Trust and mistrust in the lives of forcibly displaced women and children

HYNES, Patricia

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Corresponding Author:	Patricia Hynes, PhD University of Bedfordshire Luton, Bedfordshire UNITED KINGDOM
First Author:	Patricia Hynes, PhD
Order of Authors:	Patricia Hynes, PhD
Abstract:	This paper aims to consider the experiences of displaced women and children throughout the experience of displacement and the issue of trust (or mistrust) throughout this journey towards future emplacement. Issues around trust and mistrust in conflict situations and considerations around interpersonal and broader based gender-based violence in politicised contexts are explored. Various stages of displacement are viewed and, through the use of examples, from experiences within refugee camps, reception in host countries and resettlement in countries of asylum insights into the lived experiences of displaced women and children are provided. This paper therefore draws upon research projects and practitioner experience, including research carried out within refugee camps, in the UK on the dispersal of asylum seekers, qualitative research into agency responses to the trafficking of children and young people, plus a scoping study involving qualitative research into non-statutory understandings of trafficking.
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Introduction

In 2015 more than one million people crossed the Mediterranean Sea seeking refuge with thousands dying *en-route* (Crawley *et al.,* 2015). This migration was only part of a broader, global picture wherein, by the end of 2015 forced displacement worldwide had reached unprecedented levels, with 65.3 million people displaced, some 86% of which were hosted in the world's 'developing' countries (UNHCR, 2015). This figure included new displacement during 2015 of 12.4 million people and some 6.4 million refugees living in 'protracted refugee situations' (PRS) – defined by UNHCR as refugees of the same nationality who have been in exile for five or more years (UNHCR, 2014, 2015). Detailed demographic information is not available for the entirety of these populations but it is estimated that around half are women. The proportion of children (defined as below the age of 18 years) forcibly displaced has increased from 46% in 2011 to 51% in 2015 due mainly to growing numbers of Syrian, Afghan and Somali children (UNHCR, 2015).

This paper looks at the lives of forcibly displaced women and children, including women and children who have become refugees or have experienced 'trafficking', specifically around the issues of trust and mistrust. It is suggested that a continuum between trust and mistrust is a more useful conceptualisation than any binary distinction and different points along this continuum are actively used by those who have been forcibly displaced. It is also suggested that knowing who and when to mistrust, and with what information, is as important as knowing who and when to trust in such contexts. Mistrust, it is suggested, is consequently considered a logical, useful and rational strategy employed by forcibly displaced people for survival.

To do this, different stages of displacement are outlined and addressed in turn. The experiences of displaced women and children throughout the processes and experiences of *dis*placement and journeys to future *em*placement are part of this (Turton, 2004). The paper also addresses what is termed herein as 'cultural somersaults' often required during the process of displacement to come to terms with new contexts and, more positively, active agency away from violence towards being believed, being able to disclose abuse and/or exploitation and ultimately finding sanctuary from persecution.

This paper is a cumulative paper, drawing on a range of mainly qualitative research projects plus reflections on experiences as a practitioner. Although each project had distinctive aims and samples from diverse populations in different settings, trust and mistrust have been important themes emerging during data analysis of each study. The first part of this paper looks at the distinct definitions and competing legal frameworks of women and children seeking asylum and those who have experienced 'trafficking', different ways in which processes of forced migration of women and children are viewed and the issues of trust and mistrust. The second part of the paper provides empirical material to illustrate different stages of displacement.

Defining and Conceptualising Forcibly Displaced Women and Children

Approaches to understanding forcible displacement vary. For example, Bhabha (2014) outlines different forms displacement of women and children can take – family-related; exploitation-related; and survival-related. On the migration of children she argues that the complexities of child migration is as yet 'a largely untold and unanalysed story' and, rather than their 'invisibility', an 'unresolved ambivalence' towards children who migrate without legal status better explains persistent policy failures and the lacuna of protection mechanisms available for children (Bhabha, 2014:1). Others focus on single-country or single-nationality approaches to understanding forcible displacement, territorially-bounded studies within countries of origin, within refugee camps or countries of asylum (e.g. see Holzer, 2012; Stewart, 2012). This paper takes the approach of outlining different stages of

displacement, outlining the processes of being constructed as and becoming a 'refugee', 'asylum seeker' and other labels such as being a 'victim' of 'trafficking'.

A 'refugee' is legally defined by Article 1 of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (hereafter the 1951 Refugee Convention) as apply to any person who:

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

The 1951 Refugee Convention was devised post World War II at the same time as the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) was established with the mandate to protect refugees. This definition was restricted at the time to people who became refugees prior to the events of 1951 within Europe but was made universal in October 1967 when a Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees came into force extending the temporal and geographical limitations of the 1951 Refugee Convention (Goodwin-Gill, 1996, 2014).

The definition reflected historic conditions after World War 2 and was written with the image of an adult, male, white, heterosexual dissident, resulting in the legal definition being historically interpreted through the framework of male experiences. As Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2014) suggests, feminist critiques since the 1980s of the 1951 Refugee Convention definition have highlighted the failure to recognise women's resistance to oppression and violence and made understanding the gendered nature of forced displacement an add-on to any attempts to protect refugees. The 1951 Refugee Convention does not include violence that occurs in the private sphere, such as domestic or sexual violence. It has been argued that such 'interpersonal violence' (IPV) is discriminatory in contexts where there is effectively no public support services or where legal frameworks do not recognise IPV (Krug *et al.,* 2002; WHO, 2010; WHO, 2014).

The definition of being 'trafficked' comes under a different legal arrangement adopted in 2000 – the Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, supplemented by the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children – the latter Protocol commonly referred to as the Palermo Protocol. The Palermo Protocol 2000 defines 'Trafficking in persons' to:

> '… mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.'

The definition contains three interrelated yet distinct elements – the act (recruitment, transportation and transfer), means (use of violence, threats or other use of force or coercion) and purposes (a range of forms of exploitation which include sexual exploitation, forced labour and other practices similar to slavery or servitude). As such trafficking is seen as a process, not a one-off national bounded 'event' (Hynes, 2010, 2015). The logic behind this piece of anti-trafficking legislation being devised as a protocol to the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organised Crime under the Organisation for Security Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has attracted considerable concern given the focus on security above the rights, or protection, of 'victims' (Palmary, 2010; Gould, 2010). The term 'trafficking' itself is also highly contested with critiques often focusing on the lack of empirical evidence for statistics cited (Gould, 2010; Palmary, 2010; Salt, 2000).

These definitional differences, competing legal frameworks and oversight by different international organisations are gendered and have resulted in separate recording mechanisms, distinct policy agendas and, importantly, different policy responses disconnecting those who are seeing asylum from persecution and those who are trafficked for exploitative purposes. As Zetter (2007) suggests, such contrasting definitions and separate legal arrangement are a source of bureaucratic 'fractioning of the [refugee] label' (2007:172-192), including the pejorative label of 'trafficked migrant' (2007:184). Zetter suggests this 'bureaucratic labelling' by states legitimises the 'exclusion and marginalization of refugees' (2007: 172-192). Such legislative or policy categorisations have influence when framing research and different literatures have consequently emerged around asylum, refuge and trafficking. However, in practice, these categories and populations overlap and both labels may apply to the same person. It is not unusual for people who are trafficked to seek refugee status; nor is it unusual for asylum seekers and refugees to encounter exploitation (Lewis, 2013).

Failures of international protection for those forcibly displaced create vulnerabilities and spaces for exploitation. Seeking asylum may involve the use of smugglers and, as van Liempt (2007) has suggested, smuggling can and often does become trafficking *en-route* to safety. When forcible displacement occurs and protection needs are not met, trust and 'ontological security … derived from the permanency of things…' (Richmond, 1994:19) are left unsatisfied.

Trust, Mistrust and Forcible Displacement

Trust is an ambiguous, multi-faceted and dynamic term. Trust and mistrust are key themes in refugee studies. As Daniel and Knudsen and others have suggested, refugees are mistrusted and themselves trust and mistrust (Daniel and Knudsen, 1995; Robinson, 2002). Discussions around trust span academic disciplines and, although there is a plethora of literature on trust, there is space for further theorising trust within refugee or forced migration studies. Commentators have repeatedly outlined that there is no single theory of migration and that attempts to build an overarching theory for all migration is 'illusionary' (Richmond, 1994; King *et al.,* 2008:48). Colson (2003) related the theme of trust to migration studies more broadly, suggesting that trust brings together work on immigration, labour migration and forced migration. Trust in migrant communities, she argued, rests on reciprocity and the expectation of a shared future.

Trust and reciprocity are key elements in debates around 'social capital' where shared identity and networks form the basis of 'communities' (e.g. Putnam, 1993). However, 'social capital' can also be exclusionary (Sen, 1999) and in refugee studies, Griffiths *et al.* (2005) became increasingly critical of the term to describe the social networks of asylum seekers, outlining how networks played a defensive role within a hostile policy environment for refugees. Voutira and Harrell-Bond (1995) seminally challenged the notion that encounters between helpers within the structure of the international humanitarian regime and refugees had any potential for restoring trust given the political economy of aid and inherent inequalities of global protection and containment strategies for refugees. When researching smuggling, van Liempt (2007) has utilised a concept of a 'chain of trust' to denote how 'safe' contacts at the onset of migration can be replaced further from the point of departure by more anonymous smugglers increasing the chances of being exploited (2007:171,208). Hynes (2009) delineated four distinct forms of trust to assist in conceptualising the experience of forced displacement – social, political, institutional and restorative trust – and these forms run through the rest of this paper alongside the suggestion of a continuum between trust and mistrust.

At a societal level, betrayal of trust occurs in armed conflict, humanitarian contexts and situations wherein the restructuring of the nation-state results in ethnic, language or religious lines of fracture

(Hynes, 2003; Malkki, 1995; Zolberg, 1989). Once lost, trust takes time to restore socially, politically and institutionally. As one participant of the peace process in Burma poetically outlined:

> *'Trust is like a tree … the seeds of trust have to be sowed and nurtured. … Trust does not grow overnight. It takes time for trust to take root. But once the tree is chopped down, sometimes it is gone forever. Sometimes it takes time to grow back. … Sometimes it may not be at all possible to build trust across the divide once blood is shed. … It is not too difficult to understand how hard it is to build trust in a conflict. The longer the conflict, such as our conflict, the harder it is to build trust.'* Aung Naing Oo (2014)

This struggle to regain and restore trust and re-establish a sense of 'ontological security' in the world and everyday life 'depends upon routine … [and] assumes a degree of predictability and trust in others' (Richmond, 1994:19). In other words, to restore trust regaining normal routines, re-establishing trust in others where it has been lost, restoring trust in political and/or legal processes, plus creating and maintaining relationships with others are necessary.

During displacement the consequences of gendered-violence relate closely to this. Trust and mistrust are also gendered and linked to gender-specific experiences of abuses and/or exploitation. Accounts of experiences of displacement faced by women and girls, or women and children, tend to focus on specific risks and vulnerabilities rather than capabilities or active agency of women and protection from sexual and gender based persecution (SGBV) has emerged in recent decades focussed on 'refugee women' (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2014). Forced migration is, however, simultaneously recognised to hold possibilities of transformational effects during social change which can be both negative and positive (Kaiser, 2014).

As such, this paper will also illustrate how the trust/mistrust continuum relates to *em*placement (Turton, 2004) and the importance of being listened to and believed when recreating social worlds and restoring trust. Caveats include understanding that trust is contextual and circumstances will differ from those described herein.

Methodology

This paper is cumulative, drawing on analysis from different research projects over two decades including practitioner experiences working with Vietnamese, Lao, Hmong, Khmer refugees in Thai refugee transit and processing camps (1989 – 1990) and Burmese refugees along the Thailand-Burma border (1996 – 2000). As such it is informed by participant observation, informal interviews, focus groups, reflections on practice and other primary sources of data. It also draws on in-depth interview data with internally displaced persons and refugees from and within Burma, particularly highlighting the period of threat and circumstances within a country of origin outlined below. Reflections on practice were recorded in note form and the in-depth interviews in refugee camps and cross-border were conducted with the assistance of translators (Temple and Young, 2004; Temple and Moran, 2006; Temple, 2004), referred to as Practitioner Interviews with relevant dates for clarity.

This paper also draws on research conducted in the later stages of displacement with refugees, asylum seekers and children trafficked into the UK (2000 – present) across three research projects. The first of these involved doctoral research on the social exclusion and dispersal of single adult and families of asylum seekers in England (hereafter referred to as Study 1, with fieldwork conducted between 2002 and 2004). This study investigated formal and informal social exclusion inherent in the system of compulsory dispersal in England. Secondly, a qualitative study conducted between the University of Bedfordshire and the NSPCC on the trafficking of children into, within and out of the UK (Study 2: fieldwork 2007-2009). This study aimed to identify and develop agency responses to children and

young people arriving into, moved within or out of the UK. A focus on identifying good child- and young person-centred practice and safeguarding them from abuse and exploitation also resulted in a focus on trust, and believing children's accounts, as an essential fulcrum in ensuring successful practice. Thirdly, a qualitative scoping study on the knowledge within migrant community organisations (MCOs) and refugee community organisations (RCOs) in relation to the trafficking of children (Study 3: fieldwork 2012-2013). This study explored knowledge and understandings of the trafficking of children within the non-statutory sector, with a particular focus on migrant and refugee community organisations based in London.

The aims of these three studies were distinct but each had trust and mistrust arising as important themes during analysis. Both studies involving the trafficking of children looked at trafficking into, within and out of the UK also include 'internal' trafficking of UK born children. In each of the research studies, interviews and focus groups were tape-recorded, fully transcribed and analysed using social science NVIVO software.

Stages of displacement

Displacement processes are divided up into phases to enable sight of the process of becoming a refugee or processes involved in trafficking. These stages are of course somewhat illusionary and run the risk of obscuring connections between them (Van Hear, 2003). They do, however, allow for categorisation which is a useful tool for analysis. The processes detail *dis*placement and *em*placement, recognising Turton's (2004) suggestion that:

> 'The experience of displacement is not only about the *loss* of a place … it is also … about the struggle to *make* a place in the world.' (Turton, 2004:26)

During these stages different forms of violence – 'interpersonal violence', 'collective violence', 'intimate partner violence' and 'sexual violence' – will be present along with 'political violence', which sit as a subdivision of 'collective violence' within the WHO typology of violence (Krug *et al.,* 2002; WHO, 2010, 2014).

Figures 1 and 2 below outline the stages of forced displacement for both refugees and those who have experienced trafficking. For refugees, *dis*placement is viewed as per Figure 1:

[insert Figure 1 here]

Categorisations during the trafficking process are less easy as there is often no clear, easily identifiable beginning, middle or end or easily identifiable 'event' where exploitation begins or ends and children can be effectively hidden within day-to-day activities or private fostering arrangements. The process can also occur over a long period of time (Pearce *et al.*, 2013). Figure 2 details this:

[insert Figure 2 here]

Both the process of becoming a refugee and being trafficked are forms of forced migration but separate legal and policy frameworks make exploration of forms of forced migration for women and children complex. Displacement involves transitions which often include the physical losses of possessions and property and the breakup or death of family members. Displacement also often involves the loss of community structures which mean that, particularly during the early stages of displacement, transitions are felt physically and emotionally. Whilst forms of intimate partner violence may have existed prior to a state of such transition, displacement will involve further disruption to any forms of sanctuary, be these shelters or structures of family support.

The WHO have outlined how the occurrence and impacts of intimate partner and sexual violence are frequently 'hidden' forms of abuse (2010:5). Utilising a 'sanctions and sanctuary' framework, the WHO outline how, at a community level, there may be 'weak community sanctions against intimate partner and sexual violence' (WHO, 2010:24). This framework also suggests a hypothesis that there may be high levels of intimate partner violence in communities that have lost community sanctions (legal or moral) against it and IPV will be 'highest in societies where the status of women is in a state of transition as where 'women have a very low status, violence is not needed to enforce male authority'. (WHO, 2010:24).

In recent years, there has been more focus on 'rights work' in refugee camps and humanitarian contexts, particularly on 'rights that are primarily breached in private, by husbands or other males' (Hilhorst and Jansen, 2012). UNHCR's initial guidance – *Sexual Violence against Refugees: Guidelines on Prevention and Response* (1995) – noted the different situations wherein sexual violence has been known to occur against refugees. These also follow the stages approach – prior to flight, during flight and in the country of asylum – with greater emphasis on the stages of repatriation and reintegration potentially reflecting the 1990s emphasis on being a 'decade of repatriation', with 'voluntary repatriation' being the 'optimum solution' for refugees. UNHCR updated this strategy in June 2011 – *Action against Sexual and Gender-Based Violence: An Updated Strategy* – to focus on better data collection, analysis and documentation of SGBV. Research in this area is considered fledgling and little is known about the effectiveness of SGBV guidelines. As Asgary *et.al.* found, no guidelines exist that are supported by primary research on, for or with displaced populations or an evidence-base – rather they are written from a theoretical and expertise base (2012:88).

The stages of displacement are now addressed in turn.

The Period of Threat

When discussing 'root causes' of forcible migration for refugees, Zolberg (1983, 1989) suggested that the formation of new nation-states is a 'refugee-generating process' (1989:246) wherein a process of restructuring the social order of the nation-state excludes sections of a society. This restructuring and exclusion is often along ethnic, language or religious lines and other categorisations within the definition of a 'refugee' such as membership of a particular social group and those who hold actual, or imputed, political opinions. Trust is broken down along these lines of fragmentation and perceptions of, often, essentialised *difference*. One way this manifests itself is by the suppression of teaching in particular languages which, as one female teacher originally from Mon state in Burma outlined:

> *'First they told us not to teach the* [Mon] *language and later they made us leave.'* (Practitioner Interview, October 1996)

The period prior to displacement involved creation of mistrust between the central military regime – perceived as Burmese – and the Mon 'community', which had its roots in Burma's colonial past. Mistrust can be due to political connections (real or perceived) within what Anderson has called 'imagined communities' whose members may never have face-to-face contact but will fight, kill, love and die for the nation under construction (1991). Refugees may have seen friends and family jailed, tortured or killed in this project of national imagining. Any 'social contract' that exists between individuals and the state may break. Individuals may be the target of abuse by military intelligence, the police or other security forces and detention becomes a place of violence and torture for those arrested. For those 'in hiding' mistrusting others with different political loyalties becomes vital. Social norms that had facilitated domestic, sexual or other forms of violence against women may become

intensified and *differences* exploited. As outlined above, there can also be a breakdown of any existing social sanctions that deter interpersonal violence.

In various global contexts, governments define 'childhood', 'youth' and 'adolescence' differently according to the requirements of a nation (Cairns, 1996). During the creation of the nation, boundaries between different forms of violence become blurred when state violence such as rape of opposition members, institutional abuse or torture of child soldiers occurs. As one 14 year old, Buddhist, Burmese former child soldier recalled:

> *'I stayed in a big barracks and could not go outside. … People were beaten with a bamboo stick all over their body, except for their head, sometimes until they were unconscious. … All the sergeants would beat. After the sergeants had beaten them they would make a roll-call and each person* [around 250 people] *had to beat the person one time with a bamboo stick. If they beat them softly, they would be beaten themselves.'* (Practitioner Interview, April 1997).

For this child, the impacts of abuse and maltreatment from state agents and witnessing the abuse of others remain unknown but trust in others – social trust – would clearly be affected as would trust in his ability to be protected from both interpersonal and state violence. Presumed shared identity with others and confidence in the political system to provide safety or prevent violence is lost. Escape from this situation would necessarily entail crossing a border as they would face severe reprisals if found in country (Heppner, 2002).

For those who experience trafficking, the period of threat is often referred to as a period of 'vulnerability' to trafficking. Control mechanism of traffickers can be based on intimate knowledge of the specific familial, socio-economic or civil and political vulnerabilities of a child or young person:

> *'Mr P earned her trust by saying he knew about her 'difficulties'.* (Study 2 case study notes, 2008)

Again, social norms have an extensive role where the boundaries between political and interpersonal violence can be blurred:

> *'You're working with an issue that's so engrained in society … this exploitation conversation about changing societal norms around the roles of women and young girls …'* (Study 3 interview with MCO representative, September 2013)

> *'… then, this culture where it's kind of normal for girls to be abused, for violence in the home to take place for, um, women to be very, very sexualised … so women as objects, it's very, very normal in society.'* (Study 3 interview with MCO representative, July 2013)

Such existing social norms during a period of 'vulnerability' to trafficking can be used for control purposes. Social norms where violence against women and girls is normalised can assist traffickers to gain trust.

The Decision to Leave, Flee or Move across a Border

For women and children in conflict settings, the crossing of a border may be about escape, having already witnessed different forms of violence and knowing who and who not to trust will be crucial for survival. As one 13 year old Karen boy who had been captured by Burmese soldiers with nine women, forced to walk for four days to reach a military base camp, sleeping in the jungle *en-route* explained:

> *'The soldiers drank a lot and made the women dance with them. The women were given alcohol and were forced to drink by having their arms grabbed by the soldiers. They were forced to dance by having their arms and hands grabbed by the soldiers. … The first night we slept close to the paddy field. During the night the ladies did not sleep but sat up because the soldiers were sleeping with their heads on the knees of the ladies.'* (Practitioner Interview, November 1996)

Acts, or the threat, of gender based violence inform decisions to flee and/or cross borders. In the above instance, Karen women were being held by soldiers, perceived to be Burmese. This Karen child managed to escape on the fourth night and crossed the border to a Thai refugee camp. The timing of a decision to flee can mean the difference between life or death.

In another interview with a 30 year old, animist, Karenni woman it was explained how women and children moving across a border hide from soldiers considered *different* to them and, consequently, not to be trusted. The non-state agent Karenni soldiers who found them and took them across the border into refugee camps were, in this instance, trusted and followed. As she said:

> *'They had seen and heard the* [Burmese] *soldiers and had to run away* [with the Karenni soldiers] *because the babies were crying.'* (Practitioner Interview, October 1996)

This decision to cross a border followed a forced relocation order to leave their rural village homes and move to a large town close to a military base within Burma. After experiences of forced labour building roads, seeing people die from stepping on landmines and watching others die in the relocation site, decisions to escape were reached for some:

> '*As there were some sick and old people they stayed behind. The young and healthy moved to* [name of town]*. ... Coming to Thailand was the only way to survive. … Most people in the relocation sites die*.' (Practitioner Interview, October 1996)

For this group, family decisions on who should cross a border was about survival with mistrust of one ethnic group and trust of another becoming the means by which this was achieved.

For those who are trafficked, the process of being recruited and being moved either internally with a country or across a border is often termed 'grooming' whereby the specific circumstances of individuals are exploited, leading to contexts of vulnerability to being trafficked. The decision to leave in trafficking cases is complex, particularly around issues of agency and consent (Palmary, 2010). A child under the terms of the trafficking definition cannot consent to being moved or recruited into exploitative labour. Factors that inform decisions to cross borders are broad and may also involve interpersonal violence in the private sphere. As one representative of a UK-based MCO outlined:

> *'Often they're from quite marginal poor communities so there are already issues within the family, parents who maybe have some form of addiction, alcoholism is quite high, or a parent remains but that parent is just incapable of looking after that child.'* (Study 3 interview, July 2013)

Accounts of trafficking often relayed this focus on risk factors within families:

> *'… the young person was not comfortable speaking about her childhood.'* (Study 2 case file notes, 2008)

> *'She cannot return to live with other relatives as they were instrumental in her leaving.'* (Study 3 case file notes, 2008)

Broader societal risks were also relayed by practitioners discussing an unaccompanied child who had experienced exploitation:

> *'She is from a minority clan … since she was a child they had visits from the local militia and the majority clan are in charge of that region. … It looks like she has been raped twice and then they fled.* (Study 2 case file notes, 2008)

As outlined earlier, explanations around fleeing persecution overlap with being 'trafficked'; with 'trafficking' having an additional emphasis on being betrayed, deceived or misled explicitly for the purpose of exploitation.

In Flight or Transportation

In the late 1970s and 1980s, reports of sexual violence by pirates in the South China Sea permeated accounts of journeys made by Vietnamese 'boat people'. In the current Mediterranean context, experiences of sexual violence against women and children during their journeys within and across Libya, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon and Turkey during flight remain a largely untold story. Media accounts have, however, clearly shown the specific risks faced by children in particular during these crossings. Being 'in flight' or undertaking a journey away from persecution involves trusting various agents, be they travel facilitators, passport brokers, 'smugglers' or 'traffickers'. Robinson explains that the context for this is telling '… as few people know you are leaving is important, so you trust no one.' (2002:64).

In recent months 'smuggling' and 'trafficking' have often been conflated in media accounts for those paying to cross the Mediterranean Sea. The distinction between these terms is confusing for practitioners and, in practice any distinction is blurred and potential dangers of classifying journeys as cases of 'smuggling' rather than 'trafficking' hold the potential for harm, as found with children and young people coming into the UK:

> *'I think it gets minimised when somebody labels a child as smuggled. … I think that I's almost as if they consider a smuggled child to be in on it. Whereas a trafficked child is being deceived all the way.'* (Study 2 interview with practitioner, 2008)

However, as outlined by van Liempt (2007) UK practitioners sometimes found that cases beginning as 'smuggling' shifted towards 'trafficking' when children found themselves in positions where abuse of trust had occurred:

> *'We realised it wasn't always about sex trafficking … there were kids being used as domestics … people were bringing kids in under the wire, so smuggling them in but going on to exploit them here* [in the UK].*'* (Study 2 interview with practitioner, 2008)

Focus on the exploitative or non-exploitative character of relationships either during flight or upon arriving into a country of asylum is key. Trusting, and the need to rely on strangers, 'agents' or 'brokers' increases when receiving governments close their borders forces people to take more risks and undertake increasingly dangerous journeys. In such circumstances, correct decisions to trust or mistrust others – social trust – become paramount.

Reaching a Place of Asylum or being 'Harboured'

Upon reaching a place of asylum, safety cannot be assumed. Reaching a country of asylum does not necessarily mean that sexual violence will not occur. Border guards and refugee camp security personnel may be in positions of power where they can abuse women and children. UNHCRs 1995 guidelines detail how exchange of sex for safe passage is known to have occurred in previous refugee situations. Mistrust of immigration officers, government officials, uniformed officials, soldiers and border guards can be crucial.

Negotiating access to refugee camps may itself be fraught and any subsequent process of moving through a refugee status determination process. For refugees and other people forced to migrate, tough law enforcement around immigration regimes can act as a barrier to disclosure (Hynes, 2009). Knowing what to say and when in these contexts is vital. Local populations may also post a risk. Safety or sanctuary cannot be assumed.

For those who have been transported or transferred as a consequence of trafficking, this stage may be characterised in Palermo Protocol definitional terms by being 'harboured' by exploiters. Control will be an element of this and is based on a combination of physical, sexual or emotional abuse and neglect rather than the establishment of trust:

> *'They tied her hands behind her back and took her out of the car. Before putting her into a car they also tied her feet so she could not move.'* (Study 2 case file notes, 2008)

> *'We know where you are, we know your family and we know contacts back at home'* (Study 2 case file notes, 2008)

This control and manipulation may be violent or, in some instances, more subtle (Pearce *et al.,* 2009):

> *'Some girls that we had disappeared and had a 'boyfriend'. These girls didn't see themselves as sexually exploited. They thought that this guy loved them.'* (Study 2 case file notes, 2008)

> *'He was receiving low rates of pay for manual labour…he was repaying debt.'* (Study 2 case file notes, 2008)

The possibilities of abuse of trust is high in both scenarios and mistrust therefore becomes vital for survival. For refugees experiences of past betrayals by those with, for example, different political allegiances will be part of survival strategies by this stage. For those who are trafficked, experiencing betrayal can be a characteristic of this stage.

Refugee Camps: Maintaining Temporary Refuge and Contexts of Uncertainty

Not all refugees will experience life in a refugee camp – many refugees around the world live in urban settings. If residing in a camp, women and children are vulnerable to sexual abuse because of imbalances in power relations, the need to forage for food, collect firewood or water outside the camp (WHO, 2012). Overcrowding, poor lighting and the placement of toilets are all considerations within a camp setting. Rumours of coercive sexual exploitation are often difficult to investigate or substantiate in such contexts. Preventing sexual violence is consequently complex and context-specific with data collection extremely complex, difficult and logistically challenging.

In refugee camps, host governments often oppose attempts to improve camp conditions to retain the perception of refugee camps as temporary and keep refugees in 'limbo' (Malkki, 1995). Along the

Burmese border, a sense of temporariness was maintained through restrictions on building materials, restrictions on levels of educational projects within camps, relocation of camps and delays on delivery of aid (1996-2000). Within the transit and processing centres (1989-1990) this was maintained by overcrowding, provision of rations at survival level, denial of access to international NGOs other than specified hours, denial of access to international advocacy or human rights based organisations and for certain populations, the forcible movement to different accommodation on a regular basis. Such economies of shortage and the allocation of limited resources – often gendered – is consequently contentious. Living within such contexts of control and uncertainty exacerbates conflict and actions of host country camp security can hold suggestions of gender violence and sexual exploitation. These are not environments in which trust between different 'communities' or with 'host' communities is easy to create or restore.

Studies incorporating empirical materials on sexual exploitation within refugee camps are scarce, with notable exceptions. Sexual exploitation of refugee women and girls in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone has been documented by Ferris (2007) showing that sexual exploitation practices were carried out by warlords, soldiers, armed gangs and border guards. More worryingly, sexual exploitation by aid workers, peacekeepers and community leaders were also found. The political economy of aid structures and abuse of positions of power and/or trust are a source of vulnerability to exploitation. Rights in refugee camps are embedded in complex power negotiations and, given a lack of space for disclosures to occur or prosecutions made, abuses of positions of trust may stay hidden for many years.

Integration, Emplacement, Repatriation or Deportation

Outcomes for refugees and those who have experienced trafficking are similar, with some form of 'integration' (Castles *et al.,* 2002) or *em*-placement (Turton, 2004) possible following arrival into host countries. Both populations may become, or remain, undocumented or be involved in policy processes driven by repatriation of deportation. Whilst physical residence in a locality does not automatically translate into social belonging, for refugees transnational linkages and relationships of trust enable forms of such integration or belonging. This relates closely to the creation and maintenance of trust that Colson notes:

> 'Trust depends upon continuing links with a home place, a profession, or membership in some other groping that spans localities and time'. (Colson, 2003:5)

Within the UK, Study 1 found that asylum and support systems left little room for political or institutional trust to be restored and the restoration of social trust was actively hindered by policies and legislation that imposed a sense of liminality. Interviewees commented how mistrust was considered a feature of the experience of seeking asylum generally:

> *'People are mistrustful of everything. If you think that refugees are people running, running for their lives. They have had to do this to survive. They mistrust everyone, including their own community groups. Only once the basics are sorted, the basics for survival – roof and work – then they can begin looking around and seek additional support.'* (Study 1 interview with female representative of RCO, November 2002)

This mistrust from refugees was directed at a range of professionals and social contacts, from Home Office officials, housing providers and the host population in areas of resettlement. The process of awaiting a decision on an asylum claim placed people in contexts of control and uncertainty based on state legislation and policy. For those who had experienced trafficking, this was also about control, from their traffickers.

'On arrival at Heathrow he took her passport off her.' (Study 2 case file notes, 2008)

At this stage it is essential that women and children are believed, listened to, trusted and provided spaces wherein disclosures of abuse are possible. In research on trafficking of children in the UK, these spaces appeared largely absent:

> *'This child has a very vivid imagination. I'm not even going to record a lot of our conversation because it's clearly not true.'* (Study 2 case file notes, 2008)

> *'They come in, they claim to be children… they know if they claim to be children they will be put in a children's home rather than a detention centre.'* (Study 2 case file notes, 2008)

> *'I know that she's been in front of a jury and told a story about being raped over there. I know she wasn't believed. I know they wouldn't believe that the guy had been trafficking her....I mean we are asking the court to believe a 15 year old girl against four or five adults.'* (Study 2 case file notes, 2008)

However, reformulation of roles, norms and values on arrival into a country of asylum was apparent. Demonstrations of active agency away from violence or exploitation and ultimately finding sanctuary from persecution of violence was commented upon and, for one individual, rather than use of terms such as 'integration', the phrase 'cultural somersaults' was utilised:

> *'You have to readjust. Say for example if you have been the victim of rape in Pakistan. You are going to be accused of being unfaithful to your husband and possibly sentenced to die by stoning. 24 hours later the girl is in London. … How can she put in her claim that she has been raped because her frame of reference and her value system is telling her that if she does, she might die. And yet she has to tell in order to get refugee status. … you have to almost do, how do they put it, like a 'cultural somersault'. You know, cultural, ideological somersault for a girl to be able to do that. To be able to own the experience of sexual violence against her, politicise it … and make it a valuable tool for her survival. It is very, very difficult. But it has been done. I personally know that.'* (Study 1 interview with women's RCO representative, September 2003)

This 'cultural somersault' fits in the wider themes of trust and mistrust because individuals at this stage will need to re-establish social trust and confidence in institutional and political processes in their new surroundings. The same representative when on to explore the transformational effects of feeling safe enough to restore trust:

> *'You revise women and girl's role in societies, their's and the new one. … It is amazing how happy people are when they realise that there is a way out of that kind of cruelty.'* (Study 1 interview with women's RCO representative, September 2003)

Similar signs of adaptation, active agency and resilience were described regarding children who had been trafficked:

> *'She went through so much in this initial stage, but she was so resilient in trying to make sure that she wasn't going to let this defeat her.'* (Study 2 interview with practitioner, 2008)

To reach this point, in the words of two practitioners, required understanding and relationship-based thinking around trust over time:

'*Understanding that it can take a while gaining her trust, understanding where she has come from, where she is, where she needs to be and what she needs to do to get there.'* (Study 2 case file notes, 2008)

'The needs of any child that has been abused is a need to be believed and understood. They need to feel safe and secure and trusted.' (Study 2 case file notes, 2008)

Little is known about abuse and exploitation in cases where women and children are, or have become, undocumented, with notable exceptions (Sigona and Hughes, 2012). For women, Lewis *et al.,* (2015) found contexts of 'unfreedom' and 'hyper-precarity' (2015:156-157) and women being trapped in situations of domestic servitude, controlled by a combination of sexual, physical and psychological abuse in the UK.

There is little empirical material regarding violence – state-structured or interpersonal – once women and children are deported or repatriated to their countries of origin. Refugees who are returned may experience retribution by government officials, military intelligence, the police or neighbours and acquaintances. Gaining identification cards, passports or other essential documentation upon return may also create vulnerability to exploitation. There have been recent calls for further attention to be paid to the phenomenon of 'trust' in repatriation policy and theory, recognising repatriation as a process of rebuilding trust between refugee-citizens and their country or origin (Hargrave, 2014).

Conclusions

Refugees are mistrusted and themselves mistrust and a continuum between trust and mistrust, plus the forms of trust – social, political, institutional and restorative trust – experienced during displacement have been explored in this paper. In situations where governments do not protect women and children there is a need to better understand how individual risk factors link with larger structural and contextual factors that lead to forced migration. Where the state itself is the perpetrator of violence, abuse of positions of trust can create conditions wherein impunity can flourish. When people decide to leave a country of origin, trust and mistrust can become strategies for survival until safe spaces are found wherein trust can begin to be restored and *dis*placement can shift to *em*placement. This paper has begun to explore these broader issues.

Children on the move may have experienced different forms of child abuse or torture; they may have witnessed abuse or the killing of others. Women may have suffered past persecution by the state and, sometimes, non-state agents. Both may arrive into contexts of control and uncertainty. During this process, mistrust can be based around essentialised *difference*, be this on the basis of ethnicity, religion, language or other perceived difference.

Cross-cutting all forms of violence against women and children is the need for trusted spaces for disclosure. To achieve this women and children need to be listened to and believed. In conflict settings this is difficult, particularly if shortage is exacerbating perceived *differences* present before, during and often after forcible displacement. All disclosure of abuse, maltreatment or exploitation takes time and there is no reason why disclosure, or restoration of trust, would be faster for women and children who are displaced.

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Figure

Figure 1: Stages of forced displacement for refugees

The Period of Threat of *Dis*placement	The Decision to Flee / To Cross a Border	In Flight / Journey	Reaching a Place of Safety and/or First Country of Asylum	Refugee Camp or Urban Refugee situation	Reception into a Host Country	Resettlement	Post-resettlement Integration *Em*placement Become or remain Undocumented Repatriation or Deportation

Figure 2: Stages of displacement during the trafficking process

The Period of Threat of Trafficking Period of 'Vulnerability' to Trafficking	'Grooming' process Recruitment	Journey Transportation or Transfer	Harbouring or Receipt of Persons	Exploitation	Identification	Protection Possible Re-Trafficking	Integration *Em*placement Become or remain Undocumented Repatriation or Deportation