this case, mobilising MFSP as an ‘animating absence’ (Butler, 2003:468), means asking questions that might allow for a contemplation of future possibilities. Asking what could have been done differently to save MFSP⁴⁷, is, I believe, the wrong question. Rather, we should be asking what can be learned from the experience of MFSP as we move forward?

As McGovern (2016) argued, voluntary organisations are hampered by an inability to think outside of neoliberal orthodoxy. Neoliberalism has masqueraded as though the natural order, and as such alternatives can be inconceivable. While a reading of what MFSP *did* in response to funding cuts would corroborate this, attention to narratives showed a desire for a more oppositional politics that addressed structural inequalities. Moments such as this can be seen in the extract at the beginning of this section, or in the words of Kirsty who, lamenting the culture of competition in the third sector, advocated that *‘really what you should be doing is getting your heads together’*.

In chapter 9, I return to further discuss the potential avenues – through broader coalitions of activists and voluntary organisations, and voluntary sector unionisation

⁴⁷ Such functionalist analyses might be captured for instance by calls to diversify funding streams, to build new partnerships, consider mergers, innovation activities etc. The literature discussed in section 4.2 (i.e. Wilding, 2010) attends to such issues. MFSP also *did* do many of these, though it was not enough to save them given the broader contextual issues discussed in this chapter.

- for such a productive engagement with loss. While I do not purport to have the answers, I contend that a critical – nostalgic and/or melancholic – engagement with that which has been lost is an essential element of thinking about the future of support in the voluntary sector. Rather than ‘moving with the times’, we might ask instead how we can move the times.

The following four chapters attend to the analysis of the interviews conducted with migrant families, before returning in the final chapter to consider, in dialogue, the ethnographic observations of loss and the migrant family interviews. In the next chapter I analyse how restrictive immigration policy and rhetoric and a context of scarcity are experienced in the everyday – translocational – lives of migrants.

Chapter 5 - Austerity and translocational positionality

'...habits of life, expression or activity in the new environment inevitably occur against the memory of these things in another environment. Thus both the new and the old environments are vivid, actual, occurring together contrapuntally.' (Said, 1984:148)

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is the first of four that presents the analyses of the interviews with migrant participants. The chapter firstly focuses on the specifics of the migrant experience of austerity: how the reasons for migration are interwoven in austerity narratives, the effect of immigration status and differential rights, and the ways in which the *hostile environment* is experienced, both structurally and interpersonally. I then go on to consider the absence of the migrant experience in the austerity literature and highlight some key commonalities between the experiences of participants in this study with those in the *everyday austerity* literature. The title of the chapter reflects the theoretical work of Floya Anthias (2009) on '*translocational positionality*', which has framed the analysis. Through attending to both the particularity and commonality of the migrant-austerity experience I consider 'the different and multiple *locations, positions* and *belongings* that people have in a situated and contextual way' while being mindful that the analysis 'does not end up as a reification or deconstruction of difference' (Anthias, 2009:230). This chapter then is interested in articulating the specificity of austerity experiences for those designated as less- or un- deserving because of their migrant status, and in reflecting on the potential for dialogue between those on the receiving end of austerity, both migrant and non-migrant (Anthias, 2006).

It is worth defining how I understand some of the key terms of translocational positionality and articulate how it is utilised in this chapter (and throughout the analysis). *Locations* are understood to be both physical (relating to place and migration) and social (relating to the intersectional boundaries and hierarchies at which people are located). *Positionality* is a dialogue between structure (the effects or outcome of social inequality and difference) and of agency (as a process of narrating subjectivity). Anthias' conception of *belonging* aligns with that of a 'liveable life' (Butler, 2009; Butler, 2012) (see chapter 3) and is articulated as:

...a sense of belonging in terms of preconditions for quality of life, and not purely in terms of cultural initiation or cultural identity. This includes a focus on the range of *experiences of enablement* in society, as well as *experiences of hurdles*.
(emphasis added) (Anthias, 2006:20)

An important aspect of translocational positionality is the contingent, relational, changeable and temporal nature of analyses. Anthias (2006:28) clarifies with an example:

To be dislocated at the level of nation is not necessarily a dislocation in other terms if we find we still exist within the boundaries of our social class and our gender. Nevertheless, it will transform our social place and the way we experience this. Hence the interconnections and intersections involved here are important. From this point of view, to think of translocations opens up thinking not only of relocations but also of the connections between the past, the present and the future.

Importantly, though many studies that utilise translocational positionality foreground the analyses of participant *identity* (Kara, 2016; Ahmed, 2015; Katarina, 2015; Fathi, 2014; Rogers and Ahmed, 2017), I want to use it in foregrounding

participants' narration of austerity and how this narration is framed by their positionality. Support for this starting point comes from Anthias who suggests that translocational positionality:

...opens up the possibility of more reflexive forms of political struggle and avenues to greater dialogue and collaboration between groups organising around *particular kinds of struggles* rather than particular kinds of identities (emphasis added) (2006:28).

Though I start with the *struggle* (that is, austerity), given the diversity of my participants it is important that I engage with their individual positionalities so that I can attend to the differences and commonalities across stories and across the literature. This is an effort to ensure that I do not flatten or homogenise experience through suggesting that austerity affects “migrants” in any one particular way.

I now turn to look at the ways in which the migration decision frames narratives, and how immigration status intersects with welfare experiences.

5.2 Crossing borders and border crossings⁴⁸

In Manchester, we see a brighter future for our children.
(Hamid)

In this section, I firstly highlight how *where* participants came from, and *why* they migrated (the physical and psychic effects of *crossing borders*), traversed their narratives of austerity. Starting with this makes sense chronologically, as it is the

⁴⁸ See Keenan (2017:online) who articulates that borders are not simply lines that are crossed at the edge of the nation, but are ‘complex institutions’ that follow and surround migrants. Citing a poster from an activist group in Sydney ‘Cross Border Collective’ Keenan compels us to reconceptualise borders; ‘*We don’t cross borders, borders cross us*’.

beginning of the migratory story, and it foregrounds the *reasons for migration* and *immigration status* in the analysis. Secondly, I consider the effects of welfare bordering for both forced and voluntary migrants (though I do not understand this to be a neat binary), and how differential rights and restrictions – increasingly stringent in a context of austerity - were narrated.

Adriana, an EU migrant from Portugal, though originally from Angola, spoke of austerity in Portugal following the recession, and how this was the impetus to move her family to the UK:

I finished high school, and then I did an IT course and hygiene course as well, then I got a job in a cod factory. But then there was the crisis so they started making people redundant- the ones that were there for a short period of time. I was only there for a year ... Other factories were affected as well. Basically the whole country, because of the economy. So then I started looking for other jobs, but I couldn't find anything. For a year I was looking but couldn't find anything... When things were getting very difficult that's when I decided to move because I couldn't provide for my children any more, and after I was made redundant I got some support from work... some extra money for a period of time, and from that money saving some, so I could be able to move here to England, and when I got here I had my sister to help me, so I stayed with her and she help my family. (Adriana)

Adriana was the only participant from the EU who expressed that she had *migrated* explicitly because of the effects of austerity. Portugal has implemented severe austerity measures following a recession that has precipitated high unemployment and gross inequality (Dias, 2013). It will be evident through the analysis that Adriana's experience of austerity in Portugal shaped how she understood austerity in the UK (see chapter 8). Adriana hoped for a better life for her children in the UK,

and this was universally articulated as the primary reason to migrate by those exercising their EU treaty rights to freedom of movement.

In this way, though the UK has been subject to austerity measures, for participants in this study, it was still seen as somewhere in which a better future could be had (see Hamid's quote that started this section). We also see that Adriana's decision to come to the UK was determined by having family already in the country. This was common across the participants, with most knowing someone in Manchester before arriving. There were exceptions to this, for both the EU migrants and asylum seekers that participated, and the importance (and deprivation) of support networks will be explored further in chapter 7.

One participant that came shortly before the 2008 recession, Sara, had sought asylum, been granted refugee status and latterly acquired British citizenship. Sara was a Kurdish woman who had left an oppressive and dangerous situation in Turkey. Austerity in Sara's narrative is predictably overshadowed by the narrative of the UK as a place of safety and sanctuary. Drawing inspiration from tracing the "I" (Doucet and Mauthner, 2008), I traced Sara's utterances of the word "*nothing*", and a "nothing poem" shows succinctly how she narrates her time living in the UK, despite austerity:

Nothing make me feel unsafe here.
Nothing's been hard.
Nothing.
There's nothing bad to say about Manchester.
I never experience nothing really not good.
By time I just saw there was nothing to be scared about.

(Sara)

I will come to show how I see austerity as evident in participant narratives, even in narratives such as these. However here it is important to state the importance of where people have come from, their reasons for migrating, and their subsequent immigration status in the UK, to contextualise narratives of austerity. This is a crucial concern of this thesis, how to understand the narration of austerity in the context of other, global, harms (see chapter 8). For Sara, leaving a context of acute oppression, means that she understood herself as safe in the UK. I will go on to argue that this safety (particularly in terms of a *safety net*) has been eroded by austerity, and this has become increasingly apparent since these interviews were undertaken in 2014.

I now go on to consider *border crossings*, or how the rights and restrictions that immigration status confers, particularly vis-à-vis the welfare state, were narrated by participants. The work of Guentner et al (2016:392) is instructive, as they critique the ‘practices of bordering’ that ‘demarcate categories of people so as to incorporate some and exclude others, in a specific social order’. These welfare practices work to ‘construct new kinds of borders that keep non-citizens at bay’ and operate to ‘exclude multiple and changing categories of migrants’ (p.405). Participants in this study experienced this bordering to varying degrees. The tightening of conditions for entry to stay and the curtailment of migrant welfare rights have coalesced with the more general ideological welfare retrenchment propelled by austerity (Morris, 2016).

Sheena, a woman from Pakistan who had lived in France for many years and was an EU migrant, experienced lengthy delays and refusals when making claims to welfare. Sheena was caring for two teenage children with disabilities and for her husband who had a serious and worsening health condition. Because of this she was restricted in gaining employment. Supported by MFSP to claim Income Support (IS) and Carer's Allowance, she said of the refusal for IS:

They told me, when Ibrahim was here and I applied for the Income Support, they told me that I'm not five years here with residence, and I have not done work here. For that reason. But it is very difficult for me to do work here. (Sheena)

The unvalued nature of 'unwaged forms of caring labour' (McDowell, 2005:372), the contraction of welfare entitlement for those not in employment (particularly mothers) (Johnsen, 2014), and the 'problematic characteristic' of a welfare state that does not provide social support universally (Mynott et al., 2002:2) are all evident in Sheena's experience. Furthermore, though she was entitled to and eventually received Carer's Allowance, this was subject to a considerable delay:

Lucy: Was there a period when you weren't getting the benefits you were entitled to?

Sheena: Seven months I think. Stopped. Not from Paris, not from here. It was hard time, which I have to borrow some money, then I have to manage all the things.

Lucy: Did they ever say why it took so long?

Sheena: Because they had to verify everything, they verified all the things from Europe. We were from the EU and so they have to have verified that they stopped there [so they could] start here. It takes time.

As established, Sheena was unable to work due to her caring responsibilities.

Verifying that Sheena was not claiming in more than one place put a substantial strain on the family's income. Though supposition to assert that discrimination affected this case, Williams and Johnson (2010:22) have argued that historically:

At an operational level the traditional welfare state as a system proved to be riven with racisms and discriminations, sometimes intended, sometimes benign, that contaminated service delivery, ensured low take-up and resulted in inequitable outcomes.

Whether Sheena's experience was exceptional, or not, the financial difficulty that the family faced meant that Sheena had to turn to her brother in Pakistan to borrow money. She found it difficult to express how this made her feel, and assured me that she paid her brother back as soon as she was in receipt of benefits. Sheena turned to her transnational support network; in order to survive in Manchester she was dependent on her brother in Pakistan and his ability to send 'reverse-remittance' to the UK (Mazzucato, 2011; Adiku, no date). Sheena did have some relative privileges. She owned her home (unusual for the families that MFSP supported) and her class position in Pakistan was one that enabled her to draw on the wealth of her family there. However, this seven-month period devastated the family's savings. These were intended for starting a takeaway business in the UK, but instead they were used for daily living and short-term survival, depriving Sheena of her independence and ability to plan for the future (see chapter 6).

Zeynab and Fidan, a mother and teenage daughter from Azerbaijan, encountered lax welfare bureaucracy following a positive outcome on their asylum claim. The

transitory period between asylum seeker and refugee (from NASS to mainstream welfare) is bewildering, as claimants attempt to navigate a welfare system described as ‘...challenging, even for those who understand it and have always lived in the UK’ (Doyle, 2014:20). The family were without any income for three months after receiving discretionary leave to remain. An exchange between myself, Zeynab and Fidan highlights both the difficulty of the period and is indicative of the reluctance of many participants to critique power (see chapter 8):

Lucy: How did you find the process of accessing regular benefits?

Fidan: We had many phone calls and going to many places to try and get it. But it was easy.

Lucy: It was easy?

Zeynab: Not very quick...

Fidan: It was very hard, but then again, if you do all the forms, it was easy.

The family sought help from a local refugee support organisation, and they also had to draw on their own resources to make ends meet:

Fidan: When my mum and dad were together, my dad borrowed money from someone, so we had that, and my mum had some jewellery here, so we sold that.

Lucy: Did you have a particular attachment to the jewellery?

Fidan: It was just small things like necklace or ring, not very...

Though Fidan does not lend such significance to the event in this telling, a study by Bates et al (2014) found that resorting to selling possessions such as jewellery was often narrated as an act of desperation. As with Sheena, the family had to borrow

money from a friend, showing the importance of informal support networks in lieu of government support. The risks are high however, and delays at this juncture increase the likelihood of being made homeless (Doyle, 2014). Though Zeynab and Fidan had been officially recognised as entitled to mainstream provision the wanton inefficiency sees that they are only ‘grudgingly permitted’ access to the welfare safety net (Guentner et al., 2016:397). This is indicative of an immigration system that imbricates rights with surveillance and control (Morris, 2002) (seen for instance through the insistence on submitting biometric data before a refugee can get their national insurance number).

Here I have narrated two instances where the welfare border was narrated as having *crossed* participants. The stratification of migrants is vital for understanding how migrants are excluded from welfare, but also how any inclusion is often partial and subject to the ‘informal processes’ of welfare delivery (Morris, 2002; Howard, 2006). The next section will further detail the ways in which immigration apparatus, particularly that which has flourished as part of a commitment to the ‘hostile environment’, was experienced by participants.

5.3 Hostility and immigration controls

In chapter 2 I introduced the hostile environment and its ideological synergy with austerity. The Immigration Act 2016 (which supersedes the 2014 legislation) has resolutely shifted the onus of immigration compliance from a central government concern to the places and institutions that people encounter in their everyday lives, such as healthcare, school, and housing (Yeo, 2017). Though the interviews for this study took place before the implementation of the ‘flagship’ immigration legislation,

the culture of hostility is one that has been perpetuated for a long time. In chapter 4 observations of how MFSP families encountered hostility were highlighted, particularly in relation to NHS charges and landlord impunity. Moreover, we see hostility in decades old practices of dispersal (introduced in the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 (Howard, 2006)) and detention (extended under New Labour (Allaby, 2015)). This section will draw on narratives that highlight the effects of these for participants that were subject to immigration controls as asylum seekers and (precarious) refugees. I then go on to illustrate how hostility (and fortune) came to bear on the private lives of Sahir (an EU national) and Naheed (a non-EU national).

When seeking asylum Sara was subject to forced dispersal. It is perhaps useful to know something of the home in which I interviewed Sara, and in which she told me of this period. Her house was immaculate. As I entered Sara offered me a pair of slippers, with which I swapped my boots that joined a line of shoes by the door. She made tea, and her youngest child watched cartoons on a television in the next room. As Sara explained to me a litany of house moves, she compared this period of dispersal with her current home, a social housing property in North Manchester:

Lucy: Have you lived elsewhere in Manchester?

Sara: I've lived in [South Manchester]. But I didn't live there long. It's been five years I live in this house. [There] is not that long, eight or ten months... It's different. Here is better, because I have a nice neighbour. I know everyone knows each other, children they safe, they can play outside in the garden. It is important for families.

Lucy: Where did you first go when you came to the UK?

Sara: Where did I first go? I came to Manchester. First, I live in [North Manchester] for like three weeks. Then to [GM borough] for two weeks. Then to Liverpool for two months, I live in hostel. After that I left to [GM borough 2], like one year and a half. After I move [South Manchester]. Because when I would live in [GM borough 2] I didn't know anyone... (but) in Manchester I have friends to look after my children, so that's why I just talk to housing, you know, to ask to come here.

Though Sara is careful not to complain (see chapter 8), she positioned her current home as *better* than what has gone before. Neighbours that are nice, who know one another, children being safe to play outside are all mobilised as important for creating a sense of belonging for Sara. In this way, there is an allusion to a past in which dispersal meant a lack of support networks (Hayes et al., 2004) and which produced a 'politics of discomfort' that positioned Sara at the margins of liveability (Darling, 2011:264; Butler, 2009). Dispersal was described as difficult for Sara's daughter:

My big one, she changing lots of schools. Three or four. In [GM borough 2] we live one address, after the landlord wants his house, they just contact me say we have to change. After we contact her school again... she changing two schools there... After we moved to here then *she's changing five schools...* It's difficult for her, it's not easy for her. Because you know teacher, you know friends, then you changing. But still she's... she's doing well at school... (Sara)

Sara constantly reiterated that the hardships she had faced because of the hostile mechanisms of the immigration system had been resolved. Policies of dispersal preceded austerity, and people seeking asylum have already experienced 'disproportionately violent histories' (Canning, 2017a:67), both pre-migration and post, as the UK has consistently, yet increasingly, sought to deter settlement. In this

example then it might be apparent how the history of hostility goes some way to shroud the effects of austerity.

Zeynab and Fidan recalled an attempt to detain and deport them as the most difficult moment they had experienced in Manchester:

Fidan: Oh, the time when they wanted to deport us was the worst probably... That was a few years ago. Our barrister saved us like in the last minute and we returned... They came and took us to the airport. Heathrow? I think. From Manchester. From our old house to Heathrow.

Lucy: How did you recover from that situation?

Fidan: It was very hard. We used to think the door was ringing again. But then, slowly by time, it's changed.

Worsening mental health as a direct result of state policy and practice are particularly evident in cases of detention (Neale, 2012). Though the family were supported to stay by their solicitor⁴⁹, the incident had a lasting impact as fear of deportation seeped into their everyday lives. Fidan went on to tell a story of receiving a letter from the Home Office:

Fidan: We thought they were deporting us again, so we started crying.

Lucy: What made you think that?

Fidan: We just thought... we saw the logo and basically my mum and sister started crying but I came and read it and I was like alright... before they asked us for photographs and then they deported us, and now they wanted photographs again and we were like a bit scared.

⁴⁹ Only a small minority of detainees receive leave to remain following detention, though more than half receive temporary admission or are released (Refugee Council, 2015).

Other research has illustrated the constant anxiety of ‘the brown envelope’ and official letters in the context of sickness benefits (Garthwaite, 2014; Mattheys, 2017), and De Genova (2002:438) cites deportation as an ‘ever-present vulnerability’ in migrants everyday lives. It is evident that the fear of deportation, and its antecedent, detention, work as a form of governmentality to produce compliance in everyday life. The ‘detention corridor’ (Drotbohm and Hasselberg, 2015; de Noronha, 2016) extended to the hallway of this family home, as communications with the Home Office were seen as something that could only be violent. Though Zeynab’s family did receive *discretionary leave to remain*, a policy of granting only temporary leave to stay to refugees has exclusionary repercussions in other areas of life. In chapter 8 I further explore Fidan’s (eventually successful) negotiations with student finance. Another participant who had discretionary (and therefore time-limited) leave to remain was excluded from higher education as a mature student. Mina was a woman from Iran who had fled gender violence. She narrated the barriers she faced in attempting to achieve her ambitions:

I moved to look for studying. I wanted to do architecture, a foundation degree. After eighteen months, they stopped the student loan and retracted the loan that had already been paid. I couldn’t afford to continue. I owed a lot of money, six thousand pounds. At least I learnt something. Maybe in the future I can study, maybe the same thing, I’m still interested in it. When the tuition fees increased I think *I can never do this again!* I hope maybe I can when I am better off financially.
(Mina)

The experience of being allocated funding, starting a course, the withdrawal of funding and being compelled to repay the loan negatively impacted on Mina, but so

too did the universal policy in 2012 which saw tuition fees rise to £9000. With this, Mina doubted there would be a time when she could afford to return to study. Hostile policies such as this⁵⁰, as with welfare bordering (Guentner et al., 2016), serve to delineate who is included and who is excluded. Hostility serves not only to deplete the *safety net* of the welfare state, but also to restrict flourishing (Butler, 2009).

Finally, I want to turn to the hostility experienced by Sahir and Naheed. Sahir was an EU migrant of Pakistani origin. He had lived for many years working in Germany, while Naheed cared for older relatives in Pakistan. When the relatives passed away, the family planned to be reunited in the UK. This was delayed due to both ineffective bureaucracy at the British Embassy⁵¹, and a Home Office imperative to prove that their marriage was a 'genuine and subsisting relationship' (Home Office, no date). Sahir explained:

We had to wait for two years [for a visa]. At first it was refused, and we appealed and it took around 9 months for the appeal to go through... they said that the reason they objected was because we got married in Pakistan and I went to Germany, but my family never went there, they came [to the UK] directly from Pakistan, and when we applied on a Spouse visa, they wanted proof of marriage. We didn't have any pictures or anything, so we took out a picture from the video, which was not as natural as original photographs and they objected... they doubted that the pictures were real or that we made up the pictures, they objected on that... [In that time] I was waiting... thinking... studying... waiting... researching...

⁵⁰ There is no longer a blanket ban following a supreme court decision: *R (Tigere) v Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills* [2015] UKSC 57

⁵¹ Sahir talked about the processing of visa applications moving from Pakistan to Dubai, and this was blamed for holding up the visa application. The embassy moved visa processing from Islamabad to Abu Dhabi in 2008, after a bomb detonated nearby (Morris, 2009).

[Now] I am happy here, because before when I was in Germany I was all by myself, and here I had to spend two years on my own so I felt lonely, like it was a *split family*.
(Sahir)

We see here the inherent practice of ‘moral gatekeeping’ (Wray, 2015) in the assessment of migrant relationships. It should however be noted that under current legislation, as an EU migrant, Sahir did not have to satisfy minimum income requirements brought in by the Coalition government, which have been particularly contentious for British citizens hoping to live with their non-EU partners in the UK (Sirriyeh, 2015).

I now turn to the everyday encounters with hostility, in particular how participants encountered othering and racism.

5.4 Racism in everyday encounters

In chapter 2 I discussed the racialised nature of welfare, and the implications of this for migrants. The analysis throughout the thesis attends to the ways in which macro and meso forms of racialisation shape inequalities for migrants (Phillips, 2010). Here I want to highlight ‘race practices’ (Gill and Worley, 2010:7) and *racist* practices as they affected everyday lives, attending to both the intimacy of these encounters and the structural formation of them. It is important to note that, of course, racism is not new, but austerity, paired with a resurgent far-right politics is argued to be ‘renaturalising inequalities and involving us all in the practices of establishing and hardening these inequalities’ (Bhattacharyya, 2015:114). Interpersonal incidents of racism cannot be disaggregated from the wider socio-political context. Performative marking and expulsion of migrants has become usual (i.e. raids in workplaces and

public space, payment cards for asylum seekers, vans marked 'Go Home'). It is in this context of stigmatisation that racially motivated attacks occur. Here I highlight narratives of racist encounters, and I offer some macro context for these incidents.

Florica, a Roma woman from Romania, spoke of how she received racial abuse when working selling the Big Issue in Manchester:

Some people just say 'oh, Romanian, go back to your country!'
Sometimes. When I go to work, sometimes people are like
'Gypsy! Romanian!' (Florica)

Several Roma families that MFSP supported sold the *Big Issue*, though often it would be difficult or impossible to convince welfare institutions that this was genuine and substantial work. Alongside this was a media and political campaign that delegitimised Roma vendors. That Florica experienced verbal abuse as a visible Roma woman, as local politicians voiced concerns about the 'loophole which gives them access to benefits' (Leeming, 2011:online), is not coincidental. In this instance, the work that Florica did offered her low financial reward, complicated encounters with welfare agencies, and carried risks of racism. In this way racialisation works at both a structural and an intimate level.

The *visibility* of migrants in low-paid, precarious employment leaves people open to racist interpersonal encounters⁵². Though he finds it difficult to name, Sahir's

⁵²Concentration in precarious sectors also makes migrants visible to mechanisms of state racism, as businesses collude with immigration enforcement. Byron Burgers, in 2016, for instance facilitated an immigration raid on its premises under the guise of a training meeting. 35 foreign nationals were arrested (O'Carroll and Jones, 2016).

experience as a taxi driver narrates racist encounters as an everyday possibility at work:

I had some bad experiences with the passengers. I can't comment on whether it is my being Asian... I don't know. Like sometimes it happens that people don't give the fare, or they try to just get into an argument which I don't like. I'll try to avoid it and if somebody's arguing I'll just want them to leave without giving the fare. Sometimes they're like runaways, so I'm not sure if it's them people that they would do the same to a white driver as well. Or is it just me? I'm not sure about that. (Sahir)

Again, this has structural and historical roots. Pakistani taxi drivers are particularly concentrated in the North West of England. Virdee (2010:80) highlights how this was a result of the 'constrained choices facing racialised minority communities' following the closure of the textile mills. This occupation has persisted across the generations and newly-arrived migrants, as 'racist exclusion' has meant the move from 'low-paid, relatively *secure* employment in the manufacturing industry to low-paid, *insecure* employment in the service sector.' The precarious position of migrants in the labour market, means that they are more likely to face exploitative practices, and less likely to be able to formally challenge poor work environments. In this case, all Sahir can do is *try to avoid it*.

Beyond work, racist violence was encountered by participants as they went about their day. Sahir asked his daughter to tell me about the racism she had faced at the local park. Cast as 'bullying', the encounter encompassed both physical racialised markers 'you've got brown eyes, you've got hair like that', and her foreignness 'you've got different country'. A racist attack encountered by Adriana on a bus highlights

that racism was indeed an issue before Brexit. Emejulu (2016:online) highlights how 'performative outrage' post-Brexit has symbolically positioned racism as an 'aberration', when in fact this racism has long historical roots. Adriana describes:

I go to Piccadilly, and once I went there with the kids to do some shopping and have lunch, and in the evening I was going back home. We were on the bus on the way back home, and the kids were calling me, 'Mum, Mum, Mum, Mum', and my niece was also calling me 'Mum', but my niece is light-skinned – a bit lighter than us – so a couple, an English couple were talking, they were talking amongst themselves, and they were saying '*why is she calling her mum if she's white and they're black?*' ...My niece... was getting very annoyed because they were talking about her family, so she said 'Mum, why are they talking about us? They say I'm white and you're black, and what we all doing here and have I got the same parents as rest of them?' ...When I understood what they were talking about I said 'what is your problem, *what have you got against us?*' ... Other people got involved, from different races, [a] man came to defend me, and saying '...so have you got an issue with just her family? Because some are black or for their race, what is your problem?' ... Everyone got involved. I was getting agitated... then the kids started crying as well... (Adriana)

Though it is important to reiterate that racism is not new, it is also important to understand the socio-political contexts in which interpersonal violence flourishes.

Lavalette and Penketh (2014:8-9) highlight that:

Appalling levels of racist abuse, violence and discrimination do not exist in a vacuum. They have grown and festered in a climate of economic recession and austerity where media, politicians and the far-right have agitated against, and found a convenient scapegoat in, minority populations.

This *growth* has also been cultivated by the 'insistent talk' of scarcity in the austerity moment (Bhattacharyya, 2015:142). While all are told to *make do with less*, the image of the migrant has been of a figure that *takes too much*. It is in this context that

participants are told to *go home*, are not paid for services rendered, and are attacked for simply being in public space.

5.5 Commonality of experience

In this section, I attend to the *commonality* of experience between migrant participants in this study, and non-migrant experiences articulated in the *everyday austerity* literature (see chapter 2). It is important that migrants specific *and* general experiences are articulated, to understand, but not reify, difference. It matters that there is a dearth of literature that attends to migrants' day-to-day experiences of austerity. That migrants experience 'shockingly high levels of poverty and unemployment', and yet irregularly 'feature in popular or policy discussion about the crisis' is the basis for Emejulu and Bassel (2017b:118) to ask '*whose* crisis counts and *whose* crisis is being named and legitimated?' This is an attempt to narrate common struggles, and contribute to a common resistance. It is also important to be mindful that commonalities were not uniform across participants. Further, as all had recourse to public funds, this section is unlikely to resonate in the same way for those migrants with no recourse to public funds and who are destitute, who face additional hardships worthy of study (Canning, 2017a). All the narratives in this section are taken from EU migrants; that is not to say those who had been asylum seekers and had refugee status had no common experiences with non-migrants, but discussions with these participants tended to focus on the sort of issues discussed earlier in the chapter. Everyday experiences of austerity are characterised in the literature by 'fuel poverty, food insecurity, social isolation, insecure tenure, social and familial breakdown and ill health' (Edmiston, 2017:266) and such commonality

could be noted elsewhere in the analysis. Here however, I will focus on two key sites of study within the everyday austerity literature; experiences of welfare reform and the financialisation of everyday life.

5.5.1 Welfare-to-Work

A sustained ideological attack on welfare has seen the Coalition and Conservative governments justify welfare state retrenchment on the grounds that it is ‘profligate’; causing welfare dependency and public sector debt (Edmiston, 2017:262). Though welfare conditionality had been introduced before austerity measures, since 2010 the scale and regressive nature of cuts to public spending have been coupled with policies of welfare withdrawal and sanctions. The nature of conditionality has become more focused on managing and altering the behaviour of applicants (Edmiston, 2017). The neoliberalisation of welfare shifts the framing of welfare from one of social rights to one of individual responsibilities (Rigby, 2015). The focus of welfare has shifted to ensure people are productive and contributing to the market, and this is true for those on unemployment benefits *and* disability benefits. The former are subject to sanctions and strict regulation of their time and activities, while the latter are subject to Work Capability Assessments reported as ‘abusive’, ‘callous’, ‘unprofessional’ and ‘prejudiced’ (Warren et al., 2014).

Adriana described being denied (IS), having just had a baby and being newly separated from her partner. She said:

...it was a very stressful period because I also had to pay rent, and my landlord was saying ‘oh you’ll have to move out if you keep missing payments’. So then we decided to stop thinking

about the Income Support and instead to look for Jobseekers Allowance. (Adriana)

Though technically eligible for IS, the barriers in place⁵³ and the risks to her tenancy, meant that Adriana instead applied for unemployment benefits. This is synonymous with a general move away from IS, that is reported to have mostly affected lone mothers (Davies, 2012; Haigh, 2015), and which signifies the ‘unvalued’ nature of mothering (McDowell, 2005:372; Davies, 2012).

Adriana’s experience of workfare was richly discussed in our interview. Though she described having an amicable relationship with her advisor at the Jobcentre, she also described the banality of the requirements (Jordan, 2016):

...[they] sent me to a Work Programme, where I have to do the same thing that I do at home. Sit at the computer and look for a job. I’m thinking it would be a lot more helpful if they had an advisor there to look for jobs with me or contact agencies and employers instead of doing everything by myself which I could do at home. (Adriana)

Patrick (2014) highlights the often obstructive nature of Jobcentre advisors, whose priority of finding employment for clients clashed with their parenting roles.

Adriana also found this as she explained the time costs of the Work Programme:

...I leave college, then go to the Work Programme and stay there for one hour, by myself, just looking for jobs. Then after I finished, come back and pick the kids up from school, but sometimes I’d get there late and they’d already left the school. (Adriana)

¹ Including a reduction in local Citizens Advice Bureau’s and unwillingness of welfare services to take on her appeal – a situation now solidified by the removal of non-asylum seeking migrants from the scope of legal aid, which sees migrants being ‘doubly disadvantaged since they cannot access advice’ if they are ‘wrongly refused benefits on the basis of their immigration status’ (Guentner et al., 2016:398).

The ineffectiveness of compulsory tasks, and the under-valuation of non-waged responsibilities was further compounded by a clash between the Work Programme and Adriana's college schedule where she was completing an ESOL course:

Before there was a big issue with the Work Programme because they wanted me to go for three hours but they'd make the appointment at the same time as I used to go to college to study. So my teacher was getting [angry]. I had to speak to them to say if I keep missing lessons I'm gonna get [thrown off the course]... (Adriana)

Adriana was fraught as she explained the fear that she would be sanctioned for trying to both learn English and meet the demands of the Work Programme:

There was once I went to the Work programme and the advisor said 'well we noticed that you didn't go', but I was there and told them to check the register - because every time I go I have to sign a register, the time I come in and the time I leave - because *they threatened to stop my claim*. So then they went to see and found out I was actually there... I feel a bit upset that they [might] stop the claim, *the housing benefit stops, everything stops*, and that's the disadvantage of not having a job because you have to depend on the benefits. And once, I had an exam at college so I couldn't go to the Work Programme and they sent me a letter saying 'oh your benefits will stop'. So I had to go to the advisor at college and I had to phone the Jobcentre and explain that I had to be there because of my exam, so that's why they didn't stop. But I did feel a bit stressed with the situation. (Adriana)

Adriana's experience with workfare is constituted of both general experiences - banality, ineffectiveness, devaluation, fear - but is further complicated by a clash of priorities specific to her position as a migrant, as she finds herself punished for attempting to meet the demands of integration through acquisition of English. The absurdity of the conflict between these is apparent, as ESOL is also implicated in the 'employability agenda' for migrants (Cooke and Simpson, 2009).

5.5.2 Debt and financial household management

Financial hardship and the tactics that people adopt in managing finances has been a prominent feature of the everyday austerity literature, with Shildrick and MacDonald (2013:288) finding that people were in 'deep poverty' and that 'day-to-day life was a juggling act which demanded strict routines'. Affording energy bills was a particularly highlighted area of concern in this study, and like the findings of Pemberton et al (2014) this caused anxiety and a fraught day-to-day existence. Hamid and Laila, EU migrants who have lived in Spain for twenty years, but originally from Morocco spoke to this affect:

Hamid: For bills, we try to pay from the money I get from working and the benefits I get. We find it difficult sometimes to pay. Gas and electricity are both on a meter card and are very expensive. It is sixty to eighty pounds per month for gas. For electricity is it twenty pounds per week.

Laila: I have to put the washing machine on every day; four children - Hoovering, kitchen electrics. Central heating in winter... we need to put all the heaters on because it's a big house and it's very cold. In the wintertime we turn the heating on... because we need to for the children. Gas is maybe eighty to ninety pounds per month in winter... We never let the card run out because it will turn off. When there is four or five pounds we will fill up. If it gets to zero it's very difficult because you have to ring to reinstate the card and it costs more. *We always think about it all the time.*

An exchange between Sheena and I indicated the uncertainty that high bills instil:

Sheena: Too much washing for [youngest son] because he vomits too much. And you see [oldest son] sometimes he goes out and untidy his clothes. So two, three machines every day. I have a drier but sometimes I keep economy and don't use the drier, only washing machine and then dry out there. *If it's a nice day...* Last time [the bill] was £1500... for three months.

Lucy: Wow.

Sheena: It was very difficult for me to manage

Lucy: How did you pay that?

Sheena: Er, little bit, little bit.

Lucy: Have you managed to pay that?

Sheena: No. I am still paying, still paying.

[Pause]

Sheena: Sorry. I am thinking that I must have to do something. I must, *otherwise we can't survive*.

Sheena's experience is intersected by the inequalities of disability, which sees families face additional outgoings (Contact a Family, 2012) and which are discussed further in chapter 6.

Others, such as Florica, had their gas cut off following missed payments. Reportedly, this was not resolved for days, as MFSP staff (called on for support) had to prioritise other families facing eviction, as the capacity of the organisation reduced. In these examples, the affective impact '*we always think about it*' and the material impact that families face in managing household finances is evident.

Unlike many studies of austerity (Rabindrakumar, 2013; Hall and Perry, 2013), participants did not disclose using payday lenders as a means to making ends meet. This is likely to be a feature of their migrant position, without credit histories (Datta, 2012), and as seen earlier, participants were more likely to call on their support network to borrow money. While this might protect many migrants from a particular kind of austerity effect, such as high-cost credit debt (O'Hara, 2014), they still encountered debt and impoverishment, and as discussed earlier, relied on informal support networks (such as family in the country of origin, or a friend established in the UK) to loan money.

5.5.3 Food scarcity and sourcing

Most families told me that though they struggled, their priority was to ensure that they could put food on the table, with most spending after bills and rent going on this (Hall, 2016):

We can afford food, that is fine, but with other things it is difficult. Buying clothes is difficult... You need to be tight, having a good budget, live day to day. (Laila)

Basically we don't spend on any extras... I work for the children, we do everything for the children so we make sure they've got the necessities of life, and we don't eat outside every day, it's just if it's someone's birthday we go out as a family. (Sahir)

Families adjusted their food consumption, through parental sacrifice, disciplined shopping tactics, and modifying their purchases (Goode, 2012). This is consistent with austerity studies that highlight that 'food budgets are where people can and do make economies' (Dowler and Lambie-Mumford, 2015:417), which unlike the previous section, are presumed to have less severe consequences.

Adriana spoke about the tactics she adopted when she was in debt following three months without any income and had rent arrears of two thousand pounds:

I spoke to the [letting] agency to save some money for my living expenses, but the rest they take to pay the rent... I was very limited in how much I could spend, with things I wanted. I like having lots of food at home and buying what I want, but *I could only use so much so that I could pay the debts as quickly as possible...* Sometimes it's difficult, but I learnt how to use the money, because every fifteen days I get Jobseekers Allowance, which is £140, then I get the benefits for the kids, so I use the money to go shopping. I go for the cheaper items... If you're organised you can manage... I mainly shop at Asda and Tesco and if I need meat I go to the butchers near Manchester, and also to Pakistani shops as well, where I can

find all the items... When I leave the house, I have a list of everything I need and where to get things from and then I just go to all the places and get everything... [I try] to do the shopping weekly because I like us to eat lots of fruits and cereal so I try and buy lots of food for them so [the children] don't go hungry. (Adriana)

This echoes the findings of Dowler and Lambie-Mumford (2015:419) that:

Many report spending more time and effort to obtain and prepare food, for instance, travelling to cheaper supermarkets rather than local familiar shops, planning menus and shopping with great care.

Food poverty during austerity has increased, with foodbanks being a particular site in which the material effects of austerity are evident (Garthwaite, 2016). Few studies highlight the migrant experience of food banks (Brighton & Hove Food Partnership, 2016), and likewise few participants disclosed that they had been the recipient of food parcels, though a number of participants' case files suggested that families had been referred to local food banks in times of crisis, but had chosen not to share this in the interview.

5.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have utilised *translocational positionality* as a framework to explore the heterogeneity of austerity experiences that participants narrated. I have demonstrated the need to foreground migration histories and immigration status in analyses of migrant experiences of austerity, and begun to argue that these shape the austerity narratives of migrants. I have highlighted how hostility as policy and practice worked to limit quality of life. While this is particularly evident at a macro level in the lives of those who have sought asylum, the racialised nature of hostility has affected the everyday lives of most who took part in this study; through limiting

opportunities and interpersonal racism. Finally, a section on *commonality* has brought into dialogue commonalities of experience between the migrants in this study and non-migrants in the wider literature. While paying attention to the *specific* is vital, explicating common experiences highlights class-based oppression and ways in which experiences of poverty and disempowerment (Bhattacharyya, 2015) have shared effects. This discussion however should not forego intersectional analyses – and while I have attended to this throughout, the next chapter attends to the precarity of migrant families at the intersections of inequality.

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I explored the specific and general experiences of migrants in relation to austerity. This chapter develops this theme through looking at precariousness; a 'condition inherent' to 'vast swathes of the population' (Lorey, 2015:55), but which differentially affects people and most detrimentally affects migrants. To understand these differential impacts, it is necessary to be attuned to the expanding and almost-universal nature of precariousness that sees labour being increasingly insecure and exploitative (for instance, through zero-hour contracts), but also to the positionality of some migrants that contributes to their being 'hyper-precarious' (Lewis et al., 2014). Moreover, analyses should attend to the 'many afterlives of historical and ongoing colonialism' (Danewid, 2017:online) in order to understand how the state of precarity is globally and historically structured.

I firstly look to the way in which participants experienced precarious labour practices, before broadening the scope of precarity to demonstrate how it is intertwined in other areas of life, and particularly how it affected relationships. The second half of the chapter focuses on the gendered nature of precarity, with attention paid to the care-work that dominated many narratives. I end by exploring the experiences of two mothers of children with disabilities, highlighting both the power and vulnerability that frame their narratives.

6.2 Precarious work, precarious lives

Labour markets are inherently transnational, yet labour rights are not... (Piper and Grugel, 2015:270)

Narratives of precarious work highlighted both the general condition of labour precarity and the experience of migrants who are more likely to be concentrated in low-paid, insecure work (Precarious a la deriva, 2004; Bridget Anderson, 2010; Alberti et al., 2015). As per the quote above, this work - cleaning, care, hospitality - often undertaken by migrants, is particularly subject to poorer working conditions, and yet is vital to the economy and society. For instance, irregular working hours are evident in Adriana's narration of the journey to work:

The bus stop is a bit far away. It's an issue for getting a job, because sometimes I find a job that - you start at six o'clock - which means I have to leave the house at five and to get to the bus stop I have to get to a park and there's no lights, no street lights over there, so it can be a danger⁵⁴. (Adriana)

In the previous chapter Adriana spoke of migrating to the UK because of her family's intensely precarious position following the implementation of austerity in Portugal. Once in the UK, Adriana secured a job working morning and evenings cleaning in a college. Adriana said of this short-lived role:

I'm just upset about my job at the college. I only wanted an improvement. My manager, I mentioned to him I wanted more staff to come in and help me because there was too much work for one person, but he was upset and he dismissed me. (Adriana)

⁵⁴ A Unison report: 'The Damage: An austerity audit' (2015) takes this concern seriously, as since 2010, 1 in 5 streetlights is either switched off or dimmed at night to save Local Authority's money. This has led to an increase in crime (particularly against women) and a decreased sense of security (Unison, 2015).

Deteriorating labour conditions under the Coalition and Conservative administrations have seen fewer restrictions on employers and fewer rights for employees (Full Fact, 2017; McKay et al., 2012). Migrant workers have consistently been in a vulnerable position in the labour market, with Jasiewicz (2012:online) noting that increasingly ‘everybody’s getting the migrant treatment’, as worsening conditions see employers ‘discipline’ employees through the *reward* of work and the denial of work as *punishment*. As was the case with Adriana, work can be ‘taken away if workers start to demand rights’ (Jasiewicz, 2012:online). Adriana found she was unable to challenge the dismissal, as she – like all workers in the UK – does not earn the right to do so until two years employment (Full Fact, 2017):

I consulted an advisor from the college, and they rang an agency that helps the employees basically and they saw the contract and because I was only there for three months... so in that period of time they considered it as like a trial, so he was okay to dismiss me. (Adriana)

She explained how being unemployed made her feel vulnerable as an EU migrant:

Adriana: I’m concerned about getting the UK residence because *things are changing all the time... you’re more secure when you’re working* because you’re contributing to the economy, but also having residence is a lot better...

Lucy: What do you mean by everything is changing all the time?’

Adriana: Just the laws are changing, so I’m aware of that and also I heard from other people, because we get many people coming into UK, every year, so they’re not helping people as much... A man I know, he was denied Jobseekers Allowance so *sometimes they can do those things to people and stop helping them...* I’m aware that I’ve got four children to look after so if they stop helping – giving support – it will be very difficult for my family.

Adriana's fear related to the duty to exercise her EU treaty rights. For the EU migrant, precarious work, means precarious access to welfare and to citizenship. Though as a 'jobseeker' she was exercising treaty rights, the rules that confer eligibility to EU migrants were (and are) *changing all the time*. As legal rights collide with welfare chauvinism, eligibility to welfare has become increasingly restrictive and conditional for many EU migrants (Dwyer and Scullion, 2017; Anderson, 2015; Owen, 2013). Conditionality assessments, time restrictions and thresholds⁵⁵ limit when and for how long an EU migrant can claim benefits (and indeed, be defined as legitimately residing in the UK). These mechanisms of bordering and marginalisation have led Anderson (2013:80) to note that 'some workers are more equal than others' and Humphris (2016:1191) to comment on the way that interactions with the welfare state bring the 'territorial border to the domestic sphere'. For Adriana, the border surrounds her children, and she fears being unable to adequately care for them. It is argued that these restrictions are most likely to affect minimum-wage earners with children, families without two full-time salaries, and single-parent families (The Migration Observatory, 2016; Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland, 2015). As a single-parent household, Adriana's fear is warranted. Shutes (2016:692) notes that conditionality is:

⁵⁵ Current regulations include: The *Habitual Residency Test*, *Right to Reside* test, and *Genuine Prospect of Work* test which assess the legal right of an EU citizen to be in the UK (subject to their working or being able to work), assess the claimants intention to settle in the UK, and the likelihood of the claimant finding work; an EU migrant cannot claim benefits before three months stay in the UK; after being on JSA for 3 months a claimant has to take a 'genuine prospect of work' test which if failed will render them ineligible for all benefits and remove their *right to reside*; New EU migrants can only claim JSA for three months (those who have previously worked can claim for six months); for work to be considered '*genuine and effective*' claimants must pass a '*minimum earnings threshold*' of £153 per week; new EU migrants are not entitled to housing benefit.

...underpinned by a market model of citizenship that assumes individual responsibility to participate in paid work and self-provisioning through work...

Adriana's quote above shows that she exemplifies these 'conditions of conduct' (Shutes, 2016:697) as she recognises she is *more secure* through work, *despite* the precarity of such work.

Working conditions in the UK were often held up against the experience of work in previous countries. Hamid spoke animatedly of the trade he learned as a child:

I've spent all my life doing carpentry, since I was ten years old. I love to do this. I started in Morocco. I didn't like to study at school and when my Dad found out he took me to his friend's workshop and by seventeen I was professional. (Hamid)

He compares this work, which he narrated as both artisanal vocation and skilled profession, with the work he is doing in Manchester:

There are no jobs in here. I was a carpenter in Spain and I work in a carwash in the UK. I work three days a week. I got the job through a Kurdish-Iraqi man that I met at college when I was doing ESOL, he introduced me to the job. *I am not happy. It's not the kind of job I'm interested in.* It's unclean. I am interested in carpentry. I am a specialist. I make kitchens, floors, doors... For twenty-three years I worked for a big company in Spain, twelve people, all carpenters; a factory. I looked for work like this in UK but I can't find. I looked on computer at college, but I can't find... Since two and a half years I have stopped practising. (Hamid)

Deskilling, devaluation and the downward mobility of skilled migrants contribute to what May et al (2007:151) have termed the 'migrant division of labour', whereby foreign-born workers make up the majority of low-paid work. This polarisation is striking in car-washes that have proliferated since the recession (Clark and Colling, 2016). Though there is little research that focuses on such workspaces in the UK,

Clark and Colling (2016:6) note that their business models are such that ‘paying lawful wages is likely to be prohibitive to profitability’. Research on carwashes in the US note that it is an industry mostly populated by migrants (often undocumented) and that work practices violate employment laws (Garea and Stern, 2013). Hamid spoke of variable hours and alluded to the low-pay, but in the extract above we see the non-material effects of this work; he is unhappy, uninterested, and adrift from his understanding of himself as a skilled professional.

I turn now to think about the ways in which precarity extends beyond labour, into relationships and family life. Feminist scholars have highlighted the importance of attending to precarity beyond waged labour, to the ways in which it has affects in the domestic sphere (Casas-Cortés, 2016). Several of the migrant women that I interviewed were not in paid employment, but the reproductive labour described was intimately connected to narratives of precarity. Bhattacharyya (2015:34) argues that ‘a sense of inescapable decline and contraction’ are central to understanding austerity, here I consider how this sense pervades everyday lives and seeps into relationships. For instance, Laila (the wife of Hamid) spoke of how she had never worked, only that she *‘learned to sew in Morocco’* before moving to Barcelona aged seventeen. Precariousness is sewn into the fabric of her everyday life in Manchester. She talked about feeling isolated, in a home that *‘doesn’t catch the sun’*, while her children are at school and Hamid at work. How she could not speak English and there was an eighteen-month waiting list for ESOL. She looked forward to the school holidays so her children could interpret for her (see chapter 7). Laila reflected: *‘it makes me wonder why I’m in this country.’*

Participants narratives suggested precariousness affected their relationships.

Theresa, a Belgian citizen and previously a refugee from West Africa, told me how her partner worked nine-hour shifts, six days a week, in a factory in a borough of Manchester some distance from the family home, but she was emphatic: '*I don't want to hear him complain, we all have to work.*' This points to the 'institutionalisation of uncertainty' (Bhattacharyya, 2015:121); the normalisation of precarious modes of living.

Relationship breakdown in the context of austerity, and specifically for migrants and refugee communities are under-researched (Goodson and Phillimore, 2008), though studies have shown that relationship breakdown and debt are closely linked (Patel et al., 2012). One study of black and minority ethnic experiences of austerity found, as I have argued above, that 'economic problems give rise to non-economic problems' resulting in strained marital relationships (Sosenko et al., 2013:13).

Adriana's story of her break-up exemplifies this:

We were together for a while, but then we had lots of arguments and it was affecting the relationship so then we split up... *Having to depend on other people* to help him was having a big effect on him, and he was getting very stressed and also he couldn't find a job because of not speaking English, so *everything was stressing him out*, so he'd come home and we'd argue... (Adriana)

The precarity that Adriana narrated as the reason for migrating to the UK is mirrored here as her partner was unable to find work once in Manchester, and this precipitated his return to Angola. An "I" poem constructed from Adriana's account highlights the emotional impact of this:

I don't know where he is.
I wish I could have my husband back.
I hope that one day he'll come back.
I was also trying to protect the children so they weren't aware.
I didn't tell the kids that we split up.
I told them that Dad left to go to work.
I kept saying the same thing.
I didn't want them to have a trauma.
I was crying
How I'm going to cope with all the pressure.
(Adriana)

As well as the material impact of being a single parent (Omonira-Oyekanmi, 2014), Adriana becomes subject to the 'interpellations of impossibility' that Jensen and Tyler (2012:1) argue cast single parents as both more *vulnerable* to crises and more *responsible* for their own and their family's success (or lack of). Affective labour is evident as Adriana tried to protect her children from the reality of the separation. Not only has precarity affected her relationship with her partner, but with her children as she weaves a tale that will support them, even while she is struggling to cope.

This section has sought to show how precarity – at work and in everyday lives – was narrated by participants. As the labour market responds to austerity, the positioning of migrants means that they must:

...not only be available to work in a super-exploited position
when needed, but... be the first to be cast off when demand for
labour falls (Vickers, 2012:23)

The concentration of migrants in 'atypical' work presents challenges in relation to workplace organising and trade unionism (Gumbrell-McCormick, 2011), and moreover they are particularly subject to the retraction of welfare and support services (Emejulu and Bassel, 2014). These factors work to isolate migrants, and I

would suggest that precarity's disproportionate burden on migrants is a form of everyday bordering. In narrating precarity in everyday life I have indicated the gendered effects of precarity, and below I continue this through exploration of stories of care.

6.3 Gender and care

Narratives of everyday lives were overwhelmingly populated by stories of migrant women as providers of care. This care work is intimately connected to the discussion of precarity above, especially if we consider the words of Ahmed (Mehra and Ahmed, 2017:online) who illustrates what it is to be precarious:

If you think of a jug that is precarious, you might be referring to its position. Maybe it is too near the edge of the mantelpiece. Just a little push and it would fall right off. Precarity can be a generalized position; when we say a population is precarious we would refer to *how much work has to be done just to maintain a position*, how easy it is, because of how hard life is, for some to fall right off. (Emphasis added)

In this latter half of the chapter, I highlight how the caring roles of migrant women worked to *maintain a position* for themselves and others. For instance, in the previous section we saw how Adriana sought to maintain her children's wellbeing, precarious as it was, through affective labour. This section refers to narratives of commodified care work and global care chains (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2003). In the closing section, I attend to migrant women's accounts of caring for children with disabilities. Together these narratives will exemplify care as an 'unstable but powerful resource' (Bassel and Emejulu, 2017:16).

Mina is part of a 'global care chain' (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2003) that co-opts women in a patriarchal and colonial system of care (Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, 2014). As with Hamid's story above, Mina's qualifications and experience of working were delegitimised:

I have a physiotherapy degree from Iran. I have fourteen years' experience in my country. But it is hard to transfer this for the NHS. To work for the NHS I need two or three years of experience in the UK. *I can volunteer but they say then that this is not experience...* This year I decided I need any job, even cleaning! Finally, I found a job as a... domestic support worker; shopping, cooking, cleaning at home for disabled people, people with mental health problems. I'm happy to say *at least I have a job...* [but] I can only work fifteen or sixteen hours a week as I have to care for a young child. (Mina)

This kind of work is typically undervalued, yet structurally 'vital and sustaining' (Anderson, 2000) and transported across borders (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2003). Mina became entwined in the global care chain as she attempted to find something better in the UK than that which she left in Iran. Presented with a lack of options as her physiotherapy qualifications and experience are discounted, and unable to access student finance for an architecture degree, Mina was working towards a childcare qualification and hoped to run a childcare business from her own home. In this way Mina saw an opportunity to respond to the neoliberalisation and atomisation of social care (Lutz, 2016). She described how this was a costly and slow process, and in the meantime she had taken up a role in the home care service industry (McGregor, 2007). As a single mother, Mina experienced an 'escalation' in her role as a mother and a concurrent reduction in her capacity to earn an income (Institute of Migration, 2012:online) as indicated by only being able to work part

time in order to care for her child. For Mina, care work was always present in her everyday life, whether it was caring for her family at home, caring transnationally for relatives in Iran (where a child and grandchild remained in volatile circumstances), or as a provider of commodified care, and this had implications for her work-life balance (Datta et al., 2006). Though Mina came to the UK hoping to transcend the limitations she experienced as a woman in Iran, her narrative was one that suggested that her 'gender and class subordination' were reproduced in the UK (Mezzadra, 2005:4), and these were further intersected by racialised inequalities. Mina's caring also sought to *maintain a position* of security for her daughter, who it was disclosed had been in an abusive relationship. This relationship had taken her daughter back to Iran at a young age, and when she left her husband and returned to the UK, Mina described her as '*very depressed*' and with few work prospects. She hoped she could hire her daughter to help her with her childcare business so that she might build up work experience, and in this way, have a better chance of gaining a visa for her daughter (Mina's granddaughter) who remained in Iran: '*she will be in a better position to get her daughter back and a visa if she has a job*'. Though Mina's future was precarious, it was in this precarious future that she invested the wellbeing and safety of her daughter, granddaughter and herself:

I was suffering with depression, well more with anxiety. I was sent on some courses by my doctor but they didn't help. Work is the best. (Mina)

Illustrating just *how much work has to be done* (Mehra and Ahmed, 2017:online) to prevent a fall, Mina highlights how (following multiple harms) work (no matter how precarious) comes to be sustaining and vital for holding together a precarious life.

Like Mina, other participants also expressed concern about those left behind in their country of origin, and described how they enacted care transnationally. From instigating transnational divorce and child contact proceedings to speaking regularly on Skype, the migrants I spoke to challenged the borders of family and care (Mazzucato and Schans, 2011). Florica spoke about how she missed the only daughter that had remained in Romania following marriage. She told me:

Florica: ...I send her... sometimes I help her, send her money... and I try - I'm going to bring her here.

Lucy: How often do you send money back?

Florica: Not every month, like one time [every] three, four months. When I have money. And I have children here, so I have to keep them...

Working as a *Big Issue* vendor, and occasionally selling balloons and flowers, Florica has little and precarious income, but when she can spare it, it goes to her daughter in Romania, until she can bring her to Manchester too.

This section has attended to the ways in which care was gendered, and how options available to women in this study were shaped by global structures. Care work was precarious and costly but was also narrated as vital for caring for families in a transnational context.

6.4 Disability and care

The stories of care narrated above were further pronounced in the conversations with Theresa and Sheena, who both had children with disabilities. Research has shown that austerity has pushed those with disabilities and their families further into poverty, with one report noting that 7% of children are disabled, yet 27% of

families in poverty have a child with disabilities. Parents of a child with disabilities are less likely to be able to work, and where they do it is more likely to be part-time and low paid (British Medical Association, 2016). Social exclusion, deprivation, extra costs of caring (as described in chapter 5), worsening mental health and insecure housing have all been reported as a direct outcome of austerity measures and welfare reform (Fitton, 2012; BACCH and BACD, 2014). Austerity has reified inequalities experienced at the intersections of oppression through material and nonmaterial effects, though these intersections are less often explored in the literature. In the narratives that follow emphasis is on the participants experience of caring, and as such these are partial accounts of the impact of austerity on disability. This focus is however important and I take note of the observations of Michelle Fine in a discussion on the effects of neoliberalism that it is poor, black and minority ethnic women that care for others who pay an 'exorbitant price' when government retreats (Guidroz and Berger, 2009:69).

Both Theresa and Sheena were EU migrants, though both had migratory histories that extended to the Global South; West Africa and Pakistan respectively. Theresa's son had multiple learning disabilities and boarded five days a week in a residential school. He was a *looked after child* and though we did not discuss the circumstances that led to this, this may be indicative of 'parental stress' and insufficient state support (Davie, 2016; Dowling et al., 2012). Sheena's son had physical and learning disabilities, and attended a specialist school. The oldest child was also disabled and lived at home, and Sheena's husband had a debilitating and worsening health condition. I will attend to the caring narratives of these two women, and illustrate

how at times they were 'located perilously' at the intersection of race, class, gender, disability and migration status (Erevelles and Minear, 2010:129). As per the previous chapter, translocational positionality and the migration histories of the two women are also vital to this discussion. Though the two participants had quite differing views on their experiences in the UK, they both spoke of constraints and of isolation, and to explicate these I will focus on how care was invoked in relation to *work* and in relation to the *home*.

In introducing this section I highlighted that parents of children with disabilities are less likely to be able to work, and this was the case for Sheena. Like Mina and Hamid, Sheena recalled the work she had done prior to coming to the UK proudly and with remorse that she could no longer work due to her caring responsibilities.

She said:

I miss [work] too much. But *here now it is very difficult for me. My husband supports me before*. He is on dialysis, when he come back, he will come - perhaps one o'clock - you will see he will be very poorly, very tired. He [will have] his lunch and all day lie down, he couldn't move, he couldn't do anything, so *I have to do everything*. I have to do work at home, keep clean house, keep shopping updated for four person - five person - every day! Every day something needs to be done. Cooking, every day cooking for five of them and cleaning and washing.
(Sheena)

In this extract the substantial nature of Theresa's care work is evident, and throughout her narrative is one of being consumed by her newly escalated role as mother and carer (Institute of Migration, 2012). Sheena's (in)capacity to work was affected by her husband's worsening health condition, where previously they had run a business together. That Sheena was denied welfare due to not working in the

UK (see chapter 5), was felt as an affront, as she declared ‘...*I have never been sit idle, do nothing. I’m not that person.*’ Through invoking her past, Sheena illustrates how constraining her present is:

I came from Pakistan... and I settled down in Paris with my husband. I did business there - with my husband as well - I helped him, we had a Cash and Carry. I did very well... But here, when I came, my husband was not feeling well and both children were grown up, so they need more help... so that *I am stuck in the home*. I can’t go out. I’m very, very tired now. Aged... I miss [the Cash and Carry]. I miss going out freely to meet people, I was very friendly before, but *I am stuck with the children*... I go out whenever I get the chance, when they are in school or college. (Sheena)

The sense of being stuck, and a feeling of ageing, shows the intensely affective nature of caring. Prior to Paris, Sheena spoke of setting up a school in Pakistan and so, while it is evident this family’s migration was propelled by considerably more capital than many of the families MFSP worked with, she could not mobilise her privileged class position in the UK. Instead she experienced a marked isolation in the UK, and reliance on a precarious support network (see chapter 7).

Theresa described being in a similar position when she first came to the UK, as she was unable to work while her son was out of school. She vividly depicted this period:

It was very hard. *I can’t even believe it now*. I see students... and I can’t imagine myself, just being out for good seven months, with [son] not at school. If it’s now, I don’t know what I would do. I can’t cope, *I can’t imagine that*. It was very hard... Very, very hard. Sometimes *we just had nowhere to go*. We’d just take the bus in the morning, go around all Manchester. At the end of the day, we’d come home. (Theresa)

Theresa's narrative speaks of the 'biographical disruption' (Bury, 1982) often present in narratives of ill-health and disability, whereby normative expectations of the present and future diverge in reality (Grant et al., 2003). Theresa struggles to see what her future will be like:

If I can just say "Oh, I can see the future now – see what it's gonna be like" ... I'd be very happy. (Theresa)

However, it is the past which becomes the site of alterity, as she signifies disbelief at her past as her own.

The length of time it took to allocate a school place for Theresa's son was the source of much frustration and placed a substantial physical and emotional burden on Theresa. Children moving to the UK from abroad are at a greater risk of missing education, and the delays in finding a suitable school are likely to increase further for disabled migrant children (Ryder et al., 2017). A recent report notes that the increased risk may arise due to carers being unaware of school admission systems (Ryder et al., 2017). Additionally, that the largest proportion of children missing education are migrant children is likely due to their making in-year applications, a shortage of school places, bureaucracy between central admissions and academies (who have autonomy in admissions decision-making), and reduced funding for work with *International New Arrivals* (personal communications, February 2017). Theresa's narrative of this period is one of exorbitant cost, both materially, as she was ineligible for Carer's Allowance and Disability Living Allowance for six months, unable to work, and reliant on charitable grants, and immaterially, as she felt isolated and her mental health deteriorated. Theresa confided that she had felt

suicidal in the first year of coming to the UK. It is in this context that work prompted a narrative of solace, seen here in an “I” poem:

I was able to look for a job.
I like it even if I am busy.
All day, I don't mind.
I don't have to think too much anymore.
Before I used to think a lot.
But since I been working, busy,
I don't think so much anymore. (Theresa)

Theresa and Sheena had both been in the UK for just over five years at the time of interview, both with a right to work as EU migrants, though their (unvalued) caring labour as wives and mothers came first and foremost. Theresa secured work when circumstances – structural and relational – enabled it, though these remained precarious. Sheena narrated a ‘collapsed temporal horizon’ (Butler, 2009:26), whereby the sense of her life and future as something she had agency over was a remote prospect while she worked to maintain the family’s survival.

Finally, I want to turn to the space of the home as a site of narrating care. From the narratives above it is evident both Sheena and Theresa spent a lot of time in the home, and both invoked it, at times, as a site of struggle. Sheena’s struggle intersects with the practices of welfare bordering explored in chapter 5. As I interviewed her at home she showed me round the house and, showing me the damaged walls and confined spaces, Sheena offered a sense of the everyday challenges that the family face:

Biggest challenge for my family is the residence, because it is a three-bedroom house, but I need more rooms downstairs. Because of two disabled children... I have to live with them in the downstairs because they need me at night as well... so the

rooms are built down here, but they are small. They are grown up, just like big men now, and they have bigger [wheel] chairs, so nowadays it is a big challenge for me... You see it is broken – the walls. It is not much room for turning the chairs. I need wider doors and wide corridor... I want a bigger house, just like a bungalow... because my husband can't go... up and down stairs. He sleeps here nowadays [motions to the settee]. And me in son's bedroom... (Sheena)

As noted previously, Sheena had come to the UK with some capital, and the family owned their home⁵⁶, but the loss of the family income meant that as they grew out of it they were unable to alter their circumstances.

Despite these challenges, Sheena spoke of the UK as offering her sons' independence and a better future. Theresa however, though she was grateful to her son's school, was more resigned to her life in Manchester. She spoke of the difficulty of moving to the UK from Belgium, and how she could not face that again:

If I was to move to another place, I'm gonna be starting all over again... [my son] don't like moving, don't like changes... no, for the moment I don't see myself going anywhere.
(Theresa)

Theresa also told a story about when she first moved to the UK that is reminiscent of the critical race analyses of Erevelles and Minear (2010:127) who argue that those at the intersection of race, gender, class and disability risk being constituted as 'non-citizens' and this affects encounters with institutions ostensibly there to 'protect, nurture and empower'. Much of the interview with Theresa focused on the services

⁵⁶ A survey reported that parents of disabled children are most likely to be concerned about the insecurity of their housing following welfare reform (BACCH and BACD, 2014).

that she met when she came to the UK, and though things had improved, memories of ineffective (and dangerous) support were vivid:

There was a day, he was attacking me in the house, there was this nurse – there were two – they tried to help me [but] they couldn't. They had to back off. Leave me with him alone. It was in the living room like this... After a while, he's not willing to stop, they just leave him, leave me with him, I was alone with him, attacking me all day. (Theresa)

Theresa's narrative highlights the risks that face those who are carers *and* newly-arrived migrants subject to a lesser welfare safety net. Isolation because of a delayed offer of school, and ineffective state support placed both mother and child at risk.

It is possible through these narratives of disability and care, to recognise the observations of Ryan and Runswick-Cole (2008:199) that:

...mothers of disabled children occupy a liminal position because they are often not disabled and yet they can experience forms of disablism.

Theresa and Sheena's experiences mirror much of the narratives described in the first half of this chapter; precarious work, strained relationships, welfare bordering and deskilling/devaluing – however their experience at the intersection of disability multiplied the risks and harms faced. An intersectional analysis has attempted to attend to the complexity of narratives, to bring these into conversation with the disability literature, and highlight the harms experienced by a retracting welfare system.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has shown how precarity was present in migrant family narratives. While recognising that precarity has shared effects, I have attended to it through an intersectional analysis that highlights the additional costs for some. I have highlighted how precarious work (at times referred to positively in the narratives as work that is '*flexible*') is experienced by migrants whose previous experiences are devalued, leading to deskilling, low-waged and at times exploitative labour, and poor mental health (though work, any work, is often narrated as important for mental health too). I extend the analysis of precarity to consider the effect and *affect* that this has on relationships and family life. This extension of analysis is imperative for migrant women who are less likely to be in work, but no less likely to contend with the condition of precarity. Care narratives were prevalent across the participants, and these show how austerity has signified a reification of women as providers of care – both domestic and commodified. The reduction of public services, exacerbates the burdens placed on women, a burden that is particularly notable for poor and migrant women (Griffin, 2015). In global care chains, this burden disproportionately falls to migrant women, who are engaged in care work in the home (with reduced state support), in local communities (in potentially exploitative conditions), and in global networks as they provide transnational care and send remittance to countries of origin. Migrant women in this chapter have shown how care in the home is undervalued and how they are overstretched, isolated and at risk of harm as a result. The next chapter will look at the role of state, voluntary and private services in participants lives and consider the effects of funding cuts to local services. The informal networks of family, friends and

neighbours that participants called on alongside, and in lieu of, state support, will be narrated.

7.1 Introduction

A primary motivation of this research project was to understand migrant family experiences of services in a context of austerity. This was led by my observations as a family support worker at MFSP, as I witnessed service closure, and increased difficulty signposting families to services that might support them. I wanted to understand what services participants accessed, how supportive they were vis-à-vis settlement, and what (or who) else supported families in lieu of services. This chapter attends to these concerns. The services that I refer to in this chapter are those that are important in promoting the settlement and wellbeing of migrants new to the UK. These are both mainstream and specialist services, and public sector and voluntary sector services. The private sector is discussed in relation to the provision of housing. In earlier chapters I have discussed welfare and employment (and the parallel system of welfare for asylum seekers), so these are referred to minimally to avoid repetition though they are no less important in promoting settlement. Focus in this chapter is on those services that respond to health, housing, language and community integration⁵⁷ needs. Participants narrated services as *enabling* a sense of belonging and as presenting *hurdles* to a sense of belonging (Anthias, 2006). Narratives were not binary, and participants were often nuanced in their explication of accessing services, they were rarely simply ‘good’ or

⁵⁷ I am mindful that ‘integration’ is not a neutral term and that it has been used in a post-multiculturalist context as a proxy for assimilationist discourse, assuming and reifying the notion of social segregation between races and nationalities, targeting Muslims as potential terrorists, and assuming that there are “British Values” that promote social cohesion (Spencer, 2011; Anthias et al., 2012). Here I use it to signify a sense of civic participation, inclusion and belonging.

'bad'. I attend to this below though for clarity I first highlight the services that were most evidently presenting barriers, and then those that were described as enabling settlement. These are discussed in relation to available literature in order to contextualise how austerity and funding cuts might have influenced the experiences narrated. Following this, a section on housing is an exemplar of the ways in which marketisation (both predating and as accelerated by austerity) affects the provision of a basic and vital necessity. The final section highlights how networks formed of family and friends provide support (and are corroded) in times of austerity. As seen in chapter 4, informal support networks have been capitalised on in cynical ways to legitimate funding cuts to migrant communities, and the section will offer a critique of this; highlighting the precariousness of informal support and the prevalence of children supporting their parents.

To promote the anonymity of participants I am mindful of the need to withhold naming services in certain circumstances. Where this is necessary, I disaggregate experiences from the participant. I name MFSP and state organisations (such as the *NHS*) as there are fewer risks of individual identification in discussing these.

7.2 Barriers to services

This section will highlight the barriers faced by participants primarily in relation to the accessing the NHS and English language courses (referred to as ESOL). This is not exhaustive of the areas in which barriers to services were narrated, indeed they have been discussed in the previous chapters in relation to welfare and education, and later in the chapter in relation to housing. Healthcare and the acquisition of English are potential enablers of belonging and settlement, and concurrently are key

sites in which funding cuts, neoliberal and chauvinistic welfare policies (Guentner et al., 2016), and the hostile environment have been particularly mobilised (Lonergan, 2017; Saner, 2015). Consequently, participants narrated negative (inefficient, unresponsive, under-resourced, discriminatory) experiences when encountering these services. Barriers could also be narrated as encountering a *lack* of services. In dialogue with participant narratives I will refer to healthcare and ESOL policy narratives to understand how migrants are positioned in a period of austerity.

7.2.1 Healthcare

The NHS was discussed by every participant to some extent, and as such there were a range of views expressed about it. Some, who had experienced poor health care in their country of origin spoke positively about it; particularly Sara and Zeynab, who as refugees had either no, or discriminatory, healthcare experiences in Turkey and Azerbaijan. Zeynab's daughter, Fidan, highlighted the positive impact of healthcare free at the point of access:

NHS is the best thing ever, honestly. My mum didn't go to doctors very much [in Azerbaijan]. The thing is with the healthcare system, it's always with money. If you go to the doctors, it's money, if you're going for a check-up, it's money. *Without money you can't really have health control...* My mum just didn't go very much... After going to the GP [in Manchester], my Mum had so many illnesses, and she didn't even know... It's much better [to know] because she's getting medication and it's getting her fixed. (Zeynab and Fidan)

This narrative is an apposite warning about the risks of charging for healthcare.

Since these interviews have been undertaken the Immigration Acts 2014/2016 have legislated that increased categories of non-EU migrants can be charged at the point of access (Yeo, 2015) and that immigration status should be ascertained before

treatment (Docs Not Cops, 2014) contributing to the *hostile environment*. Though none of those that I interviewed faced charges, in chapter 4, ethnographic data highlighted the extortionate (material and emotional) cost of such policies when a family supported by MFSP was charged thousands of pounds for maternity and emergency care. Despite no participants being eligible for or experiencing incorrect charges, Lonergan (2015) noted that confusion over regulations (and racialisation) can mean migrants being asked to pay, even where they are eligible for free healthcare. For asylum seeking women who are dispersed, they face disjointed and inadequate maternity care (Lonergan, 2015; Beecher Bryant, 2011). Sara reflected on the different experiences she had giving birth in the UK, the first when dispersed to an area where she was isolated, and the second when settled in Manchester:

It was very, very different [when] I went to birth with my little one. I had my partner next to me, my friend – she's next to me, but I just been crying. Not from pain, it just like hurt me, you know when I birthed my other one, no-one's next to me, so I just been crying. But not of pain... just it hurt me. I saw how I just birth my other one: I didn't know English, I didn't know anything. This really hurt me. (Sara)

Participants who came from an EU country were more likely to express disappointment with healthcare in the UK. Sahir for instance noted that '*they don't take anything serious*' and invoked the idea of GP services as a 'paracetamol force' (Goodwin et al., 2012). Sahir disrupts the trope of the 'health tourist' as he returned to Germany for an operation, due to his frustration:

I would have complained against the NHS. I asked my friends as well, if I want to lodge a complaint where should I go? I've been waiting and I've been in the queue for over two years for this problem and it was still not sorted... I spoke to my friends

and they all said there was no point and no use in going anywhere and complaining because nothing would be done. So I just gave up and just thought that I'm better off going to Germany. (Sahir)

Adriana expressed similar concerns to Sahir, as she narrated a sense of being ignored and at the mercy of an ineffective (overstretched) system:

I can't say much about the healthcare here. It's fifty-fifty. Two weeks ago, all the children were ill – including me – and the children had very high temperatures. So I contacted my GP to book three appointments and they said they can only do one (individual appointment) because they can't book... for all the family here, for people from the same house, so I got very annoyed with the situation... So I took the baby – the appointment was for the baby – but I also took the other children, so the doctor said that he'd check the temperature for one child and saw that it was thirty-nine and half degrees and said there's not much we can do so take paracetamol and ibuprofen, but for the other child, *they didn't even look at them...* I took the children home but, my son, his temperature wouldn't go down with all my efforts, wouldn't go down, so I ended up taking him to the hospital. I went there and they gave me some paracetamol and told us to go outside to see if there would be any changes, but it actually went up, so we had to go back in... We went at five in the evening and only left at three in the morning. (Adriana)

Adriana compared this to Portugal, and while she appreciated not having to pay for her children's prescriptions in the UK, she also thought the children in this situation would have received *'treatment straight away'* and she would not have had to *'keep asking'* for help. Instances such as this, as with Sara above, place an emotional burden on isolated migrant mothers, as Adriana reflects that it was at this time that she *'was crying, thinking how I'm going to cope with all the pressure'*.

Isolation was exacerbated by communication barriers for those who could not speak English and who required an interpreter. Sara highlights the importance of having

access to an interpreter, *'it is really important, because you can't explain, like a child, like you're too young, you can't talk.'* Adriana spoke about the variable nature of access to interpreters:

...here sometimes I can get interpreters, otherwise I just have to go to appointments and speak of what I know... [In English] I say "I'm not happy, I'm not happy, she has fever, why you no give me the medication? Why you not check? Why you not make blood?" *Sometimes they understand but ignore me...* If I've got appointments that are not important I don't need [an interpreter], like maybe for bank or anything like that, but for health I ask for interpreter all the time, and if I don't get one then I ask if I can get one over the phone or something like that because I'm scared that I'll say something wrong.
(Adriana)

Fieldnotes from the interview with Hamid and Laila, at which an interpreter was present who on occasion works for the NHS, narrate worsening interpreter provision and the resultant isolation:

Laila said that 'there is no-one to help us in the UK. The hospital asked me to take along someone who speaks English, that they cannot provide an interpreter'. The interpreter agreed that this is happening more and more in her experience too. At North Manchester hospital, the first time they went, they did provide an interpreter, but when one of them needed a scan they said that they do not provide an interpreter. They have been waiting a long time for the scan. The interpreter asked whether they might have missed an appointment date perhaps because of the language barrier, but the family state they have not even had a letter.
(Fieldnotes, Hamid and Laila).

Laila had to rely on her children (all under 16) to interpret for her at medical appointments, and she was upset as she narrated how she arranged appointments for the school holidays:

In our daily routine we force ourselves to speak English, but there are some things we cannot understand. We have difficulty reading letters, whether they are from the hospital or school. We need help with letters and appointments. We wait for the school holidays to go to the hospital and the GP with the children so that they can interpret for us. Without them, we struggle. I can't wait for the holidays, they are a great help... It makes me wonder why I'm in this country, I feel very stressed, depressed. (Laila)

In a context of resource deficiencies, whereby face-to-face interpreting is seen as too costly (O'Donnell et al., 2013), Lucas (2015:154) notes the 'informal economy' of child interpreting is necessary for the functioning of everyday life in some migrant families. I will return to this intergenerational dependency in the final section of the chapter.

7.2.2 English language support

Relatedly, Loneragan (2015) reflects that a lack of ESOL provision is a substantive barrier to accessing welfare and healthcare, as migrants are restricted in their ability to advocate for their own, and their children's needs. Patchy and poorly-organised provision, combined with childcare responsibilities, led to disproportionate problems for migrant women in accessing ESOL. Insufficient provision has been exacerbated following funding cuts to ESOL provision of up to 50% by the Coalition and Conservative governments (Peutrell, 2010).

We saw above that Laila struggled without English and an "I" poem highlights the sense of individual deficit (see chapter 8) that she narrated:

Until I can communicate
I feel a stranger in Manchester.
I feel I have failed
because I can't communicate.

Someone asks a question and I can't answer;
I feel a stranger.
I won't be a burden on friends, on children.
(Laila)

Similarly, Sara told me of when she first came to the UK and the sense of shame she felt at not being able to speak English:

I don't have English at all... Once, I got address but I couldn't ask anyone that I'm looking for this address. I show letter to someone, I was with my daughter, she was young, I was just holding her hand and they were thinking I was begging. They put money in my hand... I just said no. Cause 'no' is the same in my language as well, I just know that word. (Sara)

Because of the isolation and sense of shame attached to not being able to speak English, most participants spoke of the importance of learning English, and subsequently had sought ESOL classes, though often with little success. Laila was told by an ESOL provider that there were no available spaces for eighteen months. Unlike government rhetoric of Muslim women as unable and unwilling⁵⁸ to learn English (Mason, 2016), Laila was emphatic:

I want to get out of the house. I would study full time or part time. I'd travel any distance. It is better maybe if I am not with the Arab community, because then I will be forced to learn if I do not share the language with my classmates. (Laila)

Similarly, Naheed – unlike her husband who was compelled to undertake an ESOL course while claiming Jobseekers Allowance – was unable to find suitable provision:

⁵⁸Following substantial funding cuts to ESOL, a £20 million fund was announced by the Conservative government that would target Muslim women who, David Cameron asserted, may have come from 'quite patriarchal societies' where 'perhaps the menfolk haven't wanted them to speak English'. Rhetoric of radicalisation and counter-extremism was also invoked in the announcement, with non-English speakers assumed to be 'more susceptible' to extremist views (Mason, 2016:online).

I applied for the ESOL class as well. I've been waiting for two years but I haven't heard anything yet... When I came here, I had some classes... for seven days, and after I wait for two years. Last [time], coming a letter, that sent me to Longsight. My husband tells me Longsight is different from Manchester College. College is better for walking, because every day you going there, me no [transport to] drop in, no drop-back. And I have children to pick up in afternoon. My interest is in my children's English school learning... (Naheed)

Sara was the only participant that had been able to consistently attend an ESOL course, and one that wasn't connected to the requirements of claiming Jobseekers Allowance (unlike Adriana and Sahir). Crucially, the college also provided childcare for Sara's youngest child while she undertook her class, and this was key to her positive experience:

If they didn't pay, maybe I couldn't go to college, because how am I going to pay? It's really expensive... I went there for learning and that's why I don't want to miss any of my classes. (Sara)

Once she received her refugee status, Sara was entitled to free ESOL and this – combined with the childcare provision - has undoubtedly had a positive impact on her sense of agency:

It's really important for me... For myself, for my children, because when you have to go to school, talk their teacher, when you take them hospital then it's good you have – you can speak, you can explain... (Sara)

Even despite this positive experience, Sara was repeating Entry Level 2, even though she had already completed it, as she was unable to progress to the next level because it clashed with having to pick up her children from school. This is indicative of the parenting responsibilities that mothers narrated in this study as partly determining

their opportunities outside the home, and moreover of the design and provision of services that do not adequately consult and respond to the needs of service users.

These narratives of barriers have indicated the ways in which migrants (particularly mothers) are restricted from accessing the services and support that will allow them to flourish in the UK. Their narratives indicate abandonment in terms of provision, though they are often over-represented in terms of policy narratives. English language acquisition and healthcare are especially linked in times of austerity as both ESOL classes and interpreter services are subject to funding cuts, leaving those with the fewest resources to draw on alternative resources (such as their children's language skills) and risk isolation and poor health.

7.3 Services that enabled

This section will highlight the services that participants narrated as supporting their settlement in the UK. These were stories of organisations and professionals that went the 'extra mile' and which were often recalled fondly. Voluntary sector support organisations and leisure and cultural spaces such as libraries, museums and parks were most often invoked as providers of a welcoming space, practical and emotional support, and a sense of belonging. However, these have been reshaped by austerity as funding cuts and neoliberal processes of marketisation have taken effect. This context is important; as participants narrated what was valuable to them, the risks faced at the loss of these is also evident. This section will start with narratives of support from MFSP. That these are most prominent is undoubtedly affected by my positionality, seen as a 'representative' of the organisation, many participants expressed profuse gratitude to me (see chapter 3, section 8.5, and chapter 8). While

recognising the potential limitations of this narrative, it is nonetheless important, particularly so that participants might ‘speak back’ to the ethnographic data presented in chapter 4. I then go on to consider other voluntary sector organisations that were narrated as sources of support, and (where it is known) reflect on changes to these services beyond the confines of the narratives presented here, to provide an overview of the changing landscape for migrant support. Finally, I briefly highlight the library as a setting for narratives of belonging and how this space has depleted following funding cuts.

7.3.1 Views of ‘Migrant Family Support Project’

Many participants recalled the support they received from MFSP positively, they spoke of practical support, such as signposting and advocacy work, and of the emotional ‘holding’ that support workers exhibited (Thompson, 2016:108). In the previous section we saw that Zeynab had never seen a doctor in Azerbaijan, and Fidan told me that their support worker ‘*was the first person that sent my Mum to the doctors*’ and consequently:

...[Kirsty’s] support and her really trying to make us feel at home, and comfortable in where we are was very, very nice of her... she helped us so much. (Fidan)

Adriana was also emphatic about the support she received from MFSP. The outreach model was valued, as it was the persistent visiting and leaving of notes when she was not at home that encouraged Adriana to accept the support offered:

I was that excited, I forgot to ask how he [support worker] got to know me and how he got my details. But he’s been very good to me and he helped me so much, so I’ve got him in my heart... He helped me for two months but what took longer

was sorting out the school for my niece... My niece was still at home, so what he did was speak to the high school and they said we haven't got any more spaces, so he informed the school that we're going to contact the court, so they could find a solution, so when he mentioned the court, the schools replied and said – okay – we've got a space for her. (Adriana)

Adriana exclaimed that she told the support worker '*God sent you here*' and subsequently said she was '*very upset when he told me the bad news about the project*'. Other participants spoke similarly of the support from MFSP in relation to school places for their children. Support workers would challenge slow and unreasonable school offers and ensure requisite additional support was available, be that language support, therapeutic interventions for those who had suffered trauma, and appropriate SEN provision where needed. In a context of funding cuts and increasing neoliberalism in education, whereby academies have greater autonomy over admissions procedures (Sellgren, 2013; Rudd and Goodson, 2017), a 'lower proportion of deprived pupils' are admitted (Gilbert, 2013), and schools are enlisted as agents of border control (Against Borders for Children, 2016), migrant children face increased risks to their educational wellbeing. Furthermore, the removal of MFSP's local authority funding, despite the knowledge that migrant children face a high risk of missing education, and who Manchester City Council (2017:online) emphasise are '*amongst the most vulnerable in our city*', appears additionally regressive.

Support to access welfare benefits was also highly valued by participants. Sheena noted that her support worker had:

...pushed all the paperwork. He did it all for us. Mainly, mainly for money, for benefits he helped us. Very important. (Sheena)

Florica too highlighted that at a time when things were hardest for the family (in 2010), when they were not in receipt of welfare benefits and had to borrow money to survive, it was MFSP that would '*bring food and help*' several times a week. Florica was the only participant who was still receiving family support from *Charity 2*, in what could be termed MFSPs new incarnation as a Roma-only support service⁵⁹. Celina, her support worker, who worked just two days a week, told me that she lacked the capacity to support Florica in the same way as she had been supported in 2010 (when *MIF* funding paid for three full-time workers):

...Sometimes I haven't had time to come see Florica, and I said I'm sorry I can't come, and I didn't see her for like two, three months. Because I had to prioritise evictions, but she needed to see me as well, and she had the gas cut off, and I couldn't see her and it was quite a long time to sort it out with her... We only sorted that gas out recently... because Florica wanted me to come and I didn't have time to come. For a while. There was a time when I couldn't see her for a while. (Celina)

The intensity of participant recollections of the service however appeared to depend on when they were supported by MFSP. Those who were supported between 2008-2011 were generally more emphatic in their review than those who were supported in the year up to the closure of the project in March 2013. This reflects the changing capacity of the organisation to be responsive to the needs of service users following funding cuts. Moreover, families that had been supported by MFSP in this latter

⁵⁹ This is a trend recognised by Guma (2015:107), studying in Glasgow, that post-2011 there was an 'intensification' of support services that catered specifically to the Roma community, with it being assumed by a range of actors, both well-meaning and hostile, that they are somehow more needy, vulnerable and *risky* than other migrant groups.

period were more likely to tell me about substantial support needs. For instance, Hamid told me about a situation that highlights the risks that migrants face in trying to access services without support:

Accessing benefits is difficult, if you miss signing one letter all your benefits will stop. Due to the language barrier, we are not sure what to do... it was *all* stopped. Our tax credit was stopped over a year ago. We went to a solicitor on the main road... who now has the paperwork, and we pay £150 to appeal the decision. We paid over a year ago and still have not got tax credit. (Hamid)

The exploitation of a gap in legal advice services, resulting from local authority and legal aid cuts (Gentleman, 2011), is evident in the fixed fees charged by solicitors to those in poverty or on a low-income. Of all the interviews, it was this case that most directly illustrated the impact of the loss of MFSP as an organisation that effectively signposted families. While MFSP had supported the family to complete their initial application for benefits, following closure and the repeal of their tax credits, Hamid and Laila did not know who to ask for help. Despite an overall reduction in advice services in Manchester (Ryan, 2017), I informed the family that there was an advice centre, a few streets away from their home, to which Laila remarked: *'I see people queuing there every Tuesday. One year we've been here and I didn't know'*, emphasising the risks of isolation.

7.3.2 Refugee voluntary sector

Other organisations that were narrated as particularly supportive were, unsurprisingly, most often those that specifically served refugee and asylum-seeking communities. Zeynab and Fidan spoke of *Refugee Action* and a drop-in project that

supported them once they received their refugee status. Fidan recognised that the organisation had closed shortly before our interview took place and lamented:

It's ridiculous... We used to go and phone, lots of stuff, and they were very kind and very welcoming, and I'm very sad, actually. It should continue, definitely. (Fidan)

This was a centrally located and thriving drop-in advice service that provided advice at all stages of the asylum and refugee process. Funded by the Home Office, the service received a 63% cut in funding in the first year of the Coalition government, referred to as 'savage' in the charity's annual report (Refugee Action, 2012). The drop-in was defunded and closed in 2014; a national helpline service was put to tender as an alternative. This new model is criticised for being 'less a welcome support and more a barrier to any sense of belonging' (Darling, 2014:online).

One participant spoke of the indispensable care and support received from a counsellor at *Freedom from Torture*. Though purporting that they could not put into words what the counsellor meant to them, they emphatically highlighted the *life-saving* nature of their relationship with this service. Referring to the annual report of the organisation, it is evident that their capacity is such that not all who need this support can receive it, as they state they had to 'turn away two survivors of torture for every one we saw' (Freedom from Torture, 2017). It is these services, narrated as vital to enable migrants to move beyond mere survival and live a life in which one might 'persist and flourish' (Butler, 2012:10), that are seen as expendable in times of austerity.

7.3.3 Community spaces

Leisure activities were narrated as important by most participants, especially for children and whole-family activities. For low-income families; municipal services and public spaces are vital (Ridge, 2013), and participants spoke about spending their time at libraries, museums, parks, free cultural events (such as the *Mega-Mela*), and in Piccadilly Gardens. In chapter 6, we saw that Theresa similarly spent her time on buses when she had '*nowhere else to go*'. These spaces were vital in orienting participants in the city. Sara spoke about the local library that she and her family visited:

Close to my home there is a library, we can go there... I just borrow books, borrow DVD's, children can watch it. Yeah, cos when you buy it's expensive and anyway they just, they just get bored, so you can just change. It's nice. (Sara)

This facility was a community-run library, housed in a Sure Start centre following the closure of the local library in 2011 following funding cuts. Run by 'local people', it opened just six hours per week due to a lack of volunteers (Clarke, 2013). While these spaces can potentially counter some of the isolation felt and narrated throughout by participants, funding cuts have depleted the opportunities for participation in free leisure provision.

7.4 Housing and private sector

If I make a complaint to housing, what if the landlord says I have to leave the house? I've been bidding for a house and I want one that is permanent. If I just wait in this house I'll have time to get a good one, but if the landlord says I have to leave the house, I'll have to look for one in a rush and I'll not get one nearby. (Adriana)

The role of markets and the private sector in delivering welfare has been entrenched under the guise of crisis and austerity (see chapter 2), and this has been evident earlier in this thesis, for instance in relation to *welfare-to-work* initiatives (chapter 5). However, it is in the provision of housing that neoliberal trends are most pronounced. Participants, as indicated above in the extract from Adriana, spoke of feeling insecure, of imbalanced landlord-tenant power relations and the desire for a secure, good quality home. In this section then I consider the role of the for-profit sector in narratives of housing and the *difficulty* of making a home. The housing sector has been subject to a ‘neoliberal assault’ since the 1970s (Hodkinson and Lawrence, 2011:online), and economic crisis, austerity and welfare reform have further pushed those on a low-income into ever more untenable housing situations and homes that are in poor condition (Rubery et al., 2012; Hodkinson and Robbins, 2013; Ridge, 2013; O’Hara, 2014).

In this study, those who were in social housing were mostly positive about their homes. While Sahir and Naheed spoke of being prohibited from moving into a bigger home because of the ‘bedroom tax’⁶⁰, their home was overall in good condition. While Sheena experienced problems with her home (chapter 6), she also had security as a home-owner. Those in the worst housing conditions were in private accommodation or NASS provision for asylum seekers. Living conditions were similarly poor as participants spoke of homes in various states of disrepair and landlord inaction or harassment. Migrant *families* and refugees are likely to be

⁶⁰ The ‘bedroom tax’ is the commonly given name to the Coalition government policy that came into effect in April 2013. Known officially as the ‘under-occupancy charge’ it reduces housing benefit payment to working age tenants who have a ‘spare’ bedroom. (Koch, 2014)

looking for a *secure* home for the long-term (Perry, 2012) and consequently participants spoke of moving between private properties seeking something better each time, trying to avoid conflict with landlords, and an overarching desire to be in social housing. This mirrors a trend reported by Shelter that for those on a low-income; affordability and somewhere to settle long-term, are prioritised over home-ownership (Edwards, 2005).

To return to Adriana, while pointing out a broken window pane in the living room, covered over with cardboard and secured by masking tape, she described the conditions that she and her family lived in (and which she dared not report to the Council):

I have no electricity in the bathroom, also the lightbulbs in here I have to keep changing them, so maybe there's a problem... The kids they were playing outside and they threw a stone by accident and I asked for the window to be changed... but they said that the pane was very old, so they're not doing that. So I'm just waiting... During the winter it gets very cold... and damp as well... (Adriana)

Detailing how she had persistently and unsuccessfully sought help from the letting agent and the landlord, Adriana took measures herself to improve the home:

I cleaned everything, *but still it's bad*. They have done nothing. I did write a letter stating all the issues with the housing, but they don't sort anything out... [When we came] this carpet wasn't here. It was a green one and when we stepped on it our socks all turned black because it was that mouldy because of the previous residents, and then the baby started walking... so I had to change it myself, and my bedroom floor and my son's bedroom, there was no carpet there either, so I actually had to go and get a carpet from the bin and do it myself because there was no way I could live with it. So when I want to do something I do speak with my landlord, but *I end up doing it myself* because he doesn't do anything. (Adriana)

While these improvements and contestations undertaken by Adriana signify an agentic *resourcefulness* and *strength* (cf. Pink, 2004:108), these were narrated by Adriana as not sufficient to change the circumstances of the family's living conditions for the better. Structural constraints are overwhelming and harmful; and Adriana feared for the health of her children in such conditions (Harker, 2006; de Noronha, 2016). The threat of eviction loomed over those in private accommodation, and this risk was most pronounced when benefits were delayed or denied. Though none had experienced eviction in this study, as can be seen in the extract that opened this section, it was felt as an ever-present risk, limiting the capacity of participants to 'complain' over legitimate concerns, for fear of homelessness.

Asylum seekers are subject to a separate welfare system, that sees them dispersed, housed in 'low-cost and hard-to-let social housing' (Darling, 2016:486) and which has been termed a 'new apartheid' from its inception (Mynott, 2002:106). More recently, housing for asylum seekers has ceased to be provided under a mixed-economy of welfare, and instead for-profit contracts are fulfilled by multinational private businesses. This has further marginalised asylum seekers as 'support organizations and local authorities are readily side-lined and their expertise lost' (Darling, 2016:488). Echoing the findings of Allsopp et al (2014) and an exposé on squalid conditions in asylum accommodation in Manchester (Real Radio and Manchester Mule, 2011), Zeynab and Fidan spoke of the poor quality of the NASS property in which they were housed, the management of which was subcontracted to a local private lettings agency:

[When we first came] it was very bad. As first, it was just very dirty. The garden was piled up with dirt, lots of mice – so it wasn't very nice. My mum just totally redecorated, like made it clean and everything, but even then it was still very dirty all the time, the carpets were very bad. We reported it and they wouldn't really – [Zeynab speaks] – When something was broken they'd come and fix it, but for example, the carpet, we told them – for years and years – like all the time, maybe come clean it or maybe change it, and they didn't do that. With the mice they just put some medication in, but they kept coming back still. (Zeynab and Fidan)

In a context of austerity, Darling (2016:489) asserts that the expansion of private interests in asylum accommodation is 'relatively easy' as:

Asylum seekers are unable to vote, unable to work, are often demonised in the popular press and are constructed as figures whose entitlement to any form of support is readily questioned.

Canning (2017a) goes further; housing asylum seekers in uninhabitable conditions evidences not only complicity, but state infliction of violence on those in vulnerable positions and with least recourse to challenge.

Though participants in this study had not experienced eviction, or been subject to the 'bedroom tax' (homes were more likely to be overcrowded than 'under-occupied'), participants narrated eviction as an ever-present threat as they faced increasing rents and low-paid, precarious employment. For some participants there was an awareness that if just one thing were to happen – such as a benefit sanction or a complaint made against a landlord – they could face eviction. We might return to the definition of precarity introduced in chapter 6; families were close enough to the edge that it would be quite easy to fall off the precipice (Mehra and Ahmed, 2017). Paton and Cooper (2017:167) note that the harms of eviction are not only

evident at the point of removal, but in the 'build-up' which 'induces much psychological stress and anxiety'. Moreover, the condition of the homes in which participants were, or had been, housed were of a strikingly low standard, and yet the actions of participants to effect change were largely ignored by private landlords and contractors⁶¹.

7.5 Social support networks

To understand how migrant families make liveable lives, in a new country with a regressive welfare state, it is necessary to highlight the informal networks that participants narrated as influential and supportive. Family and friends have been named as important in making lives in the UK already; in chapter 5, transnational support networks were highlighted, and in chapter 6 the role of migrant mothers enacting heightened care roles was explored. In this section, I turn to the narratives of those relationships that were named by participants as making their daily lives possible in the UK. Friendships discussed were gendered; migrant mothers spoke of turning to other mothers for support. Children also appeared to have significant roles in the home, and I will return to the issue of children as interpreters, discussed earlier in the chapter. Throughout, I consider the potential risks of both a lack of, and an over-reliance on, informal support networks.

⁶¹ Editing this section (and perhaps the reader has already thought it too), it is impossible not to think of Grenfell Tower and the disregard for human life evidenced through the low standards of housing provided for a poor, largely migrant population. Though the residents campaigned for better conditions, their concerns were ignored, and 72 people have subsequently died. These narratives – and the narratives of many more – assume a new urgency in the shadow of Grenfell. State, institutions and policy must respond to these narratives and must apprehend the lives of migrants and ensure that they are *liveable* (Butler, 2009).

Knowing a relative or friend in the UK was often instrumental in the decision to migrate. These connections influence where participants settled, and decisions were made based on the stories of their peers:

When things were getting very difficult [in Portugal] that's when I decided to move because I couldn't provide for my children any more... and when I got here I had my sister to help me, so I stayed with them and they help my family. [I moved to Manchester] basically to be with her. (Adriana)

I came to Manchester because I had a brother there. I visited my brother and then claimed asylum and was moved to Stoke-on-Trent. When I got my papers I moved back to Manchester. (Mina)

For Theresa, this decision was made on what she came to understand as a '*science-fiction*' and she resented the move to the UK:

Theresa: For the beginning it was hard. I feel like just going back to where I was coming from... I was having some family here, who asked me to come over. So when I came here, it was not like what they said... Everything was different. When they see (my son) they thought '*oh*'. As we were talking on the phone they thought my son's like other children. When they see him with this situation they couldn't cope. Because we stay in their house, we stay in their house for three months.

Lucy: What did they tell you that was different to the reality?

Theresa: Like getting (son) into school. They told me... it's very easy... I don't know it's not like that. Where is this school (that they spoke of)? ... Maybe if I was told what it was going to be like, seven months at home. Not getting what I want when I come here, I don't think I would even have come. With two kids, I can't cope. But with all this misinformation...

Theresa had distanced herself from her relatives in the aftermath of the move, and she had learned that she could only rely on a friend who also had a disabled child as:

...She's the only one that understand my situation. You know, if you are not in my situation, you will never understand... I don't just take him to nobody else, no, it's not possible.
(Theresa)

Theresa met her friend at a voluntary organisation that supports parents of children with disabilities, thus highlighting the contingent nature of this friendship on a formal intermediary.

Other women also spoke of having one close relationship with one woman that they depended on for childcare, emergency support, and emotional care. Migrant mothers worked in partnership with other migrant mothers to collectively meet the needs of children and enable job-searching, access to English language classes and employment. In this way, participants echo the findings of Canton (2016:139) that there is gender 'homophily' in support networks; that is women seek support from other women. For instance, Adriana needed her sister to look after her children while she attended the Work Programme. Sara met her friend, also a Kurdish woman, at the school gates:

I don't have any family in Manchester. I have no family in UK. I'm close to friends. I have a friend... she's like my sister. Last year I went to operation, she looked after my little one who was seven months old... She looked after for a week, till I got home from hospital. She stay in my home... I didn't know anyone before... [Other friends] they good, they okay, but [she is] not like friend, she's like my sister. When something happens, even if it's the middle of the night I just can ring her and ask for help... (Sara)

Similarly, Sheena's neighbours were vital in meeting the multiple care needs of the family:

Sometimes, when I have another emergency and I have to go out, I ask her, especially my next-door neighbour, she came here and look after him if he needs something. She helps me, too much here, and her husband as well... My eldest son has appointment everywhere, I'll come back later, and [my neighbour] has to come from the school to receive him.
(Sheena)

Where participants didn't have family in the UK, they were hugely grateful to the friend(s) they had, and as Sara notes, they often came to be seen as a proxy family:

...friend is more close because everyone is like you, because no-one have family... you try to be like family to each other.
(Sara)

Some reduced the physical distance from friends through virtual means. Mina explained that when her daughter returned to Iran, she was reallocated a one bedroom flat by her social housing provider. This meant she was placed further away from her support network and subsequently she turned to the internet as a conduit for support: *'I get support from other Mum's in the area, we have built a community, you can ask anything on Facebook.'*

For migrants, we see a divergence from the findings of Canton (2016) who notes the primacy of the extended family in providing everyday support in times of hardship; for many in this study (excepting Adriana) it was a friend who provided this support, often on a reciprocal basis. Family were scattered transnationally, and though they may have been called on for financial support (see chapter 5), it was friendship networks that sustained everyday life in the UK. While these networks are crucial, they are also precarious. The networks are small, often people spoke of *one close friend*, and as seen in chapter 6, migration and economic insecurity place relationships under pressure that can cause these networks to rupture. Moreover, as

was the case for Theresa (above) and for Hamid who made supportive acquaintances through his ESOL class at college (see chapter 6), friends are often made through institutions and formal networks, if these disappear due to funding cuts, there will be fewer opportunities for informal networks to develop.

While I offer caution about the lengths to which informal support networks are a panacea for formal support, the lack of close friendships was additionally difficult for those who were newest to the country. For instance, throughout this chapter, Laila has narrated a sense of isolation, elucidated here:

It is difficult to make friends. I have friends, but they are not close or comfortable friends. It takes time... In Manchester people are less, even [the] Arab community, friendly. They are closed, not open. Is this the community or how people live in the UK? Am I the odd one out, or are people locked in themselves? Or is it because we are new to the area? People seem scared. Maybe it will change with time passing. This has been a big change from Spain and Morocco. We always had a busy house in Spain. There was always someone to help with the paperwork, but there isn't anyone to help in the UK.
(Laila)

For this family, the lack of external support, both formal and informal, meant a reliance on the resources within the immediate family unit, particularly vis-à-vis English language support. Intergenerational differences are evident in the family setting, as children experience intense acculturation in the school setting and quickly adopt the language; their ability to speak English is subsequently invaluable in everyday family life (Lucas, 2014). Fidan illustrates this, as she told me that *'I have come so far, from no - no English, to receiving certificates from the mayor.'* Earlier in the chapter Laila's reliance on her daughters to interpret in healthcare settings was

highlighted, and similarly Fidan described to me how her mother Zeynab *'just says I'm "the help" ... I'm like her personal translator.'* Fidan was eighteen at the time of the interview and expressed that she liked the role that she had in the family. She described how since she was able to speak English, the family were no longer in need of support from external agencies, and instead they were *'very competent to do it ourselves now... we're very thankful'*. While child language brokering is narrated as necessary, even enjoyable, by participants, it is nevertheless an 'informal economy' (Lucas, 2014:154) that is more evident in times of austerity as formal interpreting resources deplete. Children should not be de facto interpreters in lieu of alternative provision, especially in circumstances where it might be harmful for them to be exposed to adult domains (Lucas, 2014).

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter has largely attended to the third reading of the Listening Guide (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998), to understand how *relationships* were narrated variously as enabling and/or presenting barriers to settlement and belonging. These relationships were formative, whether they were professional or personal, negative or positive. The narratives depicted here have highlighted at the very least a *sustained* need for support services, while resources and service provision are decreasing. Indeed, stories such as Hamid and Laila's, whereby they faced exploitation from fee-charging solicitors, indicate a central tension of the austerity period; an increased need for support as the welfare state retreats. As the welfare state retreats, the importance of social support networks is evident, but these are susceptible to the proclivities of all relationships. The tendency to rely on one close

friend means that there are fewer options available should these relationships breakdown. Policies that rupture geographical proximity to family and friends, such as dispersal or social housing allocation, also have the potential to place hurdles in the way of making lives that are *liveable*. Narratives developed in earlier chapters are relevant here, as *welfare bordering and hostility* are felt in the removal of specialist provision or entitlement for migrants. In lieu of interpreting services, migrant children are ‘filling the gap’ and taking on significant responsibility in family life. The *precarious* nature of tenancies and the seeming impunity of landlords sees families living in near uninhabitable homes, without recourse to complain, for fear of eviction. Migrant families narrate caring and supportive social support networks, but these are subject to the strains of economic hardship and decreasing formal provision, particularly as ‘homophilic’, disadvantaged networks require reciprocal support and care (Canton, 2016:39). These networks are important, but they are not infinite resources.

This chapter also foreshadows some of the overarching narratives that will be discussed in the next chapter. For instance, the function (and restrictive nature) of gratitude as it limited the extent of narratives of complaint or defiance (and which shaped my encounters with participants who saw me as a representative of MFSP), and the narrative of individual responsibility, an imperative that can be seen to be pushed by policy makers and institutions, as specialist provision is withdrawn (Lonergan, 2017). For all the talk of specialist provision, the welfare state, and close friends in this chapter, still Theresa says:

Now I realise, my life, this situation, so I just have to keep strong, keep praying to God, one day this situation I am in will be solved. (Theresa)

In the final analysis chapter, I analyse how participants constituted austerity in their narratives, and examine the structural constraints within which stories are told.

8.1 Introduction

The impetus for doing a PhD came out of a desire to share the stories of the families that I worked with as a social worker. Working closely with newly-arrived migrants, and hearing about their struggles and successes in making their lives in Manchester, I knew the power that their stories held. In order to understand the divergences and connections between my narrative of austerity, MFSP's narrative of austerity and the participants' narratives of austerity, I recognise the words of Frank (2010:3) that:

‘Stories work with people, for people, and always stories work on people, affecting what people are able to see as real, as possible, and as worth doing or best avoided.’

The narratives that will be explored in this chapter speak to these affects. A narrative perspective should be seen not as ‘a means to discover or mirror reality’ but as ‘an ongoing and constitutive part of reality’ (Orbuch, 1997:466). Using the Listening Guide to analyse participant narratives, has enabled me to attend to the constructed nature of narratives, and to attend to the material reality of everyday lives. Drawing on a critical lens (see chapter 3) is important to understand the context within which narratives are told. Frank (2010:73) says of this:

‘What makes thought *critical* is a refusal to accept immediate, commonsense understanding, while at the same time having the most profound respect for and curiosity about commonsense understandings... Critical thought can appreciate how expert people are about their own lives while examining ways in which any person's or group's self-awareness is limited.’

Stories of everyday lives have been shared in chapters 5-7. This chapter attends more specifically to the fourth reading of the transcripts and brings together that which participants narrated, my own interpretation of their stories, and the 'wider web of social and structural relations from which narrated subjects speak' (Doucet and Mauthner, 2008:404). Using the Listening Guide, I have been made aware of listening to not only '*the voice*' of participants, but to the multiplicity of narratives that make up a person's account of their life. The listening guide approach reveals the complexity, the relationality, the contradictions, and the connections within one interview, and across the entire dataset.

This chapter will highlight six key narratives that participants drew on in making sense of their experiences. These are; *the 'worse-off' narrative, the duty to be grateful, individual responsibility, othering and being the other, narrating inequality and making claims to justice, and precarious temporality*. These are helpful for thinking about the latter element of the chapter that explores why and how austerity came to be *elusive* in participant's narratives.

What follows is an exploration of how each of these narratives were apparent for those interviewed, with all of these drawn on to a greater or lesser degree by participants.

8.2 The 'worse-off' narrative

The "worse-off" narrative is one that participants used to relativise their experiences in the UK. This was done spatially and relationally, as lives pre-migration were described as worse, and the lives of others as worse than their own. This narrative was one that recurred throughout many of the participant interviews, and as

touched on in chapter 5, it is key to understanding participant's experiences of austerity. I was attuned to it very early on in the research, and though it seems somewhat obvious now, it was the narrative that most challenged me, as I realised my perception of austerity differed to the perception of many of the participants. An email to my supervisors as I began interviews shows my anxieties with regard to this narrative:

The question about austerity and migrants did not solicit much of a response... is it about the relevance of the topic? ... [Austerity] just did not seem to be something that concerned the participant. She talked about balancing the books, getting by etc, but actually austerity was way down on her list of concerns. She's suffered discrimination in her home country, sought asylum, received refugee status, had counselling support, so perhaps there's a kind of hierarchy of concerns ... (Email communication, April 2014).

It is important that this narrative be discussed, in order to contextualise the austerity narratives of migrants. I also think it's important to note, lest this discussion be understood in a wholly unintended fashion, or come to the attention of those who would sanction the further curtailment of migrant welfare rights, that this narrative is *not* about suggesting that because an individual narrates that they had a 'worse' experience in another country, that their experience (with all the inequality and discrimination that this might entail) in the UK is tolerable, or that they should tolerate it.

Most often, participants would talk about where they had come from, either their country of origin or a second country, as somewhere that they had experienced

worse everyday living conditions, and this shaped how they understood their lives in the UK. This was a recurring theme for Florica:

[Life in Romania was] poor! No money, nobody helped me. No money, no food, no nothing... In Romania, nobody is going to help you with these things... Romania don't do these things, like Child Tax Credit or anything like that, or to help you like how [support workers from MFSP] does. No-one does that. (Florica)

A conversation about racist verbal abuse in Manchester is also seen as something quite tolerable to Florica, compared to what the Roma people have faced elsewhere:

When I go to work, sometimes people are like "Gypsy! Romanian!" [But] we're not ashamed, the English people is nothing to fear. I like it here because many times [in other countries] there was like, immigration [enforcement] that try to force Romanians back to their country. In Romania, no-one is going to help me. (Florica)

For Sara, she often returns to the idea that '*nothing is hard here*' in Manchester, and contrasts this with a Turkey that is '*too different*', '*too hard*'. She contrasts the *safety* of her neighbourhood in Manchester, where her children can play outside with her neighbour's children, with the *danger* of Turkey. She invokes two vivid examples that evidence that she understood it to be a country that was violent at an intimate/personal level and at a structural level (Sanders-McDonagh et al., 2016):

Everything is too different, Compared to here, it's big, big difference. They not really helpful, it's completely different... I don't really remember about support in Turkey [laughs], but I don't think you have any support like here, to build you up, to hold your hand, yeah. That's why Manchester here is little better. Because if no-one try to help you, everything is different there. Traffic, everywhere... that's why every day you heard 'accident', we heard car crash, we heard people die... lots of things you can't compare to here really. It's really different.

The traffic, and other things. Ladies have problem with husband, yeah. They just went to police, they just don't cover family, they just say 'just go sort by yourself...after husband just kill wife and children. *They got lots of bad things, it's really bad.* (Sara)

The 'worse-off' narrative was also invoked to show how an understanding of one's situation was shaped in relation to others, as some participants spoke about a '*man I know*' who was narrated as experiencing worse conditions than themselves. Adriana refers to such a man as she talks about the precariousness of welfare entitlement for migrants:

Adriana: I'm just a bit concerned about getting the UK residence, because things are changing all the time, so you're more secure when you're working because you're contributing to the economy, but also having residence is a lot better.

Lucy: What do you mean by everything is changing all the time?

Adriana: Just the laws are changing, so I'm aware of that and also I heard from other people, because we get many people coming into UK, every year, so they're not helping people as much... A man I know, he was denied Jobseekers Allowance so sometimes they can do those things to people and stop helping them... I've got four children to look after so if they stop helping – giving support – [it] will be very difficult for my family.

As can be seen above, the 'worse-off' narrative was sometimes used to signify fear that their lives could become worse, as they extracted from their past experiences and from their peers' what life could become – that they may become *the other* – particularly as this related to welfare retrenchment. This fear of becoming more abject and the desire to distance oneself from abjection will be further explored in the narrative of 'othering' below.

The 'worse-off' narrative was also used at times to compare experiences of poverty and inequality in the UK (the world's fifth largest economy) with countries of the global South, and Eastern Europe. For instance, Adriana draws on this narrative, where she buys-in to the ideal of the UK as a meritocracy. A place which, despite social inequality, also presents an opportunity for a better life – if not in the present, at least in the future:

I have good childhood memories [of Angola], things were good back then, but now a lot of things changed, because there's some very rich people and the others are very poor, so *I prefer living in Europe...* Here you still see a difference between the rich and poor, but although people struggle, it's a lot easier for them to get what they want. But in Africa, people they just stay the same way, like children - they're hungry - and the conditions are really bad and the rich, they just stay rich, and they don't care about everyone else. *But here if you fight, you can achieve what you want.* (Adriana)

This quote has some similarity with the observations of Back (2009:338) who, talking of those who risk their lives at the borders of Europe, finds that:

...Migrants see themselves as moving towards Europe and not Spain or France... African migrants are often more enthusiastic Europeans than the EU passport holders on the mainland. Despite the white disdain for them, the migrants are perhaps the ultimate Euro-enthusiasts, willing to pay for their fervour with their own lives.

There are differences, Adriana is an EU passport holder, and as such has not been subject to the some of the bordering practices impacting non-EU migrants. Though she has not risked her life, Adriana cares for the daughter of her half-sister, who does not have dual citizenship with Portugal, thereby the separation of mother and daughter across continents signifies the sacrifices that the family have made in

order for her to be able to '*fight*' and '*achieve*' better things in Europe. When Portugal no longer appeared to offer those European promises, the family uprooted and moved to the UK, where they continue to fight.

Sheena also drew on this narrative of the “developed” versus the “third world” when she talked about *Zakat* (the Islamic obligation to give to charity) and fasting for Ramadan:

[Fasting is] okay, once you are used to it, it's easy for you. You feel better, the hungry people, thirsty people, when you are hungry and thirsty you can feel better for them and [that] is the idea... My husband has to pay money for charity. Mostly in the poor country, like Pakistan, Palestine, Ethiopia. Here, all are well. There, there's no water, no pure water for them in the poor countries. I prefer there give charity. (Sheena)

The presence of the “worse-off” narrative does not mean participants did not speak of difficulties in the UK; indeed, we have explored many in the previous chapters. The narrative was often in tension with the difficult experiences that participants told me about in their day-to-day lives in the UK. However, it is important to recognise that migrants come to the UK with a lifetime of experiences across countries, some of which may have been incredibly traumatic, some of which may have been imbued with economic hardship. These histories matter when trying to appreciate how migrants understand their situation in the UK. The work of Abdelmalek Sayad (Saada, 2000:37) is pertinent when thinking about how migrant narratives are constructed through and across time and space. He calls the phenomenon ‘the double absence’, that is, ‘the immigrant is always an emigrant’ and he warned that failure to give due consideration to the life of a migrant before

their migration, was as if to say the migrant's '...existence began at the moment he [sic] arrived...' (p.31)⁶².

For many of the participants, memories of state sanctioned marginalisation, violence, discrimination, injustice and economic inequality permeate their new environment. We might recognise what Gunaratnam, citing Freeman, calls 'temporal drag', that is, 'how time is layered, with the past continually intruding into and tugging on the present' (Gunaratnam, 2015:online). Another point of Gunaratnam's is instructive here. Referring to intersectionality and to the idea of pain as experienced by those in end-of-life care, she talks about how the components of these two are not 'distinct and additive', but instead are 'mixed and kaleidoscopic'. Instead of the *hierarchy of concerns* that I posited as an explanation in the email to my supervisors earlier, instead I want to call attention to the kaleidoscopic nature of migrants' experiences of inequality, of which austerity is in the mix, but perhaps at times indistinguishable from previous (and concurrent) harms.

This narrative did not only work one way. Some felt they were 'worse-off' since migrating, though those that felt this talked about persevering for the sake of their children. For instance, Theresa felt support services were better in Belgium, and she described her life as '*off-track*' since coming to the UK. She did not want to move, only because she did not want to start '*all over again*' and because her son was

⁶² Though it should be noted that this research project would not be of the sort that Sayad would advocate for, whereby he thought to understand the emigrant as much as the immigrant, research had to narrow 'the object of study to a single immigrant population at the expense of more general or comparative analyses of immigration...' (Saada, 2000:31).

settled in his residential school. For Hamid and Laila, my initial notes in the analysis of their interview highlights the prevalence of the word '*difficulty*', as they told me about their lives in Manchester. These difficulties were in line with commonly reported austerity effects (and affects) as they relayed stories about benefits, employment, housing, service provision and isolation (Stenning, 2017). Their lack of a social support network, and their knowledge gaps in terms of service provision, meant that they felt – certainly on a relational level – 'worse-off' in the UK, compared to Spain. However, they determined that though painful, this was a necessary compromise:

The children do not have a good future there, there is no work for children, there is lots of discrimination. People that immigrate there, they have degrees, but no jobs, no future. They are sitting at home, doing nothing. Spanish people are racist, they don't give work to migrants. We experienced this ourselves... (Hamid and Laila)

This can also be read in terms of what Kate Smith (2014:210) refers to as the narrative of 'reworking', whereby participants rework their situation through 'material social practices' (Katz, 2004 as cited in Smith, 2014:209). In this case, education is seen as a transformative project, one which will pay dividends in a better future, if not a better present.

The presence of the narrative does not mean that there is a neat binary between worse and better. For instance, in the story of Mina, to suggest she is "better-off" in the UK would be too simplistic. She anticipated her arrival in the UK where she hoped to '*...find my rights, be proud of myself as a woman*'. Mina left Iran, a country that she found stifling for the expectations placed upon her as a wife and mother,

and so too she left an abusive husband. However, in the UK she continues to face gendered and racialised constraints and oppression as state structures delineate what migrant women can and cannot do. She talks of not being able to continue her university studies due to having a student loan revoked, not being able to work as a physiotherapist because her qualifications and experience are not recognised here, and in turn her necessary participation in the ‘global commodification of caretaking’, that limits her ability to develop ‘viable unpaid work-care-life strategies’ (Datta et al., 2006:3-4).

Engaging with the complexity and nuance of a narrative means attending to the multiple layers within it (Doucet and Mauthner, 2008), and to the translocational positionality of the teller (Anthias, 2008). Though the ‘worse off’ narrative can at first reveal itself as one that simply suggests life in the UK is better, because it was worse before, or because someone knows someone worse off than themselves, this narrative is more than that. It talks to the issues of global state violence (from which the UK can be, but is not always, a sanctuary), to promises formed on the basis of colonial histories (more of which is discussed in the next section), and to the precariousness of “better” and the fear that worse could yet come.

8.3 Duty to be grateful

Grateful. There was that word again. Here I began to notice the pattern. This word had already come up a lot in my childhood, but in her [the teacher’s] mouth it lost its goodness. It hinted and threatened. Afraid for my future, I decided that everyone was right: if I failed to stir up in myself enough gratefulness, or if I failed to properly display it, I would lose all that I had gained, this Western freedom, the promise of secular schools and uncensored books. (Nayeri, 2017).

In a *Guardian* article, Dina Nayeri speaks to the suppliant⁶³ narrative that is expected of refugees. Migrants are expected to be grateful, to be seen to want to fit in; to perform the role of the ‘worthy exile’. This article was published just as I began to write this section in earnest, though this narrative has been percolating since I came across a chapter in Sara Ahmed’s *The Promise of Happiness* in July 2016, and which seemed to me then a *eureka* moment. In September 2016, I presented a paper at an event on ‘austerity, racism and resistance’, where I first tested out the idea that perhaps austerity in migrant narratives was obscured by the ‘happiness duty’ (discussed below). I held back tears for a brief moment as I read out the quote from Ahmed’s chapter on ‘melancholic migrants’. It was as if I had waited for this quote, to make sense of the seemingly senseless⁶⁴. Though I do not wish to deny the veracity of migrant claims to gratefulness, the work of Ahmed (2010:158) is useful for thinking through the restrictions under which migrant gratitude is expressed, (and which Nayeri, above, also depicts):

Migrants as would-be citizens are... increasingly bound by the happiness duty not to speak about racism in the present, not to speak of the unhappiness of colonial histories... the happiness duty for migrants means telling a certain story about your arrival as good, or the good of your arrival. The happiness duty is a positive duty to speak of what is good, but can also be thought of as a negative duty not to speak of what

⁶³ I was introduced to this term after watching *The Suppliant Women* at the Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester in March 2017. The play is a 2500-year-old Greek play by Euripides that shows a group of women seeking asylum in Argos, and the tension between their ‘wise father’ imploring them to be ‘suppliant’ (i.e. humble, pleading, beseeching), and their agency – which sees them demand that the people of Argos listen to them and permit them to stay, and their threat to shame them if they do not do so.

⁶⁴ Coming across this work via a PhD student’s blog⁶⁴, seemed to me such a break-through in understanding that I emailed the author of the blog, to express my gratitude for introducing me to this critique of gratitude! See: <https://politicsofthehap.wordpress.com/2011/01/21/why-politics-of-the-hap/>

is not good, not to speak from or out of unhappiness... It is as if you have a duty not to be hurt by the violence directed toward you, not even to notice it, to *let it pass by, as if it passes you by*. (emphasis mine).

This duty, the imperative to let the violence '*pass by*', is a story that 'works on people' (Frank, 2010:3), and in so doing, can obfuscate the harms of austerity to migrants. It is this narrative of gratefulness that I explore in this section. This was not a narrative universally told by participants however, some instead settled for a more restrained *acceptance* of their lives as they were, discussed below.

Some participants were vocally grateful; to me, to MFSP, to Manchester, the UK, or to the government. They maximised this voice, and minimised the voice of protest, or ungratefulness. This narrative has to be understood in terms of the research relationship, seen as a representative of MFSP, gratitude was bound up in the power relations evoked between service and 'service user'. In this setting though, Sara overwhelmingly told a story about 'the good of her arrival' as she often reiterated that there was nothing '*hard*' or '*bad*' about living in Manchester.

Though her appreciation of the Home Office (that had dispersed and moved her around the North West five times) was somewhat more muted: '*Home Office is okay... it's okay... it's not bad.*' By comparison, Sara spoke of Turkey in opposite terms:

Compared to here, it's big, big difference. They are not really helpful, it's completely different... It's really hard, really different. (Sara)

Importantly, Sara's narrative of gratefulness is so emphatic because of the effective support she appears to have received from voluntary sector organisations in

Manchester⁶⁵. Sara is grateful for the practitioners that have counselled her and advocated on her behalf. The disparity between the ‘hard’ Turkey that she described, and the support received from therapeutic services in the UK, has contributed to Sara’s display of gratitude.

I’ve got a counsellor, she’s really nice. She’s really, really helpful. I never can forget what she’s doing for me. It’s really, really important for people. *If she’s not next to me, if she didn’t hold my hand, maybe today I’m not here*, I don’t know. I can never forget, she’s like part of in my body, like in my heart. It’s a really, really big part... my counsellor made contact with MFSP as well. She is like my angel. (Sara)

This narrative can be understood in relation to the ‘worse-off’ narrative, discussed above, where participants perceived that the UK was better than where they were before. Inevitably, what people have experienced before – be that poverty, oppression, discrimination, conflict – impacts how they frame and understand life in their new country. However, many participants indicated that they could not complain, even where there might be something to complain about. For instance, Naheed, summing up a story of how the NHS had not adequately met the needs of her family, said that she was: ‘*Happy, there is no problem, life is very good, but just NHS is... problem*’. Complaints then are qualified, muted, and second to the story that tells *the good of their arrival*.

Zeynab was described by her daughter as having no friends in Manchester, and as being isolated, yet for the sake of her children she is grateful to be in Manchester:

⁶⁵ One of which, MFSP, has closed.

My mum's really happy *for us* now that we've been successful in our school and everything, so she's happy about Manchester, it's given *us* experience, to live a good life. (Zeynab & Fidan)

I highlighted in chapter 5 how the family had lived in fear of the simmering threat of deportation, but mostly their narrative spoke of how they were grateful for the support they had received from MFSP and *Refugee Action*:

My mum just says she loves Kirsty. Because she helped us so much... I think her support and her really trying to make us feel at home, and comfortable in where we are was very, very nice of her... I think Manchester has been a great experience, and all the support we've got was amazing. Especially from Kirsty, so we want to thank her all the time as well. (Zeynab & Fidan)

Yet the fear of deportation that was articulated by Fidan was detailed and affecting. She told me that the mere sight of the Home Office logo could make her mother and sister cry, and how they '*try not to*' communicate with the Home Office, for fear of what they might do to them. Yet the most egregious example of state violence is allowed to *pass by* as she talks about the Immigration Enforcement officers that removed them from their home:

They were very nice people, but because we were scared and fearful of what was going to happen to us, we saw them automatically, as not good people..., [but] we just understood that they're doing their job. They might be nice people, but they're just doing their job. (Zeynab & Fidan)

State violence then is seen as a burden for the individual to bear, and Zeynab and Fidan extend forgiveness, understanding and humanity despite the violence directed toward them. Ahmed suggests that there is a 'moral task' handed to

migrants when they experience violence that is predicated on colonial histories, that is they must:

“...get over it”, as if when you are over it, it is gone. In other words, the task is to put racism behind you. (Ahmed, 2010:143)

I enjoyed the interview with Fidan, she was a teenage girl who enjoyed books, theatre, museums. We talked about *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and how she wanted to move to London and work ‘in the media’. She reiterated how happy she was here, how great school and her teachers were, and how many friends she had in Manchester. But there was a schism between this utopian present and Fidan’s uncertain future, as she told me about the chance that she may not be entitled to financial support at university⁶⁶:

...basically student finance might not grant me the money, because they think because I have discretionary leave to remain, I might not get it. So that’s what upsets me the most... but, erm, I really like Manchester in total, yeah. (Fidan)

Ahmed warns that:

It is the migrant who wants to integrate who may bear witness to the emptiness of the promise of happiness. (Ahmed, 2010:158)

Sheena was grateful that her sons who are disabled had more freedom in the UK than they did in France (see chapter 6), yet this narrative is iterated much more

⁶⁶ See organisations and campaigns such as *Let Us Learn* which campaigns for the rights of those who are not British citizens but have grown up and gone to school in the UK to be eligible for student loans: <http://www.justforkidslaw.org/let-us-learn> and *Article 26* which highlights barriers to higher education for asylum seeking young people and has established bursaries for asylum seekers: <http://article26.hkf.org.uk/about-us>

prominently than her own narrative of isolation as she cares for her sons and husband with differential (and worse) access to welfare as a carer.

Sheena's position at intersections of gender, migrant status and disability means that she has to be especially mindful of the claims that she makes, of the complaints that she airs, of the space that she takes up, and so, as described in chapter 6, she becomes '*stuck*'. The duty to be grateful insists on emotional labour, as Sheena works to ensure the wellbeing of those around her, at the expense of herself. Her contributions of mothering and care-work are rendered invisible as the ideal immigrant logic argues that if migrant women are not in the labour market 'they are not contributing to society and therefore do not belong'. (McLaren and Dyck, 2004:44). I am not wishing to 'fix' Sheena's story in place (Frank, 2010), to define her only as a 'stuck' victim, but only to look at how 'the emptiness of the promise of happiness' (Ahmed, 2010:158) might be apparent in narratives.

Some participants were less emphatically grateful, but were still rarely dissenting or angry at the inequalities they experienced. Instead, they presented as *accepting* their life as it was. Theresa strongly voiced acceptance as opposed to gratefulness. Talking about the ending of MFSP's support to her, Theresa indicates that she felt powerless in the decision-making process. She explains:

I just tried to accept it the way it is cos there's nothing I can do... Before you pull off, I asked 'why are you doing this to me, it's not fair', you know. And they explained the situation to me. It's finished, I have been discharged, they've worked with me for a while, they feel that I have settled, my child has settled... What would I do? *You have to accept it.* (Theresa)

This acceptance works to both enable *and* constrain (Doucet and Mauthner, 2008).

It enabled Theresa to simply *get on* with life, but also reflected her sense that she was restricted in her ability to effect change given the structural constraints working on her.

Sahir talked about the harms of discrimination and racism and similarly he narrated that he accepted this as a fact of life:

Anywhere in the world, someone is feeling, like an 'other', like a stranger, all the world is like this, this is true. Maybe we have experienced something, but this is what we accept, because we live here, want to live here, want to study. It's something everyone is experiencing... [The interpreter clarifies] It is everywhere, but then if you like to live here then you have to accept it as well. So *the best is just to accept it instead of complain*. (Sahir)

The 'structured power relations and dominant ideologies' (Doucet and Mauthner, 2008:406) within which stories of violence, discrimination and difficulty are told, emphasise the duty on migrants to be grateful. This duty minimises complaint and grievance, and works alongside the narrative of life as *worse* somewhere else (or for *someone* else), to let harms *pass by*, as if they pass by. Related to a discourse of hospitality (Derrida, 2000) that is seemingly 'generous and benign' (Bell, 2010), those positioned as *guests* have expectations placed upon them. Migrants are obliged to be 'good' and to conform to the conditions offered by the *host*. In this way, hospitality is an 'expression of power and an act of violence' (Bell, 2010:251), that constrains the stories that can be told about arrival and everyday life in the UK. While some transgress this obligation and duty, they only did so in limited ways, through *acceptance*. Accepting did not conform to expectations exactly, but neither

did it resist it completely. Instead it signified the constraints on agency (and perhaps, energy) in the face of persistent difficulties.

8.4 Individual responsibility

This section is about the individualising narrative that most participants invoked when they spoke about their difficulties. Participants reiterated the sense that it was their own responsibility to succeed, or even simply to manage. They looked to individual explanations and individual solutions for the harms that they experienced. For instance, Sheena when speaking about the difficulties she has experienced in the UK, emphasised the problem as an issue that is innate within herself, rather than as an issue of structural proportions, insisting: *'it is not Manchester, it is a natural thing'*. This speaks to the theoretical work of Bauman (2002:xvi) who spoke of what it is to be living in a time of *individualisation*:

If they fall ill, it is because they were not resolute or industrious enough in following a health regime. If they stay unemployed, it is because they failed to learn the skills of winning an interview or because they did not try hard enough to find a job or because they are, purely and simply, work-shy... This is, at any rate, what they are told and what they have come to believe so that they behave... 'as if', this were indeed the truth of the matter... Risks and contradictions go on being socially produced; it is just the duty and the necessity to cope with them that is being individualised.

The individualisation literature then also talks of 'duty', in this case people are duty-bound to cope with whatever systemic challenges they encounter. This narrative is closely entangled with the duty to be grateful, discussed above. In enacting the duty to allow structural harms to 'pass by', the individual can only then only look at 'one's own performance' and conclude that they are the cause of their own defeat

(Bauman, 2001:106). This sense of individual deficit was illustrated in an 'I' poem from Laila in chapter 7:

I feel a stranger in Manchester.
I feel I have failed
because I can't communicate.
(Laila)

While maximising her own responsibility and blaming herself for being unable to speak English, Laila minimised the role of the state in producing her feelings of shame and strangeness, for example in drastically reducing the ESOL provision that would enable her to communicate and become 'known' as opposed to feeling like a stranger.

I described in chapter 6 the struggles of Mina in relation to finding work. Despite having to withdraw from university after funding was denied to her, and her professional qualifications not being accepted in the UK, the narrative of individual responsibility is felt at an affective level, indicated through an 'I' poem:

I really feel shame
I can't work
I am very active person
I was working 50 or 60 hours a week
I feel so depressed
I don't work
I worked to keep busy
I feel so depressed
I don't work
I decided I need any job
at least I have a job.
(Mina)

Participants often presented a narrative of having learned to manage themselves, though this could be difficult and wearing. Theresa told me about the continuous

advocating she had to do on behalf of her child who was disabled, the long hours her husband worked and their concern that he could not stay in the UK due to visa restrictions, as well as a history of experiencing mental health issues – including suicidal thoughts. Yet she summarised our conversation with this:

Now I realise, my life, this situation, so *I just have to keep strong*, keep praying to God, one day this situation I am in will be solved. (Theresa)

As we have seen in chapter 6, Theresa came to this ‘realisation’, not passively, but after feeling let down in various ways by those in her professional and personal networks. The support Theresa received from MFSP was, as far as Theresa was concerned, stopped without consensus. Nurses left her and her son alone in their home when he displayed violent behaviours. She felt she had been fed ‘*misinformation*’ from relatives that had brought her from a settled life in Belgium, to an unsettled (and isolated) life in the UK. Though adversity is experienced at the relational and structural level, Theresa comes to realise it is she that has to ‘*keep strong*’.

Lonergan (2015:124) highlights the ways in which migrant women are expected to be ‘autonomous, independent and economically productive’, and as such should ‘require no government assistance’ (p.140). Focusing on the contradictions in ESOL policy and language acquisition rhetoric, Lonergan explicates the neoliberal tension between ‘producing’ good citizens (i.e. someone who “contributes” and does not make claims for welfare or support) and restricting access to ‘undesirable’ migrants (i.e. someone who is seen to be costly and a burden). The case of Theresa shows

how this tension is evident within health, social care and education admissions services too. Adequate access to these domains was not available for Theresa, and this meant she was unable to work for a long time after coming to the UK as she cared for her son at home, with support that was discontinuous at best, and dangerous at worst.

Individual responsibility is a narrative that has credence in some social work practice. Research conducted by Mostowska (2014) on migrant homelessness in EU countries, for instance, found that social workers often relied on an individualising narrative for the cause of homelessness by ‘frequently addressing the shortcomings and failures of individual migrants’ (p.131). It should be no surprise, then, that this narrative is evident. Austerity too is predicated on it, as described in chapter 2, with moralistic discourse emphasising individual thrift and the need for *skivers* to become *strivers* (Jensen, 2012). Recent research suggests that migrants are situated in the ‘undeserving’ class in the popular imagination (Stanley, 2014; Forkert, 2014; Pemberton et al., 2015), and therefore their claims to welfare are increasingly – and with public support – delegitimised. It falls then that migrants must work, both economically and reproductively, to individually attempt to repair the harms inflicted by the state. Similarly, this imperative is gendered, and as illustrated in chapter 6, many migrant mothers are performing excessive caring roles with little to no state support (Leonard and Fraser, 2016).

Participants did speak to some of the literature around thrift and prudent housekeeping (Jensen and Tyler, 2012; Bramall, 2013; Hall and Holmes, 2017), with Sara for instance insisting that no matter how tight her finances that ‘if you know

what income you've got you can just manage'. However, as described above, more pressing for participants in this study, was the 'crisis of care' which obliges people to simply '*get on*' despite exceptionally constrained circumstances (Leonard and Fraser, 2016). They strived to be economically productive, despite social inequality and marginalisation. The narrative of individual responsibility normalised the extraordinary (almost Sisyphean) act of privately repairing public harms.

8.5 Othering and being the other

Some participants expressed sentiments that reproduced narratives of the *other* as a problem, and as at fault for the economic crisis (Anderson, 2016; Burnett, 2017a). They turned to those in similar situations to them, perhaps in an effort to ease their fear and unease, what Bhattacharyya (2015:145) terms:

...a kind of differentiated racism... an assertion that we are less abject than these new others... a plea to divert racist attention to others.

The narrative of othering has distinctly moralistic overtones; of criminality, of the good and bad citizen, and of the deserving and undeserving. The work of Anderson (2013) is useful for clarifying the relationship between the *rights* of those who belong, and the *values* that determine who belongs. As she notes, 'part of being an outsider is not sharing the same values – which easily becomes not having the 'right' values' (p.4). To have rights as a citizen is seen as a marker of having values that align with the 'good' majority. In her taxonomy of citizenship⁶⁷, Anderson highlights

⁶⁷ Anderson refers to 'Good', 'non-', 'failed', and 'tolerated' citizens (2013:6), offering an extension to the 'us vs. them' binary of othering (cf. Dominelli (2009:online)).

how criminals and welfare claimants – though having fundamental rights of citizenship – are cast as ‘Failed Citizens’. The impermanence of citizenship status, the precarity with which one holds rights, means that:

Those at risk of failure or of not belonging seek to dissociate themselves, one from another. Migrants... are usually eager to differentiate themselves from failed citizens with whom they are often associated.... [in turn] contingent acceptance turns tolerated citizens, who must often struggle for acceptance... into the guardians of good citizenship. (p.6)

For instance, Adriana expressed fear that welfare provision for migrants could be restricted, or even removed altogether. Welfare as a site for othering discourse was evident here, as she suggested that it is those migrants who do ‘bad’ things that put the welfare rights of migrants generally at risk:

Lucy: What is your perception of how the media and politicians talk about migrants coming to the UK? I think there’s been quite a lot of talk about that in recent years and I wonder what you thought about it?

Adriana: It will only affect me if they stop my benefits, if they stop helping migrants. Because there’s a lot of people coming into the country, so I understand that politicians will be a bit - erm - under pressure, because they already have their own people, and now because there are more people coming in they have to help them as well. But people come in here because their own countries are not good. Their country has got no [good] conditions, so that’s why people come in. So I understand both sides because people come here for a better life, but *some they come and they behave and they help the country to grow financially, but others they just do bad things*, so they’re not really helping.

Lucy: Have you got any experience of people who do bad things?

Adriana: I don’t know them personally, but I know - I witness that some people they steal and things like that – and that

they are immigrants. *Like people who participated in the riots* in Manchester and London, some of them are not British, so I don't understand why some people they do that – those sort of things – it's not necessary to do vandalism.

In this interesting and unexpected turn, Adriana, despite not knowing anyone involved in the riots, invoked them as a moment in which *some* migrants (criminalised, *failed citizens*) put her citizenship as a 'good migrant' at risk (Anderson, 2013). The riots have been characterised in the public imaginary as a moment of violent moral decline (Tyler, 2013a), and as a problem of excessive greed in a time where austerity and frugality are seen as responsible choices (Jensen, 2013).

Adriana here speaks to the assertions of Dhaliwal and Forkert (2015:49), that migrants do not simply internalise and repeat popular discourse (i.e. anti-immigrant sentiment), but that it is 'a central feature of their own bid for recognition and legitimacy.' It is evident that Adriana has taken upon the mantle of being a 'guardian of good citizenship' (Anderson, 2013). Through the media, Adriana witnesses that some migrants do 'bad things' - such as participate in the riots of summer 2011⁶⁸– and it is they who put migrants' entitlement to welfare at risk. By decrying the behaviour of (literal and metaphorical) 'revolting subjects' (Tyler, 2013b), Adriana seeks to distance herself from 'some people' and to highlight her

⁶⁸ See (Murji and Neal, 2011) for a situation of the 2011 riots within a 'matrix of race, policing and politics'. There is no empirical evidence (see Lewis et al., 2011) to suggest that migrants were substantially involved in the riots, though in some areas there was a higher proportion of BME rioters. This is unsurprising given that the death of Mark Duggan, a young black male at the hands of police, was the moment that sparked the riots. Nevertheless, for Adriana watching the news, BME was synonymous with migrant, despite Manchester and Salford rioters being almost 80% white (this logic was not isolated to Adriana, but repeated in the popular right-wing press).

respectability and claims to citizenship. This resonates with the assertion of Bauder et al (2016:111) that:

The threat of the “undeserving” migrant criminal is ever present, haunting expressions of and marking the boundaries of inclusion... the parsing of the “deserving”/“undeserving” migrant creates rupture between and within migrant groups, a key neoliberal strategy. This splintering diminishes solidarity and reduces the likelihood of broad-based social organising calling for systemic overhauls of structures of inequality.

But here – as with Dhaliwal and Forkert’s (2015) findings – the picture is more complex than this. The work of Skeggs (2014) is instructive, as her theoretical work suggests that social relations are mediated by more than capital and ‘exchange-value’⁶⁹, and instead that there are other values that define relationships beyond neoliberal/individualistic values. Dhaliwal and Forkert find these to be ‘compassion, solidarity and empathy’ (2015:57), and we can see that Adriana dovetails her revulsion with these as she states that she understands ‘*both sides*’ and that people come here because their own countries do not have good conditions and that they seek a better life.

For Sheena, the narrative of the ‘other’ was in dialogue with the narrative of individual responsibility. In chapter 6 we saw how Sheena positioned herself as someone who intrinsically knows the value of work from a moral standpoint, as she says ‘*I have never being sitting idle, doing nothing, I’m not that person*’. ‘*That person*’

⁶⁹ This is the idea that the ‘logic of capital has subsumed every single aspect of our lives, intervening in the organisation of our intimate relations’ (Skeggs, 2014:1). The logic of capital is often theorised as though it ‘monetises and commodifies every aspect of our lives, making everything, person and interaction subject to the value that can be realised in exchange’ (ibid:2). Skeggs argues however that values are not reducible to a value, and they are instead ‘dialogic, dependent and co-constituting’ (ibid:1).

is introduced in the narrative as a persuasive device, as a counterpoint to her as a 'good citizen' by comparison. In our second interview, Sheena went on to further clarify her position in relation to migrants and welfare:

I've seen in the news and read in the newspaper about the EU migrants. It is a problem. The government has to look after their own people first. They have to provide first for them.
(Sheena)

Polkowski (2015:263), in research with Polish migrants in the UK, noted that the people in his study brought with them 'neoliberal subjectivities'. He says:

The "fear of wasting time, of being unproductive" (Sennet, 2003:109) vividly surfaces in migrants' narratives when they complain about other migrants living on benefits and rush to explain that they themselves do not do this...

Polkowski returns to the ideas of Anderson (2013) that this differentiation serves to shore up their position as a good citizen, and to bring the work of policing the terrain of citizenship into the remit of migrants themselves. There is a dialogic relationship then between the 'neoliberal subjectivities' of migrants and austerity discourse. The narrative of othering that works *on* migrants, fits into the overall austerity narrative that depends on those who are substantively less powerful seeking to blame those who are similarly powerless, rather than looking to blame powerful institutions of business and government.

Sahir also cast the newest arrivals of EU migrants as 'others', marking distinctions between EU migrants and third-country nationals, and there again between an '*old*' Europe and a '*new*' Europe:

Lucy: ... have you noticed a change in how the media or politics talks about migrants?

Sahir: ... Before it was much easier for migrants to come here – for people to come to UK – but now the government is making it very hard for settlement purposes, and I think that the reason is that the people who come from Pakistan, or anywhere else, they in the end are a load on the government. And then, the EU nationals, they are living in a country where the system is the same, so why do they need to move here? So the government is right in objecting or making these policies, but they've changed a lot, they're making it very difficult and hard. We know a few families that come here and they facing a few problems now.

Lucy: What problems?

Sahir: EU countries – Germany and France – this is old. New countries in Europe coming [joining the EU], *these* countries are problem. They here one year [before they can get] benefits. An old man and old woman [that I know], they have applied for housing benefit, they pensioner, get a pension... they can't get housing benefit. Apply, apply, apply, no. It's hard. No. Maybe they'll go back [to] Germany.

That two of the participants who drew on this narrative of othering were EU migrants of Pakistani origin is, if not quantitatively significant, notable for their positionality in the UK. Both families were Muslim; a particularly demonised minority in the UK (and the EU generally), viewed variously as savage, uncivilised, terrorist (Barbero, 2012) and as an exception to liberal values; dangerous, misogynist, anti-modern, and unfit to parent (Vacchelli, 2017). Islamophobic narratives and policies, such as Prevent⁷⁰, are likely to contribute to a vulnerable sense of belonging, and this in turn may influence the necessity to be the guardians of 'good citizenship' vis-à-vis welfare and EU migration. Indeed, it had been

⁷⁰ Prevent is one strand of a government counterterrorism strategy, the main aim of which is to 'stop and prevent people from becoming or supporting terrorism' (Awan, 2012:1160)

suggested that some Asian minorities were inclined to vote 'Leave' in the EU referendum as a Commonwealth versus European migrant narrative was pushed by the Leave campaign (Pickard, 2016)⁷¹.

A debrief with the interpreter (Sadia) after the interview with Sahir and Naheed was illustrative of the way in which the othering of Muslims – exacerbated by austerity and anti-immigrant discourse - is violent, pervasive and has affects across generations. She told me:

After 9/11 things changed here. I went to London and at that time I wore a headscarf and one man started abusing me and shouting at me. The other white passengers stopped the train and made him get off at the next station. All my children have been born in the UK but I think we are still like second-class citizens. They still find it difficult even though it is their only home. My sons have turned to Islam more than I ever did... they go to Friday prayers every week. They fast even though I don't ask them to. I think this is because in Pakistan it was just our culture, but here they are trying to find where they fit in. They are not accepted as totally British, so they turn more to Islam for acceptance. (Sadia, interpreter)

Similarly to Sadia's experience, participants also narrated how they had been on the receiving end of othering discourse while in the UK, and some of these were discussed in chapter 5.

Mina attributed her limited social network to a feeling of being unaccepted, both within the Muslim community, and with the wider – white hegemonic – community:

⁷¹ Though this did not generally come to fruition in the referendum election results, where Black and Minority Ethnic voters were more likely to vote Remain. Only in some wards in London did the Asian population vote prominently to Leave, see: Rosenbaum (2017).

I'm not a very sociable person, I find it hard to communicate with people from my background because they are very strict Muslims and don't agree with what I do; with my divorce. I prefer to mix with people from other backgrounds and with English, but this is hard because people from other backgrounds want to stick with their own and English don't want to talk to people from anywhere else. (Mina)

Here we see how Mina's belief that others do not want to associate with her because of who she is (a migrant) or the choices she has made (divorce), limit the kind of relationships she is able to form.

Othering, is discursively and symbolically violent, fracturing relations between those who might otherwise be able to find common ground due to their social positioning. Slater (2016), highlights that stigmatising views (particularly of the migrant as a drain on public resources) become both internalised and projected onto others in similar positions. Individual narratives of othering draw on dominant ideologies, and critical moments are mobilised to situate the migrant (as well as Muslims and racialized people) as 'the other'. For instance, Sadia highlighted 9/11 as a turning point, Adriana referred to the 2011 riots, and Sahir to austerity policies.

8.6 Narrating inequality and making claims to justice

This section highlights the narratives of participants as they recognised and articulated inequality, and made claims to justice in light of these inequalities. Initially I had titled this section the '*moral voice*', as I wanted to highlight the compulsion of many participants to make sense of the stories they told about their lives through a 'moral message'. This is usually a key concern of narrative analysis:

A teller in a conversation takes a listener into a past time or "world" and recapitulates what happened then to make a

point, often a moral one... Respondents narrativise particular experiences in their lives, often where there has been a breach between ideal and real, self and society... (Riessman, 1993:2)

However, I came to realise – as argued throughout this chapter – that there was not *one* voice or moral message in participant's narratives. All of the narratives outlined so far could be described as moral messages, though often appealing to a neoliberal moralism. The defining difference of this narrative then is that it appeals to the moral domains of social justice, inequality and human rights. For some participants, this was a quieter voice, though present nonetheless, and as such an important counter-narrative to the neoliberal norm. Some participants spoke primarily of their subjective position (see Theresa below), where some saw that the inequalities they faced or feared could have a broader reach (see Florica below). This section will show how participants recognised the political in their lives, even if in small ways, and how this was often mobilised as means to advocate for support for others, and in making claims for recognition and redistribution.

Some participants spoke of recognising inequality through their engagement with institutions, such as the NHS and the third sector. Sara, for instance, though she went to lengths to distance herself from any criticism of the state or of institutions, was also the most vehement advocate for the need of migrants to have access to support services when they first arrive in the UK. She often returned to the idea of the *'helping hand'*:

[Moving to the UK], it's a massive change. But with help, with MFSP, they really helped to build me up from here. Always they offering a helping hand... I really think they [other migrants] need help, like helping hand. (Sara)

Oh, I think everyone's in need when they come to UK, when they come to Manchester, in this country. Everyone, I think they need someone to [give a] hand, to help. (Sara)

Sara would often come to this point via the explication that nothing was hard in the UK, though it is evident from her advocating that she has found the support of others - third sector agencies in particular - important in being able to assert this. Her previous experiences, of an oppressive regime in Turkey, meant that she did not narrate the UK as unjust or oppressive, though she did recognise that people still need support. To recognise that one needs support, I would argue is an acknowledgement that there is something amiss in the status quo, that there is some inequality at play. Sara says as much when she moves to advocating at the intersection of migration and mental health:

If you need help, you need talk to someone, you need to [be] believe[d], you need someone to talk to. The people ... they just thinking other way, like you are mental, that's why you need that help, but I don't think so. I think everyone needs to trust someone to talk to. That's so important for the people. *I just really believe them*, I really... I don't know. (Sara)

Speaking about the stigma of mental health, and the need to be believed, Sara highlighted claims to justice that are often made by mental health and women's rights campaigners, indicating an awareness of injustice and a refusal to accept it. Adriana also emphatically recognised the importance of MFSP in supporting her when she came to Manchester, particularly as MFSP intervened in the unfeasibly long time that it took for Adriana's children to be allocated a school place. She believed MFSP was valuable for migrant settlement and thought it should be available to others too:

[Ibrahim] helped me a lot and I was upset that the project was closing because the amount of support that I got, it could also help another family as well. (Adriana)

Adriana highlighted how MFSP had particularly helped her in claiming benefits, and that as this was such a complicated area, migrants needed support to claim and know their entitlements and rights. In this way she challenges racialised practices of welfare bordering.

Naheed spoke of a 'breach between the ideal and real' (Riessman, 1993:3), as she alluded to her perception of the UK and how it differed from the reality:

Over here they care about lives – children, people – so they should *pay more attention* to NHS as well. Because if anyone is suffering it's an important, integral part of the system, and they *shouldn't be careless* with the health issues. You can skip food for one meal if you don't eat or anything, but if you not feeling well or *you are suffering* then you have to have that treated. (Naheed)

Later, when the recorder was switched off, Sahir and Naheed referred to the '*human rights*' of the UK, and they thought that generally human rights were valued in the UK (at least, as seen earlier in 'duty to be grateful', they are to the extent that everyone suffers equally). Human rights as a normative moral code have become a frame through which individuals can make their claims to state power for social justice (Ignatieff, 2000).

Mina spoke of the injustice and oppression she faced as a woman in Iran, where despite being an experienced physiotherapist, once she had children she was made '*...to stay at home and only be a mum*'. As described in the 'worse-off' narrative, Mina had hoped to redefine her role once in the UK, but her agency in relation to study

and work were severely constrained in the UK by immigration rules. Mina had hoped for a better life for her daughter in the UK, but, as seen in chapter 6, gendered violence had similarly affected her.

Just as Mina faced the violence of bordering in the UK, so too did her daughter following her return to the UK. She was separated from her eighteen-month-old daughter, because she was unable to procure a visa. Mina resented the legal aid lawyer acting on their behalf:

My solicitor is unhelpful. She is from a charity for people with a low income. I rely on her, she let me down twice in the court with my granddaughter. I have no idea where to go, I can't trust anybody. (Mina)

The position in which Mina and her daughter found themselves was shaped by the 'interplay of processes and outcomes of social relations' (Anthias, 2008:17) both here and in Iran. Though it seemed as though history was repeating itself, Mina was emphatic that her daughter should not face the same stigma and hardship that she had, and her narrative was woven through with strident claims to justice for her daughter.

Some made claims to social justice through recognition. For instance, Hamid and Laila both emphasised the normality and *everyday* nature of migration:

Laila: There are other things more important than immigrants. All the people in the world are migrating, you can't tell who's who.

Hamid: It depends on the people. Spanish used to migrate to France, Germans to France. It depends on them and what is best for them. It depends on the individual, it's personal choice. In Spain, we looked for a better life.

They lamented the anti-immigrant rhetoric that they saw in the news and which Hamid said affected all of Europe. Instead, they argued, it should be respected that to migrate is a personal choice, one that is made often, and that should not be an issue for others. The interpreter was inclined to disagree; as a child she had sought refuge in another European country, and argued that '*some people have to move because it's dangerous for them*', emphasising the *crisis* of migration, as well as the commonplace nature of it.

Florica was inclusive in her claims to justice for migrant groups. The interview took place, in 2014, just as UKIP were receiving publicity for their gains in the European Elections, where they won 24 seats; more than any other party in the UK. Their campaigning was predicated on an anti-immigration manifesto, and they urged voters to vote for them in defiance of the political establishment; as a kind of proxy-referendum on the issue of whether the UK should be a part of the European Union (Hawkins and Miller, 2014). Their success was dubbed a 'political earthquake' (Wintour and Watt, 2014), and the force of this earthquake is narrated by Florica, as she feared for the future of her family and other migrant communities in the UK:

Florica: Sometimes I get scared they are going to throw Romanians out of this country. Yeah, because everyone was saying – English people – *oh Romanians, they going to throw you out, back to your country*. Like, police say '*oh, we're gonna throw you back to your country*.'

Lucy: How does that make you feel?

Florica: Very bad... I stopped watching [television] because it made me feel bad. Because you are same people like them, you are no different ... They want to throw Romanian back to their home. Not just Romanian's... Romania, Pakistan, Muslim who is not from England... *Believe me, this is so bad*. I try to ignore

it, ignore them. Sometimes I am scared they will throw us in Romania. I asked my husband '*what are they gonna do?*' I was thinking no-one's going to help people. They're not going to have money, no-one is going to look after my child...

Florica invoked institutions (the police), the government and the media in her narration of how anti-immigrant discourse filtered down into her everyday life. The racist imperative of the '*Go Home*' vans, (Jones et al., 2017), can be seen to mobilise in other ways too – not just on the roads of London, but in encounters with police and in front rooms via the television. Of note, is Florica's inclusivity and solidarity with other migrants as she describes the harms of anti-immigrant discourse, and in particular with those who simultaneously experience Islamophobia, a discourse that is embraced by UKIP (Ford et al., 2011). Her invocation and appeal to me that this is '*so bad*' and that we are '*same people like them*' is both a voicing of inequality and a claim to justice on the grounds of a common or shared humanity.

To reiterate what I stated at the outset of this chapter, the narratives discussed here were not singular within an interview. Voices were multiple, layered and at times contradictory. This narrative – that highlighted inequality and made claims to justice - often jarred with the narration of individual responsibility and othering, as people spoke of the need for their rights to be recognised, and the need for all to have support when arriving in the UK. This voice was in some ways a rebuke to the narrative of austerity, a discursive act of resistance – no matter how small that act. Though austerity was not explicitly implicated as a factor in creating inequality, participants nonetheless argued for support, compassion, and kindness, counter to

the neoliberal moralism outlined earlier. This narrative speaks to the making of liveable lives (Butler, 2009; Butler, 2012), even in hostile contexts.

8.7 Precarious temporality

*Not fixed, Insh'Allah, everything has a solution, but in this time
- it is very hard. (Laila)*

To have a precarious temporality is a feature of everyday life in neoliberal times. In the work '*Cruel Optimism*', Berlant (2011a:196) is concerned with how the current moment, with all its crises, forecloses the future and the 'promise of the good life' comes to seem like a fantasy. An essay on austerity and precarity extends these ideas, whereby Berlant (2011b:3) says of the withdrawal of the state and the continuation of everyday life:

No longer with resources or the will to be proactive, the state becomes an emergency responder, stumbling over broken roads and expectations; meanwhile *the people experience the state of emergency not as an exception but as an embedding in the ordinary* in which they are always tipped over, walking ahead while looking around, and feeling around their pockets for something, both focused and distracted and getting by, without assurance. (emphasis added)

To have your future become precarious, then, is a feature of the contemporary moment. Precarity, as described in chapter 6, is entangled with visioning and planning for the future; and Anderson (2010:303-304) points to this temporal aspect:

The effect of precarious work is the flipside of the celebration of the 'work-life balance', when a person's economic productivity becomes the overwhelming priority. In this sense precarious work results in *précarité*, a more general concern with precariousness of life which *prevents people from anticipating the future*. (emphasis added)

This narrative then is about the ways in which participants anticipated – or not – their future. Often participants talked in the past tense about their hopes for migrating to the UK, and how these came to be unfulfilled. For instance, this section is introduced by a quote from Laila, who maintains a semblance of faith that things will improve, but also alludes to the difficulty that has typified her experience in Manchester. Laila felt the family were worse off in the UK than they had been in Spain, and this was due to a lack of support, both formal and informal. Though their interpersonal relationships had depleted with their move, and this caused Laila heartache, this was seen as a necessary compromise. Hamid told me how they would stay here because structurally, things were worse in Spain:

The children do not have a good future there. There is no work for children, there is lots of discrimination. People that immigrate there, they have degrees, but no jobs, no future. They are sitting at home, doing nothing. (Hamid)

This quote speaks to the tendency of some participants to be unable to envision the future for themselves, while maintaining hope for the future of their children. (It is also emblematic of the desire of all participants to stay in the UK, despite facing uncertainty). At times children's futures were narrated as though they would 'make up' for the losses that parents had experienced through injustice and migration. As I traced the 'I' of Sara's transcript (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998), that is, how she spoke about herself, it became apparent that Sara entangled her (unfulfilling) past with her daughter's potential future:

She's doing well at school. She wants to be a doctor, so she's doing triple science... She wants to go to university, *because I*

couldn't go. I don't have chance to go, I really want her to go to university. She's doing good at school. (Sara)

Theresa also found it difficult to imagine the future. This is articulated particularly in relation to her son and his condition, and this is familiar in the disability literature, with Bury (1982; as cited by Grant et al., 2003:346) referring to the 'biographical disruption' that is felt when 'normative expectations about the present and the future... are thrown into a state of confusion'. Theresa not only finds it difficult to look to the future, but narrates the past as unfathomable, and consequently she focuses on the present:

My dream, in future, is for him to overcome this illness...Some people say that when he becomes older he can become calmer. So I don't know, because I've never been there... I just take it stage by stage. The way he was behaving these last six years 'til now, I would think if I was with him, I would die, you know... [But now] I'm just starting to move forward and put everything behind me, because I remember that time was really hard. (Theresa)

Theresa's uncertainty about the future is not only predicated on the fact of Ben's disability, but also on her social context. Theresa referred to the future that was promised to her by her family in the UK as a '*science-fiction*'. The dystopian nature of austerity has been explored by others, with Raynor (2016:185) for instance, considering whether austerity is like a 'diffusely felt atmosphere like smog – a feeling of something cloying and grey settled over the place'. Theresa's past was suffused with service and welfare encounters that fell short in supporting her and her son, and this, the disjuncture between expectation and reality, have affected her ability to see the future as something with promise.

Being a migrant enters an individual into a vortex of bureaucracy, discrimination, and everyday bordering practices that inevitably disrupt normative temporal trajectories. A scoping literature review by Griffiths et al (2013) is instructive of the multiple ways that migration and temporality are interlinked: the journey, detention, migration as a (ideal) process from decision – citizenship, precarious working, the decision to migrate as ‘a tactic of creating futures’ (p.15), immigration systems as ‘both too slow and too fast’ (p.18) with time experienced as either ‘frenzied’ or ‘suspended, stagnant’ (p.19). Immigration statuses signify the temporal (and conditional) nature of being a migrant: *limited, discretionary, indefinite* (but crucially, *not* permanent). The authors note that waiting and liminality are often emphasised in migration literature, and here too I wish to turn to this as a feature of participant narratives.

Mina narrated how her time, and her family’s future, felt out of her control. She explained how an out-of-date travel document meant that she did not know when she would be able to see her teenage son who lives in Iran with his father. Mina was in the process of applying for indefinite leave to remain after having refugee status for five years. It was this liminal state that she understood to be the cause of the problem with her son’s visa. The policy of granting refugees just five years discretionary leave to remain, introduced in 2005, can be seen to limit the settlement of refugees by design⁷². Mina and her son were at the mercy of the immigration regime:

⁷² In 2017, the government introduced the ‘safe return review’, a policy that reviews the safety of a country from which a refugee is fleeing. If it is determined that it is safe, they will be returned rather than granted settlement. Espinoza et al (2017:online) argue that this signifies a shift from ‘durable’ to

My eldest son returned to Iran after two and a half years because of bullying in school... When I got my papers they gave me five years... My visa ran out in April, so I applied for indefinite leave to remain and they say that I have to wait for them to look at this. I can't travel anywhere now because my travel documents have expired. Every year my son has come to see us in Summer for 2 months maybe. I am really heartbroken because this year he cannot come, because of the expired travel documents, he cannot get a visa. (Mina)

Griffiths et al. (2013) note that migration is governed through temporal devices, such as the five-year Limited Leave to Remain (LLR) policy introduced in 2005.

Transitioning to indefinite leave to remain (ILR) is not straightforward, and indeed Mina has fallen foul of a 'time trap' (Griffiths et al., 2013:30), as she was not granted ILR in time for her son to be able to visit in the summer months. She narrated the affect this had on her youngest son:

His younger brother always remembers his older brother every morning. It is unusual. He dreams about him, they are very close. They play together a lot when he is here. I cannot tell (youngest son) that he is not coming this summer... he is *always* asking when he is coming. (Mina)

Her intimate, family life is bound up in the expansive time of immigration controls.

As she notes, the effect of this stasis, is heartbreak and unrealised dreams.

Fidan illustrated the temporal strain of the asylum system, and of prohibition from working while claiming asylum. The family had been in the UK for five years, and they had received discretionary leave to remain (DLR) in 2013. Fidan uses persuasive

'temporary' refugee protection. The temporal disruption is also highlighted as they say the 'policy will create renewed uncertainty about refugees' future, risking their stability at work or the continuation of their studies. This sense of unsettlement can also have harmful effects on refugees' mental health and can increase their socio-economic vulnerability. After years of displacement and long periods of waiting for a response on their asylum applications, refugees will now be subject to a review that puts on hold their pathway to citizenship.

narrative tactics to highlight how her father's restriction from working appeared to elongate time, and create a sense of being stuck and without power (Griffiths et al., 2013). Though he was legally able to get a job when they received DLR, he was still out of work:

My Dad wants to work... he has been searching for work for *many, many years*. Well – not many years – but *ever since we've been here*. (Fidan)

Studies on refugee outcomes in relation to the labour market commonly highlight the difficulty of finding work even once restrictions are lifted. The Refugee Council (Doyle, 2014:21) cite 'the erosion of skills for those who have waited a long time for a decision on their asylum claim', barriers to learning English, non-recognition of qualifications and an unfamiliarity with the UK job market as contributing factors. In this way, the act of waiting, of being in stagnant time, stretches beyond the confines of immigration status, and constitutes precarious temporality. As dispersal is an intentional disruption of spatial settlement, so too I would argue immigration practices work to disrupt temporal settlement, through their hostility to normative practices of future planning.

Though participants narrated their future as uncertain, they all expressed a desire to stay in the UK, indicative of a kind of 'hopeful pessimism' (Coleman, 2016). Though there was uncertainty in the UK, participants were certain that there was a worse future, or no future, in their previous country. This can be seen when Hamid talks of there being no work for his children in Spain, or when Florica asked what is there to go back to in Romania but discrimination and a one-bedroom flat. This finding

highlights the contingent nature of austerity. Though families may have had to adjust and rework (Smith, 2014) their imaginations of the future, there was still some space for hope in the unknowable – most often through hopes of education and careers for their children, but also through voicing entrepreneurial plans, maintaining the desire to go to college, or speaking of a time when they would be able to travel and visit their family (and return to their home, in Manchester).

Adriana was the only participant who really spoke of the material potential of these futures in the UK. She had born witness to the effects of austerity in Portugal, and how it hollowed out their opportunities there. She cautioned:

While the politicians and the government can keep things stable, things should be fine for now, because people here get benefits and help to pay rent, whereas in Portugal, because of the crisis, people can't pay their bills and they are returning their houses because they can't live at home and maybe their salaries aren't enough to pay the rent and bills. So here – at the moment – maybe it's not too bad. But because we get lots of people coming in all the time, *maybe it might get worse in the future and end up like Portugal*. But we can also see that unemployment is rising at the moment and with unemployment people start applying for benefits... so it's unstable at the moment. (Adriana)

Adriana's insistence on '*the moment*' in this excerpt underscores the work of Coleman (2016) and which draws on the work of Berlant (2011), that hope can be sustaining in the present, in day-to-day life, rather than 'a deferral to the future' (Coleman, 2016:99). Perhaps it is because Adriana had seen how austerity had more aggressively played out in Portugal, that she was able to anticipate the future; both for her children and niece, and herself, as she was out of 'the worst of it'. Research

undertaken by Kara (2016:258) on the everyday lives of Latin American women living in Barcelona found that:

The future shadowed by the economic crisis was not perceived as overly threatening. Return, as such, was hardly considered an “easy solution”.

This is not to say austerity was perceived as presenting *no* threat, because families *were* materially affected by austerity, but it was not considered as great a threat as what may await in participants previous countries; be it harsher austerity contexts, gendered violence, or discrimination and oppression. Children are evidently also a key factor in sensing threat or hope for the future. Kara (2016) notes that for those who have left their children in the country of origin, an economic downturn might be impetus to return if one could no longer send remittances. However, migrating (or reuniting) as a family may be what leads migrants to want to settle, to put hope in the promise of children’s futures, despite the difficulty, uncertainty and hostility.

8.8 Locating austerity

As stated at the outset of this thesis, my experience as a social worker within MFSP, where the material harms of austerity were abundantly apparent, led to my perplexity when I interviewed families and realised their concerns were not necessarily the same as mine. Or that the weight they lent to austerity differed to the weight I lent to it. Drawing on the work of Frank (2010:3) who reminds us of the structural stories that work *on* people and which affect what ‘people are able to see as real’, and adopting the Listening Guide (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998; Doucet and Mauthner, 2008) to analyse interview transcripts, I have traced the plots,

subjectivities, relationships and structures that permeate participant narratives.

Coming to reflect on all of these, and returning to the term *elusive austerity* (a term I had tentatively coined for a conference paper), I came to think about the relationship between the readings, and what these say about austerity. I turn now to explicate these analyses with relation to the six narratives described above, but first, a reflection on etymology.

The word *elusive* means something that ‘evades grasp’, is ‘*hard* to comprehend or define’ and is ‘*hard* to isolate or identify’ (Merriam-Webster, no date:online). In discussing the ‘worse-off’ narrative, I drew on Gunaratnam’s (2015) notion of inequalities as kaleidoscopic in nature. To isolate austerity within a multitude of harms experienced is indeed *hard*. To comprehend something that has ideological as well as material effects is *hard*. I have devoted five years of study to ‘austerity’ and yet still find the term slippery and difficult to grasp. Perhaps it is useful to consider another word that comes from the same Latin etymon: *elusory*. This word additionally denotes *deception* (Fine Dictionary, no date:online). This is an important aspect of the absence of austerity from participant narratives; the deceptive nature of austerity, for as evidenced throughout this thesis, austerity does enact material and immaterial harms on migrants, though the isolation of these harms from others is at times difficult. Ultimately, it would be misleading to conclude that because austerity was not consistently articulated by participants, that it did not consistently affect their lives.

Returning to the six narratives explored above, and further grouping these into three themes, perhaps then indicates the *presence* of austerity. The first two, the

'worse-off' narrative and the *duty to be grateful*, speak to the specificity of migrants translocational positionality and how this might shape their understanding of austerity (explored also in chapter 5). The understanding that things were worse before the UK, and the mediation of migrants' emotional responses – the insistence on happiness, the duty to be suppliant and grateful for the embers of prosperity – both work to let the story of austerity 'pass by' (Ahmed, 2010:158), though indeed it does not. The third and fourth narratives – *individual responsibility* and *othering* – signify the presence of austerity through the reproduction of narratives that draw on neoliberal hegemonies. These work to normalise the marginalised position of migrants. They both assert who is not deserving of welfare and work to position the teller themselves as good citizens and ideal migrant subjects. These echo the findings of austerity studies done with the autochthonous population (Pemberton et al., 2015), but additionally they are a bid 'for recognition and legitimacy' as they recognise the ideological demands of austerity (Dhaliwal and Forkert, 2015:49). The final two narratives – *narrating inequality* and *precarious temporality* – could be classed as counter-narratives and as an expression of resistance to austerity (and inequality more generally), or at the very least, an acknowledgement of the moments when austerity surfaces from the background to the foreground (Hitchens, 2016). These narratives both articulate what is wrong, what the harms of inequalities are, and – through claims to social justice – what migrants need to make a liveable life in the UK.

These six narratives then, to greater or lesser extents, indicate and narrate the presence of austerity in migrants' everyday lives – even if in roundabout ways.

Whether it be narratives of austerity through the articulation of the neoliberal values on which the project of austerity is predicated, austerity as part of a kaleidoscope of inequalities that limits the articulation of its specificity, or austerity as causing harms and limiting future imaginaries. My concern that it was *not* a concern for participants, is not the whole story. Instead, austerity at time eludes narration. It is slippery, hard to define, but still there - and in this way - it is deceptive.

The positionality of participants is important for understanding the connections and divergences between this study and those discussed in chapter 2. As indicated, and unlike those who participated in the research of Emejulu and Bassel (2017a) and to some extent Lonergan (2015), the families engaged in this research were not generally active in political or collective networks. For instance, when I asked Sara what she thought of austerity and how migrants were portrayed in the media, she asked what austerity was and told me that she didn't watch the news, because the children watched cartoons on the television. This despite the multiple ways in which scarcity and hostility have reached into her life. For this reason, it is imperative to understand the socio-economic and transnational positionality of participants in order to contextualise their (lack of) austerity narratives.

In the next and final chapter, I provide a concluding discussion, that will summarise and bring into dialogue the ethnography of a voluntary organisation and narrative analysis of interviews with migrant families. I reflect on my contributions to knowledge and offer some implications for research and practice.

'...there is the loss of place and the loss of time, a loss that cannot be recovered or recuperated but that leaves its enigmatic trace.' (Butler, 2003:468)

9.1 Introduction

The main aim of this research was to understand how migrant families and a voluntary sector organisation that supported refugees, asylum seekers and migrant families, experienced austerity. This concluding chapter offers a précis of the ethnographic research and the interviews with migrant families, and states how they meet the aims of the project. I then bring the organisational and professional narratives into a dialogic relationship with the migrant family narratives, exploring how these two perspectives allow for a fuller understanding of the effects, and meanings, of austerity. I explore my key contributions and – through invoking the 'enigmatic trace' (Butler, 2003:468) and productive qualities of loss – consider implications for practice and future research. I end with a reflection on the research journey (and the journeys yet to be made).

9.2 Ethnography

Through an ethnographic study of a voluntary organisation I have provided an in-depth look at the effect of funding cuts and austerity as they manifest at an organisational level and in so doing met the third research aim: *Provide insights into the effects of austerity on a voluntary sector (migrant support) organisation and how professionals narrate austerity.*

The nature of undertaking an 'insider' ethnography which was not in the original research proposal, is itself a manifestation of crisis, and one that has necessitated a reflexive engagement with my own researcher positionality. Responding to the closure of the organisation which had both inspired the research proposal, and had performed a key gatekeeper function, I proposed to observe and record this period of organisational change, to better understand the effects of austerity from an organisational and frontline perspective. Responding in this way has enabled a study of the closure and loss of a service, and this contributes to a significant gap in the existing third-sector and ASR organisational literature. Interviews with employees one year after the closure of MFSP enabled a perspective that charted the impact and affective nature of change as constructed through narrative and (nostalgic) memory.

Through attending to the exogenous context of organisational change and eventual closure, and to the affective and subjective experience of these, the ethnographic study looks to the interaction between structure and agency. The isomorphic pressure exerted on the organisation through its formal partnership with the local authority, were in sometimes harmony, sometimes tension, with an organisational and employee value-base that emphasised social justice, pro-migrant and anti-poverty goals. The increasingly hostile environment towards migrants was seen to influence the public response of the organisation to funding crises, as the need to protect the client group from direct hostility was in tension with more overt forms of resistance and campaigning tactics. Attempts at securing the future of the organisation drew upon received knowledge about organisational resilience and

sustainability (i.e. partnership working and enterprise activities). However, a combination of too few resources, shifting external context and commissioning processes, and the suppression of the organisation's critical voice (and later self-censorship) meant these were ultimately unsuccessful.

Analysis of participant narratives highlighted the relational and collective way in which the organisation was understood as epochal, and in turn, its loss as traumatic (Cohen and Duberley, 2015) and tragic. In contrast to much of the business, management and human resources literature, organisational change was not understood as progressive, but as 'undoing' the good work of the previous decade. Moreover, the observations of existing literature regarding conflict between management and frontline workers were largely inapplicable in this instance, with empathy and concern directed toward MFSP management instead. Rather conflict and blame was directed 'higher up': in ambivalent ways towards the overarching charity in which MFSP was housed (with some recognition of the ways in which they also provided vital support); in conflicting ways towards the local authority (with anger directed more so towards those with ultimate jurisdiction over local authority budgets, rather than those commissioners with whom MFSP has relations); and unreservedly towards the Conservative government (this was despite the government of the day being a Liberal Democrat-Conservative coalition). This suggests that governmental attempts to disperse accountability and responsibility for austerity measures towards localities were, in this case, partial (at best) (Featherstone et al, 2012).

Analysis of the effects of organisational change and loss on the workers highlighted the intensely affective nature of austerity. Witnessing the impact of austerity on newly arrived families – through the depletion of local service provision and a worsening welfare context (including universal welfare reform and increased welfare bordering) – produced the dissonant effect of desiring to do more while being able to do much less. The emotional labour inherent to this, along with the increasing precarity of some (mostly frontline and migrant) workers, coalesced to detrimentally affect the wellbeing of participants, who spoke of feeling anxiety, stress, anger, guilt, sadness and disbelief. The claims of Pini et al. (2010) that organisational loss can be felt as though a bereavement have traction in this case, as participants spoke of the intensely felt connection to the organisation and their colleagues (indeed, if love could sustain an organisation (cf. Goldstraw, 2016) then MFSP would have certainly prospered). Through reflection on the organisation's past (the 'good times') and its loss, subjective insights about the future (narrated as uncertain and almost-dystopian) of welfare and the lives of migrant families in Manchester were narrated.

An engagement with critical readings of loss has enabled a theoretical lens through which to analyse organisational change and closure, and this has sought to move beyond a managerialist literature that conceives of loss as a process through which one can progress and eventually overcome (Bell and Taylor, 2011). Instead the concept of continuing bonds highlights the way in which loss is a process of meaning-making, and is socially constructed and collectively mediated. Looking to further a critical engagement with loss in organisational literature, I have invoked

political readings that situate loss within a structural frame. Through the invocation of melancholia (or nostalgia (Tannock, 1995)), this analysis sought to have a 'continuous engagement with loss and its remains' (Eng and Kazanjian, 2003:4) that looked to the ways in which the past might be rewritten and the future reimagined. Such an approach has intensely personal connotations, as I sought a hopeful (yet critical) way through the analysis of the loss of an organisation which I too loved. In section 9.7 I attend to this further through posing some potential avenues for future practice.

9.3 Migrant family narratives

Here I synthesise and discuss the analysis of migrant family narratives. Using the 'Listening Guide' (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998; Doucet and Mauthner, 2008) I have undertaken multiple readings of the transcripts to build up a complex and multifaceted narrative of everyday life in a time of austerity, this section addresses the second research aim: *Understand how the everyday lives of migrant families are narrated in relation to austerity.*

9.3.1 Everyday life and material harms

Using a frame of *translocational positionality* (Anthias, 2008), which highlights the intersectional, situated and changeable nature of belonging, I firstly interrogated the ways in which participants experiences of austerity were framed by where they had come from and why they had migrated, by the restrictions placed on them through the stratification of immigration status and welfare rights, and in relation to the hostile environment. Many participants saw the UK as somewhere that would

open up a better future for their children and in which they could take measures to improve their lives, or as a sanctuary from persecution, discrimination and abuse in their country of origin. However, at times these narratives were fractured by the realities of welfare bordering and retrenchment (Guentner et al., 2016; Morris, 2016). Particularly risky periods appeared to be around the 'verification' of benefit claims, which often took over six months, and immediately following being granted refugee status (Doyle, 2014). These left families in dire financial constraints, and many spoke of facing debt and arrears in the first years after arriving in the UK. Those that had savings had to use them for day-to-day living rather than securing the long-term future of the families. Additionally, participants spoke of reverse-remittances (Mazzucato, 2011), drawing on their informal networks to loan money, selling valuable belongings, and accessing voluntary support and advice services for assistance. Organisations that were described by the participants as particularly helpful in these times, such as MFSP and Refugee Action, had either closed or their services significantly reduced in the time since their encounters with the organisations.

A hostile environment was particularly evident in the narratives of those who has been in the asylum system, as they spoke of dispersal having detrimental effects on education and maternity services, and one family spoke of their detainment and threatened deportation as *'the worst'* moment they had experienced in the UK. Though these incidents were in the past, and participants had leave to remain, these had lasting psychic effects, and *temporal drag* - in which the past pulls on the present - was evident (Gunaratnam, 2015). The fear of the Home Office logo is

reminiscent of the fear described at the sight of the 'brown envelope' by participants in a study with incapacity benefit claimants (Garthwaite, 2014). Hostility was evident in the higher education restrictions that participants faced, and some described having to *rework* their expectations of what might make life *liveable* in the UK (Smith, 2014; Woodiwiss et al., 2017).

It was not only asylum seekers and refugees who faced hostility. This was also narrated in relation to the condition of proving - through wedding pictures and videos - a '*genuine and subsisting*' marriage in order for a third-country national to join an EU migrant. In the suspicious treatment of Sahir and Naheed we might recognise the way in which particular migrant women are positioned as an '*unhomely threat*' to the moral fabric of the nation (Gedalof, 2007). Structural hostility was additionally accompanied by interpersonal racist encounters. The circulation of discourses such as the migrant as undeserving of benefits or as a threat to the nation have repercussions in policy and in the public domain as far-right discourse and support grows (Luhmann and Vuoristo, 2015). It might be said that policies of hostility work alongside austerity policies to forge 'chains of jeopardy' which 'operate to bind and then suture some... migrant populations into highly differential social worlds' (Bloch et al., 2013:196).

Relating my findings to the everyday austerity literature, I have shown how the experiences of migrants (with recourse to public funds) and of non-migrants in relation to austerity are often not dissimilar. Common struggles are evident in the increasing conditionality of welfare, the banality and ineffectiveness of Jobcentre support, and the undervalued nature of parenting and care responsibilities.

Moreover, the punitive nature of the welfare-to-work agenda risks punishing migrants for engaging in activities that genuinely improve their chances of gaining employment, such as restricting their ability to access English language classes. Experiences of debt and the management of this within the home indicated the consuming nature of financial concerns (Pemberton et al., 2014; Hall, 2016). These were emotionally-consuming, as people described constant anxiety about paying bills; and time-consuming, as participants (usually mothers) described the tactics they adopted to ensure there was food on the table. Making these connections has sought to bring experiences of austerity into dialogue, so as to open up 'the possibility of more reflexive forms of political struggle' based on common *struggle*, not necessarily on 'common identity' (Anthias, 2006:28).

Chapter 6 focused on how precarity was manifest in everyday lives. This was evident in the low-paid work in which most were employed. Participants spoke about taking up positions that were far away from their home, working unsociable hours, long hours or too few hours, and an inability to challenge poor work practices. This translated into precarious lives beyond the workplace. Low wages and subsequent debts placed strains on familial relationships and some expressed fear at being unable to provide for their family. For some, relationships broke down as economic problems gave way to non-economic problems (Sosenko et al., 2013), and being an (unexpectedly) single parent brought additional pressures (Rabindrakumar, 2013). Several expressed concerns about their need to exercise their treaty rights (that is, to be working), and this, alongside the rising UKIP discourse at the time of the interviews, conspired to govern the actions of participants, who expressed that they

would do anything rather than nothing as they were fearful of being forced to return to the country from which they migrated.

Material and immaterial effects contribute to the *diffuse* atmosphere of austerity (Hitchen, 2016). These effects were experienced variously along intersecting axes. Many of the women interviewed spoke of the care work that they undertook in the home, of reciprocal caring relationships with friends, of transnational caring responsibilities, and as being part of a commodified global care chain (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2003). These caring roles were consuming, and fixed women in feminised and undervalued - though socially vital - roles (Anderson, 2000; Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, 2014). Attempts to transcend these gendered boundaries were often unfulfilled: be it the withdrawal of a student loan that thwarted dreams of undertaking an architecture degree; banal activities on a welfare-to-work programme that actually detracted from a meaningful search for employment; or the closure of local ESOL provision, women in the study expressed isolation and an escalation of their roles as mothers and carers (Institute of Migration, 2012). Isolation, caring responsibilities, and depreciating welfare provision were narrated as particularly problematic for mothers of children with disabilities. Participants described being unable to work, either because children were out of school for extended periods of up to a year, or because their caring duties kept them in the home. Narratives highlight disentanglement to welfare, discontinuous and sometimes dangerous support from professionals, and a sense of there being no-one to turn to. Attending to the intersection of disability alongside other social inequalities has shown the 'exorbitant' cost to these women of state withdrawal from private lives

(Guidroz and Berger, 2009:69). Existing inequalities and forms of disablism (Ryan and Runswick-Cole, 2008), alongside welfare bordering that restricts migrant access to welfare, no matter their intersectional needs, have conspired to place some perilously *near the edge* (Mehra and Ahmed, 2017).

Finally, in analysing the material harms of austerity, chapter 7 returned to the initial aim of this research, which was to *understand the experiences of migrant families accessing services⁷³ that support settlement in a context of austerity and funding cuts*. Drawing on the third reading of the Listening Guide (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998; Doucet and Mauthner, 2008), this chapter highlighted the relationships which were narrated as important by participants. Participants spoke of barriers to services such as healthcare and English language support (ESOL); the role of the voluntary sector (including MFSP) in promoting a sense of *belonging* (Anthias, 2006; Anthias, 2008); the poor condition of homes in the private rental sector and those which are provided to asylum seekers; and the indispensable, yet precarious, nature of informal support networks. As highlighted in chapter 5, participants compared services to the provision in the country from which they migrated. This meant that for some, the NHS was uniquely valued, as previously they had received little in the way of healthcare. However, families from the EU were more likely to raise concerns about their healthcare experiences, as they felt as though professionals did not take them seriously, and a sporadic use of interpreters left families reliant on their children to interpret.

⁷³ Services taken to include specialist migrant, refugee and asylum support, and general welfare, education, health, housing and leisure services, provided by the public, voluntary and private sector.

Most who did not speak English spoke of their desire to do so yet they had faced waiting lists for ESOL classes of over one year and, for migrant mothers, a lack of local provision that fit in with caring responsibilities. All of those in either private provision or who had been in NASS accommodation spoke of (or indeed, showed me) unsanitary and unsafe conditions, and the fear of eviction that governed their behaviour (Paton and Cooper, 2017). While participants showed ingenuity in improving their homes, their agency was also narrated as being overwhelmed by structural constraints and the inaction of landlords and housing providers.

Families evidenced inter-generational support, as children were often called upon to interpret for their parents, especially in the context of worsening interpreting provision in the NHS. Mothers that I interviewed often referred to one close person who supported them in everyday life – particularly around childcare, and in emergencies. Though these networks were vital, they were small, and as others indicated, the pressure of precarious conditions can put strain on – and sever – relationships. I argue then that though important, these friendships and familial networks should not be understood as a panacea for support in times of austerity and reducing provision. Many spoke warmly about the voluntary sector support they had received, highlighting their importance in relation to advocacy for welfare, housing and school places; emergency provision of food parcels; the connection with a knowledgeable person that could signpost to appropriate services; and simply, as providing a warm welcome and listening ear. I also noted, and some families lamented, that the provision narrated as helpful had either closed or faced severe reductions in capacity following funding cuts.

This brings me to a key concern that has haunted me in the latter stages of writing this thesis, and which is related to researching in and about a contemporary and shifting context. Worsening service provision, alongside increasingly restrictive legislation (i.e. the Immigration Act 2014 and 2016), mean that some of the ‘worst’ effects of austerity policies might not have been captured in this research. Indeed, the findings that I have presented are highly concerning, but the policy context has only become starker. This, however, is impetus for continued research in this field. Of writing in a contemporary moment, Back (2007:155) notes the partiality of that which is written, but that this is not cause for ‘turning away from a commitment to dialogue’. In ‘trying to capture an outline of an existence that is fleeting’ (p.153) this research has not only captured the materiality of austerity harms, but also the structural constraints and broader field of inequalities within which austerity is felt and narrated. These open up opportunities for thinking about how to approach both research and practice. Before I turn to these however (section 9.6 and 9.7), the next section summarises the key narratives that participants drew on to make sense of austerity.

9.3.2 Making (no) sense of austerity

Moving from understanding everyday lives in a time of austerity, to reaching for explanations for the stories told by participants (Doucet and Mauthner, 2008) - particularly why austerity was often not named as a problem - chapter 8 sought to understand the relationship between what participants narrated, my interpretation of their stories, and the ‘wider web of social and structural relations from which narrated subjects speak’ (Doucet and Mauthner, 2008:404). I explored six narratives

that sought to contextualise the elusive nature of *austerity* in participant accounts of everyday life in the UK. This chapter attends most explicitly to the second research aim, and in particular to *how* everyday lives are narrated, as well as to *what* is narrated (Riessman, 2005).

The first two, the '*worse-off*' voice and the *duty to be grateful*, indicated the translocational positionality (Anthias, 2008) of migrants. Through reminiscing and comparing with another time and place, and with other people, participants constructions of life in the UK were placed in a relative context. Austerity then became subsumed by stories of harder times and was one element of a 'kaleidoscopic' (Gunaratnam, 2015) mixture of harms and experiences in the past and present. However, migrants also expressed *fear* that witnessing the effects on others – for instance welfare restrictions and the need to use a food bank - meant they may be next (Hitchen, 2016). Additionally, belonging in the UK is understood as *conditional* (Derrida, 2000) and subsequently migrants are obliged to be grateful for that which they receive once in the UK. In the context of depleting provision and increasing restrictions on migrants, I would argue that the austerity context - the 'insistent talk' (Bhattacharyya, 2015:142) of scarcity - propels this duty, as migrants are obliged to feel grateful for anything that they receive.

Narratives of *individual responsibility* and *othering* reproduced the moral imperatives upon which austerity is premised, for instance through the desire to be seen to be doing everything they can to *get on*, normalising the amount of work that goes into maintaining a precarious position (Mehra and Ahmed, 2017), blaming themselves for situations that I read as evidence of structural constraints and

distancing themselves from those who are seen to take too much, or who engage in criminal behaviour (Seabrooke and Riisbjerg-Thomsen, 2016; Bhattacharyya, 2015).

Participants narratives of *voicing inequality* and *precarious temporality* spoke to the ways in which resistance and ‘resilience’ were demonstrated. These were counter-narratives to some of the earlier narratives discussed. Rather than emphasising moral stories that drew on neoliberal discourse, these narrated injustices and made claims for social justice and human rights. Participants drew on these narratives to advocate for support for migrants and to highlight the harms that jeopardised their ability to plan for the future. Many participants spoke of the hope they held for their children’s future, when they could not envision their own.

In concluding chapter 8, I reflected on the way in which the *not naming* of austerity did not indicate that austerity was not present, but that rather participant narratives are told from a position that is situated, partial, contingent, changeable and relative (Anthias, 2008; Doucet and Mauthner, 2008). These six narratives speak ‘all around the life’ (Frank, 2010:168) and *all around* an austerity that is but one part of the kaleidoscope of inequalities that migrants experience.

9.4 In dialogue: MFSP and migrant families

Here I explicitly attend to the fourth aim of this research: *Construct a dialogical narrative of austerity for migrant families and those who support them.*

The ethnographic study, interviews with professionals, and interviews with migrant families undoubtedly indicated the material harms of austerity policies. Funding cuts to service provision in the public and voluntary sector, leading to service

closure, have reduced the range of provision available to support migrant families to settle in Manchester. Those that have survived often find their services reduced, their thresholds heightened and capacity limited. Similarly, formal and informal practices of welfare bordering (Guentner et al., 2016) have severe financial implications. Legislative eligibility does not always translate into funds, as delays (for many months, in some cases years) and processes of ‘verification’ work to substantively exclude many from the protection of a welfare safety net.

The organisational data and professional knowledge has been vital for establishing a broad view of the material harms that austerity inflicts. Though I did not use case records to ‘verify’ the accounts of individual participants, organisational records did indicate the breadth of the harms of austerity. It was commonplace to refer families to food banks, to donate clothing and furniture, to negotiate with landlords around eviction and poor accommodation, to spend countless hours on the phone to the benefits agencies, to struggle to find ESOL classes with spaces or battle with GP surgeries that would not register migrant families. These findings connect with the existing everyday austerity literature that highlight the material effects on the non-migrant population (Hall and Perry, 2013; O’Hara, 2014), and on migrant populations (Sandhu et al., 2013; Kartalozzi, 2014).

Extending these analyses, through an in-depth study of organisational change and eventual loss *and* of those supported by the organisation, I have shown the effects and affective nature of funding cuts. Professionals spoke about the tension between their empathy and desire to help families through putting in ‘*two hundred percent*’, yet their sense that they could not do enough and were simply firefighting and

having to prioritise the most extreme cases. While most families expressed disappointment at the closure of MFSP, lamenting that it could have supported others as it had them, some of those who had been supported in the last year of the organisation's work were more ambivalent and could not recall in which ways they had been supported, indicating that indeed the reduced capacity of front line workers had been detrimental to the relationships with families.

The most significant way in which professional and family narratives diverged was through the tendency, or otherwise, to *name* austerity as a problem. Or in fact as *the* problem. The interviews with professionals underscored a shared language and knowledge of what austerity *did* in terms of the material, economic harms on migrant families. Conversely, the interviews with migrant families rarely named austerity as a problem, *for them*. Families qualified their experiences through narratives that emphasised that they were worse off before or that others were worse off than themselves, that they were grateful to be in the UK, that it was *their* responsibility to make life in the UK a success, that perhaps 'others' *were* taking too much, and that the government needed to look after 'their own'. Using the Listening Guide, and attending to the multiplicity of narratives in participant accounts of their everyday lives, has opened up ways of seeing the complexity and ambiguity of austerity. These narratives challenged my preconceptions and have coalesced to shape my understanding of *how* austerity is obscured, and how it is *kaleidoscopic* in nature. Austerity is a significant part of a number of 'routinised crises' (Emejulu and Bassel, 2017a:186) for migrant families. This thesis has shown how these crises extend beyond the border of the UK, to a global context of inequality (inequalities

that are economic, racialised and gendered). Of course, these narratives – for both professionals and migrant families – were not absolute. Professionals noted the existing *inequalities* that were exacerbated by austerity, and migrant families articulated the disjuncture between their expectation of the UK and the reality and made claims to *social justice* based on these.

While those who worked at MFSP situated the current austerity climate in a geographically situated and temporal context (i.e. what was service provision like in Manchester in previous years), migrant families largely made comparisons that were translocational in nature (i.e. between healthcare services pre- and post- migration). However, some of the family support workers that were migrants oscillated between these two. For instance, asked if austerity had affected him, Al suggested he was somewhere between these two positions:

The thing is, the place that I was born, I was born in recession time (laughs) and it's been in recession since then, so I've been in recession for more than thirty years, so I'm okay! But yeah of course, because then you feel like after you've paid everything, after you've paid your bills, you have to live your life... but prices are so high and wages are still the same, and it makes a difference... so yeah it is something. (Al)

This is indicative of a need to attend to the translocational positionality of participants, and not to assume and/or reify difference between 'professionals' and 'service users'. Engaging in a feminist ethics of care works to recognise that vulnerability encompasses the 'practice and experiences of professionals as well as service users' (Jupp, 2017:144). While recognising the power differentials inherent in this (permeable) boundary, to consider the affective nature of austerity for both can

enable an empirical look at the connections ‘with others across difference without projecting a generalised ‘otherness’ onto them.’ (p.145).

I return to some of these issues below in exploring implications for practice and research.

9.5 Limitations and challenges

Here I explore some of the challenges that this research has presented and highlight limitations of the study. Firstly, the issue of ‘quality assurance’ in qualitative research is one that presents additional complexity in comparison with positivist traditions (Bailey, 1996). Issues of generalisability, rigour and validity are not always directly applicable to research that is interested less in *a truth* and more in co-constructed, multiple meanings (ibid). I have sought to present an outline of my methodological decisions, noting the learning process that I have gone on during this research journey, and reflexively engaging with the ‘messy, human affair’ that constitutes much research (Plummer, 2001:122). It goes without saying that this study is not directly generalisable to other contexts. It presents a particular case study of a voluntary organisation and the families that accessed that organisation. But what I have hoped to do with this research is to create a space to think about the ways in which other organisations and those they support may experience and narrate austerity. Many migrant organisations have faced and are facing funding cuts, and subsequently migrants are facing an increasingly sparse formal support landscape alongside an explicitly hostile policy context. While this research may not

be directly translatable, it is hoped it can be useful in promoting dialogue about austerity and persistent inequalities as they affect migrant communities.

I explained in chapter 1 the sample of the migrant families included in the study. I have felt conflicted throughout this study by two opposite concerns; either that the sample were *too* diverse, and that this would limit the analyses, or conversely, that the sample was missing current asylum seekers, those with NRPF, and irregular or undocumented migrants, who may in fact face the most egregious hostility in the current climate. In practical terms, the study is limited by those who agreed to take part, and while diverse in many ways, it was to be that all participants had recourse to public funds (though I have explored the ways in which welfare bordering affected them nonetheless). In hindsight, this has allowed an in-depth exploration of the experiences of those with recourse, but with different migratory trajectories – EU migrants and refugees.

9.6 Contributions to knowledge and implications for future research

In seeking to understand how migrant families and a voluntary sector organisation experienced austerity, I learned several things, both anticipated and unanticipated. Here I explicate these and specify the contributions to knowledge that this study makes. I propose three areas in which I make contributions: empirical findings, methodological findings and theoretical findings. I also suggest areas for future research based on these.

9.6.1 Empirical contributions

In broad terms, this study affirms that austerity and a politics of hostility have

substantial effects on the everyday lives of migrant families, and - through ethnographic study and interviews with professionals – has offered an in-depth insight into the effects of austerity (and antecedent policy context) on a voluntary sector organisation. This research was undertaken in a moment of acute crisis for MFSP, though the interviews with migrant families have shown that they face multiple crises that exist across borders and persist over time. Through in-depth analyses of both a support service and the families they supported, this study offers a case study of how austerity, via funding cuts and policy rhetoric, manifests at a local level and in a voluntary organisation closely allied with the local authority. The decisions taken by the organisation and the narratives drawn on, both complicit and resistant, filter down to migrant families and these are manifest in multiple material and immaterial ways. Moreover, the ethnographic study has highlighted the tension between working *within* the state and attempting to persuade the state of the importance of the organisation in a changing policy context. Using the *tools* and rhetoric of the state in this instance proved unsuccessful, subsequently it is important to consider alternative modes of practicing for the future, and I explore in section 9.7.

Situating the organisational ethnography within the existing literature highlights the unique value of studying from an ‘insider’ perspective. There are remarkably few studies of organisational loss, particularly from a third-sector perspective. This study therefore contributes to a qualitative understanding of the processes of loss at varying temporal junctures. Paying attention to both the exogenous context (i.e. changing commissioning processes and state-voluntary relationships, funding cuts,

anti-migrant hostility) and subjective understandings of loss has highlighted the interplay between structure and agency, and the convergence and divergence between what an organisation *does* in response to austerity and financial crisis, and the narratives of employees within the organisation. Attending to governance and management decisions, and to the narrative ‘meaning-making’ of individuals enabled a more rounded analysis of the moments of compliance and the potential for resistance in third sector organisations. A focus on the affective nature of austerity highlighted the significance of organisational change and closure – felt viscerally, organisational closure should be understood as a significant loss that impacts on the wellbeing of employees. This loss presents in symbolic and material ways, as workers (dependent upon their own intersectional positioning) spoke of their own precarity and (more generally) of a future that was uncertain and potentially violent (see also Colley, 2012; Sanders-McDonagh et al., 2016).

Through reviewing the burgeoning austerity literature, this study has identified that migrants are generally excluded from research that looks to the impact of austerity in everyday lives. Making connections between the existing literature that has studied the autochthonous population and the experiences of migrants with recourse to public funds, I have shown the ways in which these narratives converge, while also attended to the specificity of the migrant experience. When I started this study, there was little in the way of research on migrant experiences of austerity (Collett, 2011). As this field has grown (though it remains understudied), this study supports many of the findings of austerity studies that look to the experience of migrants, for instance: the impact of welfare reform and inferior access to the labour

market (Sosenko et al., 2013; Kartallozi, 2014; Migrants' Rights Network, 2017); the barriers to accessing services such as healthcare, ESOL and advice services (Bynner, 2012; Lonergan, 2015; Rafighi et al., 2016); and the gendered and racialised impacts of austerity policy and discourse (Sosenko et al., 2013; Lonergan, 2015; Emejulu and Bassel, 2015; 2017; Bassel and Emejulu, 2017). This study extends these through attending to the way in which these are felt in everyday lives; at a household and family level (Hall, 2016). For instance, particular difficulties arise through the long periods in which EU migrants await 'verification' for benefit claims. To make a comparison between the everyday austerity literature, the home office logo is akin to the 'brown envelope' that Garthwaite (2014) and Mattheys (2016) describe as causing fear for their participants. Being unable to read letters in English presents an additional layer of concern for some migrant families, and many parents rely on their children to read and relay important documents. Moreover, there was evidence of the market creeping in to fill the gaps left by the reducing voluntary and legal aid sector, as one family described paying for (unforthcoming) support with a tax credit appeal. This raised questions for me about how new migrants are informed of their rights and (remaining) service provision in a hostile and austere context, and this is a question open for both researchers and practitioners to consider.

Precarity is not only felt in the labour market, but in the home as partners struggle to make ends meet and with little support, and relationships face unbearable strain. The often unpaid and almost always undervalued labour of care work was a gendered issue, and for migrant mothers raising a disabled child, hardships felt at

the intersections of inequality were especially pronounced. The intersection of race, migration, gender, disability and care work are particularly understudied, with related studies found only in North America (Hon et al., 2011; Zechella and Raval, 2016; Kediye et al., 2009) and Australia (Liu and Fisher, 2017), suggesting that this is an important area for future research to pursue. Relatedly, the admission of migrant children into school is important for the functioning of the whole family, with parents (particularly single parents) unable to work in this period.

Just as Sosenko et al (2013) noted that economic problems give way to non-economic problems, so too non-economic problems give rise to economic problems. While a recent report mentions that migrant children may wait a long time for a school place to be allocated (Ryder et al., 2017), little empirical research has ascertained how this is experienced by families at an everyday level more broadly. Given the context of austerity, the 'academisation' of the education sector, and the reduced provision to support migrant families to access school places, I would argue that this should not be a marginal issue and demands further research.

Finally, the support networks that families called on in everyday life and in times of crisis are small, and getting smaller, as service provision is reduced. Many do not have extended families and networks to call on, and there is not always a 'community' to turn to. This indicates that though vital, these support networks are likely to be precarious to shocks and strain, and this again is an area worthy of further study.

9.6.2 Methodological contributions

Methodologically, this study has adopted a mixed qualitative approach, that has produced rich data using a small sample. The use of ethnographic methods within an organisational context, combined with professional interviews and interviews with migrant families supported by the organisation has enabled a panoramic view of the impact of austerity on one service and their client group. Doing research with organisations, and as an ‘insider’ researcher, though presenting ethical challenges that must be adequately supported, is also vital in a context of continued marketisation and depleting public and voluntary sector services. Front-line workers have a broad overview of the effects of welfare and state retrenchment and are likely to have access to ‘hidden populations’, and I would advocate for research to be embedded in practice contexts to understand the effects of policy and inequality on vulnerable populations.

The approach to sampling, through reviewing archived case records and contacting families through a trusted organisation, has enabled access to a unique group of refugees and migrants. Locating a diverse sample with varying intersectional needs was achieved through this method, though all converged along axes including: low-income, visible and racialised minority, and the (relative) privilege of access to public funds. This enabled a dialogic approach that highlighted the differential rights afforded by legal status, but which also made connections between experiences, and in this way avoided an overly-essentialist or homogenising approach to the study of ‘migrants’. The inclusion of racialised EU (onward)

migrants is an area that is understudied across the academic migration literature, and similarly in the social work literature specifically. In a context of super-diversity, many services often do not identify these individuals as a demographic that may have particular support needs, and which may not be met by existing refugee and migrant support provision. It has been observed that despite increasing categorisation of migrants, 'racial inequalities remain socially pervasive' (Erel et al., 2016:1346). In this regard, the loss of MFSP is notable, as there is reduced provision that meets the needs of a diverse – multi-racial and multi-status - migrant population in the city of Manchester. The UK's decision to leave the European Union may have particularly adverse effects for this population of racialised EU citizens, and beyond the 'age of austerity', economic and social inequality are likely to continue as we move from the 'age of austerity' to the 'age of Brexit'. I would strongly propose that research which locates the everyday experiences of migrants in accessing services and welfare in a context of Brexit and increased nativism is a high priority for future research.

In relating the sample studied to the literature, at a local level it is evident that the sample reached were indeed unique, not only for their migrant status but for their limited engagement with activism or spaces of solidarity. Berry (2013), in a study undertaken shortly before my own, highlights the popularity of research conducted in Manchester with asylum seeking and refugee communities. Berry notes that conducting research with an 'active, empowered, self-organised... group' of women seeking asylum led to her knowing of at least 'seven female researchers who were embarking on pro-refugee research' and who intended to recruit participants

through one key organisation (*‘Women Asylum Seekers Together’*). At a broader level, the sample in this study appear to have a different relationship with activism than other key studies in the migrant-austerity literature, whereby participants appear to have been recruited through organisations with a more explicit solidarity and activist remit than MFSP (Emejulu and Bassel, 2015; 2017; Lonergan, 2015). Bassel and Emejulu (2017) have shown the ways in which austerity and inequalities have been both impetus and barrier to minority women’s activism. This thesis however analyses the way in which structural narratives ‘work on’ (Frank, 2010:3) the accounts of migrant families who are often ‘de facto... confined to domestic spaces’ (Bassel and Emejulu, 2017:7). In other words, the participants in this study did not (in our interview) describe themselves as desiring to be, or actually engaged in activism. Participants almost roundly described feeling isolated and with little contact with spaces that might have facilitated more political action. I have suggested that one outcome of accessing a sample through an organisation that worked through an outreach model is that the families I interviewed were distinct in their social positionality and as such converge from studies of activist and solidarity group-based organisations (cf. Lonergan, 2015). Several factors have coalesced to capture the views of isolated refugee and migrant participants: approaching potential participants through an organisation that worked in an outreach capacity (and which rarely brought families together, especially in its later years); enabling those without English to participate through an interpreter; conducting interviews at participants’ homes; and with the option of joint interviews between family members.

The use of the Listening Guide (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998; Doucet and Mauthner, 2008), though not new in social research, has often been undertaken solely with women. This study has adopted the Listening Guide for use with both men and women, and I contend that it is a method of analysis that is not inherently essentialist – in relation to gender or any other identity or positionality. I have also used this analytical approach with texts that include interpreters and multiple participants. While noting the limitations that this might have in some regards for narrative analysis, I also think that it is an appropriately flexible method for *listening* to participant accounts that is invaluable for research and practice. A process of listening for (and underlining): recurrent themes; researcher subjectivity and reflexivity; participant subjectivity; participant relationships; and structural narratives -has produced a comprehensive and complex analysis that, for instance, thematic analysis would have been unlikely to capture.

9.6.3 Theoretical contributions

A combination of theoretical underpinnings has contributed to a study that interrogates not only what austerity *does*, but how it is *understood* by people in different social locations. Through attending to the narratives of participants and to the everyday – the institutions that people engage with, familial and wider social relationships, the daily practices of making a home and family life, temporality and memory – this thesis has illustrated how austerity is narrated and how it is conveyed through beyond-narrative means. This has necessitated a researcher position between social constructionism and a critical commitment to addressing

intersections of inequality. This research is a product of a desire both to tell the stories of migrant families, but also to situate these within a structural context. This is important work for understanding the sometimes disjuncture between what is told and actual material harms. Noting that this is potentially a form of epistemic violence (Teo, 2010), I have sought to reflect on my own understandings and those of MFSP with the same criticality. Throughout this thesis I have reflected on my learning and in this way, I attempt to provide a critical, honest – and inevitably partial and contingent - account of how austerity is known, how austerity is felt, and how austerity is obscured, for migrant families, a voluntary organisation and for myself.

Through attention to critical theories of loss and grief that emphasise the role of structure and politics in the negotiation of loss I have extended the existing (and marginal) literature that engages with organisational loss. Theoretical contributions from Bell and Taylor (2011) and Walter (2014) have argued for a need to move beyond stage models that see loss as something to merely put behind us and from which to move on. These authors have emphasised the severity of organisational loss (Walter, 2014) and the potential for loss as a process of ‘meaning-making’ (Bell and Taylor, 2011) rather than resolution. This study goes further through the application of a political, relational, and – ultimately, productive – theory of loss that suggests future imaginaries must be considered through an engagement with the past. In this way, we do not simply ‘get over’ and ‘move on’ from the loss of an organisation, but through critical analysis can begin to consider ways in which a lost organisation might be mobilised in the production of the future.

The incorporation of Anthias' (2008) theoretical work around 'translocational positionality' has been crucial for adequately attending to not only intersections of race, gender, class, and disability, but to the multiple and changeable *locations, positionality and belongings* of an individual. This has enabled me to theorise how narratives were shaped in relation to migrants' geographic locations and their intersectional location, how migrants are *positioned* in times of austerity by structural constraints, but also how they position themselves as agentic subjects, the experiences that *enable* a sense of belonging, and those that present as *hurdles* to a sense of belonging. Indeed, this has alignment with the Listening Guide approach that attends to both structure and agency. Once I had learned about translocational positionality I returned to the transcripts to further draw out the stories of how participants shaped their narratives in relation to lives pre-migration, and in relation to their legal and substantive positioning as migrants in the UK. Future research might further consider how these theoretical and methodological frameworks could be brought together in qualitative research with migrants.

Finally, a substantial contribution of this thesis to both the existing literature on austerity, and with potential to be meaningful for social work practice, are the six narratives that I have presented in chapter 8 as framing migrant family narratives in a time of austerity. These call for researchers and practitioners alike to think about the multiplicity of structural narratives that might 'work on people' (Frank, 2010:3). These narratives both enable and constrain. They could be the way in which an individual finds a story that helps them to simply 'get on' with life; they may represent a narrative *duty* – to tell the story one is expected to tell; they might tell

the stories of hardship even as one is saying things are not so bad; and they may make a claim to justice, to make demands for something better – for themselves, for their families and for those that they do not know. In relation to the austerity-migrant literature, others have highlighted the narratives of *individual responsibility* (Lonergan, 2015) and *othering* (Bhattacharyya, 2015; Dhaliwal and Forkert, 2015). The work of Emejulu and Bassel (2015; 2017) and Lonergan (2015) emphasise *inequality and claims to social justice*, and several implicitly, if not explicitly, note the *precarity* of future imaginaries in a time of austerity. This study has however specifically named the ‘*worse-off*’ narrative and the *duty to be grateful*. These are significant for understanding how individuals who have migrated may narrate austerity and everyday life in the UK. Moreover, in naming these six narratives I have sought to attend to the multiplicity of accounts. Below I return to these and reflect on their significance for practice.

9.7 Implications for practice

Reflecting on the implications of this thesis for practice, it is necessary to return to the significant changes that have accompanied the research project. The loss of an organisation that supported refugees, asylum seekers and migrant families to settle in Manchester – an organisation which was intended to perform a gatekeeper function, much less be an object of study – has been a stark and concrete example of the impact of austerity upon the welfare landscape. The implications of austerity for voluntary organisations that have depended upon the state for funding are concerning. Attempts at de-formalising the voluntary sector through initiatives such as the Big Society, coupled with a rising anti-migrant hostility – both in rhetoric and

policy – have coalesced in this instance to destabilise one service so catastrophically that it could not adequately respond to sustain its future. Much has been written on the potential routes to sustainability and ‘resilience’ in a context of sector-wide financial crisis (see for instance, D’Angelo et al., 2010; Wilding, 2010; Vacchelli et al., 2015; Myers, 2017; Terry, 2017), however little research has addressed cases where such advice (i.e. funding diversification, partnership working, enterprising activities) have been implemented but have proven unsuccessful to the extent that the organisation has ceased operations. This implores us to consider potential futures that go beyond the neoliberal orthodoxy (McGovern, 2016),

In their analyses of the tensions between the voluntary sector and anti-austerity activists in London, Ishkanian and Ali (2018) - while noting the severe constraints placed on voluntary organisations who fear (funding) reprisals for taking an overt political stance - make a call for VCOs to ‘re-evaluate their wider purpose in society and to re-think their understandings of effectiveness and success... beyond the organizational level’ (p.14). They argue that for VCOs to be effective in tackling the structural causes of poverty, inequality and social exclusion (three key issues raised by professionals and migrant families alike in this study), then collaborating with activist groups should be sincerely considered. If activist groups can more effectively contest ‘the status quo that there is no alternative to austerity’ (p.14), then this would seem an alliance worth pursuing to counter the current quagmire of neoliberal state-voluntary relations.

Ambitious campaigns have emerged in the wake of austerity and the ‘hostile environment’. Groups such as North East London Migrant Action (NELMA), Against

Borders for Children (ABC), Docs not Cops, and ‘These Walls Must Fall’, have campaigned against hostility in its various forms, and some have had significant success in challenging government policy and rhetoric⁷⁴. Working alongside campaigning organisations and activist groups is not a direct alternative to the sorts of ‘heyday’ state partnership described in this thesis, and limitations (of funding, ‘legitimacy’, differing cultures of organising) are undoubtedly present. However, in an already depreciating state-voluntary context, there are potential gains to be made through a broader coalition between the (formalised) voluntary sector and those working at a grassroots level to affect social change – through the convergence of values and the connection of ideas, knowledges and experiences. Indeed, there are examples of organisations and/or organising working within a social work-migration paradigm that have incorporated a capacity for campaigning, such as Social Workers Without Borders and Migrant Family Action.

An appreciation of the radical is in alignment with Silver’s (2018:161) call for the ‘democratisation of everyday life’. Drawing on the radical pedagogy of Freire (1970) and the concept of ‘dissensus’, Silver imagines how we might be moved to disrupt dominant discourses, reject the status quo, and question social relations anew. In the context of this research, there were moments where migrant families and professionals alike spoke of ways in which the social world might be more just and what they hoped or thought a good future could look like. Both valued the

⁷⁴ For instance, Against Borders for Children had recent success (April 2018) when it was announced that the Department for Education are removing nationality and country of birth categories from the school census – information that was agreed to be shared with the Home Office for immigration enforcement purposes.

relational aspect of the work, and I believe that this relational model could be developed in ways that might bring refugees, asylum seekers and migrants together in collective ways alongside professionals – through modes of working that distribute power more horizontally, in which ‘conscious strategies’ of resistance might occur (Piacentini, 2014:178). This could reduce isolation, but also do some of the work of *connecting* stories across multiple axes of inequality and to reflect ‘multiracial’ and ‘multi-status’ diverse contexts. For instance, sharing stories of inequalities experienced, and mutual support could help to lessen the burden of individual responsibility and the duty to be grateful that permeated the narratives of migrant families’ everyday lives.

Returning to the concept of conscientization in closing this thesis – having been so inspired by it at the beginning of the PhD journey, and yet so beset by despair in the midst of fieldwork as I felt the project (and myself) become consumed by the neoliberal, hostile and austere atmosphere – is for me, tantamount to the productive potential of a critical engagement with loss. The potential future imaginaries discussed here are, I believe, congruent with many of the values of the individuals that made up the lost organisation, but which were failed by neoliberal logics, and is reflective of an organisation that has left an ‘enigmatic trace’ (Butler, 2003) on which new practices might be built.

This discussion has not been a conclusive analysis of the way forward, indeed this is a collective discussion and endeavour. Ways forward might also include considering how unionisation of the third sector should be utilised to moderate and negotiate state-voluntary relationships, and to better secure the futures of workers currently

working in exceptionally precarious conditions in a sector that depends on the emotional labour of its workers. Rather than an answer, I am ending on a call, to develop models of practice that are based on solidarity and which retain some independence from a state that has continually shown itself to be hostile toward migrants.

9.8 Final reflections: writing in and against time

Writing an ending to this thesis, I am reminded of a colleague asking me whether it matters, now that austerity is ‘over’. While a rhetorical end to austerity may be apparent, the structural and institutional effects of austerity have afterlives that will continue to haunt many. The *routinised* nature of crisis (Emejulu and Bassel, 2017) and the advent of ‘*Brexit*’ are suggestive of the continued relevance of this study. Immigration is a central concern in negotiating withdrawal from the European Union (Oxfam, 2017), and this is framed in nativist and hostile rhetoric. Concomitantly, the ‘refugee crisis’ is ‘drawing differential lines of exclusion’ alongside the economic insecurity that excludes within the borders of Europe (Giglioli, 2016:online). Inequality then will persist and be persistent. In this context, social work must respond proactively and politically. I hope this thesis is a clarion call for these responses.

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Appendix 1: Interview schedule for families

Central Research Question:

- How do migrant families experience austerity in the UK?

Indicative/Theory questions (TQ):

- What does everyday life look like in the UK in a period of austerity?
- What are experiences of service provision in the UK?
- What are participants financial and employment experiences?
- How are experiences racialised, gendered and generational?
- How do media and political discourse affect life in the UK?
- How does life in the UK compare to the country of origin?

Interview topics related to the indicative/theory questions, these may include:

- Manchester
- Change
- Everyday life
- Sense of home
- Aspirations
- Home country
- Family and children
- Parenting
- Employment
- Income
- Welfare
- Services
- Housing
- Support network
- Media/political representation of migrants

	Theory Question	Interview Questions
1	<i>What does everyday life look like in the UK in a period of austerity?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can you tell me about what your life is like in Manchester. - Local area - Welcome/belonging/home - Intention to stay? - Community links - Family/friends support networks - Childcare - Family activities - What is hard - Change (in last year / since arrived in UK) - Future hopes/fears
2	<i>What are experiences of service provision in the UK?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Could you tell me about your experience of services that you have used in Manchester (Prompt: GP, School, Jobcentre, CAB, Foodbank, NASS support, Library, MFSP). - Services accessed - Helpful and unhelpful services

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support needs across time in UK - Migrant status and service access (refusal?) - Professionals/organisations that stand out and why - Understanding/gaining knowledge of available support - Experiences of support endings – how was this? - Housing (social/private/homeowner) - Condition/affordability of home - Landlord relationship - Comparisons to previous homes - Informal support networks – family/friends - religious and community spaces/support <p>(The above can be tailored specifically to the particular services that are mentioned when asking the first broad ‘experiential’ question).</p>
3	<i>What are participants financial and employment experiences?</i>	<p>Please tell me about your experience of employment in Manchester.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working? Length of time. - Partner/family employment - Type of work - Hours/regular pay/contract/cash-in-hand/self-employed - Fulfilment from work - Exploitative conditions - Is income sufficient? - ‘going without’ (food, clothes, gas, electric, leisure etc) - Managing money over the month - Previous work experiences/future hopes <p>Please tell me about your experience of welfare benefits in UK.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Which benefits do you receive? - Change - Completing forms/support/appeals - Immigration status and benefit delays/rejections - Sanctions/Bedroom tax - Crisis loans/Community Care grant (& abolishment) - Manchester welfare provision scheme - Food bank/parcels - Clothing/household donation - Social services/charitable financial support - Debt - Rent arrears - Bailiffs
4	<i>How are experiences racialised, gendered and generational?</i>	<p><i>Has there been a time when you or anyone in your family have experienced discrimination?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discrimination/prejudice/racism - Individuals in family and their experiences – who has found it easiest/hardest - School and children - English language and children as interpreters - Work and childcare – mothers and fathers
5	<i>How do media and political discourse affect life in the UK?</i>	<p>Can you tell me how you feel about how the media and politicians portray migrants and immigration?</p> <p>Would you say austerity has affected you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Change and representation - Local news, national news, TV, Newspaper, Social network sites - Perception of politics/politicians

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perception of austerity/funding cuts - impact on day-to-day life - Places/times when participants have felt welcome/unwelcome, belonging/non-belonging
6	<i>How does life in the UK compare to the country of origin?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Could you explain to me what your life was like in your country of origin (and/or previous country) - Comparison with Manchester/UK - Welfare provision - Employment and income - Family and friends - support - School - Healthcare - Discrimination/oppression - Crises - Desire to stay/return

Appendix 2: Interview schedule for professionals

- If you think back now to working at MFSP what are your immediate thoughts and feelings?
- What was your motivation in your role? At any point did you feel less motivated?
- What was your highlight of working at MFSP?
- How did you feel in the lead up to and following funding loss?
- What factors do you think were to blame for the outcome of MFSP?
- How do you think the life of a voluntary organisation is affected by (global/national/local) politics?
- What would have been a better outcome? (Pie in the sky thinking / realistically)
- Would you have done anything differently looking back? Should the organisation/management have done anything differently, in your opinion?
- Did you feel supported by MFSP and the wider organisation?
- What are you doing now following the closure of MFSP? Are you motivated to work in a similar sector / with similar service user group?
- How has austerity affected you personally?
- How did you see austerity affecting the families that MFSP supported?
- What would you like people to know about MFSP?

Appendix 3: Participant information sheet (family)

Identifying the impact of government policy on the experience of newly-arrived families in accessing education, health and welfare services in Manchester.



Participant Information Sheet

You are invited to take part in the PhD research project of Lucy Mort, a student at Manchester Metropolitan University in the Social Work department. This information sheet will explain why the research is being done and what the research will involve for you and your family if you decide to take part. Please take time to read the information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. If you are not clear about anything then please ask for more information. If you cannot read English I will endeavour to discuss the information here with you in person, and with an interpreter in a language of your choice where possible.

Key terms

Newly-arrived families - Families that have arrived in Manchester from abroad in the last three years. I use this term to encompass the range of immigration status' of people that the research intends to engage with. This may include asylum-seekers, refugees, EU migrants, student visa holders etc. MFSP uses this term, and it indicates that you may have been "newly-arrived" when MFSP supported you in the past, however it is not to say you see yourself as "newly-arrived" now!

Services - Refers to those services that you and your family do or have engaged with when you came to Manchester, and includes school, college, GP, dentist, advice services, family support services, social services, police, housing, Jobcentre, charity groups, community groups, etc.

Austerity - The term used by government and others to signify the approach governments must take when developing public spending policies in order to save money and pay off the national debt following the global economic crisis of 2008.

What is the purpose of the study?

The aim of this study is to understand how government policies affect newly-arrived families access to services in Manchester. I want to understand the experience of families in accessing health, education and welfare services (and any others that you might think are important to discuss) in Manchester. I particularly want to understand how policies

that have been made with the intention of saving money for the government ('austerity' policies) have affected the experience of newly-arrived families in Manchester.

This will be done by talking to newly-arrived families themselves about their experiences and to the MFSP staff and volunteer team that have experience of supporting newly-arrived families to access services in Manchester.

I am interested in improving access to services for all groups in the UK, regardless of their immigration status, and this research will contribute to the discussion and debates around this. I cannot state that it *will* make a difference to service provision, but I will endeavour to publish and make recommendations to practice with this standpoint in mind.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because you have engaged with MFSP in the last ten years, and therefore are likely to have some experience of accessing services in Manchester.

Do I have to take part?

It is completely up to you whether or not you participate in this research. You are free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. There will be no penalty for withdrawing yourself from the research project, and it will not adversely affect your involvement with any service providers in Manchester.

What will happen if I take part?

Firstly, you will be asked to sign a consent form that gives me permission to interview you about your experiences, and shows that you understand the research project processes.

If you decide to take part in the research project I will visit you in your home or another location of your choice and interview you about your experiences of accessing services in Manchester. The main interview question that I will be asking is "*what is your experience of accessing services in Manchester?*" and there may be more questions asked depending on your response to this and the issues raised. If you require an interpreter, please request this and an interpreter will also come to the interview. Any interpreter will be made aware of the necessity to keep your information confidential also. The length of the interview will vary, dependant on whether or not an interpreter is needed and how much we have to talk about! I would recommend 1-2 hours as a rough guide.

With your permission, the interview will be recorded on audiotape, and you will have the opportunity to review written transcripts if you wish, and add to or edit your responses.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

I do not intend to cause you any distress or harm in the course of this research project, however I am conscious that the discussions we have may be sensitive and emotive subjects, particularly where you have experienced barriers or struggles in accessing services in Manchester. I am a qualified social worker and outreach worker with MFSP, and while I cannot offer you a support service myself in this situation, I can signpost you to relevant services if you require any advice, support or counselling.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

While I cannot offer you any material compensation for your taking part in the research project, I hope you will value the opportunity to discuss your experiences of life in Manchester, and contribute to research that may highlight the experience of newly-arrived families, who are often left out of policy development.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

Anything that we discuss at interview or subsequently will remain confidential, and information kept about you will be stored in a locked drawer, or if electronic in a password-protected file. Only I and my two supervisors, Professor Hugh McLaughlin and Debra Hayes, from Manchester Metropolitan University will have access to interview information. Your identity will remain confidential and anonymous in any written records of our interview, for instance in any journal articles or in the final thesis.

The only time I would disclose information about you to others is if I am concerned for the safety of a child or vulnerable adult, in which case I would be obliged to refer this to social services. I would discuss any concerns with you first, unless I thought it would put others or myself at risk to do so.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of the research project will contribute to my PhD thesis, a large text that will discuss some of the issues found in interviews with newly-arrived families in line with the aims of my research project. Results may also contribute to other publications, such as academic journals or conference papers. I'm also interested in discussing with participants how they would like to see the findings distributed to them and others that may find it useful. This might include an internet based page that anyone can access or a community event to disseminate the research. It may also influence the direction of MFSP and contribute to funding applications, evaluation reports etc.

Who is organising and funding the research?

Manchester Metropolitan University have funded me to conduct this research as a PhD student in the Social Work department. The research is also being conducted with the support of MFSP

Who should I contact for further information?

If you have any question or queries about this research and your participation, then please don't hesitate to contact me on the details below. This discussion does not mean you are obliged to take part in the study.

Name: Lucy Mort

Email: l.mort@mmu.ac.uk

Telephone: XXX

Alternatively you can contact my supervisors:

Professor Hugh McLaughlin – h.mclaughlin@mmu.ac.uk

Debra Hayes – d.hayes@mmu.ac.uk

Appendix 4: Participant information sheet (MFSP)

Identifying the impact of government policy on the experience of newly-arrived families in accessing education, health and welfare services in Manchester.



MFSP staff Information Sheet

You are invited to take part in my research looking at exploring the above bold statement. This information sheet will explain why the research is being done and what the research will involve for you if you decide to take part. Please take time to read the information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. If you are not clear about anything then please ask me for more information or clarification.

What is the purpose of the study?

The aim of this study is to understand how government policies affect newly-arrived families access to services in Manchester. I want to understand the experience of families in accessing health, education and welfare services (among others) in Manchester. I particularly want to understand how policies that have been made with the intention of saving money for the government ('austerity' policies) have affected the experience of newly-arrived families in Manchester.

This will be done by talking to staff from MFSP and newly-arrived families themselves about their experiences. MFSP staff and volunteer team have extensive experience of supporting newly-arrived families to access services in Manchester and of the frontline challenges that face voluntary organisations supporting newly-arrived families.

I am interested in improving access to services for all groups in the UK, regardless of their immigration status, and this research will contribute to the discussion and debates around this. I cannot state that it *will* make a difference to service provision, but I will endeavour to publish and make recommendations to policy and practice with this standpoint in mind.

How is the research being done?

MFSP has been central to the development of this research, and as we know, there are a lot of changes happening to the way MFSP is funded and works with families. For this reason, I plan to use an *ethnographic* approach to explore the aforementioned research aim. *Ethnography* can be used to research organisations, such as MFSP, and it enables the researcher to produce a detailed description of how an organisation operates based on the observation and participation of the researcher in the organisation. This method will also be supplemented by interviews and gathering documents from the organisation.

Do I have to take part?

There is no obligation to take part in this research. I am asking for the written consent of the main MFSP team employees. As you may appreciate however there is likely to be people in and out of the office, be that new staff/volunteers and it is not practical to ask for permission each time or with every person. For this reason, I will be pragmatic in taking management consent as team consent on the whole. However this is not final, and can be managed flexibly on an individual basis if necessary. If you have any concerns, please do ask.

It is important to note that I will seek to ensure your anonymity in any publications of my research or reports that are shared with management. This may be by changing minor identifiable details, in order to maintain confidentiality where necessary.

What will happen if I take part?

Firstly, you will be asked to sign a consent form that gives me permission to conduct ethnographic research that includes your everyday, working experiences and shows that you understand the research project processes.

I will be in MFSP office as much as is practical in order to observe, take 'field notes', access documents including archived files, and to have informal discussions/interviews with members of the MFSP team. I will be involved in the everyday work that MFSP conducts, and will not be overtly observing your practice, but rather how the MFSP organisation as a whole understands, manages and supports service users subject to current government policy.

With your permission, I will take field notes – i.e. write down what is relevant to the research projects aims - and this will be gathered together and analysed. Any works deriving from these field notes will be available for you to view before they are published or discussed externally if you request this.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There is potential for identification of individuals in publications, however I will endeavour to manage this by carefully anonymising reports, including changing personal details to reduce the potential for identification.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

I hope you will value the opportunity to contribute to a research project that aims to improve access to services for newly-arrived families.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

Anything that I observe or discuss with you will remain confidential, and information kept about you will be stored in a locked drawer, or if electronic in a password-protected file. Only I and my two supervisors, Professor Hugh McLaughlin and Debra Hayes, from Manchester Metropolitan University will have access to observation information. Your identity will remain confidential and anonymous in any written records of my observations, for instance in any journal articles or in the final thesis.

I will be working within[organisation redacted] policy and procedures, for instance the Code of Conduct, Confidentiality policy, Document Security policy, Whistleblowing policy and in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. Furthermore I will work within organisational and national policy regarding the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults (see the Child Protection and Vulnerable adults policy), this means then that if any instance of harm or abuse becomes apparent I would follow these policies in terms of disclosure to the relevant persons.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of the research project will contribute to my PhD thesis. Results may also contribute to other publications, such as academic journals or conference papers. I'm also interested in discussing with participants and MFSP staff and volunteers how they would like to see the findings distributed to them and others that may find it useful. This might include collaboration with Manchester Metropolitan University, i.e. workshop/seminar, internet based page that anyone can access or a community event to disseminate the research. It may also influence the direction of MFSP and contribute to funding applications, evaluation reports etc.

Who is organising and funding the research?

Manchester Metropolitan University have funded me to conduct this research as a PhD student in the Social Work department. The research is also being conducted with the support of MFSP.

Who should I contact for further information?

If you have any question or queries about this research and your participation, then please don't hesitate to contact me on the details below.

Name: Lucy Mort

Email: l.mort@mmu.ac.uk

Appendix 5: Letter from MFSP to participants

MFSP Logo redacted

9th January 2013

Dear *Family name*

We are writing to you to introduce some research to you that you may wish to participate in. The research is being undertaken by Lucy Mort, an employee of [REDACTED] and formerly MFSP, who is currently completing PhD research at Manchester Metropolitan University.

You have been asked to participate in the research because MFSP has supported you and your family in the last five years. Because of this, you are likely to have experience of accessing services such as health, education and welfare in Manchester. The aim of the research is to understand how you and your family, as people who have moved to the UK, experience these services in Manchester. It is hoped that the research can make recommendations on how services can better support newly-arrived families in Manchester during a difficult economic period.

Lucy will shortly contact you using the details we hold for you at MFSP. This may be by telephone or by visiting you at your home. If you do wish to take part and have changed your telephone number, please let Lucy know on the details provided on the enclosed information sheet.

Lucy has the full support of [REDACTED] and MFSP and we are writing to you to assure you of this. Lucy has been able to contact you with our support as a trusted employee who is looking to include your voice and your family's story in a new research project. Any conversations that you have with Lucy will be confidential and you will not be identified in publications. An interpreter can accompany Lucy to the interview if you request this.

Please find the enclosed information sheet giving further details of the research project. It is important to note that there is no obligation to take part in this research, and if you do not wish to do so it will not affect any support you receive from services now or in the future.

If you want to clarify anything or request further information regarding Lucy and her research please do not hesitate to contact [REDACTED] on [REDACTED]

Yours Sincerely

[Director]

[REDACTED] (Redacted)

Appendix 6: Participant consent form

Identifying the impact of government policy on the experience of newly-arrived families in accessing education, health and welfare services in Manchester.



Informed Consent Form

Lucy Mort, a PhD student at Manchester Metropolitan University, is conducting research that will explore the above research title. You have been invited to participate in this research as outlined in the Participant Information Sheet.

Prior to our interview, could you confirm the following by putting your initials in the box:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. I have read the Participant Information Sheet (Version 1) and have been offered an interpreter/translation for this where necessary | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. I am aware that I do not have to answer all questions | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. I consent to the recording of the interview | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. All information will remain confidential unless there are concerns for the safety of a child or vulnerable adult | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. I can withdraw from the interview at any stage without reason or penalty | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. All information I provide will be stored in a locked cabinet or in a password protected computer file | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Any written documents published (thesis, academic journal articles, conference papers etc) after our interview will not identify me | <input type="checkbox"/> |

I have initialled the boxes above to show that I have read and understood this informed consent form.

Signed

Please print name

Researcher

Researcher print name.....

Date.....

Appendix 7a: Excerpt from transcript with family

...

LUCY: How did you learn Arabic?

SHEENA: From Pakistan, when I learned the Qu'ran I learned Arabic in Pakistan.

LUCY: Did you learn all the languages in school? You seem to know a lot!

SHEENA: No, in college. Was in college. Two years Persian, Persian and English, English is the main language, international language and second language of Pakistan, so I learnt English from there and French from France when I moved there, got married.

LUCY: How did you come to move to Paris?

SHEENA: From Pakistan to Paris – after six months I think. My husband was there, he was working there, so I moved to Paris and my children born there.

LUCY: Made your life there?

SHEENA: Yes.

LUCY: What work was your husband doing?

LUCY: When I was married to him he was working for the company 'Raj Mahal', Raj Mahal is the food company that supplies to the food... packing food in the airplanes for the different companies, and he has been working in the Air France for the chef, for the cooking chef was there, they packed the food for the Air France and different companies. Then he started the business of the cars. Then [son 1] born, he started a business for the butchery, the meat. Wholesales of the meat, for the restaurants, it was wholesales. Then the children were going to school, I started the Cash and Carry.

LUCY: Did it take up a lot of your time... how did you manage that with small children?

SHEENA: Yeah they were going to school so that I could manage.

LUCY: And would they finish school and come to the Cash and Carry?

SHEENA: They also would work with me, and they handle that well. I keep eye on them and do work.

LUCY: Family and work altogether?

SHEENA: yeah.

LUCY: And do you miss work?

SHEENA: Yes... yes I miss too much. But here now it is very difficult for me, my husband supports me before... he is on dialysis, when he come back, he will come perhaps one o'clock, you will see – he will be very poorly, very tired. He took his lunch and all day lie down, he couldn't move, he couldn't do anything, so I have to do everything. I have to do work at home, keep clean house, keep shopping updated for four person- five person, every day! Every day something is needs to be done. Cooking, every day cooking for five of them and cleaning and washing. Cleaning, washing. Too much washing for [son 2] because he vomits too much. And you see [son 1] sometimes he go out and untidy his clothes... so two, three machines every day. I have a drier but sometimes I keep economy [laughs] and don't use the drier, only washing machine and then dry out there. If it nice day... Last time it was £1500 -

LUCY: - For a quarter?

SHEENA: Yes, for three months.

LUCY: Wow.

SHEENA: It was very difficult for me to manage.

LUCY: How did you pay that?

SHEENA: Er, little bit, little bit.

LUCY: Have you managed to pay that?

SHEENA: No still paying, still paying.

[Pause]

SHEENA: ... Sorry, I am thinking that I must have to do something, I must er... otherwise we can't survive.

LUCY: Do you mean working?

SHEENA: Yes income, yes. Doing something for income. Because I'm not getting Income Support, I am getting only Carer's Allowance for [son 2].

LUCY: Did you ever get Income Support?

SHEENA: They told me, when [MFSP support worker] was here I applied for the Income Support and they told me that not five years here to residence and I have not done work here, for that reason. But it is very difficult for me to do work here.

LUCY: So if you did have a business – if you found time to have a business in the UK - you may be able to get more income but also perhaps Working Tax Credits? It may depend on how much you are earning. That's something to remember, to check your entitlement for it.

SHEENA: Here I am thinking about the take-away as well, if I will start that one. May be helpful for me. [Slight laugh]. Nowadays I'm thinking about that.

LUCY: You cook for so many anyway!

SHEENA: No, there will be cook, a proper manager and everything, all rented out as well.

LUCY: How long have you been thinking that you need to do something to get more income?

SHEENA: Since when I came here! Because I have never been sit idle, do nothing, I'm not that person.

LUCY: I don't think you're being idle I have to say, I think you're working very hard.

SHEENA: Yes... I'm working hard with children, it is very hard to spend time on the business, when you start business it is full time job. You have to manage everything, when you... then you get anything...

[Sheena's son makes a noise, he is sat in the kitchen]

LUCY: Is [son] okay?

SHEENA: He might want to drink something.

LUCY: Actually, we can leave that there today, we've been here nearly two hours now so let's finish that there for now. Thank you very much for speaking to me.

[Recording ends]

Appendix 7b: Excerpt from transcript with family (interpreter present)

...

LUCY: So have you lived in Portugal most of your life?

ADRIANA: I was born in Angola, we moved to Portugal when I was fourteen.

LUCY: Okay, do you have fond memories of Angola?

ADRIANA: [In English] um, yeah.

LUCY: What is it like there?

ADRIANA: I've got good childhood memories, things were good back then, but now a lot of things changed, because there's some very rich people and the others are very poor, so I prefer living in Europe.

LUCY: You don't think there's such a divide between the rich and poor?

ADRIANA: Yeah, here you still see a difference between the rich and poor but although people struggle, it's a lot easier for them to get what they want. But in Africa, people just stay the same way, like children are hungry and the conditions are really bad and the rich they just stay rich and they don't care about everyone else. But here if you fight you can achieve what you want.

LUCY: Okay, so there's movement, you can move from maybe being poor to having more money here?

Interpreter: Yeah.

LUCY: Okay, and what was it like living in Portugal?

ADRIANA: I studied and got a job, but soon after I was unemployed again... because we had to pay for books at school I was struggling a lot to care for my children, for education... also to provide for other material things, so that's when I decided to move to England.

LUCY: What were you studying and what job were you doing?

ADRIANA: Er well I finish high school and then I did an IT course and hygiene course as well, then got a job in a cod factory, er but then there was the crisis, so we started making people redundant, the ones that were there for a short period of time – I was only there for a year -

LUCY: - What factory was it sorry?

ADRIANA: Fish, cod...

LUCY: Oh cod factory, I thought that's what you said... what did you do in the cod factory?

ADRIANA: The fish would come in the morning fresh, we put salt on it and then get them to another machine so it can dry, and that's when it goes to the stores.

LUCY: Okay, so then you say the crisis meant they made people redundant? What year was that?

ADRIANA: 2010

LUCY: So did the crisis affect the factory and the industry badly?

ADRIANA: Yeah, not just that factory but other factories were affected as well. Basically the whole country, because of the economy. So then I started looking for other jobs, but I couldn't find anything, for a year I was looking but couldn't find anything.

LUCY: Okay, and when did you decide to move?

ADRIANA: May 2011.

LUCY: So after that year of looking for a job you decided to move to the UK?

ADRIANA: Yeah when things were getting very difficult that's when I decided to move because I couldn't provide for my children any more, and after I was made redundant we get some support from work, like erm, money, some extra money for a period of time, er so I was receiving that, and from that money saving some, so I could be able to move here to England, and when I got here I had my sister to help me, so I stayed with them and we help her family.

LUCY: How long was your sister here before you?

ADRIANA: Two years.

LUCY: And that's why you decided to come here to Manchester?

T: Yeah basically to be with her.

LUCY: And now do you think you'll stay in Manchester or do you see yourself returning to Portugal in the future?

ADRIANA: No I plan to stay, my children are happy here, we've got friendships, so we don't want to go back.

[Adriana talks to interpreter without prompt]

ADRIANA: I'm just a bit concerned about getting the UK residence because erm things are changing all the time, so you're more secure when you're working because you're contributing to the economy, but also having residence is a lot better.

LUCY: What do you mean by everything is changing all the time?

ADRIANA: Just the laws are changing, so I'm aware of that and also I heard from other people, because we get many people coming into UK, every... each year, so we're not helping people as much. For example, a man I know, he was denied Jobseekers Allowance, so sometimes they can do those things to people and stop helping them, I'm aware that I've got four children to look after so if they stop helping... giving support, it will be very difficult for my family.

LUCY: And that's why you prefer to get a job?

ADRIANA: Yeah, I've been looking for a job for a long time, I don't like staying at home, I like to work. I'm just upset about my job at the college... I only wanted an improvement – my manager – I mentioned to him I wanted more staff to come in and help me because there was too much work for one person, but he was upset and that's why he dismiss me.

LUCY: Was it an agency that you went through working at the college?

ADRIANA: No, no... It's the college, I got my job through a friend who works at the college as well, and so then she communicated with them saying I've got a friend that's looking for a job.

LUCY: And does the man that dismissed you work at the college?

ADRIANA: Yes.

LUCY: Were you being paid through your bank account or were you paid in cash?

ADRIANA: Bank account

LUCY: Okay, so they were paying tax and that sort of thing?

ADRIANA: Yes.

LUCY: ...it seems like you should have more rights, that he shouldn't be able to dismiss you that easily. Do you know what sort of contract you had?

ADRIANA: Yeah... so I consulted an advisor from the college, and they rang an agency that helps the employees basically and they saw the contract and because I was only there for three months, so in that period of time they considered it as like trial, so he was okay to dismiss me.

LUCY: That's not good. Hopefully you'll get a better job with a better company next time... My colleague just sent me an email about work-clubs, so maybe I could see if there is one in the local area and I could forward it on to you? They might be able to help you with getting your CV out.

ADRIANA: Okay... so I've been going to other schools in the local area, even my children's school to ask if there's vacancies because erm... I can work after the children leave for school, because my sister lives nearby.

LUCY: Okay. I'm sure you'll get something. How long have you been out of work?

ADRIANA: Two months

...

Appendix 8: Excerpt from transcript with MFSP professional

LUCY: When you think back now to MFSP what do you think and how do you feel about it now?

CELINA: Well, I think it was a good project and it was, erm, we had a great team, and it was helping people a lot, and yeah, it's a shame it's finished. I don't know what else. I think it was very good project. You know... in terms of Every Child Matters...

LUCY: Well you're still working at [REDACTED]... does it feel different working at [REDACTED] now, than it did working for MFSP?

CELINA: Yeah. Well, it's because, it used to be like, erm, there's not as much staff as before, there's not as much support, management had left. So all the skills and knowledge they had, they took with them. And, you just have to kind of, it's all different when you're sitting on your own, you have to figure out some issues for yourself, rather than sharing it with other people who might be much more experienced than you. It's hard. Lots of lone-working and stuff, the support is not there as much as it used to be. Because before you could go see [manager] or whoever and just say, "[redacted] I've got this family... that and that... what do I do?" and just double-check. Or talk to your team, everybody would know something about this, there would always be a solution, and now you have to come up with everything yourself.

LUCY: Do you think that's a good experience at all, like a learning experience...

CELINA: Not really, I think just after a while, obviously you're more experienced anyway and actually you can work yourself, but it's good to have still support, because obviously, even though you're more experienced it's good to have support, like other people like Linda coming from education background or Kirsty... maybe a little bit more safeguarding children perspective, you know. Erm, yeah that's the whole thing with working in a team, you've got people from different backgrounds and then you can just... you don't have to know everything, you can just share whatever and everyone is an expert on something. Yeah it's demoralising isn't it, working like that, by yourself. Lots of work, for two days a week, demoralising and demotivating and...

LUCY: Did you have a similar amount of families as when you were fulltime at MFSP in your two days?

CELINA: Well, I think so... did I? The support you give to families is not the same.

LUCY: So what do you prioritise? What do you say, oh I can't do that anymore?

CELINA: Well you prioritise, emergencies really. Prioritise emergencies like evictions or... boiler cut off by landlord, or you know, absolutely no money. Things like that, but things are always being overlooked. Whatever you do, you can't just help everyone. You know, maybe there's domestic violence issues in the house that you could maybe if you had more time, resolve something, you could maybe spend a little bit more time talking with the family, but you haven't because you haven't got that time. Maybe you could help with bills more, with money more.

LUCY: Do you think it affects your relationship with families?

CELINA: Yeah, I think so because they ask for help, but you have to say to them, I'm sorry I can't come see you and then you just don't go, and then the relationship is not as good as maybe it was before.

LUCY: Have you had anyone being angry at you?

CELINA: Yeah. Plenty. Like [REDACTED] said "where have you been?" and I said "I'm really sorry, but you are on the right track with most things, like it was just the tax credits waiting... but

tax credits got refused you know, because she ended up getting taken by ambulance... which I didn't know about, and by time I found out, you know it was couple of weeks, so she went for ESA, which she didn't get anyway. So yeah, she was sick, worried, upset I've not been to see her. She was calling me, but other people were calling me as well "Celina, please come and this and that, we don't have this and we don't have that, we don't have..." you know. You know social services are calling you like, they want me to hold the meetings, and put the support in, when you actually don't have time for any of that, really.

LUCY: Yeah... What would you say your motivation was to work at MFSP, from the beginning?

CELINA: Well, from the beginning, it is rewarding job, something that I like and enjoy doing, working with families, coming up with solutions, it was a nice... [baby coos]. It was a good team, good project.

LUCY: You persevered for a long time as a volunteer didn't you?

[Break to attend to baby].

CELINA: ... what was I saying? Yeah it was just what I wanted to do, and the team was really nice, the management, you know MFSP project was working really well, you were there five days a week. You didn't think "wow, how great is that", because you didn't know that all that money, all that team and all that support would be taken away from us. So maybe we didn't appreciate it as much as we should. You know, like because you wouldn't think about, you just thought *it's a job* –

LUCY: - 9-5 –

CELINA: - *Monday to Friday*, and you know the support is there. Erm, yeah it was rewarding. We used to do lots of learning as well. You know lots of training – as it should have been, and going to conferences – like it should have been, and share knowledge with like, you know going to MARIM and everything – like it should have been. And yeah, there was time for kind of... working properly.

LUCY: What about, when we started having to have conversations about losing hours so that everyone could stay on, and then we lost hours and couldn't work with families anymore... Did that affect your motivation at all?

CELINA: Yeah, it was demotivating. Obviously, I was worried because you think "how am I going to pay the bills?" and everything. You know, you don't want to be like going to work and then, when you're actually very stressed yourself with your personal life because worrying about your bills and everything and then actually, yeah it was like, for me, it was hard for a year at least because it took me quite a long time to get a second job, part time. So it was stressful for everybody.

LUCY: How long did it take you to get that second job?

CELINA: Actually I think I got it, when – January? When did funding stop? April? So it's April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November... 9-10 months. 10 months on what, 800 pounds or whatever.

LUCY: How many hours were you working by then?

CELINA: Think, we were working two and a half days a week by then – still wasn't enough.

LUCY: No definitely not. I was one day a week still. Two and a half days is mad... When would you say was the hardest point for you working there?

CELINA: At MFSP?

LUCY: At MFSP...

CELINA: The first point, the first cut was bad. Then we had further cuts – did we – the next year. Complete lack of money. That was really bad.

LUCY: So we had a 25% reduction in 2012, then we had where we could only work with families for 6 weeks a time or 12 weeks in extreme circumstances.

CELINA: Yeah, then we've been decommissioned, and that was obviously very bad, because everybody was worried. And then actually, when people stopped working and then office - you'd just come to the office and there's like nobody there, that was really bad too. And then on top of it, management left, then Linda was made redundant and then it was like, and now like – there's nobody... to get any support from, you just have to count on yourself.

[Both CELINA and LUCY sigh and laugh nervously].

LUCY: I'm sorry if this is depressing! Oh! what was your highlight of working at MFSP? Is there any sort of time that you remember?

CELINA: Well when I started at the beginning of paid job. At the start it was part time, then after a few weeks it went to full time. And that was the best time, when you've actually got your caseloads, you work Monday to Friday, don't have to explain to anybody that you work only two days a week...

LUCY: ...Is that to families you mean?

CELINA: Yeah, families and also you know if Wood Street Mission would call and say "oh we've been phoning you and you were not answering phone..." and you're like "oh I'm sorry but I don't work that day and that day", you know, then checking your voicemail and explaining to everybody why they could not get hold of you. It's constant explaining to people, "Well sorry I'm not working then, sorry I'm not working that day, sorry that I work only two days". Because people talk to you like, they expect you to be there five days a week. Families – and agencies as well – are like, "we phoned you, but..." So... The best team was there, the support was there, the training was there, erm, you could deal with your workload basically. If you couldn't deal with it one day you could deal with it the next day, rather than waiting the whole week, when actually a small issue might become a very big issue by then, you know.

Appendix 9: Participant Outlines

Theresa

Theresa had been in the UK for six years. She had refugee status in Belgium after leaving a country in West Africa (redacted to maintain anonymity). She came to the UK as an EU migrant. Theresa had two children. She had a partner who I did not meet, but who was reported to be nearing the end of his visa and they were uncertain whether he would be able to stay. The interview lasted 45 minutes.

Sara

Sara had been in the UK for nine years. She was a Kurdish woman from Turkey and had refugee status in the UK. She had recently gained British citizenship. She had a partner who she had met in the UK, and teenage and young children. As an asylum seeker, Sara had been dispersed to several places around the North West. I interviewed Sara twice and recorded for 1 hour and 45 minutes in total. At both interview's Sara's youngest child was present and at the second interview, Sara's partner was at home, though I did not meet him.

Florica

Florica had been in the UK for four years. She was a Romanian Roma woman with six children. Florica's husband came into the room but did not speak to me. Two of Florica's teenage children spoke to me briefly about their experiences of school. A Romani interpreter was present and the interview lasted for 50 minutes.

Mina

Mina had been in the UK for seven years. She was from Iran and had refugee status, though her discretionary leave to remain was coming to an end and Mina was waiting to hear whether she would be granted indefinite leave to remain. Mina had three children, the youngest of which lived with her. Her daughter was living in a hostel and her son had returned to Iran to live with his father. The interview lasted for 50 minutes.

Sahir and Naheed

Sahir has been in the UK for nine years, and his wife and children for three years. Prior to the UK Sahir was a resident of Germany for 13 years where he had taken German citizenship. Naheed and the children remained in Pakistan where Naheed cared for Sahir's parents. Sahir came to the UK as an EU migrant and they applied for a Family Permit in order to be reunited in the UK. An Urdu interpreter was present and the interview lasted 90 minutes.

Hamid and Laila

Hamid and Laila and their four children had been in the UK just under two years. Originally from Morocco, they came to the UK as EU migrants, having lived in Spain for over twenty years. An Arabic interpreter was present. Hamid did not consent for the interview to be recorded, though I was able to take extensive handwritten notes. I met the family twice and our meetings lasted approximately two hours each time.

Zeynab and Fidan

Zeynab and Fidan were mother and daughter, and chose to be interviewed together, so that Fidan could interpret for her mother. The family had been in the UK for five years, and they came from Azerbaijan seeking asylum. They had recently been granted discretionary leave to remain. Zeynab had two children and had separated from her husband who came to the UK with them. The interview lasted for 55 minutes.

Sheena

Sheena had been in the UK for five years. Along with her husband and three children she had moved from Paris, though was originally from Pakistan. The family were naturalised French citizens and therefore migrated to the UK as EU migrants. I interviewed Sheena twice, on one occasion her youngest son was in another room in the house, and on the second occasion we sat the three of us in the kitchen to conduct the interview while Sheena cooked lunch for her family. I met Sheena's husband when he returned from a hospital appointment. The two interviews were recorded for 100 minutes.

Adriana

Adriana has been in the UK for three years. She was an EU migrant, having moved from Portugal, though she was originally from Angola and had dual Portuguese/Angolan citizenship. She came with her children and her niece (whose own parents were in Angola). Adriana had moved to the UK with her partner but they had separated. I interviewed Adriana twice with a Portuguese interpreter also of Angolan origin. The two interviews were recorded for just under three hours.

Appendix 10: Listening Guide analysis excerpts

(The excerpts have been typed up for readability)

1(a). Listening for plot and immediately apparent themes

Mina

Mina foreshadowed the stories told through emphasising the drama inherent within them. The main story was one of hoping to find opportunity in the UK after feeling constrained in Iran, and she referred to violence against women as both interpersonal and cultural. She spoke of distancing herself from other Muslims who she narrated as *disagreeing* with her divorce, and of the difficulty making English friends *who want to stick with their own*. The narrative moves between her story of attempting to overcome adversity in the past, and her daughter's current difficulties. Adversity and difficulty are transnational, occurring in both Iran and the UK. Life in the UK is almost a 'complicating factor' in the story of overcoming adversity, indicating a disconnect between what she anticipated and the reality. Mina described debt, the revocation of a student loan that meant she had to withdraw from university, unrecognised qualifications meaning she could not practice as a physiotherapist, visa bureaucracy and delay meaning that her son could not visit her in the coming Summer. Care work and setting up a childminding business are narrated as opportunities for both her and her daughter to again triumph over adversity, though this is costly and time-consuming. Mina constantly seeks ways to improve her situation, and emphasised her continued aspirations (though these were constrained financially) and her daughters' artistic talent, drawing on these as ways in which they could contribute to the UK.

1(b). Evolving reflections

Sheena	Reflections
<p>Sheena: Pakistan, I came from Pakistan, marriage and I settled down in Paris with my husband. I did business there, with my husband as well, I helped him, we had a cash and carry, I did very well... But here when I came my husband was not feeling well and both children were grown up, so they need more help... so that I am stuck in the home, I can't go out. I'm very, very tired now. Aged.</p> <p>Lucy: Do you miss the cash and carry?</p> <p>Sheena: Yeah I miss that one, I miss going out freely to meet the people, I was very friendly before, but I am stuck with the children... I go out whenever I get chance, when they are in school or college. So I'm happy here.</p>	<p>Sheena describes herself as someone that was successful, a business-woman, working alongside her husband. She is a middle-class, highly educated, entrepreneurial woman. She has had more financial and social capital in the past.</p> <p>Coming to the UK she has had to take on more caring responsibilities. Being in the home contrasts with her time in Paris and Pakistan, where she was running a business/school. This is described physiologically – as tiring and as aging her.</p> <p>The repetition of 'stuck' is in striking contrast to the freedom that she describes her sons as having in the UK – where they can travel on the buses, the footpaths are better, they can even go to London on their own.</p> <p>The coda of 'happiness' conflicts with the repetition of 'stuck'. Runswick-Cole (2013) notes the emotional work that mothers of disabled children have to perform. She says these can 'fail to be carried off convincingly' (p.108). I'm not sure I am convinced by Sheena's assertion that she is happy.</p> <p>Later reflections: reading back my initial reflections, I am struck by how I risk reifying a 'tragic conceptualisation' (Goddard et al., 2000:275) of disability. One that positions the child with a disability as a 'problem' and mother as 'tragedy-stricken' (Redmond and Richardson, 2003:205).</p>

2. Tracing narrated subjects

Theresa

Lucy: How did you manage it when that service finished? What did you do?

Theresa: Yeah, I just tried to accept it the way it is cos there's nothing I can do. Before... before you pull off, I asked her "why are you doing this to me", it's not fair", you know. And they explained the situation to me that, it's finished, I have been discharged, you know, they've worked with me for a while, they feel that now I have settled, my child has settled, in school, you know. What would I do? You have to accept it... I found it harder, because sometimes I would want to go, then I would remember that, oh, these people is no longer working with me! You know, so now I need to go somewhere else to seek for help.

I just tried to accept it
There's nothing I can do
I asked her 'why are you doing this to me?'
I have been discharged
I have settled
What would I do?
I found it harder
I would want to go
Then I would remember
Now I need to go somewhere else.
(Theresa)

3. Reading for relationships

Zeynab and Fidan

Interview with mother and daughter identified generational differences and intergenerational dependencies. Fidan described herself as having *'lots of new friends'* since coming to Manchester and she emphasises the same for her sister who is an *'anti-bullying ambassador'* at school. College was a turning point, from feeling like an *'alien'* to getting to know people and feeling at home in Manchester.

Asked about Zeynab's social network, Fidan described her mother as *'not one of those sort of people that would go out and talk to people'*, emphasising a sense of isolation. Fidan's parents separated shortly after receiving their leave to remain. Though he still lives in Manchester they do not see each other much. Apart from the financial strain that the family were under following receiving their leave to remain and his desire to work, little else is said about Fidan's father.

Zeynab and Fidan were very grateful to MFSP for their support, particularly naming their support worker as helpful when they moved to Manchester: *'my mum just wants to thank her all the time'*. The support worker helped the family to register with a GP and this was the first time Zeynab had been to see a doctor. *Refugee Action* were named as *helpful* and *welcoming*. Their solicitor was named as the person they would contact in crisis. The threat of deportation caused anxiety and the Immigration Enforcement Officers that detained and removed the family from their home were described firstly as *'not good people'* though Fidan revised this to say *'they might be nice people, but they're just doing their job.'* In this case, *the job*, not the individuals enforcing it, is most threatening.

Fidan had supported her mother in reading letters and liaising with services, performing a formative role in the family as a *child language broker*. Zeynab described Fidan as *'the help'*. Mother-daughter bond was very strong. Fidan was planning to go to University in London, and Zeynab was considering moving to London too to be close to her daughter.

Reflecting on the interview relationship, I am positioned as a representative of MFSP and as someone to express gratitude towards. This has implications for the power-dynamics and possibly which stories are told and how. I was mindful of the mother-daughter dynamic in the interview, and I made conscious decisions about which lines of enquiry were appropriate to pursue and which were not, for instance, in regard to the circumstances that led the family to leave Azerbaijan. In describing the lack of a support network in their home country, these circumstances were revealed as a *'family problem'* and later as *'more like political [problem] and they were scared to get involved with us.'* I did not pursue this further.

4. Reading for structure

Sahir and Naheed (extract)

The dynamic between Sahir and Naheed at times was illustrative of gender dynamics, Sahir had more 'turns' in the conversation and at times interrupted Naheed.

Sahir and Naheed expressed that they had experienced some difficulties accessing services, but that these may well be faced by everyone. As such there was a sense that you just need to *get on* with things and that facing difficulties is a normal feature of migrating: *'this is what we accept, because we want to live here'*. Difficulty was then a part of the 'deal' for a better future for the children: *'you come here, there's a limit to what you can do... so we want that our children will be able to do what we weren't'*.

Where they did narrate grievance – mainly about the NHS – they oscillated between either accepting it and taking action without the support of the state (i.e. through returning to Germany for an operation), or they invoked Human Rights as something that the UK government should take more seriously as a means of caring for their citizens. Naheed described the government as *'careless'* over the NHS. Similarly, Sahir emphasised that if he was applying for welfare he was not doing it *'out of fun'* and that the government should take seriously his claims for support. Sahir expressed incredulity at the morality of work as inherently 'good', emphasising that it was the government who say: *'you must work'*.

Sahir was resistant to name race and racism initially, though he went on to recount several stories of people leaving his taxi without paying and being hostile toward him. Though he could not say if this was specifically about his race, in these accounts he is racialised and aware of race dynamics. He later called his daughter in to tell me about racism she has experienced in the park near their home. They lived in a relatively homogenous-white area, and he noted for *'a while it was just us'* that were not white in the area, though a *'few more'* Asian families had recently moved nearby.

Appendix 11: Conference presentations arising from the research

(Invited paper) “Now I realise I just have to keep strong’: Migrant family narratives in a time of austerity’, *Austerity, Racism and Resistance: ESRC workshop*, Glasgow University, 7th Sept 2016

‘Becoming an outsider? Ethnography in a voluntary organisation in a time of austerity’, *Research Institute of Health and Social Care Conference*, Manchester Metropolitan University, 1st – 2nd July 2015

(Invited to contribute to panel on ‘Intersectionality, Austerity and Activism’): ‘Migrant Mothers and Austerity: living with complexity’, *European Conference on Politics and Gender*, University of Uppsala, Sweden, 11th – 13th June 2015

‘Migrant families and austerity: a discussion of PhD findings’, *Changing Families, Intergenerational Ties and Social Integration Across Continents: The Future Orientation of Research and Practice*, Manchester Metropolitan University, 2nd - 5th June 2015

‘Constructing a narrative of austerity and belonging: Migrant families in Manchester’, *Crisis, Mobility and New Forms of Migration*, University College Cork, 3rd – 4th September 2014

(Invited talk): ‘Austerity, cuts and social work with refugees and asylum seekers’, *Austerity and Social Work seminar series*, University of Bradford, 14th May 2014

‘Migrant families, a voluntary organisation and austerity: the story so far’, *British Sociological Association Conference*, University of Leeds, 23rd - 25th April 2014

‘“I’d have been suffering in silence without you”: Exploring the impact of austerity on migrant families’, *Research Institute of Health and Social Care Conference*, Manchester Metropolitan University, 4th - 5th July 2013

Appendix 12: Definition of key terms

A note on critically defining legal status

As this research engaged with participants with varying legal migrant statuses, it is necessary to define these. I will outline legal definitions and origins, their accompanying entitlements and restrictions, and reflect on how particular legal statuses are symbolically and discursively represented. I will explore the tension between these statuses; which are permeable and unfixed, misunderstood and misattributed, and yet how legal status – a label – can have the effect of reforming the *story* of an individual into only ‘a case’ or ‘a category’ (Zetter, 1991:44). This section, then, will highlight the very real and differing restrictions that the status of refugee, asylum seeker, EU migrant (among others) incur, while also looking at the limitations of these statuses for understanding the full breadth of an individual’s experience.

The central argument presented here is that while it is imperative to understand what a legal status conveys in terms of access (to public funds, services, support, employment, housing), it is also the case that categories of legality and illegality change over time and so these are not static. Moreover, these categorisations may not accurately represent the *story* of an individual, whose legal status, for instance, may not correlate with a binary notion of migration as either forced or voluntary; but perhaps as somewhere between the two. This thesis foregrounds the role of legal status in determining experiences in the UK, but also situates this analysis within a broader transnational and intersectional analysis (see chapter 5) that considers how historical racialisation and (post)colonial relations are brought to bear on an

individual's story. It is not only that legal status need be considered in analyses, but how these legal statuses reduce stories which are irreducible.

These critiques draw on the work of authors such as Leanne Weber (2012: 37-38), who speaks of the way in which a 'narrow view' of legal status 'imagines an immutable line between legality and illegality', when in fact it is 'fluid and contestable'. She argues – in relation to the policing of borders – that we 'might aspire to embody a broader awareness of membership of a wider circle of belonging – that of human beings with common security needs that cut across hierarchies of entitlement' (p.38). It is this sentiment, cognisant of the social construction of legal status, which I argue needs to be emphasised in the social work profession.

I now turn to the task of defining key terms in relation to migration, starting with *migration* itself.

Migration

This thesis is concerned with the everyday lives of those who have migrated to the UK, as such it is necessary to briefly define 'migration' as understood in this study. The movement of people across national borders has been a constant feature throughout human history. During the 20th century, however, it has become more politically salient and regulations governing migration have never been more plentiful than they are currently. Policies enacted with the aim of restricting migration (usually from the countries of the Global South to the North) are generally unsuccessful in reducing migration, though they increase reliance on risky, dangerous, costly and irregular migration pathways (Castles et al., 2014). It is

at the intersection of the *movement of people* with *national, intranational and global policy*, which are themselves embedded within *political and economic processes* (think; capitalism, colonialism, industrialisation, conflict), that contemporary migration is shaped. That is, there is an interplay between the agency of migrants (looking to find a better life, improved work prospects, seeking safety) and global and national structures (available routes, criminalisation and legal status, welfare and labour restrictions). It is between these two, agency and structure, that the everyday lives of refugees and migrants are located.

Migration, cast as the ‘the issue of our time’ (Swing, 2015: online), is portrayed in largely negative terms in political and media rhetoric. Framings of migration are often reliant on binary concepts; the media assesses who is deserving and undeserving, who is criminal and victim, who is valuable and who is costly. These readings of migration (and migrants) are a consequence of a classed and racialised immigration system, which has privileged entry routes for highly skilled and wealthy migrants, and which rarely speaks of migration from wealthy, predominantly white countries as problematic. Instead, the negative rhetoric is directed at those migrants who are from ‘developing’ countries of the Global South that have historically been colonised by European states; at those who are likely to fill low-skilled positions in the labour market; at those with few material resources and who it is feared will be a ‘burden’ on welfare, and who will take our jobs and our houses. These framings of migration have consequence in the daily lives of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, with these being further explored in chapter 5.

Popular theories of migration, such as ‘push-pull’ analyses, are, de Haas (2014) argues, platitudinous and limited in scope. Such models enable one to list determinants of migration in origin and destination countries, but do not sufficiently look at the inter-relation between these or between the agentic and the structural. Rigid theories such as this also fail to take into account the non-linearity of most migration. De Haas (2014: online) argues for understanding migration as a ‘constituent part of broader development and change’, which takes into account an individual’s motivations, capability and aspiration alongside the structural processes that bear on them.

Significant for this thesis too, is the theoretical work on ‘mobilities’ (Urry, 2007), a body of work that has taken on the multiple flows and networks (for instance, forced migration, labour migration, movement for pleasure and tourism) that constitute the reshaping of the global landscape. The mobilities paradigm emphasises the *dynamic* (Kilkey and Palenga-Möllennebeck, 2016) and the *relational* (Mas Giralt, 2017) nature of migration. Dynamism and relationality shape the contingency of plans that respond to and anticipate structural events, migration policies and inequalities. It is inclusive of ‘onward migration’; that is those migrants who do not have a linear A-B migration, but who migrate to one country, and then again to another.

The scope of the mobilities paradigm is both useful and a limitation in its application to this study. It is useful because it enables an analysis that encompasses those with a range of legal status, countries of origin, and migration motivations. Regarding its potential limitations however, studies of mobilities reference the

many assorted reasons that people are on the move, ranging from travelling for pleasure to seeking asylum. The basis on which movement is formed however is heavily stratified across lines of nationality, race, class and gender, and an analysis that is too broad risks losing this important intersectional analysis. Some choices about movement are much more limited and made in the face of a paucity of choice (cf. Schuster, 2005). This study explores the experiences and narratives of migrants who largely converge in their relationships with capital and structures of racialisation. While some participants had more resources upon taking the decision to migrate, none were what Kilkey and Palenga-Möllenberg (2016:2) term the 'mobile elite'. Participants in this study, and those supported by MFSP, were very much subject to the machinery of borders, and did not always find borders to be as 'porous' as some mobilities analyses suggest (and which is similarly critiqued by O'Reilly, 2007; Brubaker, 2005). Despite these limitations, the emphasis on migration as fluid, with multiple layers, and as an interplay between the individual and the context in which they find themselves, means that a mobilities paradigm has traction for this thesis, and can be seen in the discussion of translocational positionality in chapter 5.

Refugee

In the post- World War II period the status of 'refugee' was formally ratified in the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees. The 1951 convention defines a refugee as:

A person who, because of a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political

opinion or membership of a particular social group, is outside their country of nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country (UNHCR, 1996).

These conventions are fundamental in making a claim for protection from persecution and were formulated upon an understanding of the universality of (some) human rights. They recognise the need for some to move outside of national borders to exert these rights, and the need for nation states to protect - from persecution - those who were not born within their territory. The definition is critiqued by some for being too limited, without protection for those displaced by war, uprooted by natural (or manmade) disasters, or who are subject to a state of abject poverty (Webber, 1991).

While the UNHCR convention is international in scope (Yeo, 2014), nation-states, including the UK, have (re)interpreted it through national legislature. Notably, the UK employs a system of determining refugee status through investigating, upon arrival or notification by an individual, whether they meet the criteria to be classed as a refugee under the 1951 Convention. Someone who applies for asylum, and therefore for their refugee status to be recognised, is referred to as an 'asylum seeker'. The significance of this is explored further below. Some – though few – are resettled through established programmes that recognise the individual's status as a refugee prior to arrival in the UK. The *Gateway Protection Programme* and *Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement scheme*, are examples of this.

Less than half of those who claim asylum are granted refugee status. Since 1991, the majority of initial decisions made by the Home Office have been refusals, with 68%

of claims refused in 2016 (Blinder, 2017a). The majority of asylum refusals are appealed by claimants, with an average 30% of appeals resulting in a successful claim since 2007, and latterly - in 2016 - 42% of initial decisions were overturned (Blinder, 2017a).

The UNHCR has declared that the decisions of nation states as to the veracity of an asylum claim – and therefore the bestowal of refugee status – is only a *declaration* and does not *constitute* refugee status. This means that though an individual may not be formally recognised as a refugee, they are nonetheless refugees by virtue of meeting the criteria of the 1951 Convention (UNHCR, 1977; Albert, 2010).

Accordingly, some authors – noting the bureaucratic and juridical-only (and problematic) nature of the nation state's refugee declaration – refer to all those who seek asylum, no matter their status in law, as refugees (cf. Vickers, 2012).

Some of those who apply for asylum will not receive refugee status, but may receive alternative leave to remain, for instance *humanitarian protection* – which confers largely the same rights as refugee status (Right to Remain, no date) and *discretionary leave to remain*, for instance, on human rights grounds (Right to Remain, no date). Participants, Zeynab and Fidan, had recently received discretionary leave to remain in the UK. These, as with refugee status, are time-limited, and the temporal uncertainty that this conveys is explored further in Chapter 8 (section 7). After (usually) 5 years, refugees or those with other leave to remain, can apply for indefinite leave to remain (ILR). In terms of this study, one participant, Mina, was at this stage of her immigration process. The delay in receiving ILR meant that she experienced a status of 'limbo' as she was unable to

travel, and her son was unable to obtain a visa to visit the UK from Iran. After 12 months, those with ILR can apply for British Citizenship, which enables an individual to leave the country to travel and to contemplate travelling to visit relatives and friends.

Asylum seeker

While someone with refugee status is legally able to access welfare support and seek employment, an asylum seeker – that is, ‘a person [who] has entered into a legal process of refugee status determination’ (UNHCR, no date:online) – is subject to a separate system of welfare, prohibited from working, and, in most cases, allocated housing on a no-choice basis through the dispersal programme.

While the Home Office aim to make an initial decision on an asylum claim within six months, recent data from the Office for National Statistics highlighted that there was a 51% rise in delays and claimants waiting more than six months for a decision (Refugee Action, 2017). Delays are not only a problem for initial decisions; a report from Refugee Action (2017) indicated that delays are a feature of most claims for support and assistance (namely support made under Section 95 and Section 98 of the IAA 1999). These delays place asylum seekers in exceptionally vulnerable positions, as they risk experiencing homelessness and destitution.

In chapter 2 (see section 5.1) I further highlight the ways in which asylum seekers face substandard welfare through the *National Asylum Support Service*. Here it is simply necessary to highlight that provision for asylum seekers – including those who have received a negative decision and are appealing the decision – are subject

to restrictive and punitive measures by the British state (Mayblin, 2014). Asylum seekers are kept in a state of welfare dependency, despite a general push for citizens to move from welfare-to-work, which Mayblin (2014:379) notes as a ‘paradox in the policy landscape’ that disables asylum seekers from moving from a perceived status of ‘undeserving’ to ‘deserving’ (see chapter 2, section 5.2 and chapter 8 for further discussion).

Participants in this study were no longer asylum seekers, as they had received a positive decision on their claims. However, they indicated that there were longstanding consequences of going through the arduous process of claiming asylum (see, for instance, section chapter 5, section 3). Drawing on existing research that specifically looks at the relationship between austerity, service and welfare provision and the asylum system was crucial to situate the experiences of those in this study that have themselves been asylum seekers (see chapter 2, section 5.1).

EU migrant

Citizens of countries within the European Union may – for the time being⁷⁵ - exercise freedom of movement throughout EU member states. Those who do migrate from one EU state to another are known as EU migrants (or as EEA migrants, which is inclusive of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway & Switzerland). With each expansion of the EU (see p.4), migration trends have altered (Pollard et al., 2008), but moreover, the stratification between those who are, and those who are

⁷⁵ See chapter 9, section 8 for further reference to ‘*Brexit*’, that is, the United Kingdom’s decision following a referendum in 2016, to leave the European Union. This decision is likely to affect the freedom of movement of EU citizens to the UK and vice-versa.

not, economically active has become more pertinent (Dwyer, 2004) (see chapter 6, section 2 for further discussion of this). The welfare rights of EU migrants have been increasingly restricted in recent years, in conjunction with austerity discourse and anti-migrant hostility (see chapter 2, section 5.1).

The expansion of the EU has been argued to erode support for the principle of free movement (Lafleur and Stanek, 2016). Disdain towards new-EU migrants has been particularly virulent since the accession of A8 and A2 countries (see p.4). Accounts of the ways in which this disdain is manifest, particularly for Romanian migrants, highlight the transformation of racialised exclusion to a 'cultural racism' that excludes not on the basis of race but through the invocation of cultural difference (Fox et al., 2012: 680). While this study did not interview any white migrants, the discussion of racialisation is pertinent for understanding the Roma experience (one participating family were Romanian Roma migrants). Insights from a further study by Fox (2012) indicate that some Romanian migrants seek to differentiate themselves from the Romanian Roma community by asserting their own 'whiteness'. They perceive that the Roma are to blame for stigmatised attitudes towards Romanian migrants, and consequently they use 'racism to insert themselves into Britain's racialized hierarchies' (p. 1884). For Roma communities in the EU, Fekete (2014) is clear about the risks of their minoritised and stigmatised status. Fekete argues that the Roma are *de facto* stateless; are typically unwelcomed in most European countries and are subject to populist hate and racist attacks; are subject to the demolition of settlements, deportation and expulsion; and face exclusion from welfare, labour and basic rights. The image of Eastern-European Roma has been

particularly circulated in the media outrage at EU migration; portrayed as benefit-scroungers, they are key figures in the rhetoric *against* freedom of movement in the EU.

In addition to the racialised status of the Roma community, a further four of the participating families were black and minority ethnic EU migrants (or a combination of EU migrant and non-EU migrant) who were third-country born migrants (that is, they were first-generation migrants in Europe). Consequently, this study focuses on the experiences of EU migrants whose relatively fortunate legal migrant status intersects with their racialised status as black and minority ethnic persons, and often with migratory histories that extend to the Global South. Erel and Tapini (2017: online) highlight that the false equivalence of:

‘Europeanness with whiteness... ignores the presence of people of colour in Europe, whether it be centuries-old Black European communities or those who migrated more recently, often as parts of postcolonial or labour migrations.’

Black and minority ethnic onward EU migrants are under-represented in migration literature, and almost entirely absent from the social work literature (cf. Mas Giralt, 2017, on Latin American onward migration in Spain and the UK). Erel and Tapini (2017), writing about the experience of BME migrants who have migrated from Greece and Spain to the UK, go on to identify BME EU migrants as more likely to be concentrated in low-paid and precarious employment. Moreover, as they are positioned as ‘racial or ethnic Other’ they are more likely to face racism and to be stereotyped as health and benefit tourists (see for instance chapter 5, section 4).

In chapter 2 (section 2.5.1) I further discuss the welfare entitlements and restrictions that EU migrant status affords. It should be noted that, following the EU referendum and the decision of the UK to leave the European Union, the status of EU migrants in the UK has become increasingly uncertain. D'Angelo and Kofman (2018) note that leaked documents suggest that post-Brexit EU migrants may be brought within normal immigration rules, thus stratifying EU migrant rights to remain in the UK according to notions of who is skilled/unskilled. This is indicative of the way in which legal statuses are not immutable facts, but are constructed across time, and are complex and fluid.

Non-EU migrant

Non-EU migrants are those that come from outside of the European Union and have usually travelled on a family, student or work visa. They are differentiated from most asylum seekers and refugees in immigration administration in that they have usually applied for a visa out-of-country before gaining entry to the UK. They are 'subject to immigration control' and usually have no recourse to public funds (see below) as a condition of their stay. For those wishing to remain in the UK following visa expiration, and after a specified period of time in the UK (usually 5 years) they may apply for 'indefinite leave to remain' to regularise their status. This incurs high fees, strict regulations pertaining to completion of the 'Life in the UK' test, English language requirements and criminality checks. Some may claim asylum once their visa expires, others may return to their country of origin, and finally some may overstay their visa and in varying migration terminology become known as an 'over-stayer', as 'undocumented', or as an 'irregular' migrant.

Relevant to this study, is the family visa route which one participating family (Sahir and Naheed) had used to reunite in the UK. Two other participants, Mina and Theresa, also spoke of visa concerns that their dependents (in the case of the former) and their partner (in the case of the latter) were experiencing. Participants spoke of their experiences – either in the past or continuing at the time of the interview – as drawn-out, with heavy documentary burdens, and as putting their life on hold while their application was considered (see for instance, chapter 5, section 3 and chapter 8, section 7).

Family unification visas are most often requested by women; comprising 76% of family migrants. This is in stark contrast to labour migration which is heavily male-dominated (Blinder, 2017b). Most, as with Sahir and Naheed, are married prior to arrival. Family migration has tended to be conceived of in problematic terms, as Charlsley (2014: online) notes, ‘marriage can pose a fundamental challenge to governmental attempts to manage migration, given that spouses are generally selected by individuals (and/or families) rather than the state.’ The UK government has sought to manage family migration through the minimum income requirements, though there are alternative routes in light of case law (‘Surinder Singh’ route) that enable the evasion of income requirements by taking advantage of EEA freedom of movement (Charlsley, 2014). Though Sahir and Naheed were able to avoid minimum income thresholds, they were subject to intensive challenge around the veracity of their marriage. Following the discourse and suspicion around ‘sham’ marriages, the couple had to prove that they were in a ‘genuine and subsisting’ relationship (see chapter 5, section 3). This suspicion is more commonly aroused for

those from South-Asian countries (Charlsley, 2014), and consequently while Sahir and Naheed should have been in a position of relative privilege as Sahir was an EU national, looking at their experience with an intersectional focus highlights the inequalities experienced along lines of nationality, ethnicity, and gender.

No recourse to public funds (NRPF)

While no respondents in this study had NRPF, it is useful to define it in order to highlight the additional challenges faced by those who are subject to this condition – which intersects with austerity and hostility discourse and policy, and to highlight the way in which those with varying immigration statuses may *become* subject to the condition.

To have NRPF means one is restricted from access to welfare, social housing & homelessness support. The NRPF condition can be applied to a variety of legal status and affects both those who do have leave to remain and those who are irregular/undocumented. Three key groupings of people often with NRPF are as follows:

- Non-EEA migrants on a family, student or work visa
- Undocumented and irregular migrants, i.e. those that have come to the end of their asylum appeal rights and/or whose status has not been regularised
- Some EEA migrants who are un- or under- employed and subsequently determined not to have a ‘right to reside’

Those with NRPF and who experience crisis in their everyday lives (i.e. relationship breakdown, homelessness, job loss) face destitution (see below), poverty, exploitation and dangerous living conditions (cf. Farmer, 2017).

Destitution

Though this study did not interview anyone who was destitute, this is a condition to which some migrants are subject, and which is an outcome of a hostile immigration regime and funding concerns. An asylum seeker may become destitute after their claim is refused, an appeal is rejected, and subsequent financial support and/or housing entitlement have ended (typically within 28 days of the decision). Some who may be entitled to support (under section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999) once they have exhausted all appeal rights, may choose not to apply for such support for fear of being returned home. To become destitute means that one is without a home or eligibility to access welfare and is unable to work legally. Many in such situations are reliant on charitable and faith-based organisations to survive.

Racism

Racism is understood in this thesis as a consequence of the processes of racialisation upon which society is formed. While the concept and analytical usefulness of the term 'race' is problematic and contested (cf. Gilroy, 1998) – specifically because it has no biological basis – the social construction of racial hierarchies has material effects on those who are racialised (i.e. typically those who are not white). Lentin and Karakayali (2014:141) summarise that racism is something which is 'deeply rooted within structures, institutions and discourses of state and society.' This

definition foregrounds the structural and the systemic in analyses of racism, rather than understanding racism as purely interpersonal prejudice and as an atypical event. Rather, racism underpins societal structures and is pervasive in day to day life. That is not to say there are no interpersonal experiences of racism and prejudice, indeed in chapter 5, section 4, participant experiences of racism in their everyday lives are highlighted. These interpersonal encounters were a combination of racism based on visible social markers (i.e. skin colour), and of more indirect – yet perceptible – racism, which drew on cultural distinctions and national distinctions that place in relief the perceived threat to Englishness of ‘differently raced subjects’ (Byrne, 2007:527). Situating these interpersonal moments of racism within the structures and discourse that they occur (i.e. the pervasiveness of “UKIP discourse”), is important for understanding the ways in which policies of austerity and discourses of scarcity, combined with anti-migrant sentiment in an expanding European Union, have material effects in everyday life. As Fernando (1993:9) noted; ‘although racism may well be fashioned by personal prejudice and fear, it has always obtained its strength through economic and social forces.’

Xenophobia

Dictionary definitions of xenophobia claim that the phenomenon is a ‘fear and hatred’ of strangers and foreigners (Merriam Webster, no date). For some, xenophobia is less useful a descriptor than racism, with Fernando (1999:3) stating the reductive nature of the term, whereby racism comes to be ‘depicted as mere prejudice, a psychological quirk’, rather than as something engrained within institutions and systems. Balibar (2018) however utilises xenophobia as a constituent

part of racism. In order to preserve national 'identity' and unity, some are conceived of as 'enemies'; their otherness perceived as a threat to national order. Balibar (2014:134) further argues that immigration can come to 'substitute' race, as racism comes to be dominated not by 'biological heredity' but the 'insurmountability of cultural differences'. In this way, and as discussed earlier in relation to EU migrants, this 'new form' of racism can also encompass the prejudice and discrimination faced by, for instance, white Eastern European migrants. Xenophobia usually manifests as a call to fortifying national borders and espousing the incompatibility of multicultural societies (Balibar, 2018). The argument put forward by Masocha and Simpson (2011:9) can be employed as a compromise between the use of the terms racism and xenophobia. In the context of a study of discourse surrounding asylum seekers, the authors note that 'racism' is insufficient to articulate the oppression faced, because 'the racial composition of asylum seekers within the United Kingdom militates against using skin colour as a basis for analysis.' Consequently, they advocate for a framework that encapsulates both racism and xenophobia; 'xenoracism', whereby analysis reflects the racism that is not only directed on the basis of skin colour, but which is directed toward 'the displaced, the dispossessed and the uprooted' (Sivanandan, 2001, as cited in Masocha and Simpson, 2011:9). Though I foreground the term racism in my analysis, I could also usefully have incorporated the term 'xenoracism', which reflects the exclusion, discrimination, oppression and prejudice directed toward migrants, and which mitigates the limitations of the term xenophobia.

Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism is described by Fine and Saad-Filho (2016) as a distinct stage of capitalism (as say distinct from early laissez-faire forms and later Fordist stages), which has, since the 1980s, shaped the economy, society and politics. Though it is not a coherent ideology, and has differential effects across geography and time, it is commonly understood as valorising the role of the individual and the market in the production of resources and services and minimising the interventions of the state. An intensification of individualism and commodification have redefined the relationship between the economy, state, society and individual – with Fine and Saad-Filho (2016) at pains to emphasise that neoliberalism has precipitated a *transformation* of the state, rather than simply a *withdrawal* of the state from the provision of resources. Individuals are expected to be resilient and self-sufficient; neoliberalism ‘places the merit of success and the burden of failure on isolated individuals’ (Fine and Saad-Filho, 2016:13). Neoliberalism shapes the material world around us, entrenching inequality and insecurity along lines of class, race and gender (Cummins, 2018) (see chapter 5). Moreover, as a mode of governmentality it shapes how individuals see themselves, the world, and their place in it – creating the ‘neoliberal subject’ (Brown, 2003). (see chapter 8, section 5).

Neoliberalism is implicated in the production and experience of migration, as it governs global relations and has presided over the globalisation of the world, in which capital, economic growth, employment (and the movement of people) are shaped. The reach of neoliberal capitalism, shaped by unequal power relations (i.e. between the Global North and Global South) and seeking ever more resources and markets to exploit, produces the migration of the dispossessed (Davison and Shire,

2014). Moreover, the neoliberal market also creates the conditions for exploitation in destination countries (Geiger and Pecoud, 2010).

Finally, and relevant to this study, neoliberalism is of course implicated in the structure of welfare in the UK, and chapter 4 highlights the move toward contract culture and the process of isomorphism as consequences of neoliberal relations.