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Narrative exchange and intercultural encounter between forced migrants and receiving communities in Torino (Italy) and Edinburgh (Scotland).

Esa Aldegheri

Submitted in fulfilment of requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Education

School of Education
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Abstract

This thesis undertakes a comparative study of community education projects in Torino (Italy) and Edinburgh (Scotland) which use narrative exchange to facilitate intercultural encounter between people who are forced migrants and those from receiving communities. It investigates the effectiveness of narrative exchange as a tool for addressing, interpreting and challenging the dynamics of intercultural encounter and community integration in contemporary urban contexts.

The thesis presents a unique interdisciplinary contribution to academic debates around migration and integration, drawing on insights from social science combined with a narrative inquiry methodology and a deliberately narrative form. It addresses the epistemological tension between the qualitative, narrative-based work and knowledge embodied in community education projects and the more quantitative requirements of funding criteria which must be met to continue such work. Furthermore, it offers a series of practice-based findings and learnings intended as a resource of practical use in the field of community education.

Taking 'journey' as a founding metaphor, the thesis is cast in the form of a travel narrative moving through the phases of a PhD, the lives and stories of people and projects encountered, and processes of learning, unlearning and relearning. It is presented as a journey narrated through the voice of the researcher as traveller or wayfarer. The thesis employs qualitative research methods and is conducted multilingually, with maps and poetry occurring and recurring. Material is gathered through conversations and participant observation. Narrative inquiry is the overarching research methodology, employed to analyse material gathered and identify which types of narrative exchange can facilitate dialogical intercultural encounter in urban migratory contexts.

Prologue

Welcome. This is

a thesis exploring narrative exchange in the context of
forced migration and intercultural encounter, comparing
community education projects in Italy and Scotland

a story about people's stories and what happens when they meet

a journey among movements of people and languages

It is informed by my ongoing professional practice and my personal story. This is relevant not because this thesis is all about me, but because the experiences which have formed me also inform and influence the work I do and the text I weave to describe and discuss it. I am a woman of dual Italian and Scottish nationality, born of parents who met thanks to freedom of movement within Europe. Ancestors on both sides of my family migrated to escape hunger in Ireland and Italy and were able to make new lives in new places. From a young age being bilingual meant that I interpreted for various family members who did not understand each other.

For the past fifteen years I have worked as an educator and facilitator in community education projects, endeavouring to welcome forced migrants in Italy and Scotland. I have worked for small charities, community groups and arts organisations, facilitating and co-ordinating projects which specifically used narrative exchange as a basis for community educational and integration processes. From this work came the observations and questions which, eventually, led to the document you are reading now.

All these factors – these stories - have contributed to my positionality as a researcher and educator committed to facilitating dialogue and welcome in contexts of intercultural encounter and forced migration. Stories, journeys and maps are recurrent elements in this thesis, forming a large proportion of the

material encountered during fieldwork. They are also employed as narrative elements informing how the thesis is presented and structured, intended to help me, and the reader, move through the thesis without getting lost.

And now, off we go…

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I wish to dedicate this thesis to the memory and stories of my beloved Nonno,
Emilio Aldegheri.
We did not always agree on matters of migration; but he showed me
the power of stories, and taught me to
never, ever give up.

Nonno: calma e gesso, mai arrendersi!

Author's declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Printed Name: Esa (Elena) Aldegheri

Signature:

Glossary

During the course of this thesis certain words appear often, like recurring features in a landscape. Here I briefly clarify their meaning in the context of this thesis and offer a reflection on terminology.

Many of these words - migrant, refugee, local populations, receiving communities - are used to describe the people - or groups of people - whose stories and lives I encounter and describe. They are words which carry long histories and many connotations, both positive and negative. While we need words to use as shorthand for describing situations and experiences, it is important to acknowledge that when words become labels they are easily employed 'not only to describe the world but also to construct it in convenient images' (Zetter, 2007 p.173).

Who is doing the constructing? To whom are such images convenient? Paying attention to these questions will be important throughout this thesis; here I will begin by considering the uses of labels and definitions in forced migratory contexts of intercultural encounter. Frameworks and explanations are used by a wide range of actors - politicians and policy makers, activist and NGO workers and academics - to understand, define and respond to phenomena related to forced migration (Hanen 2018). In researching and writing this thesis, I position myself among these actors, while noting that the majority of reports, studies, books, definitions and frameworks regarding forced migration in a European context are made by people who are not themselves forced migrants. How can this thesis acknowledge this hegemony of labelling while also attempting to challenge it?

A start could be presenting
labels and lists
differently -
migrants, refugees, communities
at the heart
of a poem

on movement and meeting

O magari potrei presentare le parole nella lingua in cui sono pronunciate dalle persone che incontro, senza traduzione: per esempio,

يريت مش لازم البيت...

… but this is a thesis written within the academic traditions of an Anglophone European university. A specific type of referencing and clarification is required. Here, therefore, is a list of labels and explanations of how I use and understand them, in English - a glossary for the journey ahead.

Forced migrants

These are people who migrate because they have to - the alternative being a life unsustainable because of the dangers of war, hunger, persecution. This group includes, but is not limited to, **refugees -** people who are forced migrants and have been granted refugee status according to the Geneva convention (UNHCR 1951), in a country to which they have been forced to migrate – and **people seeking asylum,** who have applied for refugee status in a country to which they have been forced to migrate.

The use of different categories to describe people who are forced to migrate is a contested and politicised practice, predominantly based on dichotomies relating to the temporal, spatial and causal elements of migratory journeys (Collier & Haas 2012). Such dichotomies result in 'hard boundaries' drawn between different types of migrants, such as temporary versus permanent migrants and voluntary versus involuntary migrants (Robertson 2019, p. 222). Crawley & Skleparis argue that the categories of 'migrant' and 'refugee' are used to differentiate between the experiences of people migrating, and to define the relative legitimacy of their claims to international protection. They warn against the danger of tacitly accepting these categories and allowing them to become the basis of scholarly analysis: this would make researchers complicit in a process of categorisation which erodes the rights of refugees and migrants in Europe (Crawley & Skleparis 2018).

Categorising migrants according to who most deserves protection and welcome is absolutely not part of my work – but the labels, narratives and stories involved in this process are central to this thesis, because they contribute to the context in which intercultural encounter and narrative exchange occur. In order to question and contest the processes whereby European people label people forced to migrate here, I refer to people as 'forced migrants' if this corresponds to their experience, without defining them further unless they present or refer to themselves as 'refugees' or 'asylum seekers'. Sometimes people call themselves and others 'migrants', without further description; in such cases, I follow their lead and use the same term.

Receiving communities

I choose to use this term rather than 'local populations' or 'host countries / communities' due to the nebulous meanings of 'local' and the difficulties associated with the concept of 'host' and 'hospitality' as elaborated by Derrida (1999, 2005), Still (2013), Berg and Fiddian-Qasmieh (2018) and others, and discussed in more detail in section 1.2.

Intercultural encounter

'Encounter' here indicates an event which involves the meeting of two or more people, bringing together their respective stories and cultural expectations; an event which holds the potential for conflict and ambivalence (van Leeuwen 2008) as well as collaborations and unpredictable transformations (Tsing 2015) which can shift negative perspectives of the Other (Askins 2016).

The word 'intercultural' here refers to the encounter between two cultures or two languages across the political boundaries of nation-states, in agreement with Kramsh (1998, p. 81). It is also important to acknowledge that within one nation-state there are wide cultural variations between people from different geographical locations, religious and educational backgrounds as well as socioeconomic status and other factors.

In this thesis, intercultural encounter refers primarily to the encounter between people from receiving communities and people who were forced to migrate there.

Narrative

The term 'narrative' has been described as relating to cultural artefacts that tell a story (Bal 2009) and connected to the process of 'experiencing and thinking about the world, its structures, and its processes' (White, 2010, p. 274). Cultural and subjective perceptions of experience are an immediately obvious element of narrative understood in these terms. Other attempts to formally define the term state that a narrative is mainly about related events that occur in a certain temporal order (Walker, 2004; Hinchman and Hinchman, 1997). Gergen suggests that in Western European cultural traditions narratives provide a sense of explanation of events, and feature events in an order related to a linear conception of time (Gergen 2009).

In the context of this thesis, *narrative* refers to *a collection of culturally defined elements which relates to, is informed by and informs individual stories; but which exist on a broader, more abstract level than stories themselves*. A narrative can hold a broader sense of meaning without necessarily being a specific story: one example is 'the narrative of the grateful refugee' which includes a series of abstract elements (refuge as salvation; gratitude; appropriately appreciative behaviour) without needing to present a specific story of an individual who is a refugee and is grateful. Conversely, the individual story of the refugee Aeneas is part of an epic heroic narrative tradition. In this thesis, *story* can be understood as *an account of events which is related to specific protagonist(s) and setting(s); usually occurs in a linear time progression; involves personal experiences and change*.

I also acknowledge that many scholars do not seem to differentiate between story and narrative, as defined above. Squires (2008), for example, talks of narrative as being sequential and meaningful, related to human experience, and presenting transformation or change: this is very close to my understanding of story as presented above. While navigating definition of narrative and story, I am reminded of how Tsing writes about encountering 'a rush of troubles stories' and

experiencing them as a challenge to modern knowledge defined by the need for 'summing up' and 'grasping the whole in an equation' (Tsing, 2015 p. 34). This is a(nother) reminder not to get too bogged down in definitions, and to stay focussed on the wider scope of this thesis, which is concerned with…

Narrative exchange

I use this term to indicate a process whereby broader narratives and/or individual stories are exchanged during moments of intercultural encounter. Narrative exchange can involve 'generative themes' as described by Freire (Freire 2000, p.87), which facilitate dialogue and lead to a transformation of previously held perspectives on the Other (Tsing 2015). It can also involve conflict, expressing fear of the Other as stranger (Ahmed 2000), as a threat which must be eliminated (Mbembé 2001).

INTRODUCTION

Held in the moment of beginning to tell a story, placing the first pieces of a thesis, making the first word-steps of a journey, I pause, uncertain. Where and how to begin?

Begin with a story; a field text; a multilingual poem made during a moment of intercultural encounter and story exchange –

Words for love

The other day someone bumped into me
on Princes Street, it was, and then
they said, 'Sorry, hen!'
and I walked on, wondering
why here a hen is a kind thing
to call someone.

Although - I call my children 'lovely sheep'
when they are soft and gentle
this might sounds strange
but it is what we say.

I read about a love like a red rose
I learn the difference between love and like
I like coffee and tea and gardens where flowers grow
I love my husband, my family,
my children.

They are my greatest joy.
They mean the world to me.
I walked away from war
across the desert
for their future.

My love for them stretches
further than the sky -
ab'ad min al sama'

Beyindir min - my sheep.
Albee - my heart.
My eyes - *ah yoon ee*
Helw - sweet

We can speak Scottish now.
Our words for love are mixing up
into a new belonging.

Yesterday my son came home
and I said to him
'Hello *ya helw*'
and he smiled.

a poem by the Syrian Women's group, Edinburgh

'Words for Love' was formed in one of the places where fieldwork happened, during creative poetry workshops facilitated by myself with a group of Syrian women who have found sanctuary in Edinburgh. The poem and its making will be further discussed and analysed in section 4.2, but I present it here to foreground the words of research participants, as a counterbalance to the academic prose which comprises the majority of this document, and because it touches on many of the elements which are key to this thesis.

The poem starts by describing a moment of intercultural encounter between a person who is a forced migrant and a person from the receiving community. It reflects on an experience of narrative exchange centred around a shared experience: 'words for love', an exchange of endearments used in different languages and cultures. It shows the importance of languages in relation to intercultural encounter, story exchange and integration; and it presents stories and encounters as embodied in particular places. (Princes St, the desert, the home). These are all elements which are key to this thesis.

Beginnings and background of this thesis

The poem also points to the places where my research work began and continues to develop: my professional practice: the community education and integration projects which I have supported, facilitated or managed for the past fifteen years. They have all been run by community groups and small charities - not governmental or religious institutions. They have used different methods of narrative exchange to facilitate the encounter between people from forced migrant communities and receiving communities.

These projects all ‘worked’: narrative exchange was an effective pedagogical method for engendering positive outcomes such as increased levels of understanding, connection and dialogue. These positive outcomes often occurred at levels of interaction that, in their complexity and depth, went beyond foreseen or measurable project outcomes.

Tensions: catalysts for starting the research

I observed and experienced recurrent frustration due to the need to ‘prove’ what ‘worked’ so that existing projects could continue being funded or new ones could be funded. It often seemed that my colleagues and I were spending more time and energy trying to stay afloat by fundraising than actually doing our work. It also felt that the funding process was often hostile and overly competitive, featuring hurdles in the form of forms to complete, outcomes to measure and boxes to tick - which did not help to express or explain ‘what worked’. Positive outcomes, in our experience, were rooted in intercultural encounter, based on exchanges of personal, subjective experiences and narratives: nuanced, messy, informed by individual emotions and (hi)stories. These were difficult to express in the terminology required by funders’ forms, which were framed in the language of measurable, replicable, ‘objective’ metrics.

Having also served on the board of a trust providing grants to grassroots community projects, I understood some of the pressures faced by funders, such as the need to justify the allocation of resources and avoid corrupt practices. However, I was concerned by the dominance of funding systems which seemed based on positivist assumptions and neoliberal parameters of competition and scarcity, and the tension between these parameters and the working reality of the projects and individuals they purported to support.

Research aims and objectives: hopes for the journey

This thesis is born of observing and experiencing the tension described above, and from the desire to understand and challenge it constructively. By the end of this research journey I aim to have findings which support community education projects in communicating the value of their work to funders, and better understanding it themselves. To do this, my research explores and articulates the

influence of narrative exchanges in contexts of forced migration, intercultural encounter and community education: in other words, it investigates ‘what works’.

This is a journey which pursues three interlinked objectives:

Firstly, I will conduct comparative observations of community education and integration projects in Scotland and in Italy working in contexts of forced migration and intercultural encounter.

Secondly, it will employ narrative inquiry to investigate how the encounter between people in receiving communities and forced migrants can be facilitated through methods of narrative exchange.

Thirdly, my thesis will bridge the world of indicators required by funders and policy makers to prove a project’s worth, and the world of lived emotions and stories of intercultural encounter, by providing a resource of practical use in understanding and explaining ‘what works’.

Research questions: a compass to guide the work

The primary research question guiding my work is:

1. How does narrative exchange influence the intercultural encounter between forced migrant people and people from receiving communities?

I choose to use the verb ‘influence’ because I wish to avoid formulating a research question along the lines of ‘what is the role of narrative exchange in contexts of intercultural encounter between forced migrant people and people from receiving communities?’. My ongoing professional experience tells me that narrative exchange does indeed play a role - many roles, one of which is to influence encounter. I want to explore what this influence looks like - and what it looks like in different settings and with different kinds of narrative exchange. I want to compare these different settings and exchanges in order to answer the primary research question.

A second question derives from these considerations; an extension of the main question, helping to focus the comparative aspect of this thesis:

2. How do different kinds of narrative exchange influence such encounter?

I will hold these questions close as I move on: they will be like a compass to guide me along the way(faring).

Researcher positionality: where I stand and start from

This thesis engages specifically with the dynamics related to the encounter between receiving communities and forced migrants, positioning itself in the field of intercultural community education. It focuses on the point of encounter where individual people, and the stories they carry, meet in the reality of daily living. To find the best guides and tools for the research journey, I move between different disciplines: migration studies, multilingual and intercultural community education, ethnography and narrative studies. In this moving, my work and loyalties lie with the grassroots work of fostering intercultural dialogue through community education; and with the people forced to migrate to a new country, without seeking to justify why they migrate. I work from the premise that people will continue to move across borders seeking safety, as is their legal right under the Refugee Convention (UNHCR 1951).

More on journeys, maps and stories

Having clarified research background, aims and questions, I will now expand on journeys, stories and maps - first mentioned in the Prologue – which are present throughout this thesis as research material and as heuristic tools which help navigate this thesis, give it shape and contain the tensions which are part of its origins.

Journeys

The journey is an important notion in the human psyche, as well as being a key element in experiences of forced migration (Ben Ezer & Zetter, 2014). The concept of journey is a central metaphor underpinning this thesis in several ways. I

examine the journey which occurs during the dynamics of intercultural encounter: the movement of people towards each other, away from each other, between different cultures and languages. As part of my research, I examine how representations of forced migratory journeys in Europe are a key element of the socio-political context which then informs intercultural encounter between forced migrants and people in receiving communities.

During fieldwork I travel between Italy and Scotland and between languages, undertaking my research multilingually: using Italian and English, the two languages in which I am bilingual, and also Arabic and French. I choose to present the thesis itself as a type of academic travel narrative, further expanding the elements of journey and story by relating form to content as much as possible. 'Field texts' (Clandinin 2006, p. 47) include extracts from my research diary, presented as texts boxes in a font similar to typewritten writing to emphasise their difference from the finalised 'research text' (Clandinin 2006, p. 48) which is the thesis itself.

Maps

Maps are intertwined with journeys, and during fieldwork I observe them being used in different ways - as a metaphor, as a narrative tool and for orientation - by both receiving communities and people forced to migrate there. I analyse the use of mapping as one of the key narrative exchange tools observed, undertaking practice-based auto-ethnographic research on my own work and observing mapping projects run by others. I also critique the ways in which the use of maps and map-making in contexts of forced migration into Europe can perpetuate power dynamics rooted in patterns of European colonial domination, replicating narratives of othering which then negatively impact intercultural encounter.

Throughout this thesis I draw on the language and imagery of mapping and travel, to clarify the structure and elements of this thesis and attempt to draw the many paths relevant to its journey into a format that can be navigated with clarity. I do not turn to maps as a cartographer, but rather approach them as representations and metaphors - vehicles for stories - as part of a narrative inquiry approach.

Stories

Stories occur and recur during this thesis in multiple ways: as 'data' gathered during fieldwork, as scholarly writings to guide and direct my research, as motivations to keep going when things unravel. I lean on the metaphor of stories / yarns as yarn: stories as threads which are woven throughout the thesis, resurfacing and connecting in unexpected ways; stories like Ariadne's thread, guiding me when the journey becomes a labyrinth; yarns which sometimes weave together beautifully and sometimes unravel.

Thesis Overview

This thesis develops in three parts, articulated as three key stages of a journey. Part one involves preparing (getting ready for fieldwork, gathering information from the scholarship of others). Part two describes travelling (the journey of investigation which is called fieldwork). Part three deals with arriving, after fieldwork, at a place where I can present findings, learnings and conclusions.

Part One - Preparing

This explores the work of other scholars, much as a traveller consults relevant maps and accounts made by others before a journey. Part 1 is divided into three chapters.

Chapter 1 presents an overview of contributions from literature which inform and challenge my research. I liken it to selecting wise guides to help me prepare and conduct my research journey. This scholarship is drawn from migration studies, intercultural and multilingual education studies, narrative studies and ethnography. Here I discuss which epistemological and theoretical framework best guide me through my thesis.

In Chapter 2 I present the context in which my research takes place - scoping out the landscapes through which the journey moves. This takes us from an overview of forced migration in Europe to national contexts in Italy and Scotland, and then to the cities of Torino and Edinburgh where fieldwork takes place. I focus in particular on representations of three stages of forced migration - journey, arrival

and integration - as significant cultural and political narratives which inform the context in which intercultural encounters between forced migrants and receiving communities occur.

Over the course of Chapter 3 I explain my choice of narrative inquiry as methodology. I then explore the practical implications of this methodological choice in relation to the research methods employed in my fieldwork. I also consider the ethical implications and commitments which arise from working in contexts of forced migration where dynamics of power, status and language are significant.

Part Two - Travelling

The second part of this thesis presents the journey of fieldwork with its encounters, stories, observations, experiences. This part is also divided into three chapters.

Chapter 4 examines the places where intercultural encounter occurs in contexts of welcome and solidarity. I observe how different community groups and projects engage with narrative exchange in these places and identify themes of significance in light of the research questions. One of these themes is the recurrence of map-making and mapping as a way to exchange stories. It becomes clear that maps constitute a significant element in my research, and the need to investigate this further this leads to a

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- an interruption to the expected journey, where I choose to take an unplanned path and pursue a deeper understanding of questions related to cartography. I do this in Chapter 5, which interrogates scholarship concerning the use of maps,

mapping and map-making in contexts of forced migration and intercultural encounter.

This provides the grounding for Chapter 6 where I present observations of projects encountered during fieldwork, where maps are used as a method of narrative exchange to facilitate intercultural encounter, incorporating representation of places and the experience of people in Torino and Edinburgh.

Chapter 7 discusses what happens when intercultural encounter is conflictual, and narrative exchange does not facilitate dialogue. I observe encounter and conflict in Torino and in Edinburgh, identifying themes that relate to those observed in the previous two chapters. This leads to the conclusion of Part 2.

Part Three - arriving

This final section is articulated as an account after the 'travelling' part of this thesis-journey, presented in two chapters.

Chapter 8 examines recurrent themes of significance from Part Two, analysing them in the light of considerations and literature from Part One. Here I present learnings which stem from these themes and respond to the research questions which guided the thesis.

In Chapter 9 I summarise the contributions of this research journey and consider possible future directions for my work.

The thesis concludes with a non-conclusion, in the sense that I review what has been observed and learned throughout the journey and then acknowledge that this research is not over: it is already evolving into new questions, hopes and suggestions for 'where to next'.

Structures, interruptions and unravelling

Many times as
the road went ever on and on
I felt completely lost, my bearings
shifting
too fast, too far.
The paths seemed to spiral and loop, back
to the beginning or forward across unforeseen

mountains;
the stories coiled, twisted, un
ravelled.

The above is an extract from my research diary, written in Italy after a particularly long and challenging day of fieldwork. It also stands for how I sometimes felt at the early stages of the literature review, and in the final stages of writing up. It is presented here because lostness, messiness and vulnerability became key to how this thesis evolved and to its findings. These concepts are further discussed in section 1.2.1, with reference to the work of Butler (2011), Phipps and Gonzales (2004) and others, and as part of research findings in chapter 7.

What is relevant at this point is that feeling lost - casting about for direction and support when it seemed my research was unravelling - led me to appreciate the formal requirements and structures of the traditional academic thesis as helpful aids in re-ravelling: many unexpected twists and interruptions occurred during the course of this research, just as they do in everyday life, especially for people forced to migrate into new lives. I have turned to the formal structures of an academic thesis as a skeleton-map to cling to in times of interruption and uncertainty, and as a blueprint of how to tell a story of research and finding. I employ these structures, following the normative patterns of how a thesis is shaped, in order to best present this narrative. However, I break with normative

patterns of how a thesis is worded, drawing from the traditions of travel narrative to express the experiences and encounters at the heart of this research journey. I do this by drawing on different writing genres and languages, as explained below.

On poetry

This thesis incorporates poetry as a form of text which is able to present (and represent) many of the emotional realities of intercultural encounter in migratory contexts – this occurs especially in section 4.1. Poems also facilitate reflexive autoethnographic expression of my experience as a researcher on this road. Poetry as a research method is discussed in further in section 3; it is also presented as a finding in Chapter 8.

Chapters and sections open with poems, quotes from conversations had with research participants, or quotes from scholars who have helped guide my research. The poems are mostly written by research participants or by myself as part of my 'field texts' (Clandinin 2006:47). Each quote is connected to the thematic elements explored in the section or chapter, with the rationale behind their selection and ordering explained as we meet them.

On languages and translations

As noted above, conversations during fieldwork mainly moved between Italian, English and Arabic. All translations into English are my own, unless otherwise indicated, and are written between square brackets to differentiate them from parentheses. If Arabic words are transliterated into English, they are written in italics; so are Italian words. While acknowledging that the practice of italicising languages other than English is problematic, in that it risks presenting English as the normative default language while othering other languages by making them visibly different, I choose to use italics. It will be *più facile* [easier] to use this نظام *nizām* [system] for the reader following this multilingual journey without my prior knowledge of who said what in which language.

PART ONE - PREPARING

Caminante, son tus huellas
el camino y nada más;
Caminante, no hay camino,
se hace camino al andar.
[…]

Traveller, your footprints
are the way and nothing else;
Traveller, there is no way,
we make the way by going.
[…]

From *Caminante, no hay camino*
by Antonio Machado (Machado 1912)

The many possibilities inherent in the first step in any journey - like the blank pages to be filled with a thesis - are both exciting and daunting. Antonio Machado's famous walking poem, quoted above, begins by telling the traveller that there is no path other than our footsteps, the way which we make as we go. While this lack of predetermined paths may bring a sense of freedom, in this particular journey my footsteps follow those of scholars who have explored issues related to this thesis before me. To go well on the road ahead I must listen to their words. This first part of the thesis, therefore, prepares for journeying through the places and encounters of fieldwork by conducting a review of theoretical and empirical literature – following those footsteps.

Chapter 1 - Guides: a review of theoretical and empirical literature

The chapter begins by considering the epistemological and theoretical perspectives which best help me conduct my research (section 1.1). I then interrogate scholarship on relevant aspects of intercultural encounter (section 1.2) and consider the importance of narrative and language for research such as this (section 1.3). Finally, I consider the key role of place in contexts of forced migration, specifically in relation to intercultural encounter and narrative exchange (section 1.4). Throughout, theoretical literature is integrated with relevant empirical work, with the aim of showing the scholarship which informs and supports my work as well as identifying where this thesis can contribute to an ongoing scholarly conversation.

1.1 Epistemology and theoretical perspectives

> … knowledge is acquired 'along paths of movement', growing into it 'by following trails' (Ingold 2011 p. 143).

At first, trying to identify the epistemology and theoretical perspectives which inform and support my research felt like an obstacle in the way of my movement towards doing, towards being amidst the conversations and encounters of fieldwork - a bit like a swamp, slowing me down. Conversations with colleagues helped me to realise that this was a healthy and necessary struggle, a slowing-down which was part of the journey and helped me reach a balance so that my thesis could be grounded in both academic discourse and community-based practice. As Catrin Evans writes, describing her own struggles with epistemological requirements: 'when grappling with one's identity as researcher, a fundamental tension emerges as one shifts between discourses' (Evans 2021:76)

Tension: again that word, that concept, that feeling. A clue. What epistemological and theoretical frameworks acknowledge tensions and are helpful for research concerned with narrative and its influence on intercultural encounter? Identifying and selecting epistemological and theoretical perspectives might be akin to finding the most relevant bureaucratic papers which define which kind of traveller-researcher I am, following Crotty's definition of epistemology as 'a way of knowing, understanding and explaining 'how we know what we know' '(Crotty, 1998: 3).

So. Another deep breath. What do I know? This: central to this thesis is narrative exchange - the encounter of different people and their stories; the dialogue between these stories; different (re)interpretation of stories in and from different cultural perspectives; the influence of wider social and political narratives on this encounter. It would be problematic and difficult to conduct this research within a positivist, objectivist epistemology: personal interpretations of reality and experience do not fit well with parameters of knowledge which presumed 'a stable external social reality that can be recorded by a stable, objective, scientific observer' (Denzin, 1997, p.31).

I therefore operate from within a subjectivist epistemology, a choice followed by many other researchers in the field of migration studies (Iosifides, 2018). Such a statement now feels easy: what was all the fuss about, back at the swamp? Obviously this thesis should be underpinned by subjectivist epistemology. The work of Tim Ingold brings further confirmation of this path, in particular his interpretation of the researcher as a 'wayfarer' (Ingold 2011, p.12), with both researcher and research operating in an ongoing journey of becoming. According to this perspective, travelling along paths of research and observation is as important as arriving at a destination: 'along such paths, lives are lived, skills developed, observations made and understandings grown.' (Ibid.)

This affirmation of journey as a foundational metaphor for research work also helps me move towards working out a belonging: I am one of the company of scholars - as described by Ingold in the opening quote to this section - who recognise that research is a journey, and the researcher is a wayfarer whose

knowledge is acquired 'along paths of movement', growing into it 'by following trails' (Ingold 2011 p. 143).

Onwards along the trail then, towards the thicket of theoretical perspectives which rooted in a subjectivist epistemology. I am conducting a study that moves between languages and locations, and between groups of people whose lives are defined by external realities of immigration and socioeconomic status. It is therefore important that I operate within theoretical frameworks which emphasise the role and importance of individual agency within social structures, but also recognise the weight of those social structures are an important element of research in migratory settings: there are factors and causal elements beyond individual agency - such as material and economic needs and social power asymmetries - which cannot be ignored (Elder-Vass 2012).

Critical pedagogical theory, as explored in section 1.2, helps me to understand and address both agency and social structure, the tension and interaction between the two, as well as the power dynamics which derive from this tension. The concept of radical openness developed by hooks (2010) is particularly relevant to my research with community education projects who work towards mutual openness between people from different cultural backgrounds. It is also key to being a researcher who is open to learning and shifts in knowledge as the research-journey progresses.

Karen O'Reilly puts forward a strong argument for practice theory as a useful theoretical framework within which migration research can admit both the importance of individual agency in shaping perspectives and choices, and the power that structures (political, socioeconomic, cultural and psychological) have in influencing individual stories and perspectives. She presents practice theory as a framework that 'perceives social life as the outcome of the interaction of structures (of constraints and opportunities) and actions (of individuals and groups who embody, shape and form these structures) in the practice of daily life' (O'Reilly 2012, p. 7).

These theoretical perspectives are useful; but what can specifically address the centrality of narrative to this thesis? The work of Ingold on ethnography,

knowledge and story presents narrative exchange as a key way in which humans form and impart knowledge:

> ‘People grow in knowledge not only through direct encounter with others, but also through hearing their stories told. To tell a story is to *relate*, in narrative, the occurrences of the past, bringing them to life in the vivid present of listeners as if they were going on here and now (Ingold 2011 p. 161, italics in original).

The focus on story leads me to scholarship on narrative inquiry, where I read that ‘Simply put, narrative inquiry is the study of experience understood narratively’ (Lessard et al. 2018 p.194), with experience understood as a ‘phenomenon under study’ (Connelly and Clandinin 2006, 375). Here is an acknowledgement of encounter as influenced by transformative narrative exchange; a focus on relationality, not only between people and stories but between events from the past and the present. Here is a way of knowing which I can identify as relevant and appropriate to this thesis.

A theoretical perspective which encompasses such a way of knowing might be called a phenomenology of narrative, grounded in ‘the phenomenological assumption that meaning is ascribed to phenomena through being experienced and, furthermore, that we can only know something about other people’s experiences from the expressions they give them’ (Eastmond 2007 p. 249).

My research journey-bag now contains bureaucratic papers which situate this thesis within a subjectivist epistemology, underpinned by a theoretical perspective identified as a phenomenology of narrative. I will further explore narrative inquiry as a research methodology in chapter 3; now, however, I will move on to consider scholarship on intercultural encounter.

1.2 Intercultural encounter

> ‘We are contaminated by our encounters; they change who we are as we make way for others’ (Tsing 2015, p. 27).

I am investigating how narrative exchange ‘works’ to facilitate intercultural encounter in contexts of forced migration; but what is meant by intercultural

encounter? In this section I explore scholarship which can help me answer that question. I discuss the work of those investigating dialogue and encounter in contexts of education, because this thesis focuses on community education projects as sites of intercultural encounter and narrative exchange. I interrogate scholarship on 'othering' related to dynamics of forced migration and integration. I also consider critiques of the concepts of hospitality and welcome as relevant to this thesis.

1.2.1 Encounter, contamination and culture

This section opens with a quote from Tsing, who posits encounter as transformative disruption (Tsing 2015 p. 27). She interprets contamination as a positive factor which arises from encounter and is intrinsically connected to collaboration: 'Collaboration means working across difference, which leads to contamination. Without collaborations, we all die' (Tsing 2015 p. 27). Encounter, collaboration, contamination and transformation are presented as essential and desirable elements of our interactions as humans. Tsing writes this in the context of exploring interactions in situations of post-capitalist degradation; I work in the context of exploring interactions in situations of post-colonial disruption. This disruption occurs both in the lives of people forced to migrate from formerly colonised countries in the South of the world, and in the lives of people in receiving European countries which were historically colonising powers.

Askins confirms the significance of disruptive, difficult interactions as part of intercultural encounter, in her work on the negotiations of difference during the interactions between people seeking sanctuary and receiving communities in a befriending scheme in Newcastle (Askins 2016). These negotiations are often difficult, but Askins argues that it is exactly at this emotional level of interaction, in the complexities of negotiation, where 'intercultural encounter as process' (Askins 2016, p. 519) most allows for transformative encounters which allow people to 'discover each other as multifaceted and interdependent'(Askins 2016, p. 525).

In line with Tsing's description of encounter as having unpredictable outcomes, it is important to note that the reality of intercultural encounters features many

emotions, including the affective ambivalence identified by van Leeuwen as part of living with cultural diversity, whereby fascination and fear regarding the unfamiliar are closely related feelings (van Leeuwen 2008). The word 'encounter' derives from the Latin 'in' (meaning towards, or in front of) and 'contra' (meaning 'against'). Etymologically, the original interpretation of the word implies implying conflict, a clash of adversaries. While the current use of the word 'encounter' has evolved from the original connotation of adversarial confrontation, in the context of this research I observe intercultural encounters which lead to dialogue and facilitate positive experiences of integration (in chapter 4), but also intercultural encounters which involve conflict (in chapter 7).

There are at least two sides to each encounter, and the 'danger of a single story' as expressed by Adichie (2009) lies in the elision of all but one side, one perception, one truth. In the context of intercultural encounter this does not lead to integration or dialogue but to the erasure of stories and cultural perspectives. When we talk of 'intercultural' encounter, the prefix 'inter' implies something that happens between two parts - a dialectic movement, an exchange. In this kind of event, culture is not relegated to a 'shadowy domain of symbolic meaning, hovering aloof from the hands-on business of practical life' (Ingold 2000:361), but is a critical element of the exchange. Culture is an intrinsic part of people's lives; it informs what they bring to intercultural encounter.

The centrality of culture to intercultural communication is confirmed by Hollidays' *Understanding intercultural communication: Negotiating a grammar of culture* (2019), which interprets the key role of culture within intercultural communication in terms of a 'grammar of culture', represented as different domains which interact with each other in the context of intercultural communication and encounter. While not specifically situated in migratory contexts, Holliday's book refers to the concepts of dialogue and the negotiation of identity and belonging – with culture as critical to this negotiation as language is to speaking. In their research on Syrian refugees in Turkey, Rottman and Kaya (2021) show the deep significance of maintaining cultural identity and of developing culturally informed social networks, in that these contribute to creating a sense of being at home for refugees, to the extent of influencing processes of decision making in terms of onward movement and resettlement.

Bourdieu (1991) observes that all social relations are symbolic interactions, instances of communication that imply cognition and recognition within a shared cultural frame of reference. Recognising symbols and their meaning is a key element to shared understanding of stories and their implications; in this sense, culture takes on significance as an element within intercultural encounter which is unseen but powerful in how it influences communication. Bourdieu also speaks of misrecognition. By this he means the unspoken rules which are shared within a community, even though people may pretend that they do not exist and hold them at subconscious level collectively and individually; one example is the various rules surrounding the giving and receiving or reciprocating of gifts. In contexts of intercultural encounter and forced migration, Arora-Jonsson (2017) takes the example of refugee integration practices in rural Sweden to show how awareness of Bourdieu's misrecognition can help shed a critical light on racialised dynamics within practices of resettlement, and open up radical critiques of power relations in this context.

Askins reflects on power relations and, more widely, interpersonal and intercultural relationships and states that 'Meaningful encounter is broadly understood as interactions that shift entrenched, largely negative versions of the 'other' ' (Askins 2016, p.4). But what can help facilitate this shift in perspective?

1.2.2 Intercultural encounter, dialogue and community education

The projects observed during fieldwork are run by third-sector organisations who position themselves as community education and development projects; while this thesis draws on different scholarly disciplines, it is positioned as a contribution to the work of intercultural education within community contexts. I will therefore now interrogate scholarship related to education, and in particular community education, where the shift in perspective described above by Askins (2016, p.4) is central to transformative practice.

When reading and thinking about educational practices that seek to achieve transformation through encounter mediated dialogue, the work of Freire is foundational. Freire considers dialogue as central to transformative educational

practice, defining it as 'the encounter between [people], mediated by the world, in order to name the world' (Freire, 2000, p. 69). He goes on to claim that 'dialogue imposes itself as the way by which [people] achieve significance as human beings' (ibid). Dialogue, then, is seen by Freire as one of the central human processes of becoming, a way in which people can define the self in relation to others and to a community, and a tool for social change (Freire, 2000).

Freire's critical pedagogy model describes dialogue taking place in classroom contexts, with teachers and students engaging in dynamics of knowledge occurring in a learning environment which is cooperative and participatory - not a traditional 'top-down' model of education where the teacher speaks and the students listen. The teaching approach and the learning environment must be modelled in such a way as to structurally reflect a critique of authority, so that this critical pedagogy has its beginning and its centre in 'the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers and students' (Freire 2000 p. 53).

Problem-posing is a practice which Freire considers as key to transformative education, with teachers engaging alongside students to contribute to - but not steer or dominate - discussion (Freire, 2005). Dialogue is central to this problem-posing process. Freire suggests that 'transformation... must be conducted through utilizing dialogue between the oppressed and those who support them in solidarity' (Freire, 2000, p. 87). As well as support, dialogue must be an act based on respect for different knowledges, so that what develops is a learning community working in cooperation rather than one person speaking with authority over others. This form of dialogue is set against what Freire calls the 'banking education' model which takes place in schools, according to which teachers 'deposit' knowledge in students without any negotiation or dialogue. (Freire, 2000, p. 71).

Freire's scholarship has been interpreted around the world and adapted in many ways to local cultural circumstances (Corbett & Guilherme 2021). Ibesh et al (2021) use Freire's framing of oppressors and facilitators in education to investigate how the ongoing Syrian conflict has impacted on the education of Syrian women who are refugees. Magee and Pherali (2019) argue that critical

pedagogical practices based on Freire's work offer an alternative model for Syrian refugees in Jordan engaging with the complexities of negotiating conflict, peace and resettlement. Freire is similarly helpful to my work in a European migratory context because of his analysis of the key role dialogue plays in transformative educational practices, of his focus on issues related to social dynamics of power and domination and his concept of critical consciousness. This is a process whereby individuals achieve in-depth understanding of their world and their place within it, as well as awareness of - and then the ability to analyse - social, cultural and political contradictions (Freire, 1976). Critical consciousness is the catalyst which enables people to take action against forces and systems which oppress them. It is a central element to education practices which seek to question the status quo and engage in bringing about change, such as Bagelman's work creating an anti-colonial pedagogy for children's picturebooks in Canada (Bagelman, 2015). We will see how these Freirean concepts are relevant to the world of the community education projects observed during fieldwork in Part 2, and how they frame the learnings and conclusions presented in Part 3.

However, there are areas in which Freire's scholarship is less helpful. His writing is informed by the political climate of Brazil, concerned with the disenfranchisement of the lower classes, and his conceptualisation of critical consciousness is strongly derived from Marx's concept of class consciousness. However, the people I encounter who are forced migrants, in Italy and Scotland, are oppressed and disenfranchised because of their acquired social status in receiving countries where they face precarity, hostile bureaucratic processes and other socioeconomic obstacles (Wyss 2019). Many interlocutors told me that they came from professional, economically comfortable backgrounds - and, indeed, this was part of the reason they had to leave their country. Lawyers, journalists, teachers all had to flee because their professional activities meant they were a threat to oppressive regimes. Their social class of origin influenced their expectations and attitudes regarding education and work, as described in Leo's study of social class and educational expectations among refugees in the USA (Leo 2020). The Freirean understanding of oppresses lower social classes does not work here; but the concept of critical consciousness is still valid and relevant when applied to other systems of oppression such as racism and the structural legacies of colonialism.

The dynamics of transformation through educational practices based on dialogue is an important pedagogical point where my work meets, and is enriched by, Freire's writings. Another is the use of what Freire calls 'generative themes' to stimulate meaningful dialogue (Freire, 2000 p.87). These are themes which generate dialogue because they reflect shared aspects of students' lives. Freire states that a generative theme has the ability to engage people in reflection and dialogue around their shared lived experiences, and can lead to the development of critical consciousness (ibid). All the projects observed during fieldwork make use of generative themes - although, as we will see, conflict is also generated as well as dialogue.

Conflict is another point where Freire's work is not a useful guide to me: what about dialogue between communities who - in different ways - see themselves as oppressed by each other? Dialogue between communities who do not start from a standpoint of mutual respect and support, who come to the encounter with very different perspectives and stories? What about situations in which education takes place community settings, away from the classroom, in community groups or public places?

The work of bell hooks helps me negotiate these different parameters. In particular, her presentation of engaged and embodied pedagogical practice offers an understanding of education which empowers learners by focussing on what brings them excitement and pleasure in learning. In 'Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom' (1994), hooks argues that this kind of education empowers and liberates people when it provides them with tools to transgress oppressive conceptions of race, class and gender. While she builds on Freire's anti-hierarchical approaches to teaching, her understanding of oppression is much more intersectional than Freire's and helps to interpret material gathered during fieldwork where a variety of power, race, gender and class dynamics are at play. Furthermore, the way hooks uses personal anecdotes when describing contexts of education and disenfranchisement resonates with the practice-based element of this thesis.

Embodied pedagogy is also particularly relevant in contexts of intercultural encounter where generative themes are often those most closely related to the body - that common currency which all participants in a learning community bring with them, as discussed by Frimberger (2013), and which is often the only tangible thing that has come with forced migrants to their new country. This is illustrated in the work of Evans (2020), who also draws on hook's scholarship in her artistic practice developed with people who are forced migrants in Glasgow.

Hooks helps to ground the concept of education in a wider sense: while she often writes about traditional classroom settings, she also addresses community education contexts much more similar to the ones where my fieldwork takes place. With strong roots in Freire's work, hooks develops the concept of oppression and critical consciousness and presents her thoughts in terms of dominator / dominant / dominated cultures, and explicitly links education practices with community:

> 'Dominator culture has tried to keep us all afraid, to make us choose safety instead of risk, sameness instead of diversity. Moving through that fear, finding out what connects us, reveling in our differences; this is the process that brings us closer, that gives us a world of shared values, of meaningful community[...] To build community requires vigilant awareness of the work we must continually do to undermine all the socialization that leads us to behave in ways that perpetuate Domination' (hooks, 2003, p. 197).

Her approach to critical pedagogy also recommends adopting practices which are flexible, open to review and to change (hooks, 1994). This is helpful in considering methodologies that need to operate within the different tensions and contexts which this thesis describes.

1.2.3 Intercultural encounter and Other(ing)

In the context of forced migration into Europe, the term 'contamination' - considered a positive element by Tsing (2015) - is often negatively loaded with references to the rhetoric of racial and ethnic purity so often employed by xenophobic, anti-immigrant individuals and groups such as, in Italy, the *Lega Nord* or *Fratelli d'Italia* (D'Alimonte 2019). This links to the representations of migratory journeys as a threat discussed in chapter 2.

The image below illustrates the interplay of political discourse with narratives of the (migrant, dark-skinned) Other as a threatening contamination:

Fig. 1: electoral poster, Torino. Photograph by author.

It is a photo I took of an election poster in Torino, during my fieldwork. The candidate’s name is Marrone, meaning Brown. He is standing for Fratelli d’Italia - Brothers of Italy - a right-wing party with a consistently xenophobic electoral manifesto (Vercesi 2021). The text underneath Marrone’s portrait literally translates as: ‘You’ve already seen all sorts of colours - vote safely - write Brown at the regional elections’. ‘Di tutti i colori’ does not mean ‘all sorts of colours’ in

a kaleidoscopic, rainbow sense: rather it means 'all sorts', usually with a negative connotation. The unwritten meaning, the subtext, is therefore more accurately rendered as, 'You've already seen all sorts of coloured people around here - vote safely and for safety - write Brown at the regional elections (because he is the right shade of pale Italian brown and he will send all the other colours away)'.

I cannot aim to understand the role of narrative exchange in intercultural encounter without investigating wider cultural narratives wherein fear - of the Other, the stranger (Ahmed 2000) - is an emotion of significance in relation to intercultural encounter. In the Glossary I outlined how labels like 'refugee' and 'migrant' are used and managed in the context of settlement and integration (Penninx 2000) and as part of political discourse on migration which categorises in order to determine who is deserving of protection (Crawley & Skleparis 2018). Labelling, then, is closely linked to the processes of categorising humans that is referred to as 'othering', as seen in the not-so-subtle messaging of the above electoral poster where dark-skinned Others are equated with dangerous contamination. Mbembé writes about the difficulties experienced by Western traditions in encountering people from Africa, and generally non-Europeans:

> 'The experience of the Other, or *the problem of the 'I' of others and of human beings we perceive as foreign to us*, has almost always posed virtually insurmountable difficulties to the Western philosophical and political tradition. Whether dealing with Africa or with other non-European worlds, this tradition long denied the existence any 'self' but its own' (Mbembé 2001 p.2; italics in original)

Mbembé also critiques the attitude whereby to perceive the Other as a person with needs that are real and different to mine is interpreted as 'a moral threat or absolute danger'; eliminating the threat posed by the Other 'would strengthen my potential to life and security' (Mbembé 2001 p.18). Such attitudes are key elements in narratives and policies which present forced migrants as dangerous threat – and, as discussed in Chapter 2 they are increasingly prevalent in UK and Italian political discourse. The party which Mr. Marrone represent - Fratelli d'Italia, which is also first phrase of the Italian national anthem - is just one of the nationalist right-wing parties whose main political strategy is to establish relationships of power whereby the Other (in this case the black or brown migrant) is vilified to define and strengthen those who belong (Hall 1989). Such dynamics

of othering are significant in the context of this thesis because of the types of encounters to which they contribute: we will see some manifestations of this fear of the Other in Chapter 7, where I present intercultural encounters which feature conflict.

Bourdieu provides useful conceptual tools to understand how dominant discourses - such as right-wing xenophobia - are produced and reproduced in society. He describes the opposition between the dominant and dominated as being 'the most fundamental opposition within the social order' (Bourdieu 1979 p.469) and draws attention to how language which features dichotomies serves to reinforce these oppositions. This significance of dichotomies within social and cultural constructs of power and control is also present in hook's understanding of 'dominator culture' as being based on fear, so that people 'choose safety instead of risk, sameness instead of diversity' (hooks 2003, p. 197). The discourse around legal/illegal migrants relates to, and is used to reinforce, these dichotomies. Of particular relevance to this thesis is the use of fear and related processes of Othering within narratives and stories related to forced migration in Europe, as further discussed in chapter 2 and observed during fieldwork in chapter 7.

Bourdieu's theories around habitus also provide an analytical framework to interpret the dynamics of intercultural encounter in contexts of forced migration. He explains habitus as system of internalised structures, ways of perceiving the world and ways of acting which are common to all people in the same social group or social class (Bourdieu 1979; 1990a; 1990b). When somebody is forced to migrate to a place where their habitus does not fit with the majority - such as in the case of a person forced to migrate to Scotland from Syria - there is a 'clash' of habitus (Fassetta 2011 p.83).

1.2.4 Encounter, welcome and hospitality

Clashes and misrecognition may occur - but what about intercultural encounters which instead involve dynamics of welcome? In this section I interrogate scholarship which can help me conceptualise such dynamics in order to better understand how narrative exchange can facilitate them. I find helpful answers by

first investigating critiques of hospitality - a concept and practice closely linked to welcome.

The word 'host' is in itself problematic, as is the concept of 'hospitality'. Derrida (2005) writes critically of the lines of hierarchy and power between host and guest which are often unspoken but imply a relationship where the guest must be unquestioningly grateful to the host, the person who maintains the position of sovereignty as the purveyor of hospitality in his or her home. This is conditional hospitality, based on the acceptance of specific terms and conditions - whether political, judicial or moral - by which guests must abide if hospitality is to be continued. Derrida contrasts this conditional hospitality with the concept of absolute, unlimited or unconditional hospitality: this asks the host to provide hospitality to a person arriving in their home irrespective of who they are and without conditions or restrictions. While the law of unconditional hospitality is often proposed as a moral good and is commanded by many of the world's religions, culturally determined conditions are often enacted to mediate between the absolute moral imperative of unconditional hospitality and the reality of human encounter and interaction. In this process, unconditional hospitality is transmuted into a framework of rights and duties, which can be more or less reciprocal depending on the power dynamics between host and guest.

Informed by postcolonial perspectives, Still (2013) discussed Derrida's conceptualisations and highlights the ways in which hospitality it is both a concept universally accepted as positive and a practice linked to forms of exclusion and repression. These ideas relate to the discussion of narratives surrounding migratory arrival and integration in chapter 2, with gratitude expected as one of the strings attached for inclusion (Ortlieb et al. 2019) - part of an underlying rhetoric of anticipated gratitude (Healy, 2014) which has significant impacts on intercultural encounter.

Berg and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2018) also critique hospitality, particularly in contexts of forced migration, drawing attention to how practices of hospitality and hostility are all rooted in particular contexts. They suggest a series of questions: 'Who has or assumes the right to act as host, in what contexts, and on what social grounds? Who is recognized as guest, and who is turned away, by whom, and on what

grounds?' (Berg and Fiddian-Qasmieh 2018, p.3). There are very similar to the questions which consider narratives surrounding forced migration and asking whose stories are told and heard, by whom, and for whose benefit. They are all questions centred around issues of agency, voice and power, and are worth noting as recurrent ones in this thesis so far.

According to models of integration based on assimilation, forced migrants are also expected to renounce their cultural heritage in order to integrate to the receiving society: an example of conditional hospitality, where the duty of the forced migrant is to change, as a price to pay for being granted the rights and citizenship. Two-way models of integration shift the balance, so that receiving and migrant communities both have duties as well as rights. This is not unconditional hospitality, but it its conditions are distributed in such a way as to make power dynamics more equal: both host and guest have duties; both can contribute and be grateful for what the other offers.

Phipps and Barnett (2007) explicitly link hospitality to travelling and crossing borders, as a journey from the cultural word of the hosts to that of those welcomed. This journey is not always an easy one, and Boudou (2012) highlights the potentially destabilising effect that hospitality can bring to the host person or culture. In this sense, the practice of hospitality is also a risk, a situation whereby the presence of a new arrival from a different culture (the guest) can provoke shifts in established hierarchies and transform the host and the host's social system and community through intercultural encounter. I have witnessed this sort of shift in perception in my work, and it is intimately connected to the concept of affective hospitality as the basis for pedagogies of transformation (Zembylas 2019). This concept is built on by Imperiale, Phipps and Fassetta (2021) who, in writing about practices of online intercultural academic hospitality, explore ways in which both affective and material dimensions of hospitality are key to transformative practices of reciprocal education.

While not all hospitality is welcoming, then, welcome does involve elements of hospitality. I am reaching an understanding of welcome as an approach to intercultural encounter which is *limitedly* conditional. It is aware of conditions, whereby duties and rights are equally of host and guest; and it accepts the

benefits of dialogue as well as the possibility of mutual transformation by 'contamination' as described by Tsing (2015) at the start of this section. On the other hand, if conditions of hospitality imply one-sided dynamics of power within the intercultural encounter, then the likelihood of welcome which is open to mutual transformation decreases: the encounter becomes a conditional transaction, where terms are so rigidly defined as to preclude unexpected transformation.

1.3 Narrative, story and language

This section engages with empirical and theoretical scholarship around narrative and multilingual, decolonising research in migratory contexts, seeking insights to inform my investigation of narrative exchange which facilitates intercultural dialogue.

1.3.1 Narrative and story in contexts of forced migration and intercultural encounter

Stories are a way in which daily life is understood, interpreted and explained; Inglis and Thorpe (2012, p. 17) define the telling of stories as an 'overarching, everyday life phenomenon'. Tordzo writes that storytelling and story are 'anchors' for our thoughts, the things that we fall back on to help us with 'grasping and grappling with the lived experience of life encounters in the moment' (Tordzo 2019 p. 62). Phipps, too, talks of the importance of stories that are 'ordinary' and 'start in the quick of human relatedness' (Phipps 2006). This quotidian dimension is critical in contexts of intercultural encounter and forced migration when even the most everyday action, like making a cup of coffee, holds depths of cultural and personal significance, as shown throughout Part Two of this thesis. Ahmed calls stories of migration 'skin memories: memories that are felt on the skin' (Ahmed, 2000: 92); Said refers to the experience of exile itself as a story (Said, 2000).

Stories, then, are embodied experiences, and 'can't be separated from how they constitute and reconstitute the tellers and the listeners' (Frimberger 2013 p. 167). The retelling of stories is therefore in many ways a reliving of the events

described. In contexts of forced migration this can become akin to a performance, expected and required, for people who have only their account of escape from extreme danger as proof that they are indeed refugees who merit protection (Crawley & Skleparis 2018): in such cases stories of extreme suffering become a currency, paid in exchange for protection, in a context where 'claiming the refugee label is no longer a right but a prized status and expensive commodity' (Zetter, 2007, p.188).

There is a wide scholarship contributing to an interdisciplinary discussion surrounding stories, emotions and place in contexts of forced migration (Palladino 2014, Phipps 2014, Pain & Staeheil 2014), as well as theories of language and the use of language as a therapeutic tool for those experiencing forced migration and its consequences (Eastmond 2007; Farrier 2011; Durrant 2012) and stories as crucial in bringing about healing transformations (Willis 2009). Healing is a word worth examining in the context of narrative and forced migration: very often projects run by well-meaning people in receiving communities aim to bring healing but are actually centred on narratives of trauma and exceptionalism which frame the 'refugee experience' (Balfour & Woodrow, 2013). Thompson warns that 'stories can unburden... However woven within them are tropes, forms, iterations and mystifications that are also capable of re-marking violence or constructing new relationships of division, anger or bitterness.' (Thompson, 2005: 6). Assuming that narrative exchange is automatically therapeutic and healing carries risks of unquestioningly perpetuating cultural narratives based on colonial paradigms of othering, as well as forcing people to re-tell and re-live traumatic events.

Used in this way, stories are just that: used, rather than exchanged. They become a kind of currency: specific types of migratory stories repeatedly elicited in the context of arts projects working with refugees, which are often the stories which best guarantee funding for the organisations involved rather than healing for the people whose stories these are (Jeffers 2012).

In an argument related to stories as performances of expectation in migratory settings, Sayad states that the converse can also be true: people who migrate can feel obliged to downplay their suffering due to a variety of pressures to conform to expectations, both from their own communities in their country of origin and

from the receiving communities (Sayad, 2004). Willis, writing on stories as ways to heal grief, presents a relevant reflection on the difference between healing and palliation: palliation is concerned with cloaking, minimising symptoms and discomfort; 'healing is concerned with underlying causes and their transformation' (Willis 2009, p. 86). Stories, in the situations described by Sayad (2004), are not extracted or performed but rather masked and hidden: discomfort is cloaked, symptoms of distress are minimised, and people seek to conform to wider narratives which they believe will bring acceptance. Examples of such narratives are the 'grateful refugee', where people accentuate their gratitude to the receiving country rather than telling stories of racism or rejection; or the 'useful refugee', where people emphasise their skills and contribution to the receiving country as a way of justifying their ongoing protection. These processes are also linked to the conditional hospitality discussed in section 1.2.4 above.

Narrative, story and storytelling, then, are intimately connected to agency; an important element of my research will be paying attention to which stories people choose to – and are allowed to - hear and tell about themselves and others by what hooks terms 'interlocking systems of dominance' (hooks 2003). The work of Butler helps to interpret these different choices of stories performed, in particular her critique of expectations of narrative coherence in the context of self-narrative when people have experienced traumatic events, as well as her focus on a multiplicity of narratives as key to understanding how people tell stories about their selves and their lives (Butler 2009; Butler et al. 2016).

Reflecting on the literature thus far, I see that many scholars focus on individual stories related to people who are forced migrants; stories used to bring about specific outcomes such as protection, acceptance or healing. My research is concerned with investigating narrative exchange as part of wider dynamics of intercultural encounter - where individual stories are elements (albeit critically important ones) of education practices involving communities as well as individuals.

These different levels of focus - between individual stories and wider dynamics of intercultural encounter - can be linked by investigating narrative exchange as a dialogic tool, in the pedagogical sense used by Freire (2006), used as part of

transformative educational encounters as described by hooks (1994, 2003). This framing integrates the discourse on individual healing by considering narrative exchanges as processes which can build meaningful dialogue and encounter between all communities involved in intercultural encounter. An investigation of narrative exchange as part of educational processes aimed at making meaningful community – this helps to frame my research journey in a way which combines insights from critical pedagogical theory with learnings from empirical literature on narrative in contexts of forced migration, and it helps me move on with a greater sense of clarity about how to approach my research questions.

1.3.2 Multilingual research and decolonising work

During fieldwork, while referring back to my compass-research questions, I will also keep asking: whose stories are most told, heard and silenced? Whose languages are privileged in the telling and retelling? As discussed above, such questions are about power and agency, and they intersect with scholarship around ethical research and critical pedagogy in the context of colonialism: a key example being the work of Linda Tuhiwai Smith on decolonizing methodologies in the context of research with indigenous peoples (2012).

While this thesis does not involve work with indigenous peoples, scholarship addressing the legacy of colonialism - and ways to challenge and change the dynamics of dominance which are its consequence - is connected to the concerns of critical pedagogy around oppression and power dynamics which are deeply relevant to this thesis. Language is a critical element in interrogating such dynamics: all of my fieldwork, for example, moves between languages and people from formerly coloniser and colonised countries. My research unfolds within contexts related to colonialism and its legacy – both in terms of migratory flows and positivistic, extractive approaches to knowledge – where it is important to consider that 'research is one of the ways in which the underlying code of imperialism and colonialism is both regulated and realized' (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012, p. 7).

The tension between what dominant systems of power and knowledge require, and what individuals need and express through their stories, echoes the tension that led me to undertake this research (as described in the Introduction). The

work of hooks, Smith and Freire help me to remain aware of such tensions in contexts of community education and forced migration, and provide approaches to understand the systems of oppression which contribute to creating these tensions. In particular, thinking around multilingual working from a decolonising perspective helps me address the significance of multilingual work in contexts of narrative exchange, forced migration and intercultural encounter, highlighting (for example) the importance of remaining aware of the power relationships manifested by the use of different languages during and after fieldwork.

Languages feature repeatedly throughout this thesis: languages spoken and silenced; ascribed superior or suspect status; languages taught, learned, desired, derided; the language of bodies when words are not present or sufficient. All the community education projects observed during fieldwork use different approaches to language and language teaching / learning in their work, as we will see in Part Two. hooks (1994, 2003) expands on the possibilities of language in learning contexts with her work on embodied pedagogy and the importance of oral stories, which form a connection with the work of Tuhiwai Smith (2012) on indigenous knowledge - the kind of knowledge that is not part of the official canon.

Learning the language of the receiving country is also one of the key aspects of integration for forced migrant people, as outlined by the New Scots Integration Strategy (Scottish Government, 2018) which in turn is informed by Ager and Strang's Indicators for Integration framework (Ager & Strang, 2008), featuring language as one of the key domains necessary for integration to happen. Scholars have drawn on critical pedagogical approaches to problematise certain approaches to language teaching / learning which are particularly relevant to contexts of forced migration; one example of this is Phillipson's critique of the 'linguistic imperialism' he describes as manifested in the domination of the English language (Phillipson,1992). N'gugi Wa Thiong'o argues that from the point of view of places colonised by European countries, the imposed multilingualism whereby colonial languages were held dominant is a negative, stifling kind of multilingualism (N'gugi Wa Thiong'o, 1986). This domination is apparent in the document you are reading now: most of the conversations and encounters during my fieldwork happened in Italian, Arabic or French, yet most of this thesis and its references are in English.

Empirical literature on forced migration and language learning also critique aspects of linguistic imperialism. In the context of displaced people in countries bordering Syria, Capstick (2020) critiques monolingual approaches held by NGOs which disregard home languages as useful and necessary resources which help forced migrants make sense of their new surroundings. Morrice et al (2021) contend that English-language policies and learning provision for refugees resettled in the UK exacerbate and compound the risk of social exclusion, partly due to discrepancies between the pedagogical goals of language learning and policy goals of rapid entry into the labour market – driven by considerations related to economic performance and competence.

Competence-based approaches to language teaching have also been criticised as focussing on student's deficit of learning rather than their abilities (Frimberger, 2016), with calls to expand beyond the ability to master grammar and pronunciation, to include elements of intercultural communicative competence in educational exchanges with language students (Byram, 1997; Corbett, 2003; Kramsch, 1998). In opposition to competence-based approaches to language education, Phipps and Gonzalez develop the concept of 'languaging', whereby language students act as 'reflective sojourners, translators and border crossers' (Phipps and Gonzales 2004 p.8) and are active agents in creating their environment within a complex intercultural reality. This is an approach based on the daily, lived reality of living between cultures, which is often messy. Here, intercultural language learning is an embodied educational experience, connecting back to the embodied nature of stories and the significance of messy, quotidian things as part of intercultural encounter.

All these critical approaches, and the insights from empirical literature, are important in framing my analysis of intercultural encounter projects based on language learning, such as the Syrian Women's group discussed in chapter 4. They also help to identify the limitations of pedagogical approaches that are difficult to quantify and measure - one such limitation being that language and community education projects in general, and in migratory settings in particular, are operating under circumstances of increasing political hostility and economic austerity across Europe and are 'under extreme pressure to develop along

pragmatic, performative lines'. (Phipps & Gonzalez, 2004: 29). We are back at the tension which catalysed this thesis - with the dominant cultural and economic systems requiring performance-based results, whereas the individual stories and experiences of people involved in intercultural encounter and education are often expressed through qualitative, narrative methods rather than easily quantified results. I take this as a positive clue, an encouragement to keep asking questions as we move on.

1.4 Intercultural encounter and place

> 'Why do we acknowledge only our textual sources but not the ground we walk, the ever-changing skies, mountains and rivers, rocks and trees, the houses we inhabit and the tools we use, not to mention the innumerable companions, both non-human animals and fellow humans, with which and with whom we share our lives? They are constantly inspiring us, challenging us, telling us things.' (Ingold 2011: xii)

So far journeying through the literature review has led me to relevant scholarship on intercultural encounter and narrative. The quote opening this section points to the importance of considering other elements in the landscape surrounding us as 'sources' of information - not just text but also place: the places where intercultural encounter happens. Place is an important element of dynamics of encounter, because this *where* influences *what* happens and *how* it happens. In this section I therefore interrogate scholars who have written about space and place in ways which helps me better frame my research.

1.4.1 Place and space, possibilities and connections

It is understood that migration is experienced differently in different places, and places are in turn affected in distinct ways (Philips & Robinson 2015). The contexts considered in this thesis are European cities where the ongoing processes of urban transformation linked to migration are apparent (Portes 2000). While such transformation can become a focus for conflictual resentment from receiving communities – as observed in Chapter 7 – the contributions of migrants as city-makers (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018) are critical to the evolution of urban spaces. In terms of forced migration, Kärrholm et al. (2022) argue that everyday

activities are central to practices of place-making in modern urban migratory settings. Linking with the definition of stories as an 'overarching, everyday life phenomenon' (Inglis and Thorpe 2012, p. 17) it is at this level – the quotidian practices of everyday living – that the importance of place and narrative in this thesis connect. Much of the narrative exchange observed in this thesis has its focus on quotidian aspects of place-making and home-making where the lives of people from receiving communities intersect with those people forced to migrate there.

In terms of terminology, Ingold argues '…against the notion of space', saying that 'of all the terms we use to describe the world we inhabit, it is the most abstract, the most empty, the most detached from the realities of life and experience' (Ingold 2011:145). He contests that while the word 'space' is too abstract, our use of the word 'place' has become traduced a logic which delineates a place according to its outer boundaries, the outer limits it presents to movement; Ingold argues that, instead, places should be delineated by movement connecting them to other places. His point is that that 'human lives do not happen inside places, but through, around, to and from them, from and to places elsewhere' (Ingold 2000:229). It is, however, also true that human lives happen inside places: in houses, rooms, community centres, classrooms, places of work and of worship. In the course of my fieldwork I observe and participate in intercultural encounters which occur in specific places. These encounters, and the narrative exchange which they involve, are made possible and influenced by the nature of these places: intercultural places of dialogue which have the potential to - literally and emotionally - 'make place in the act of reaching out to the out-of-placeness of other migrant bodies' (Ahmed, 2000 p.94).

bell hooks refers to 'research space' throughout her book on education as the practice of freedom (hooks 1994). Askins and Pain (2011) in their work on intercultural encounter, discuss the research process itself as a place of encounter and engagement with diversity and difference. She also talks of educational setting as places which question and resist the 'institutionalized practices of domination' (hooks, 1994, p.158) and are locations of possibility (1994). Places of resistance, locations of possibility! This language brings hope and renewed purpose to my searching, leading away from the obfuscations of too much debate on terminology and back towards the importance of being present among people

and their stories in places of intercultural encounter. Her engaged, embodied pedagogy also acknowledges and celebrates bodies as 'sites' of dialogue and relationship (ibid.), adding another useful word to my widening mental horizons as I prepare for fieldwork.

My observations as a linguist and interculturalist and narratologist lead me to use the word 'space' to mean a wider, more general term precisely because of its abstract meaning which allows the focus to be on the action occurring in the space, rather than on the space itself; not unlike a wider narrative can contain specific stories. In Italian we say *uno spazio d'incontro* - a space of encounter. In English, we give each other 'space to breathe'. I use 'place' when referring to the specific locations where encounters occur during fieldwork, in agreement with Ingold's ideas around movement between places and in awareness that what happens in places is important. In reference to hooks, and to widen my use of language to encompass embodied and potentially unexpected experiences of encounter and narrative exchange, I will also use the word 'sites'.

The work of Ingold and hooks are connected here through the concepts of *movement* and *possibility* - both critical elements when considering place and space in contexts of forced migration. Migration implies movement: across borders and cultures and between languages, among many other movements. Intercultural encounter is an event which holds the possibility of dialogue leading to movement towards the Other as perspectives shift. Places and spaces as holding the potential for dialogic movement and the possibility of transformative encounter – this is a helpful research perspective to add to my rucksack as I move forward.

1.4.2 Bodies as places of intercultural encounter

Askins writes about 'the emotional geographies of intercultural interactions produced through everyday spaces' (2016 p. 515) and the importance of showing and sharing emotions in the context of intercultural living. Emotions, like stories, are embodied; they are also linked closely to particualr places and the events associated with these places. Bodies are also very often the locus and focus of 'othering' in intercultural encounter: skin colour, hair and clothes are visible markers of difference. As part of a discussion on cultural theory, Eagleton also

identifies our bodies as places of dialogue, saying that 'the body of the other is at once strange and familiar' (Eagleton 2003: 161).

Paying attention to bodies as places will be important during fieldwork: bodies as places of movement, of memory, of emotion and of story-keeping as well as vehicles of story-telling – my own body included. Atkinson writes of 'research from the body' which permits 'unpredictabilty and uncertainty to be recognised as crucial aspects of the research situation' (2003 p.39). From these reflections I understand that with my body, as a researcher I must be ready to move through intercultural places (and spaces and sites) which are complex, uncertain, fluid; I also must remain aware of what the bodies of others tell me without using words. This understanding of bodies as places of encounter and communication adds a further dimension to the scope of my research on narrative exchange.

Summary of Chapter 1

I have approached this chapter as an exploration of conversations, idea-maps and stories shared by other scholars; an expedition to seek out insights and warnings from fellow travellers, to help and guide my footsteps. This began by identifying that a subjectivist epistemology and a theoretical perspective termed 'phenomenology of narrative' can best underpin my research (section 1.1). I then interrogated scholarship on relevant aspects of intercultural encounter (section 1.2), with a focus on understandings of contamination and transformation as critical to encounter. Critical pedagogies supported me in framing narrative exchange as a potentially transformative dialogic process within community education settings; they also provided key insight on dynamics of power and domination. Critiques of hospitality helped to understand processes of welcome and to interpret scholarship regarding Othering and the legacies of colonial domination in European contexts of forced migration. In section 1.2 I investigated the importance of narrative and languages in this thesis, with multilingual decolonising practices and pedagogical critiques of competency-based language learning as key guides. Finally, in section 1.4 I considered the key role of place, confirming that place is a critical element in dynamics of migratory intercultural encounter; understanding that bodies are key sites of intercultural encounter and

narrative exchange; and framing my investigation of it through the concepts of possibility and transformation.

My footsteps now turn to exploring the research context.

Chapter 2 - Landscapes: the research context

'(…) the spaces of interaction that may enable meaningful encounters between different social groups.'
Askins 2016, p. 3

This chapter outlines the context within which the research process takes place: the landscapes through which we will travel during fieldwork, the 'spaces of interaction' as expressed by Askins in the quote above. I adopt the narrative technique of 'zooming in', as if we were in an interactive map.

I first conduct a brief overview of forced migration into Europe (section 2.1), focussing on representations of forced migratory journeys, in particular the aspects of journey, arrival and integration, and how they influence intercultural encounter and narrative exchange. Section 2.2 explores one of the national contexts where fieldwork occurs: Italy. I present an overview of Italian governmental policies related to migration over the past 30 years, before considering the city of Torino in the region of Piedmont. We then meet the community projects working to facilitate intercultural encounter which I observe in this city. Section 1.3 brings us to Scotland. After an overview of migratory policies in a wider UK context, I examine the context in Scotland and introduce the community projects which I observe as part of my fieldwork in Edinburgh.

2.1 Forced migration in Europe: representations of journey, arrival, integration

'None of us could stay in our country and stay alive. My bad luck was to be born where I was born'
Reine, in conversation, 2019

'…fato profugus…'
['…a refugee because of Fate…']
Aeneid, verse 2, written ca. 30 BCE

2.1.1 Journey

This section considers representations of forced migratory journeys in Europe, as important elements of the socioeconomic context in which narrative exchange occurs in regional settings within Italy and Scotland. It opens with a quote from Reine, a woman living in Torino who is a refugee from a Middle Eastern country whom I met during the course of fieldwork. She spoke these words over coffee, in a matter-of-fact tone. We were talking of the rise in anti-migrant protests in Torino, and Reine was pointing out that she had no real option to stay in her country. She presented her refugee journey to Italy as a matter of luck: good luck because she was now safe, bad luck because she was born in a country which she was forced to flee.

In parallel to Reine's words stand words from the start of the Aeneid, an epic poem written over two millennia ago by Virgil whose hero - Aeneas - is a refugee. The first epithet describing Aeneas is *'fato profugus'*: a refugee because of Fate, which forced him to leave his war-broken city and wander seeking refuge until he found it in Italy. While I do not mean to veer off into the vast ocean of classical studies, this Latin term is significant as part of a foundational narrative in Western European culture wherein a refugee is the epic hero, fated to achieve great things in his country of arrival. It acts as a counterpoint to negative representations of forced migration prevalent in Europe today which contribute to rallies and protests such as the ones in Torino which prompted Reine's modern-day summary of *'fato profugus'*: forced to flee because of the bad luck that determined where you were born.

The story of Aeneas also allows us to move across millennia and consider the routes and stories of current journeys made into Europe by forced migrants like Reine, many of whom follow paths over land and sea similar to those Aeneas travelled:

Fig. 2: Map showing the journey of Aeneas from Troy to Italy
Source: www.romeacrosseurope.com

The sea-path taken by Aeneas is not far from the route taken by many people who make forced journeys in the 21st century, following that which is known as the 'Eastern Mediterranean Route' which features in the next image. These two maps are different depictions of refugee journeys, and serve to highlight the prevailing representation of modern forced migratory journeys into Europe:

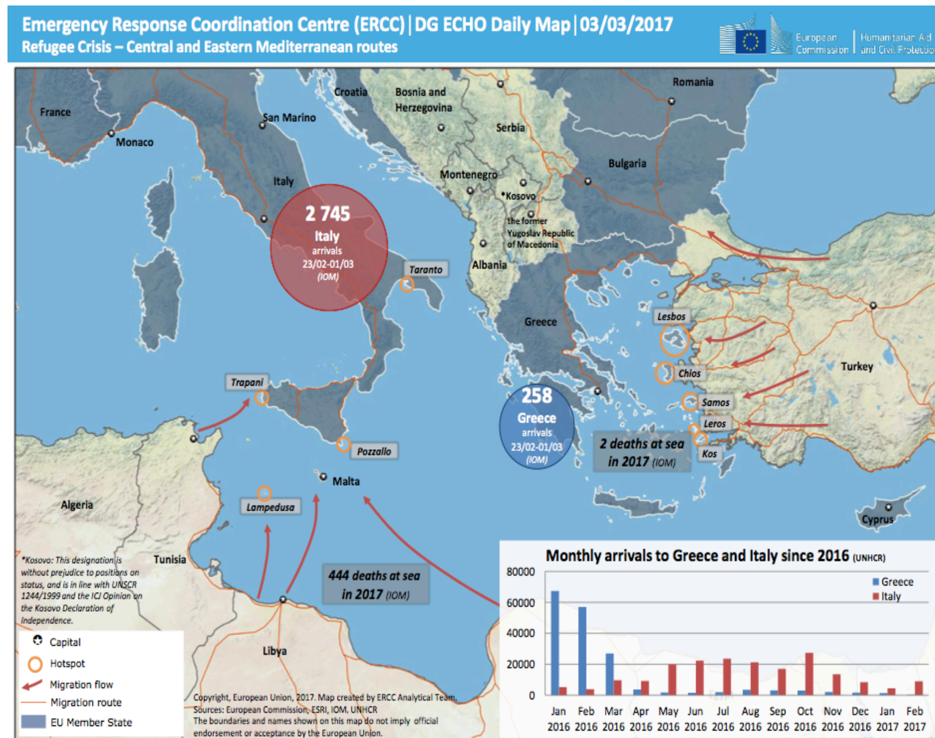

Fig. 3 Map of Central and Eastern Mediterranean migratory routes

Source: European Commission (2017)

We can see that ‘Emergency’ is the first word on the map above, and the second line starts with ‘refugee crisis’. Unlike the map of Aeneas’ journey, which is depicted simply as a line on a map with historical toponyms to guide us alongside his journey, in the second map we see the stories of people represented as statistics in a context of crisis and emergency. People undertaking modern journeys of forced migration into Europe are numbered as ‘deaths at sea’, in a wider narrative couched in words related to alarm and danger (Crawley et al. 2018).

It is estimated that between 2013 and 2017, the number of refugees in Europe increased from 1.8 to 6.1 billion (Ferris & Donato 2019). Artero & Fontanari argue that the summer of 2015 represented a turning point in the European migration policies, with large numbers of people seeking to enter Europe portrayed widely as images of an ‘uncontrolled invasion’ which led to a ‘re-bordering’ of Europe (Artero & Fontanari 2019, p.635). Others point to how European policy has become increasingly hostile to forced migrants, with European governments enabling border countries such as Libya and Turkey to keep prospective immigrants detained or repelled, outside of Europe (Palladino & Gjergji 2015). Such policies

centre the narrative of borders which need to be defended against the threat posed by refugee journeys, rather than the right to seek asylum as defined by the United Nations' Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (aka the Refugee Convention, UNHCR 1951).

The people with whom I work self-identify as refugees. As per the definition given by the 1951 Refugee Convention, people like Reine were forced to leave their homes and are unable or unwilling to return 'owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion' (UNHCR 1951, p. 14). My research concerns itself with how the encounter between these people and the communities receiving them can be facilitated through narrative exchange. This encounter occurs in, and is influenced by, specific socio-political and cultural contexts.

Representations and narratives of refugee journeys contribute to these contexts. They influence politicians and policy makers, leading to legislation which in turn impacts the social and cultural environment of everyday living in which encounters occur. Such representations are a critical element of the wider cultural narrative within which intercultural encounter between forced migrant and receiving communities occurs. Scholars have pointed to how fear-based narratives - where phrases such as 'crisis', 'unprecedented numbers of migrants' and a situation of 'emergency' recur - are linked to fear-based policies. The European Border and Coast Guard (EBCG), operational from September 2016, is an example of the re-bordering of a continent which is increasingly termed 'Fortress Europe'(Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2021; Jünemann et al. 2017).

The operations of organisations such as EBCG arguably breach key elements of the 1951 Convention including the principle of *non refoulement* (Moran 2021) and have led to cases such as the 'left to die' boat analysed by the research agency Forensic Architecture (2012). This is the story of an overcrowded rubber boat which left Libya, carrying 72 passengers who were migrating to Europe. The boat ran out of fuel and drifted for 14 days, repeatedly sighted, addressed, photographed and not helped by vessels that ranged from fishing boats (Libyan) to military vessels (unidentified but possibly NATO). It was eventually returned by the sea to the coast it had left from. 63 of its passengers died. These policies - and their

consequences - are an embodiment of necropolitics as defined by Mbembé, according to whom ‘the ultimate expression of sovereignty resides, to a large degree, in the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die’ (Mbembé 2003, p.11).

Despite recent European migratory policies being hostile to journeys of forced migration, it is important to highlight that, historically, European states were instrumental in creating international systems of protection for refugees, especially following the large amounts of people forced to migrate as a result of the first and second world wars - from Nansen passports in 1922 to the Refugee Convention of Refugee Rights in 1951 (Bank 2014). It is also true that not all recent representations of refugee journeys have been negative or hostile; while not as celebratory as Virgil was of Aeneas, modern-day refugees are also represented as people with the agency to undertake necessary journeys and the courage to overcome great adversity. These representations occur across a wide spectrum that goes from academia (e.g. Renkens et al. 2022, Kanal & Rottmann 2021, , Arizpe 2019, Crawley et al. 2018, Palladino 2014) to commercially published children’s books on the theme of migration and refuge (e.g. Bruton 2019, Milner 2017, Sanna 2016). They too contribute to the environment within which intercultural encounters take place.

There have also been recent migratory policies in Europe which have not been hostile to forced migrants, occurring at the level of individual states (Ostrand 2015). Those related to Italy and Scotland will be discussed in section 1.2 and 1.3 respectively. But now let us move to consider representations of the next stage of migratory journeys: arrival.

2.1.2 Arrival and reception

Arrival is not the end of the migratory journey but rather a liminal point where what came before (survival, departure, journey) links up with what may come after (be that encounter, danger, conflict, onward journeys, safety, integration, citizenship). It is the point of first physical encounter between forced migrants and people in receiving countries. I will now consider different representations of

arrival in the context of forced migration within Europe, which form a part of cultural narratives which are linked to different approaches to the reception of forced migrant people. These modes of reception in turn influence intercultural encounter.

Media and political representations of the journeys undertaken by forced migrants continue to involve dramatic images of large numbers of people, in boats and crowds, arriving on European shores - the visual trope of the 'refugee boat' as discussed by White (2015). This trope is used in Italy and the UK by those promoting fear-based representations of refugee arrivals as a dangerous, threatening 'emergency' (see Nicolosi 2019); there is a correlation between such media portrayals and migratory policies designed to deter and remove people seeking sanctuary in Europe (Dempsey & McDowell 2019). Sensational images representing the 'migration crisis' are also used also by organisations involved in the reception and integration of migrants, who present this 'emergency' as one requiring immediate action and help in order to attract support (Nerghes 2019).

In both cases, the people who are journeying and arriving as forced migrants are portrayed as an anonymised mass of pain; this narrative, where arrival is a collective emergency, elides the individual stories of people's journeys. In 'Regarding the Pain of Others', Sontag (2003) considers images portraying human suffering. She highlights the consequences of a culture of spectatorship, where images keep human stories at a safe distance from the viewer, who can therefore avoid identifying too much with the pain portrayed. She identifies the important difference between seeing someone's pain and being able to feel it or imagine it. The risk of too many images of suffering is that viewers become indifferent. Actors from different ends of the political spectrum attempt to manipulate viewers beyond indifference (Thomas et al. 2018) - whether that is towards resenting these arrivals, or rescuing them.

Italian political and cultural discourse around migration has become increasingly focused on the numbers of people arriving by boat in the Mediterranean island of Lampedusa and other localities similarly situated in the South of the country (Colombini 2019). A similar dynamic can be observed in Britain regarding the arrival of people across the Channel. These arrivals often turn into tragedy when

people drown due to a combination of dangerous weather, inadequate boats, and negligence by the authorities responsible for saving lives at sea (McMahon & Sigona 2021).

One image of tragic arrival catalysed an outpouring across Europe of pity and sympathy towards forced migrants: the photograph of the body of Aylan Kurdi, a three-year-old boy from Syria who drowned on the journey from Turkey to Greece with his family on 2nd September 2015 (Mortensen et al. 2017). A change in tone of public opinion, media stories and political announcements also occurred (Nerghes & Lee 2019) after months of hostile media headlines against migrants, accompanied by political pledges and a sharp increase in public donations to causes supporting forced migrants (Smith et al. 2018). This photograph acted as a story told without words; it has been defined as an 'iconic' image which 'compelled not only public but also scholarly attention' (Binder & Jaworsky 2018, p. 2). It is an example of visual narrative depicting refugee journeys which powerfully influence public discourses and policy making (Bleiker et al., 2013). This single image seemed to catalyse a change in the dominant narratives (Dempsey & McDowell 2019), shifting the terms from perceiving forced migrants as a menacing swarm towards seeing Aylan Kurdi's 'tragic' story as something that could be imagined empathically.

This sense of transformed perspective on the lives and stories of others who were previously viewed with detachment: this lies at the heart of intercultural encounters which bring new understanding of new stories to both sides and shifts 'entrenched, largely negative versions of the 'other'' (Askins 2006 p.4), as discussed in chapter 1. It is important to note that the very fact of Aylan Kurdi's image becoming such an emblematic representation of tragedy is not unproblematic, in that it risks erasing the particulars of his story and his family's (Mortensen et al. 2017). However, it is an example of a hinge moment, and is often referred to as a point when a shift occurred in narratives regarding forced migration - and in levels of engagement to support forced migrants: a shift from hostility or indifference to empathy and solidarity (Thomas et al. 2018).

As we have seen, portraying forced migratory arrivals as 'tragic' can remove the agency and individuality of the people arriving. But representations of arrival as

salvation are also problematic, as discussed by Palladino and Woolley (2018). Such portrayals are part of a narrative continuum which always centres Europeans, either as saviours of the helpless or as defenders of borders against dangerous foreigners. Saving people from drowning, destitution and other dangers is a commendable act; however, it is important to remain aware of the potential imbalance inherent in any intercultural encounter which is informed by the narrative whereby one part is always 'saviour' and the other part is only ever 'saved'.

The narrative of the 'white saviour' relates to the 'colonial reflex' written of by Sontag (2003): the inclination of showing human suffering in exotic places far from our European 'civilized' world. Many scholars have argued that what has been called the 'refugee crisis' is actually a crisis of reception and solidarity (Marchetti 2016; Campesi 2018), a humanitarian crisis (Afouxedinis et al. 2017), a moral crisis (Fassin 2016). European nations are unable to cope with suffering people - previously portrayed as abstract exotic bodies in faraway 'other' places - who are now crossing borders into Europe, bringing their stories and needs with them. The fact that these people are often seeking safety from long-term consequences of European colonial exploitation, and the troubling colonial legacies still manifest in international migration management (Sadiq & Tsourapas 2021) add yet more layers of ethical problems to the white saviour narrative as a response to the 'refugee crisis'.

Questions of agency and power are inherent in the representations of refugee journeys and arrivals considered so far. They coalesce, crowding: who has agency in these narratives? Which stories and voices are told, heard, seen? Who benefits from this? What are the assumptions and representations behind these choices of narrative? Are there other kinds of stories being told?

Shaun Tan provides a different type of image-based representation of forced migration in his book Arrival (2006) - one which offers a perspective whereby those who arrive have agency and abilities, bringing many things other than the need to be feared, rescued or pitied to the encounter with people in the receiving country. Tan presents a refugee's journey without words; his drawings convey a wide range of emotional and physical realities relating to a migratory journey with particular

focus on the moment of arrival in a new country. He illustrates the emotional bewilderment of being suddenly surrounded by a new set of symbols, and the relief when arrival translates into safety and welcome.

Fig. 4: image from The Arrival by Shaun Tan (Tan 2007)

The very fact that this representation is free of words mean that educators have found great pedagogical value in using it to facilitate discussions around migration with children from both immigrant and non-immigrant backgrounds (Farrel, Arizpe and McAdam 2010). This is confirmed by Rhodes et al (2015) who find that the imagery of Tan's book draws people towards dialogue on the topic of migration and integration even if they were initially reluctant to approach these topics with compassion.

Safety is distinct from salvation in that it involves a series of guarantees which stretch into the future, not just a momentary reprieve from danger. Safety, in the context of the arrival of people who are forced migrants, involves the receiving countries abiding by the principle of *non-refoulement* and providing dignified living conditions in the short term; in the longer term, safety means that claims for refugee status are fairly heard and favourable conditions exist for refugees building lives in new communities. Safety is also marked in spatial terms: people need, seek and find places of ongoing safety, whereas salvation happens and is experienced in a transitory moment.

These aspects of safe arrival - safety and stability - are key elements in the process of resettlement for people who are forced migrants. Stewart & Mulvey (2014), discussing the impact of hostile immigration and citizenship policies in the UK, write that the absence of durable safety in the receiving country results in deep fear for the future. Safety is often seen as a critical aspect of integration (Shaw et al. 2020) and is one of the key domains facilitating integration according to the framework of indicators of integration developed by Ager and Strang (2008).

2.1.3 After arrival: integration

We have seen that perceptions and representations of journey, arrival and reception are important influences on intercultural encounter in the context of Europe and forced migration; and that conditions of safety deeply influence subsequent integration of forced migrants into receiving communities. Integration, then, is something that people move towards from the moment of arrival. In this section I investigate how expectations and representations of integration relate to intercultural encounter in contexts of forced migration.

Integration, in my professional experience, is often a buzzword which guarantees attention (and financial support) from government, charities and funding bodies. Etymologically the word 'integration' derives from integer, the Latin for 'whole, entire', giving the sense of a social entity that is whole and united. But who defines and decides the parameters of 'whole', and what are the consequences for the people that are to be integrated?

There have been many critiques of integration as a one-way process whereby forced migrants are expected and required to fit in with the dominant culture (see for example Joppke 2017; De Waal 2018; Larin 2019). Such expectations of integration are based on normative and often nationalistic approaches (Philippou & Theodorou 2014) with concepts of integration and inclusion often based on monolingual and monocultural (and fictional) ideas of society. Piller (2001) argues that the cultural values and language of the individual nation-state remain central to the conditions which migrants must adapt to. Cameron (2012) draws our attention to the widely held requirements whereby speaking English is seen as key to the integration of immigrants, arguing that in this sense the word 'integration'

stands for assimilation. According to assimilation-based approaches, immigrants must prove their allegiance to the culture of their receiving country, with a shared English language standing in as a useful symbol for that culture (Cameron 2021); and in doing so they should be expected to abandon their own culture and way of life, so as to become indistinguishable from nationals of the host country. Sivanandan (2008) draws our attention to the semantic shift whereby integration has become increasingly used to mean, effectively, assimilation. Here the expectation of labour is put on forced migrant communities, who need to change to fit in to dominant cultural and social systems.

Such approaches and expectations are present in government approaches to integration, both in the UK and in Italy, as we shall see below; however, integration is increasingly understood to be a 'dynamic process that unfolds in various aspects of life, such as education, employment, and health' (Donato & Ferris 2020, p.1). A dynamic process: not a one-way process whereby immigrants become incorporated into the dominant culture. Caponio & Ricucci (2015) argue for an intercultural approach to integration which maintains the focus on universal rights, highlighting the social interaction element of integration processes. From a social equality perspective, De Waal (2020) argues for integration requirements which do not suggest a status hierarchy between migrants and citizens of receiving countries. In such views, integration is a two-way process involving adaptation to new cultural values and changes in behaviour for both migrants and members of the existing society.

Interpretations and representations of what integration means - like the representations of other stages in forced migratory journeys discussed above - are powerful narrative elements, which contribute to policy decisions and to cultural expectations of the Other. These, in turn, influence the context of intercultural encounter – for example, the way in which language learning is funded and conducted; or the prevailing political discourses; or how community centres and education projects are perceived by local authorities. All these are examples of contexts observed during fieldwork.

One such national context is Scotland, where the Scottish Government's New Scots integration strategy is an example of a document which specifically talks about integration as a dynamic, two-way process which requires the involvement of

many diverse individuals, cultures, institutions and organisations and includes recognition of the role and agency of refugees in contributing to receiving communities. It also makes explicit the responsibility of receiving governments and communities to facilitate situations of safety and welcome for forced migrants, and states clearly that refugees and asylum seekers should be 'supported to integrate into communities from day one of arrival' (Scottish Government 2018:11).

The New Scots Integration Strategy draws extensively on the work of Ager and Strang, who develop a structure for conceptualising the key components of integration (Ager and Strang 2008). They propose ten core domains that shape understandings of integration, grouped into four key sections, thus represented:

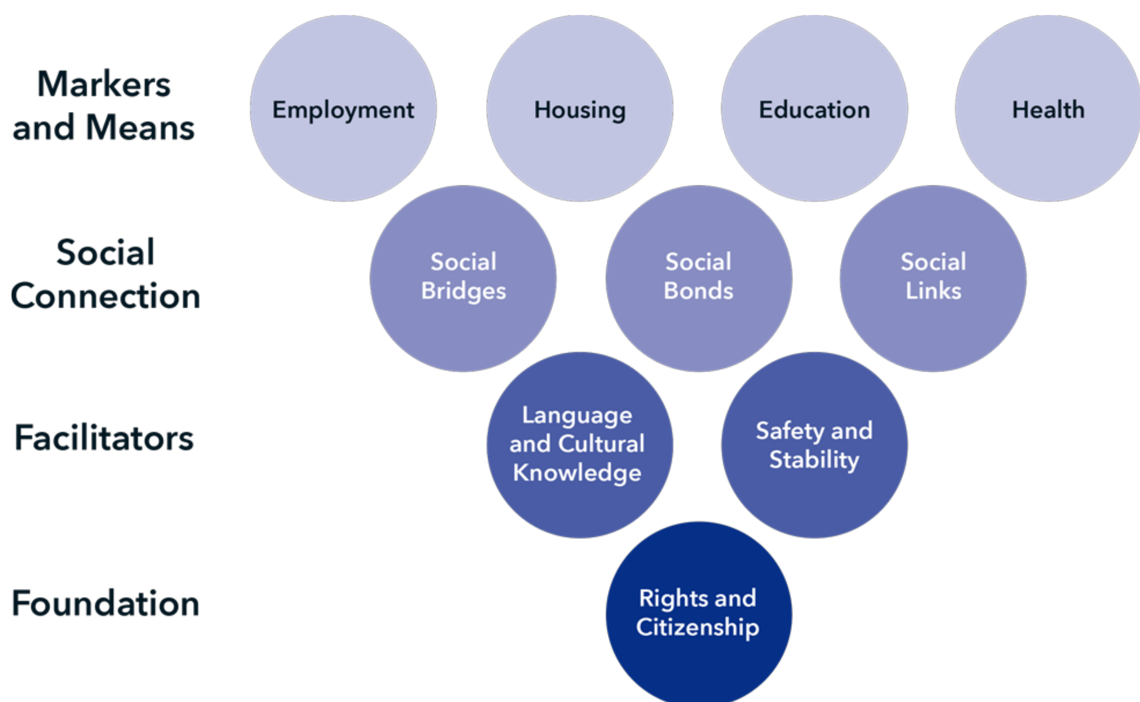

Fig. 5: A Conceptual Framework Defining Core Domains of Integration (Ager & Strang 2008, p. 170)

Language and cultural knowledge, alongside safety and stability, constitute two key elements which are critical - within a framework of recognised rights and citizenship - if integration is to be possible. Social bridges, social bonds and social links are the three types of social connections, drawn from concepts of social capital, which are key to the process of integration. The success (or lack thereof) of refugee integration can be measured through outcomes, referred to in the framework as 'markers and means'; these are employment, housing, education, and health. As reflected in the Scottish Government policy approach, rights and citizenship are the domain on which the others rest. Ager and Strang (2008) stress that all domains are interconnected but are in agreement with O'Neill who notes that 'notions of nationhood and citizenship shape core understandings of the rights accorded, and responsibilities expected, of refugees (O'Neill 2001, quoted in Ager& Strang 2008).

Donato and Ferris (2020) refer to this framework - and to Ager and Strang's 2008 publication - as a foundational piece of scholarship, noting that a wide range of people, including practitioners and policy-makers, rely on it to frame their understanding of refugee integration. However, integration itself remains a problematic concept, with some (e.g. Rytter 2018) arguing that the concept is dangerous and social scientists should avoid using it. Mulvey (2015) critiques integration in particular when it is used to support expectations whereby individuals and their communities are seen as responsible for integration (or a lack thereof), failing to address the role of systemic obstacles to integration. Ager & Strang's conceptual framework does shift the focus to the multiple social and economic factors what impact on integration, as well as the role of policies and legal rights (Spencer & Charsley 2021, p. 12). Bearing in mind that integration remains a problematic and complex concept, and that no framework can be defined as perfect, I will consider Ager & Strang's a useful conceptualisation of integration which can support my research, as discussed further in Chapter 3.

2.2 A research landscape: Italy

> *'Sono qui perché qui sono arrivato… e qui sto bene'*
> ['I'm here because here is where I arrived… and I'm fine here']
> Mamadou, Torino

Let us move from arrival and integration to lived stories in real places, and meet a man we shall call Mamadou. He and I are drinking coffee together in the bar of the *Casa del Quartiere* in Torino, a place of welcome and solidarity which we will return to in chapter 4. We are chatting as we wait for the *Sportello Informativo per Migranti* [Information Helpdesk for Migrants] to open. He volunteers at the Helpdesk, and is telling me that many refugees coming for advice are surprised to see him 'On the other side of the counter', and often ask him '*Ma perché sei qui?*' [why are you here]?'. Mamadou laughs and continues, in English: 'It's funny because these are my brother migrants asking the same question I hear from Italians who ask me why I'm here and want me to 'go back home''. I ask him how he answers this question, and he shrugs, smiling. 'Well - I tell them - *sono qui perché qui sono arrivato… e qui sto bene*. ['I am here because here is where I've arrived… and I'm fine here'].

Mamadou's words prompt many questions and further exchanges which will be addressed in chapter 4. For now, though, I want to focus on the words 'here' and 'arrived': they draw our attention to the context of one of our research landscapes (Italy, Torino), in which forced migrants arrive and engage in intercultural encounter, and which we will now explore.

2.2.1 The national context

Fig. 6: map of Italy showing its main cities, including Torino (Turin) in the North-West
Source: https://www.guideoftheworld.com/italy-map.html

Italy's geographical position, surrounded by the Mediterranean Sea, means that in the context of forced migration into Europe it is often referred to as a country of first arrival, a 'major gateway into Europe' (Brekke and Brochman, 2014). As a schoolchild in Italy, I was taught that this geography was one of the reasons why the Roman Empire was able to expand as it did, in the times when the Mediterranean was called Mare Nostrum [Our Sea]: Italy's geographical position had brought power and empire, framed as positives. The Mediterranean today is a 'paradigmatic site of migration' (Palladino & Woolley 2018, p.130), and has increasingly become a space where the movement of people and the connection between its North and South shores is highly regulated (Mainwaring, C. 2019; Crawley et al. 2018); Italy's role as country of first arrival has been coopted into the narrative of military operations to save lives at sea (Pinelli 2013) but also to patrol seas and control the arrival of forced migrants on Europe's southern shores (McMahon & Sigona, 2018).

Italy's response to migratory arrivals has been critiqued for decades as being reactive, inconsistent and short-term. The *Legge Martelli* in 1990 introduced the *decreto di espulsione*, [decree of expulsion] which could be given to anyone deemed an 'illegal migrant' (Puggioni 2005). The Dublin Convention, of which Italy was a signatory, came into force in 1997 and meant that people could be returned to their country of first arrival in Europe (Hurwitz 1999). The *foglio di via* [literally, 'page of away' – a piece of paper bearing an individual order of expulsion] which was implemented as a result of this legislation meant that those migrants found to have first registered in another country had to leave Italy within 15 days. In 2002 the *Legge Bossi-Fini* made it more difficult for migrants to work, and even easier for them to be to be expelled (Colombo & Sciortino, 2003). Following national elections in 2018, a coalition government was formed with the *Lega Nord* as one of the two key partners; this populist party, led by Matteo Salvini, had long based its manifesto on populist, anti-immigration narratives and policy promises (Chiaromonte et al. 2018).

The picture is one of increasingly restrictive migratory policies. Delle Donne (1995) draws attention to the problems implicit in reactive, rather than pro-active, policies and systems; the *strategia dell'emergenza* [strategy of emergency] which has led to the enactment of ad hoc legislation reacting to the numbers of people

seeking asylum in Italy rather than presenting a consistent policy direction. This reactive approach was exemplified in the aftermath of Mu'ammar Ghaddafi's removal from power in 2012, which destabilised existing agreements - whereby Italy provide Libya with resources to keep migrants from attempting Mediterranean crossings - and led to the so-called '*Emergenza Nord Africa'* (North Africa Emergency). Meloni (2012) further elaborates on the human consequences for refugees caught in this system of emergency legislation, dependent on the political stance of the government at the time rather than on systematised and structured policy.

We see here arrival represented as 'emergency', echoing the the map in Fig 3 (p. 60). The emergency is posed by the fact of forced migrants arriving to Italy, rather than the situations of emergency which forced them to leave their countries. The restrictive policies listed above enact a response to that representation and the narrative of threat which it entails. Nicolosi (2019) argues that migration has become a 'symbolic resource' for political storytelling in Italy. The focus is shifted to the experience of those forced migrants who live in a sociopolitical situation influenced by representations of arrival as threatening emergency, with successive legislative reactions framed in the language of emergency and threat contributing to violence at a structural and systemic level, both symbolic and cultural (Nicolosi 2019). After the 2018 election, Salvini became Minister of the Interior and Deputy Prime Minister and rapidly implemented restrictive immigration policies and decisions, ranging from passing the anti-immigration *Legge Salvini* to closing Italian ports to boats carrying migrants (Camilli 2019). Cervi et al (2020) build on this trajectory of reactive and increased Othering in political discourse which led to the legitimisation of anti-immigrant sentiment which resulted in Salvini gaining power, arguing that the discourse of *emergenza* has helped populist parties like the Lega - Italy is presented as being thrown in to emergency by migrants; Italians suffer from this; the populist leader saves the nation by restoring normality and excluding the foreigners.

This reactive approach to legislation has also resulted in many ad hoc legalisation decrees called *Sanatorie* which have allowed people who migrated to Italy and were living there without legal recognition to legalise their residence status

and/or to acquire a work permit (Zincone 2004). These *sanatorie* have been part of the Italian State's reactive legislative approach to migration discussed above; they removed the 'problem' of 'irregular migrants' simply by allowing people to change their status into 'legal migrants'. The word is translatable as 'amnesty', but the translation does not carry across the Italian etymology whose roots lie in *sanare*, meaning 'to heal, to make healthy'. Is Italy made healthy by legalising migrant people? Or are these people made healthy by being legalised and accepted into Italy? What is the situation that is unhealthy and needs remedied? *Sanatorie* meant that undocumented migrants were regularised and therefore could bring their spouses and children to Italy (Bonifazi, 2007) - a humane result of the Italian State's failure to engage in in long-term, evidence-based policy building regarding migration.

Scholars (Puggioni 2005; Giordano 2014; Tarabusi 2022) argue that Italian institutions have also failed to develop a public system of reception for migrants, leading to a gap between the so-called *paese legale* [legal country] and *paese reale* [real country], and also to a high level of regional variation in implementing national provisions. This variation leaves room for flexibility in regional and sub-regional responses, including the flexibility to implement policies to welcome and integrate forced migrants. The 1998 Turco-Napolitano Law resulted in a National Fund for Migration Policies, used to develop regional integration policies. Although the national government deals with border controls, asylum and citizenship, integration is a regional matter (Campomori & Caponio, 2013), opening up the possibility of positive outcomes for migrants when regional administrations are given the power to create their own systems of reception. Schmidtke & Zaslove (2014) and Tarabusi (2022) describe the situation in Emilia-Romagna, a region which has historically been governed by left-wing local government, where integration is framed by local governmental organisations and agencies through a universalist, human rights perspective, where the rights of people in the host communities are not different from those of forced migrants who live with them.

Furthermore, the lack of unified public response at a national level is counterbalanced by other entities such as charities and the Catholic Church - which has historically managed a large proportion of local initiatives of welcome and support for migrants via its capillary networks and Caritas's charitable arm

(Marchetti 2016). Regional contexts are complex and variable, but it is in these more localised settings that organisations have leeway to develop systems of reception and welcome that create safety and facilitate intercultural encounter (Campomori & Caponio 2017).

2.2.2 Torino

One such context is Torino, the regional capital of Piedmont in the North-West of Italy. I chose to conduct fieldwork in Torino because I have longstanding personal and professional connections there, and because of its current social dynamics related to forced migration and its migration history, as discussed below.

From the second half of the 19th century, Italy was one of the European countries with the highest rates of emigration (King, 2002; Angel-Ajani, 2000); only recently did it shift to being a 'net importer' of migrants. Italy also saw large-scale internal migration, with millions of people moving from the relatively impoverished South of Italy to the more industrialised North, particularly during the years of the *miracolo economico* [economic miracle] which brought industrial and economic growth after the Second World War (Di Giacomo 2012). A history of wealth, power and industrialisation meant that Torino was a destination for hundreds of thousands of Italian internal migrants who came from the South of the country, largely as labourers for the heavy industry developing in Torino, driving rapid urban expansion (Cardano et al. 2018). In Torino an entire area of the city, Lingotto, was built to house the workers for the FIAT car factories.

The encounter between Southerners and Northerners often involved conflict and mutual resentment. Hostility against Southern Italians on behalf of Northern Italians has been a very real factor of national discourse for decades; the origins of the Lega Nord lie in harnessing the anti-immigrant sentiment of Northerners in the wealthy, industrialised regions of Lombardy and Veneto against Southerners (Vercesi 2021). While Pizzolato (2012) offers a more nuanced interpretation of this conflict through the lens of working-class solidarity, this socio-historical context is important in understanding the background for current xenophobic sentiment in Torino which is now largely directed against more visibly 'other' immigrants from outside Italy and Europe.

We have seen that Torino's history as a city of emigration and immigration is long and ongoing; the recent memory of conflict related to the dynamics of mass internal immigration is an important element of the city's cultural narrative (Cardano et al 2018); this plays a role in intercultural encounter. Stella (2001) argues that Italian cultural and political discourse around migration deliberately romanticises Italian migrants of the past as 'honest workers', ignoring how they were represented by receiving countries. He sources these extremely negative representations from historical archives, showing that they are uncomfortably close to how Italians now talk about people who migrate into Italy; and he makes the point that Italians need to confront a non-romanticised history of their own emigrations in order to better approach and deal with current immigrations into Italy. His argument links into the focus on narratives and representations of migratory journeys as being critically important in influencing intercultural encounter in contexts of forced migration.

Torino is still a destination for migrants who have journeyed from countries outwith Europe, arrived in the South of Italy, travelled North up the country and settled where there is more prosperity and employment (Bonifazi, 2007; Manocchi, 2012). The first comprehensive analysis of reception in Italy (Dossier Nausicaa, ICS 2000) showed that migrants from countries in the Global South were predominantly concentrated in central and northern regions, with parallels to Italy's historical trends of internal migration.

Following the pattern of regionalised systems of migration policy discussed in the previous section, the Municipality of Torino in 2006 created the 'Department of Integration' to develop an intercultural policy (Caponio & Donatiello, 2017). From 2007 onwards, the City Council supported the creation of *Case del Quartiere* [neighbourhood houses]: places whose declared aim is to 'accommodate, through intercultural activities, all citizens, from the youngest to the elderly, without discrimination by gender, nationality, social background and religious belief' (Casa del Quartiere di Torino, 2018). One of these - the *Casa del Quartere di San Salvario* - is where I conducted a significant portion of my fieldwork in Italy.

It is used by a refugee-led organisation which we shall call *Insieme* [Together] as a base for many of their activities and projects. I conducted participant observation of two of these. The first one was their Information Desk, which happened once a week. It was a space open to anybody who was a migrant and needed information - about anything, from housing to legal advice to reading through job applications to the best phone contracts. The Information Desk was run by volunteers from *Insieme* who were themselves refugees. A number of Italians (who were not refugees) also volunteered at the Information Desk. The second project I observed was the *Progetto Benvenuto* [the Welcome Project], which was planned and managed from the *Casa del Quartiere* but took place in the nearby Stazione di Porta Nuova, Torino's main railway station. The *Progetto Benvenuto* involved a small group of volunteers from *Insieme* waiting inside the station to greet people arriving off trains - people who were migrants, newly arrived in Torino, with no support or legal status. The *Insieme* volunteers provided these 'new arrivals' with a survival pack: a rucksack containing water, bread, a blanket and a map of places within San Salvario which provided shelter and food.

My main contact with *Insieme* was a person we shall call Karim, a man from Sudan who had been living in Italy for many years as a refugee. He was involved in organising many of *Insieme's* projects, as a volunteer, on top of his work as a language teacher of Arabic to Italians. Despite his many commitments he always had time to sit and chat with me over coffee, to show me around and introduce me to his friends and colleagues. Karim introduced me to Mamadou, the young man from Senegal whose words open this section and whom we will meet again in chapter 4. Through Karim I also met Reine, a woman from a country in the Middle East who worked as a volunteer at the Information Desk and as an Arabic language teacher - we will hear more of her words in chapters 4 and 6. In chapter 5 we will also meet Mariam and Elisa, volunteers volunteered at the Progetto Benvenuto in Stazione Porta Nuova.

Now it is time to consider Scotland, where more fieldwork encounters take place in the city of Edinburgh.

2.3 A research landscape: Scotland

The other day someone bumped into me
on Princes Street, it was, and then
they said, "Sorry, hen!"
and I walked on, wondering
why here a hen is a kind thing
to call someone.
(…)

From 'Words for Love', a poem by the Syrian Women's Group in Edinburgh

The above quote is the start of a poem co-written by the group. Like Mamadou's words in Torino, they focus the attention on where the speaker is now: far from their original home, in a new world, where people are affectionately called 'hen'. In this section we will consider Scotland's situation within the context of the UK regarding forced migration. We will then move to Edinburgh and meet the projects and places where I conducted fieldwork.

2.3.1 The UK context

Scotland's current situation in terms of asylum legislation is defined by its position within the UK which - like Italy - is a signatory to the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (UNHCR 1951). However, both media and political discourse surrounding migration in the UK have seen a growing trend towards hostility and deterrence (Mosselson 2021), with migration a key discourse used by politicians of different persuasions to support increasingly anti-immigration policies at a UK level (Tomkow 2020). The Glasgow Media Group (Philo, Briant & Donald 2013) argue that negative media accounts which delegitimise refugees act to then legitimise political action against them. In 2013, under a Conservative government, the Home Secretary authorised vans to patrol areas of London displaying large posters telling 'illegal' migrants to 'go home'. In 2015 the UK Labour Party released a red Labour Party mug bearing the slogan, 'Controls on Immigration'. This political and mediatic narrative is part of what has been termed the 'hostile environment' (Ang and Craig 2016, Griffiths & Yeo 2021), which has increasingly informed the UK government's approach to asylum legislation. The Borders and Nationality Bill recently proposed by the UK Conservative government

is an example and a culmination of such hostile narratives becoming translated into legislation (UK Parliament Human Rights Joint Committee 2021).

2.3.2 The Scottish context and Edinburgh

Within the current UK political system certain powers are devolved to the Scottish Government, but certain others - including the power to decide matters related to immigration - remain reserved to the UK government in Westminster. This means that Scotland has limited abilities to determine its own responses to migration due to certain powers being reserved to the UK government in Westminster.

Health and social care and education, however, are devolved powers, areas in which the Scottish government can make executive decisions. So, while Scotland can't control its borders or decide its immigration policy independently, it can legislate on areas of civic life - such as education and housing - which do impact on intercultural encounter and the integration of people who come to Scotland as forced migrants (q.v. Ager & Strang 2008). While not denying that the realities of racism and hostility towards refugees exist and persist in Scotland, for over a decade the Scottish Government has maintained a track record of promoting a different immigration policy compared to the UK government in Westminster. Within the limits of its devolved powers, the Scottish Government has developed its own policy documents regarding migration and integration (Scottish Government 2018), actively countering anti-immigration rhetoric by using the term 'New Scots'.

In terms of geography, Scotland is a country which most forced migrants reach by travelling on from a country of first arrival (unlike Italy). The biggest industrial city in Scotland – Glasgow - has seen many waves of internal migration, including forced migrants fleeing famine or dispossession, such as the Irish immigrants who came to the city following the potato famine of the mid-1800s or the Highlanders displaced from their lands as a result the Clearances in the late 18th and early 19th century.

More recently, in 2000, Glasgow City Council became the only local administration in Scotland to sign a dispersal agreement with the Home Office. From 2000 until 2015, approximately 10 per cent of the UK's total number of people applying for asylum were dispersed to Glasgow, totalling an estimated 20,000 (Mulvey, 2015). Asylum seekers and refugees from a wide variety of countries and communities were sent to Glasgow. A wealth of scholarship on different aspects of forced migration has focussed on Glasgow over the past two decades: for example, McFarland (1994) documents the situation of Bosnian refugees in Glasgow; Piacentini (2011) conducts an ethnographic study of African asylum seekers and refugees in Glasgow; Strang et al (2018) explore the experience of new refugees in Glasgow seeking to participate in the life of their new city. Furthermore, as a result of this new set of needs among the city population, a wide network of collaboration has developed between organisations throughout the city, connecting the various agencies and stakeholders involved in supporting the newly dispersed people seeking sanctuary there (Darling 2016).

Edinburgh City Council, on the other hand, did not sign an agreement with the UK Home Office to become a dispersal city, and since 2000 many of the agencies working in Edinburgh to support asylum seekers and refugees closed their offices in Edinburgh and moved their base to Glasgow, including the Scottish Refugee Council and the Refugee Survival Trust (the reference for this is my own personal experience - I worked for the Refugee Survival Trust as Development Manager before they moved offices to Glasgow). The GLIMER project, based at the University of Edinburgh, started in 2018 to investigate local governance and integration of refugees across various countries in Europe; but their UK study focusses on Glasgow, not Edinburgh. This thesis can therefore be seen also as a contribution to filling this gap in scholarly literature related to people who are forced migrants in Edinburgh.

Edinburgh's statutory and voluntary sectors were both galvanised and challenged by the city council becoming a local partner in the Syrian Vulnerable People Resettlement (VPR) scheme (Weir et al. 2018). The VPR scheme was started in the UK in 2015, when the UK government committed to resettling 20,000 refugees from Syria in local authorities across the UK over the next five years. The scheme, administered by the UK Home Office, co-ordinates arrivals with receiving local

authorities (Home office, 2016). The VPR scheme prioritises people who are victims of violence, vulnerable women and children, or in need of medical care. These people are assessed and selected in collaboration with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in countries bordering Syria, such as Jordan and Lebanon, where individuals have already been living in refugee camps (Weir et al. 2018).

Such systems of managing refugee arrivals are questionable on many levels, not least the fact that the people resettled are essentially passive recipients: of assessments, of decision-making processes outwith their control, of journeys to countries they do not choose. The VPR scheme could be seen as a tokenistic response which allows refugee agencies and governments to meet agreed targets of resettling refugees, but without having to negotiate the messiness of 'processing' refugee arrivals directly into the UK; in a sense, it is a system designed for offshore management of refugee arrivals.

Despite these critiques, the VPR scheme meant the arrival of Syrian families to local councils across the breadth of Scotland, with initiatives and projects aiming to facilitate welcome and positive intercultural encounter developing in many hyperlocal contexts across the country. One such project in Edinburgh is an organisation we will call 'Belonging', which had existed in the city for decades before 2015 with the aim to welcome all new arrivals regardless of their immigration status. Belonging offers free services for all New Scots. These include ESOL (English as a second or other language) tuition, befriending services and social events. Following the arrival of Syrian families through the VPR scheme, Belonging adapted and expanded its offerings to meet the needs of these new 'New Scots'.

One of these services was a 'Women's friendship group' specifically for Syrian women and their children. The group met weekly; as part of its programme, I facilitated monthly creative writing and ESOL sessions, where intercultural encounter was mediated by reading, discussing and co-creating poetry. We will return to the stories and poems of the Syrian Women's group in chapter 4.

Summary of Chapter 2

In this chapter I presented the landscapes in which fieldwork takes place, in the context of Europe: Italy and Scotland. I showed how representations of three different stages of forced migration - journey, arrival, integration - are relevant to this thesis for how they inform narratives which, in turn, influence the political and cultural context where intercultural encounters between forced migrants and receiving communities occur.

I then moved focus from a wider European context, zooming in (as it were) to the individual national contexts of Italy and Scotland, and finally the subnational localised settings of Torino and Edinburgh where fieldwork takes place.

Regarding Italy, a general overview of Italian migration policy highlighted the historical and ongoing lack of coherent migratory policy at a national level; instead there have been a series of reactive legislative decisions, often overtly hostile to migration. However, at regional and local levels there are a variety of actors who obviate for the absence or paucity of State management with localised initiatives which provide positive reception for migrant people, facilitating intercultural encounter and dialogue. One such localised context is Torino, a city with a strong history of emigration and immigration, where my fieldwork takes place. The section concluded by briefly introducing the main projects and actors involved in fieldwork.

I gave an overview of policies related to forced migration in the UK, noting that Scotland's devolved powers do not include control over migration policy. I also discussed how Scotland - within the limits of its devolved powers - has implemented a different direction regarding forced migration. Within Scotland, I looked at Edinburgh in the context of forced migration and the Vulnerable People's Resettlement scheme. Finally, I introduced the Syrian Women's group which will be a site of fieldwork, explored further in Chapter 4.

Chapter 3 - Tools: Methodology and Methods

I have considered the landscape through which the research journey travels, and interrogated scholars whose work will support and inform mine. I have identified the research questions which will guide my work. Now it is time to fill my travel bags with the tools which will best support me in the journey: the methodologies and methods which will help me look for answers to my research questions.

I begin this chapter by explaining, in section 3.1, why I choose a qualitative research framework for my research, and why I employ a comparative study design. I then discuss the methodology best suit my work: narrative inquiry. This is a process akin to choosing the best maps to guide my research journey. In section 3.2 I present the research methods which best complement and follow from these methodologies. These are the practical tools which I will employ during fieldwork - the methods which support the gathering, shaping and retelling of material, also known as data collection, analysis and presentation.

This thesis is permeated with questions related to dynamics of power and control, within social contexts of forced migration and within academic contexts of knowledge production and reproduction. These questions are explored in this chapter through reflections on ethical issues relevant to this thesis, in particular the learnings from scholarship and practices around multilingual and decolonising research practices. Including these at this point feels as important as checking that I have a reliable understanding of the code of conduct expected of travellers: an ethical grounding to guide my actions and choices throughout the next part of the research process.

3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 A qualitative research framework

Intercultural encounters are multifaceted interactions, dense with elements connected to identity, otherness and power dynamics (Liu & Kramer 2019). The personal and subjective nature of stories and narratives in this context means that this research project is best conducted within a qualitative research framework, which allows researchers to examine and reflect upon interactions involving the 'cultural other' (Holmes & O'Neill 2012). Qualitative methods are of importance in migration studies because they offer support with interpreting and representing lived experiences and the complex, multifaceted dynamics related to migration; an additional benefit relates to how qualitative research implies a certain degree of critical assessment of the reality being observed and scrutinised - a crucial component of migration research (Zapata-Barrero & Yalaz 2018).

A qualitative methodological framework can incorporate a variety of research approaches and methodologies (Beuving and de Vries 2015). This could be a ground for criticism: it might lead to the risk of dispersive questing through too many areas of scholarship (Alvermann et al., 1996). However, in the case of this thesis it allows me to interrogate scholarship spanning different academic disciplines such as those explored in the literature review above. Such a framework functions as a 'container' - like a trusty travel rucksack - in which to place a variety of maps and tools to support the research journey.

I move on having identified a qualitative research framework as the best choice for my work, both as a practical choice in order to best represent the many facets of encounter and narrative exchange observed, and as an ethical stance in terms of how I position myself as a researcher.

3.1.2 A methodological choice: narrative inquiry

To recalibrate, before approaching the forest of possible qualitative methodologies, I consult my compass: the research questions. They remind me that the focus of my work is the exchange of narratives and stories in the context

of migratory settings and multilingual, intercultural encounter. This prompts me to look back at the scholarship explored during section 2.2 of the literature review, in particular the work around narrative inquiry which has been described as the study of experience as story (Connelly and Clandinin, 1999) and a way of understanding experience (Connelly and Clandinin, 2000). It is the process of gathering information for the purpose of research through storytelling, with the researcher then writing a narrative of the experience and analysing what was observed (Rally et al. 1994 - 2012).

This methodology suits and supports my research - both in terms of aims and of process. With regards to process, narrative inquiry accepts that any situation is 'nested within an almost endless array of other situations and, rather than sort them out, seeks to understand and explore the layers of complexity involved in living a life.' (Downey and Clandinin 2010, p. 388). Furthermore, narrative inquiry as methodology has roots in seeking to address, resolve or heal tensions within relationships (Clandinin & Rosiek 2007). Hurwitz, Greenhalgh, and Skultans (2004) describe how narrative research emerged within the field of medicine as a response to ethical problems in medical research and the need to heal the adversarial relationship these problems had precipitated between patients and doctors. Vaz (1997) documents the use of oral narrative research within women's studies in the context of histories of African women and their struggles against patriarchy, racism and colonialism.

Such a methodology fits with my research aims, within the context of intercultural encounter which can feature conflict as well as dialogue and transformative learning. It also works as a methodology posited as a response to epistemologies which privilege more positivistic approaches to knowledge (Clandinin, 2006): its focus is on subjective story and the analysis thereof (Lieblich et al, 1998), which is important in research such as mine where subjectivity and experience are of critical importance within narrative exchange.

Ladegaard & Phipps (2020) observe that a positivist empirical approach also still dominates much of humanities and social science research. I identify my work as being part of scholarship which critiques the positivist elements of assessment inherent in the approaches of many organisations (both governments and funding

agencies) who seek to manage and control migration and migrants as numbers or statistics rather than people with complex lives, stories and perspectives. However, it is important that this thesis enters into dialogue with more positivist approaches to dynamics of intercultural encounter and forced migration, in order to achieve the research aim of bridging the world of indicators required by funders and policy makers to prove a project's worth, and the world of lived emotions and stories of intercultural encounter - to provide a resource of practical use in understanding and explaining 'what works'.

Furthermore, this thesis is itself funded, researched and presented in the context of academic parameters which feature measurable, specific requirements of progress and evaluation. It is also true that the community education projects observed during fieldwork also need to operate within similar requirements if they are to continue receiving funding. Finally, and no less importantly, the individual research participants who are forced migrants have to constantly navigate a balance between their personal truth-experience and the positivistic requirements of dominance systems - such as home office forms and residence permits - which hold power over their lives.

After these reflections on balance and dialogue, it is reassuring to read that Connelly and Clandinin frame narrative inquiry in terms of relationship and negotiation:

> 'As we enter into narrative inquiry relationships, we begin the ongoing negotiations that re part of engaging in a narrative enquiry. We negotiate relationships, research purposes, transitions, as well as how we are going to be useful in those relationships' (Connelly and Clandinin 2006:47).

Yes: this is what I need: a methodology which supports negotiation and dialogue, while also having a history of use to challenge the dominant inquiry as well as to sustain alternative and counter narratives or newly arrived narratives of being (Dowey and Clandinin, 2010).

Critiques of this methodological choice point out that, due to its focus on subjective story (Lieblich et al. 1998), research employing narrative inquiry is very difficult to replicate, and its conclusions are hard to apply to other contexts (Rally et al., 1994-2012). This is in keeping with critiques of qualitative research

methodologies in general (Lancy, 1993). However, all the scholarship considered thus far in the light of my research aims, context, and questions confirms the wisdom of employing narrative inquiry as the key qualitative methodology to guide my research.

Connelly and Clandinin developed a methodological model of a three dimensional narrative enquiry space to help define and guide an enquiry, drawing on Dewey's philosophical understanding of human experience as an unfolding inquiry:

> 'Narrative inquirers work within a metaphorical three dimensional narrative inquiry space in which they use a set of terms that point them backwards and forward (Dewey's continuity); inward and outward (Dewey's interaction); with attentiveness to place or a series of places (Dewey's situation)' (Downey and Clandinin 2010, p. 385)

In other words, narrative studies

> 'have temporal dimensions and address temporal matters: they focus on the personal and the social in a balance appropriate to the enquiry: and they occur in specific places or sequences of places' (Connelly and Clandinin, 2000 P. 54),

This model provides me with specific elements - time, interaction and place - to guide and inform my methods of analysis, as discussed in the following section. It also highlights the importance of place as an element of narrative inquiry, adding another layer to the discussion of space and place begun in chapter 1.

Furthermore, narrative inquiry addresses concerns I held around the part-time, prolonged nature of my fieldwork, as expressed by this diary extract:

> Just outlined the Fieldwork Plan for my ethics application. Non-continuous presence spread over 18 months: how is this going to work? I mean, it is what it is because there are no feasible alternatives, but I have no idea if it will be ok and have found no examples of people doing part-time fieldwork. Not so many part-time PhDs in general, actually. Will not being continuously involved with projects mean that

relationships and trust are interrupted? What could the positive effects be? How can I stay open to the gifts of part-time research and not be distracted by these worries?

Connelly and Clandinin help to answer these questions and assuage these doubts, in their understanding of narrative inquiry as

> '…collaboration between researcher and participants over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction within milieus. An enquirer enters this matrix in the midst and progressing in the same spirit, concluding the inquiry still in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of the experiences that made up people's lives, both individual and social (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.20).

Over time. Yes: that is it: In Scotland, where I live, I follow projects on a monthly basis, spread out over a period of 18 months. I spend two to three continuous weeks at a time immersed in research contexts in Italy, again spread over 18 months. I return to places of fieldwork, connect and reconnect over time; build a collaboration on existing relationships, work 'in the midst' of stories and lives ongoing; know that when 'over time' I start, leave, return, begin or conclude I will be doing so 'in the midst' of stories and lives (mine included) which continue beyond my research. This story-based approach provides a perspective within which I am no longer alone, undertaking a task without comparisons or guidance to help me - rather this thesis is one of many stories, and I am one of many individuals, bringing my questions and observations as I work.

3.1.3 Comparative research

This thesis moves between community education projects in Scotland and Italy, observing different forms of narrative exchange in the context of intercultural encounter between forced migrants and receiving communities. Intercultural encounter in itself implies elements of comparison, in that experiences and stories are shared and considered in light of people's different cultural perspectives. Fitzgerald (2012) notes the increasing importance of comparative studies in exploring dynamics relating to migration and learning from meaningful similarities in different contexts. Comparison is part of the fabric of this thesis: an important

element in my seeking to answer the research questions, and a key element of methodological choice.

My research is part of a development in the field of comparative studies which has moved away from using the nation-state as key unit of analysis and actor and considers instead sub-national spaces as spatial units of comparison (Glick and Çalar, 2009). Schmidtke & Zaslove (2014) conduct a comparative study which provides helpful models for my thesis: a comparison between Emilia Romagna (a region in Northern Italy very close to where my own fieldwork takes place) and North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany, investigating different regional integration policies. A similar geographical choice is made by Papageorgiou (2006) when comparing approaches to adult education in Glasgow and Athens, choosing a comparative study approach because it permits learning from 'different educational and socio-cultural traditions' and 'provides insights of diverse practice' (Papageorgiou 2006, p. 15).

While it is helpful to study examples that support and inform my research, it is equally useful to consider potential risks and limitations. In terms of comparative studies, one risk is losing sight of specific dimensions of commonality against which to compare different contexts and cases; on the other hand, focussing too narrowly on specific predefined dimensions of comparison can risk blinding the researcher to unexpected and valuable findings (Jimenez 2010) . Studies based on very specific units of comparison can be limited in that they fail to consider wider perspectives and trends in favour of the hyper localised (Bray & Thomas 1995). To avoid these risks, I must hold fast to the sense of purpose animating my research and give 'explicit and careful thought to what how and why' I am comparing (Bloemraad 2019 p. 595).

I choose to compare Edinburgh and Torino for several reasons. On a personal level, I have strong connections with both places: I am a bilingual citizen of both Italy and Scotland; I have lived and worked in Edinburgh for over a decade; I have spent time in Torino for work and personal reasons over almost two decades. These personal elements intertwine with practical and professional advantages: my professional connections and experience in both cities mean that I can plan and conduct my research as someone known and trusted, familiar with and in both

contexts, moving between them with ease. Choosing Edinburgh as a research context also addresses a gap in scholarship: as discussed in section 1.3, most research on forced migration within Scotland has until now focussed on the city of Glasgow. The specific projects I will compare share the following characteristics: they all engage in community education projects employing various forms of narrative exchange; they are run by and for the benefit of people who are forced migrants.

I turn to the framework for integration developed by Ager and Strang (2008) and presented as as a comparative tool for supporting my analysis of narrative exchange observed during fieldwork. As discussed in Chapter 2 (q.v. Fig. 5 on page 69), this framework focuses on multiple levels of social and personal interaction relevant to integration in contexts of forced migration. While my thesis is not directly concerned with investigating integration, intercultural encounter is an essential element of integration processes and experiences. Many of the domains pertinent to integration, as described by Ager and Strang's framework - such as language and cultural knowledge, rights and citizenship, social connections and rights - are also relevant to intercultural encounter in contexts of forced migration.

It is important to acknowledge that this is a set of indicators developed in the context of Scotland and not Italy; however, Part 2 of this thesis shows that the domains presented within this framework are present and relevant in Torino as well as Edinburgh. Furthermore, Ager & Strang's framework has been employed by researchers and policy-makers in countries across the world to investigate refugee integration (Lichtenstein et al. 2019) and has been adapted to contribute to surveys such as the Refugee Integration Survey and Evaluation (RISE) in the U.S.A. (Puma et al. 2018).

This framework of indicators also presents a way of bridging subjective experiences of encounter with the quantifiable measures of indication required by policy makers. I refer to these indicators as a way of relating qualitative data (for example stories and observations made during a creative writing ESOL session, featuring highly subjective content concerning emotion and identity) to indicators that can be correlated to the quantitative needs of funding organisations (such as

which elements of language and cultural knowledge were learned by participants), in order to inform observations and analysis of what 'works' in the context of intercultural encounter and forced migration.

3.1.4 Researching multilingually

Another element which is part of the fabric of this thesis is the multilingual nature of my work. In a sense, this is not so much a methodological as an overarching approach: it is the way the work happens, so much a part of my methodological approach that it lies outwith and beyond any hierarchy of epistemological importance or precedence; it is not a choice, it is a fact. Reflecting on this statement, however, other observations and realisations surface. Firstly, I note that there is a 'filter' process acting on the multilingualism of my work, whereby the many languages employed during fieldwork are filtered out to result in the monolingual thesis document which you are reading now. Thus:

Fieldwork: English, Italian, Arabic and French
Sources: English, Italian and Arabic
Thesis: English

This 'filter' is established by requirements of the academic institution within which I operate; but I cannot pretend not to be complicit in this manifestation of linguistic hegemony, because I am part of it and stand to gain many advantages from it (not least, but not only, the scholarship payments granted me to complete this thesis, and the prestige and privilege of holding a PhD once it is complete). So, while there may not be a deliberate epistemological choice in conducting this research multilingually, the way in which I then process and present it holds epistemological significance: unspoken, but very loud, is the implication that there is indeed a hierarchy of knowledge expressed through the specific (European, colonial) languages which are privileged as ways of accessing and sharing knowledge.

Looking at the above representation of languages used, I also see that my own multilingualism is heavily Eurocentric: it is ‘simply that of one who is fluent in way too many colonial languages’, to quote Phipps (2019, p. 8). This too carries epistemological consequences in terms of which knowledge I can most easily access: whose words, whose stories.

3.1.5 Language(s), data, consent: methodological and ethical concerns

Not only whose stories: whose languages? With this question we turn to the ethical aspects of multilingual work such as this thesis. Only one of the languages I speak (Arabic) is not European. This means that while I can encounter some people and their stories through a language medium which is not Eurocentric, many conversations and all analysis are conducted in Italian or English - colonial languages - which can be critiqued as perpetuating patterns of hegemony (Gramsci 1971, 1975) through my work. What can I do as a researcher to address these ethical problems? I can continue to name the issues as I observe them recurring. I can maintain an approach based on ‘negotiation, respect, mutuality’ (Clandinin 2006, p. 52). I can continue to ask questions that problematise aspects of research which contribute to extractive models of knowledge production.

All these things are hard to remain aware of and to enact: they go against the years of formative training with European centres and modes of knowledge. This is the hard work of unlearning privilege (Spivak 2006) and decolonising my academic practice (Phipps 2019) in order to avoid the reification of intercultural relationships and knowledge about the ‘stranger’ (Ahmed 2000). Scholarship engaged with the work of decolonising multilingual academic practice recognises that it is an ongoing endeavour which requires researchers from the global North to consider their own positionality and privilege (Phipps 2019) before taking steps to change power imbalances engendered by persistent colonial modes of knowledge extraction and production (Tuhiwai Smith 2012, Thiong’o 1986).

My discomfort around the language connected to ‘data’ and ‘data collection’ relates to this endeavour. Like Bagelman, I am ‘uncomfortable with identifying what I learned as ‘data’ and the exchanges as ‘data collection’’ (Bagelman 2015,

p. 55). The language around 'data' is problematic because it is rooted in epistemologies which privilege statistics and numbers over experience and stories. This thesis is concerned with messy research material which stretches across borders between disciplines the research participants move across borders between countries and cultures. The word 'messy' is used by Phipps and Gonzales, who observe that intercultural research is a context that 'spills out and overflows in unpredictable and messy ways' (Phipps and Gonzalezs, 2004: 3). How can neat 'data' fit here?

By choosing narrative inquiry as a methodology, and research methods which centre narrative, I can channel this messiness and counter the language of 'data' through language and practices connected to 'stories'. This allows me to move from a discourse of data gathering, processing, and management to practices which involve listening, exchange, the building of trust and the bridging of different experiences and perspectives. People become keepers, tellers and givers of stories rather than 'research subjects'; 'data' becomes 'events', 'stories', 'observations'.

Data - how to gather it, keep it and share it - is also central to the ethical approval process necessary for continuing research within a University system. Phipps (2013) summarises the limitations of university ethical approval procedures thus:

> ' I have become aware of the gulf between three key poles of research:
> (i) the normative nature of methods taught (qualitative; interviews as a default for qualitative research) and their compliance with a range of institutional codes all ensuring 'methodological hygiene' to borrow Deborah Cameron's phrase (1995);
> (ii) the intercultural subject in all its complexity as colonial, hybrid and decolonizing subject;
> (iii) the increasingly legalistic frame-works at work in ethics committees and the recourse to laws on data protection and intellectual property, which force and reward normative methodologies peer review, ethics committees, promotions, funding bodies, research assessment regimes.'
> (Phipps 2013, p. 18)

This research project was formed by observing the tension between the realities of complex, messy intercultural encounter and the requirements of funding systems which need information and events to be presented in a defined, replicable way. In going through the process of gaining ethical approval for my

research, I realised that I was encountering the same tension, as a result of the 'gulf' described by Phipps in the above quote.

Connelly and Clandinin help address this tension by describing 'ethics as being about negotiation, respect, mutuality and openness to multiple voices' (Connelly and Clandinin 2006 p.52). A shift in perspective: what if the concepts of relationship and negotiation can also be applied to the institutions and requirements within which this thesis evolves? I am instantly encouraged: while I know that I must 'do more than fill out required forms for institutional research ethics boards (Connelly and Clandinin 2006:52), I now feel able to do so in a way that is more open and flexible.

This shift in perspective, supported by my methodology of choice, also gave me confidence to employ a negotiated, creative approach to another aspect of the research process which I found deeply problematic: consent forms. This process implies ethical requirements that are not necessarily compatible with the cultural requirements of research participants. An example of this is the model of consent forms that require a date and a signature from participants; my work with people who are seeking sanctuary has repeatedly shown that people are very reluctant to sign anything when they have escaped countries and systems where power is often abused through bureaucracy and signed forms. This is supported by the Association of Anthropologists of the UK and the Commonwealth (ASA) who recognise that 'standard procedures for obtaining written consent can be problematic' (ASA 2011, p.2).

I made the case for consent to be given orally as well as through signature, employing negotiation with the systems that dictate ethical requirements, arguing that this request reflected my research practice in the field, where intercultural encounters are places for negotiation and contestation, in which ethics arise from the moment of the encounter itself (Frimberger 2011). Negotiation and dialogue worked: ethical approval was granted. Narrative inquiry was confirmed as a methodology which supported, informed and enriched my research work. I was able to move forward and plan encounters and conversations with research participants and develop the research methods discussed in the following section.

3.2 Methods

> 'To listen and to tell a rush of stories is a *method'*
> Tsing (2015, p.37, italics in original).

The above quote from Tsing reminds me of the validity of listening and telling stories, which are central elements in my fieldwork. This section details how I went about gathering stories and other research material; shaping that material through analysis; and retelling the stories I encountered as part of an academic thesis.

3.2.1 Gathering: conversations, participant observation, field notes, listening (data collection)

The moments during fieldwork in which stories best flowed, connections were made, insights were reached or shared - these all occurred during conversations. Not interviews: conversations, when I privileged open questions and listening, and entered into dialogue with other people in settings where the power disparity between 'researcher' and 'participant' was, as much as possible, minimised. I adopted, in the words of Bagelman, 'an intentional pedagogical flexibility between the roles of [...] researcher and the researched – subject and object – knower and known. In contrast to the interviewer and interviewee, there are two (or more) speakers in a conversation.' (Bagelman 2015, p. 55).

This approach - seeking out and returning to conversations, honouring exchange and dialogue rather than focussing only on formal interview approaches - allowed me to maintain flexibility and agility in my research approach, freeing me up to be alert to the seemingly unimportant 'small stories' (Hannigan 2014 p.2) which often proved to be important clues from which new insights derived. I employed methods of conducting semi-structured and unstructured interviews drawn from the fields of oral history and biographical narrative (Wengraf, 2001), informed by the writings of Gramsci on hegemony (1971, 1975), as well as Freire (2000) and hooks (2003) on the dynamics of power relevant to working with non-hegemonic groups. In practice, this meant that I started by introducing myself, usually in the 'dominant' language of the country we were in (English or Italian), and immediately asked which language the participant would feel most comfortable

using. If I could speak that language, we used it; if not, talking about languages became a way of beginning our interaction.

I also employed participant observation as a method which allows for the gathering of rich ethnographic material (Holmes and O'Neill 2012). While it has been criticised as providing only 'superficial information' (Touraine 1981), many ethnographic researchers find that it is a fruitful research method, in some research contexts more so than interviews (Pink, 2009: 89). It allowed me to observe behaviours, encounters and exchanges within groups settings - such as the Information desk in Torino or the Syrian Women's Group in Edinburgh, both described in Chapter 4 - which I would not have been able to do in individual conversations. It helped me establish relationships of trust within groups, which then led to exchanges conversations with individual research participants who felt able to trust me after having observed me as part of a group for a while. In terms of consent, which is so closely linked to trust - many people refused to sign a written form, saying that they 'had had enough of forms' or 'didn't trust forms'. They gave their consent verbally and were happy for me to record this via voice message or by writing it down in my notebook alongside their name or chosen pseudonym, as they preferred.

To record material I employed field notes. During individual conversations (for example, over coffee at a cafe or in someone's house) I brought with me a notebook, which I kept open between myself and my interlocutor. On the open page I drew a mind-map which illustrated the key elements I was interested in exploring - for example encounter, story, and narrative exchange. As the conversations evolved, the visual presence of the mind-map on the notebook helped both me and my interlocutor return to these elements in an unforced way. With the notebook open and visible, I would write notes as the conversation evolved, in a language which my interlocutor could understand, without looking at the page so that I could maintain eye contact with interlocutor and use my left hand to gesticulate. My writing hand and the notebook became a part of the setting, usually something that neither of us look at; if my interlocutor wished to read or check my notes, I handed over the notebook and invited them to read and add what they wished. I made sure that pages relevant to other people were removed beforehand, to safeguard confidentiality. I also drew and stuck things

on the pages of my field notes - things like train tickets, leaflets, sweet wrappers, the little paper packets sugar comes in - and invited interlocutors to do so as well if they wished, creating field notes that were also like scrap books of individual conversations and their circumstances.

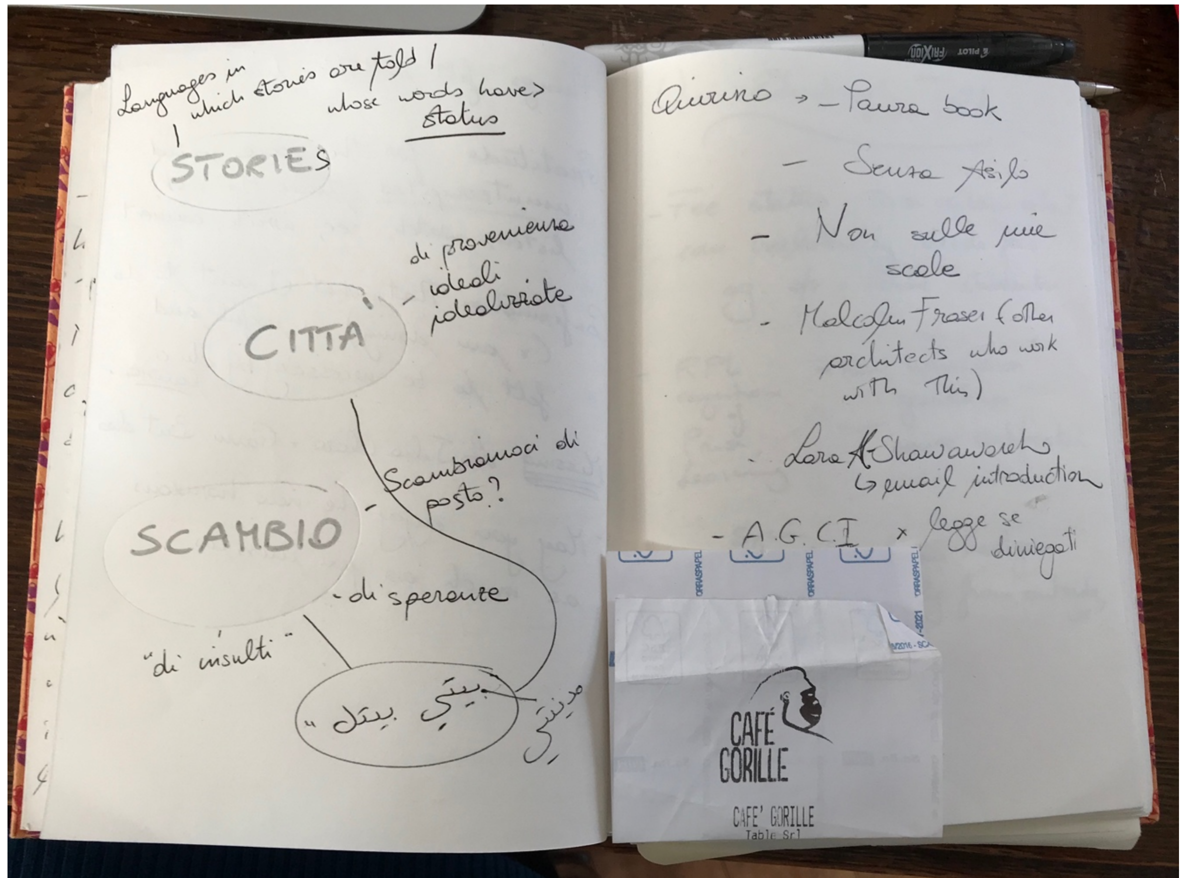

Fig. 7 Field texts. Photograph by author

This method worked much better than recording conversations on audio: most participants were extremely reluctant to have their voices recorded, fearful of negative consequences in terms of their residence status or political affiliation. In group observational situations I also kept my notebook open and visible, but it was less feasible to continuously write in it, especially if I was also facilitating the group. More often, the notebook helped as a visual reminder of what I was there to explore. I would concentrate on remembering events and conversations, take basic notes as prompts to memory later, and expand these to a written record of what was said and done as soon as possible after the group session ended.

Listening was a critical element of gathering material. Ingold makes the point of differentiating listening and hearing: listening is '… Not just hearing' and happens when 'perception is grounded in an act of attention. Like watching and feeling, listening is something people *do*.' (Ingold 2000, p. 24, italics in original). Active listening, therefore, is a deliberate doing. It is intangible in itself, although not so in its effects. By this I mean that when I was in conversation with interlocutors during fieldwork, when I was engaged in participant observation and undertook the work of active listening - as opposed to just being there hearing what people said - the effects were visible, translated into a change in the way people interacted with me (with more trust and openness) and in the quality of my research (more attentive to unexpected elements). This kind of listening involved my whole body, as well as my mind; I realised that this was a fundamental aspect of the engaged pedagogy of bell hooks (1994), who taught that the act of listening made bodies sites of dialogue.

When preparing to be present in conversations and participant observation, I reminded myself of the three-dimensional framework of narrative inquiry, with its awareness that narratives

> 'have temporal dimensions and address temporal matters: they focus on the personal and the social in a balance appropriate to the enquiry: and they occur in specific places or sequences of places' (Connelly and Clandinin, 2000 p. 54)

This greatly helped to focus my listening. I also wrote the following points at the beginning of my field notebook, as a reminder:

```
1. Listen to the story that is told: narrative
elements, structure, plot.

2. Pay attention to how the story is told: tone of
voice, language of speech, language of face and body,
medium used to tell the story (e.g. voice / text, /
drawing / photograph)

3. Pay attention to what other stories are referred
to, called upon, echoed (including within self)
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3.2.2 Shaping: sifting, searching (data analysis)

After the gathering of stories and observations came the work of sifting through field notes, searching for content that was relevant in the light of my research aims. During this process I was on the lookout for themes which:

- Related to elements which were key to the research questions. These themes were highlighted because of my focus, which was informed by the guiding research questions, which in turn were honed thanks to insights gained by journeying through the work of other scholars in the literature review.
- Recurred in different contexts. These were themes not initially anticipated, which challenged and disrupted my expectations. They became relevant because they were there, recurring, repeatedly surfacing in different contexts, independently of my initial focus.
- Connected and reconnected. By this I mean those themes which created connections between contexts and stories - for example, the theme of scarcity in encounters and stories linked to conflict; or the theme of hospitality surrounding the drinking of coffee and tea in a variety of fieldwork contexts. This aspect is related to, but not the same as, recurrence.

Narrative inquiry helped me to keep focussed while sifting through the very large amount of 'data' I had gathered during fieldwork. In line with my methodology of choice, I analysed stories as expressions of experience, considering elements of these stories within the three-dimensional framework of narrative inquiry: elements related to personal and social interactions; to temporal aspects; and to place.

Conversation analysis was an important element of the analysis process, helping me to examine the linguistic and structural features of conversation between people to understand how individuals use categories to construct an oral universe (Silverman 2004). However, conversation analysis was not sufficient to achieve my research aims, because its focus is so closely on the transcribed text of conversations. Narrative analysis helped, because I also needed to look at how and why stories were told as they were, and their effect on others (Riessman 2008; Wells 2003). I leaned on thematic narrative analysis and discourse analysis

(Reissman 2005; Oakeley 1981; Dunn 2005; Bryman 2008; Lyons 2010) to understand the wider cultural meanings and narratives linked to the material gathered (Willig 2008), the social discourses which shaped the experiences expressed through stories (Willig 2003), and the ways in which individuals (myself included) produced discourse and were also products of wider social discourses (Edley 2001).

I worked to relate themes which occured and recurred in different research contexts in order to identify commonalities or differences which were relevant in the light of the research aims and questions. Having selected a qualitative research approach helped to keep me aware that there was no need to justify all variables between situations and interactions observed: here, too, the research questions serve as a guide and a reminder of what I needed to focus on. This process was helped by the use of mind maps and notes, colour coding, post-its with symbols referring to different themes and narrative elements all helped consider and analyse relevant elements from field texts.

Sifting through stories gathered in contexts of intercultural encounter in migratory contexts, where dynamics of belonging and othering converge with different cultural understandings of story, it became clear that ethical considerations related to power and ownership of story were particularly relevant. Tuhiwai Smith warns against the risk of extractive research, expressing discomfort with the term ‘research’ itself and its associations with academics who build their careers researching the difficulties of minority groups from colonised cultures, viewing indigenous knowledge as something ‘to be discovered, extracted, appropriated and distributed’ (Tuhiwai Smith 2012, p. 58).

Narrative inquiry is a methodology weighted with ethical considerations surrounding trust, truth, and the power inherent in making and telling stories as an expression of knowledge. In order to maintain ‘openness to multiple voices’ (Clandinin 2006, p. 52), and to avoid extractive research practices based only on my own cultural understandings, I paid particular attention to a question related to narrative, power and agency: whose stories are most told, most valued, of most consequence? This method – which could be called iterative questioning - also supported me in retelling and presenting research material and findings.

3.2.3 Retelling (writing up)

I decided to present this thesis as a story, building a type of travel narrative (within the formal requirements and limits of academic requirements form) as a methodological choice, to establish a correlation between form and content. As the thesis evolved, I found that this way of presenting the story helped bring a sense of direction and clarity to my work.

As part of this choice, I employed vignettes as a narrative device. These are described by Bagelman as 'short prose-style representations of exchanges that highlight the textured and relational nature' of conversations and observations that took place during fieldwork (Bagelman 2015, p. 54). I found vignettes useful because they do not 'offer a plot like a traditional story (in the contained beginning, middle and end sequence), but rather serves to reveal something nuanced about context'. (ibid.). I chose to conduct analysis as the thesis-journey progresses, interweaving it with the descriptive text and reported conversation of these vignettes. I also decided to present images (photographs, drawings, maps) throughout the thesis, both as an illustration and expansion of text and as a starting point for discussion through words. I included poetry, too - my own as well as that made with and by others - as field texts. Poems formed an element of my own research reflections on the interactions and observations encountered.

Summary of Chapter 3

This chapter charted my journey through selecting narrative inquiry as the methodology which is best suited to support this research and identifying conversation and participant observation as key research methods to employ during fieldwork. Throughout, I considered ethical issues relevant work with people who are forced migrants, in particular practices related to data, language and consent as part of multilingual decolonising research practices.

This chapter concludes the first part of the research journey, which has helped prepare for Part Two, where we will now go to engage with the encounters and observations of fieldwork.

PART TWO - TRAVELLING

> 'A rush of stories cannot be neatly summed up. Its scales do not nest neatly; they draw attention to interrupted geographies and tempos. These interruptions elicit more stories' (Tsing, 2015:38)

In this central part of the thesis, I present the 'rush of stories' which happened during the months of fieldwork. How best to represent the complexities of encounters which generated encounters and led to unexpected realisations? How to express the nuances and counter-echoes of stories told in different languages? As described so accurately by Tsing in the quote above, it is impossible to summarise this sort of material in a linear manner: it is a path that loops back and forth between places, people and encounters, always involving stories and movement. I travelled between Scotland and Italy to observe the exchange of stories and was given stories by people who had travelled much farther than I had. The stories prompted journeys in my mind, and physical ones between the people telling them; they moved me emotionally and transported the storytellers into memories of other stories.

In order to relate form with content, and to represent the 'un-neat', interrupted, generative experience of gathering and shaping the content, this second part of the thesis is presented as a narrative of movement which begins with Chapter 4. Here I recount and analyse situations of narrative exchange as part of intercultural encounters which involved welcome, dialogue and solidarity. One site of these was a community centre in Edinburgh where group of women from Syrian met with volunteer befrienders and myself as facilitator, and in people's in homes. The other was at the *Casa del Quartiere* in San Salvario, Torino, a community centre where I took part in several Information Desk sessions and had conversations with people over coffee; and in the *ex-MOI*, an apartment complex originally built to house Olympic athletes in Torino, then left unoccupied, then occupied by people who were migrants from African countries.

Like most journeys, this too has moments of unexpected realisations and interruptions. I realise that maps and mapping are significant aspects of many fieldwork interactions observed. This realisation becomes an

interruption

to the anticipated flow of my thoughts and work, a catalyst for undertaking a detour to further explore the connection of maps with narrative exchange as relevant to my research. In order to do this, I return to consult relevant scholarship on maps and mapping in the middle of my fieldwork. Chapter 5 reflects this process: it is framed as crossroads in the journey. I choose to take an unexpected path and go on an excursus back into literature of narrative cartography and radical counter-cartography. In Chapter 6 I move to observe and analyse initiatives which explicitly feature the making and/or using of maps to facilitate narrative exchange in contexts of forced migration and intercultural encounter. Chapter 7 relates observations and analysis of narrative exchange in intercultural encounters which were conflictual and occurred in places very close to those in chapter 4.

In each chapter I begin with an introduction to the research context, then describe events and encounters through vignettes and reported conversations. These are presented in a different font to help the reader navigate the text, and interwoven with analysis, which follows the methodological parameters of narrative inquiry as described in chapter 3. Reflections on themes of significance, made in light of the guiding research questions, are summarised at the end of each section. These are then revisited at the end of each chapter, where I identify commonalities and relevant differences between the research contexts across all sections: in this way I conduct comparative narrative analysis in order to build up a picture of layered, connected and recurrent themes as the research-journey evolves. In Part Three, themes are (re)presented as part of a reflection on what I learned and found during the research journey.

After such a ‘neatly nested’ description (to paraphrase Tsing), I want to include a reflexive field text which tells a less neat story, where doubts and fears emerge. Within the journey-story of this thesis, it is important to show that things were not always as straightforward as presented in the linear plan presented as part of my formal applications for a scholarship or ethical approval. Presenting this as a research story within the wider thesis engenders interesting observations on (non)linearity, and it is also important because here, again, we see the tension

between the requirement for positivistic representations of experience, and the messy reality of that experience.

Below is an extract from an email I sent to my supervisors shortly before leaving for fieldwork in Italy:

> This coming Sunday I leave for an extended week of fieldwork in Italy, and I am feeling fairly stressed about it! Various wise souls […] assure me that they too were stressed pre-fieldwork and that it is all very normal and it will pass. I believe them, but still – it feels very silly to feel this nervous. Did you experience this, this vague ceaseless agitation and worry? The anxious voices are asking most usually at about 4am: What if you don't get enough data? Or the RIGHT KIND of data? Or any data at all? They are saying: You had better make this worth it, worth leaving your children for EIGHT WHOLE DAYS and [husband] taking a week's holiday to enable your leaving. You probably haven't set up nearly enough meetings, and all your questions are probably rubbish anyway.

This extract tells a story of 'vague ceaseless agitation and worry', which is revealed as not that vague when we look at the way in which these emotions are described. The use of Caps Lock identifies the two key pressures: time (EIGHT WHOLE DAYS) and data (of the RIGHT KIND). Continuous research time is an element which is scarce, due to family responsibilities; it must be used efficiently, filled with research activity which will 'get enough data'. Data, then, is also something presumed to be scarce. Also in short supply is confidence in research skills, with fears about my ability to set up 'enough' meetings, fear of having 'rubbish' research questions. It is a text filled with an abundance of doubt, expressed by the repeated use of question marks, 'probably', 'what if'. It also is a snapshot showing how much my approach to fieldwork was coloured by the assumption of scarcity and difficulty.

Both my supervisors responded by challenging this assumption. One addressed me directly, advising me that

> ‘whatever data you collect will be the data, and good/relevant/enough ... remember it is not only the direct questions you ask and the responses that people give you, it is also all those other non spoken (perhaps sung but also emoted) moments that build a picture’

Here the criteria of what constitutes the ‘right’ data are narrated as wide rather than narrow, including moments that do not come under the methodological labels of ‘interviews’ or ‘responses’ or ‘spoken’ things. This is an approach to ‘data’ which is based on the assumption that both data and my work will be enough, and good enough.

My other supervisor spoke directly to the anxious voices described in my email:

> Dear Voices,
>
> Thank you for visiting Esa. We recognise you well and know you are necessary to the work. You are welcome but make sure you do follow a few house rules.
> […]
> Please also remember that you are meant to leave as she gets on the plane. Before then its okay for you to hang around a bit but after that is too late to do any more preparation. We know you are a necessary part of preparing and doing good work.
> […]
> And make sure she knows all those rules about excess baggage and how easy it is to think what you have will not weigh enough on the airport scales – it always weighs and is worth more than you think when you come home.

This dialogue-response validated my fears by making them part of a story which was important to tell: yes, this is normal; no, it is not ‘very silly to feel this nervous’. It also placed my doubts within a temporal perspective whereby they were not only normal, but also useful to the researcher for a certain time - and after that certain time ‘as she gets on the plane’ the voices are ‘meant to leave’: their part in helping to prepare is finite. Here, too, is a reiteration that my ’not enough / not good enough’ thoughts, while valid in the present, will be revealed as based on false assumptions of scarcity in the future, after fieldwork.

This was a key moment in my journey as a researcher. It was an ontological shift from an expectation of scarcity, informed by the strictures of official requirements and the definitions of academic literature, to a perspective of abundance, whereby both I and whatever data I collected would be good enough. Even the voices of doubts, in this new perspective, were a necessary part of the wider story. And my story was itself part of a wider narrative featuring many other researchers and stories.

I arrived ready for a ‘rush of stories’.

Chapter 4: Encounter and welcome

(...)
'and here
we gather together'
(...)
Lines from 'Gathering', a poem by the Syrian Women's Group

This chapter considers intercultural encounter which involve gathering in dialogue, welcome and solidarity. These encounters occur in places specifically created to foster positive encounter and dialogue. In Edinburgh, I focus on a series of workshop sessions facilitated by myself with a group of Syrian Women resettled as refugees in Edinburgh. This is held in a community centre used by a community education and integration project run by the 'Belonging' organisation, a refugee-led organisation which works to welcome New Scots to Edinburgh. In Torino, I observe and participate in the setting of the Casa del Quartiere [Neighbourhood House], in the quartiere [neighbourhood] of San Salvario. The Casa del Quartiere is the setting for the Information Desk run by 'Insieme', a refugee-led project supporting forced migrants in the city.

4.1 Edinburgh: the Syrian women's group: some background

In this section I present material gathered during participant observation of creative writing workshops involving a group of women from Syria who were resettled in Scotland via the Vulnerable People Protection (VPR) scheme discussed in section 2.3 above. This participant observation involved different complexities compared to Torino, because I was not only engaging in the workshops as a participant observer: I was also facilitating the workshops. This fact caused me initial concerns due to its impact on dynamics of power, consent and trust; below I describe how these were addressed and resolved, and the general format of the workshops.

This group of women who are refugees from Syrian meets weekly as part of a programme of supporting New Scots run by an organisation we will call

'Belonging'. In 2018 I began to facilitate monthly creative poetry and wellbeing workshops host workshops, fitting into the group's programme of weekly meetings, as part of my work for another organisation (let us call it 'Reading Together') which brings books and people together through shared reading and creative writing. This is relevant because it meant that I was not being paid by 'Belonging', therefore I did not have any conflicts of interest in my work as a research. Consent was obtained from 'Belonging' and from 'Reading Together' before I started recording participant observation. I verbally explained my research aims to the participants, as well as the fact that they could choose not to participate and therefore I would not record their words. I then asked if they wanted to sign consent forms - and all refused. 'We have signed enough forms!', one woman said. Another added, 'Yes, too many forms in the UK. And in our country too, we had to sign many papers, many papers for the government, and look where it got us!'. A third woman, who is Kurdish, said 'We Kurds do not trust papers. They only betray us'.

Forms, here, were a type of text which brought up references to past stories of betrayal, an excess of bureaucracy which did not bring positive things. This reaction happened with all women, who were from a very diverse range of religious, socioeconomic and linguistic backgrounds, as well as from many different areas within Syria. Some spoke Arabic but hardly any English; some spoke Kurdish but hardly any Arabic; their English language level ranged from beginner to proficient (to use levels drawn from ESOL practice). They shared a nationality (in the sense of being Syrian) and the way they arrived in Edinburgh (as resettled refugees through the VPR scheme).

In theory workshops lasted for one and a half hours, but timetables were largely ignored in favour of the flexible approaches to timekeeping dictated by getting lost on the way, the delays inherent in having small children, fasting or just forgetting the time. Our sessions were relaxed, with children of all ages often in attendance too. One particular woman from Syria, who we shall call Sara, was the lynchpin of the group. She spoke Kurdish, Arabic and English, translating when needed for the women who spoke only Kurdish, helping me when I forgot Arabic words, keeping us all up to date with messages and reminders on the group WhatsApp chat. A variety of befrienders from the Welcoming also came along and

contributed with support, ideas, smiles and playing with the children so the women could participate in a less distracted way. They were mostly Scottish, with some coming from England and one from mainland Europe. Three of the volunteer befrienders in particular feature here - let's call them Alice, Marina and Julia - because they were always present and active within the group.

Each month a different poem was the starting point for varied multilingual exchanges, some language learning, a lot of group chat and also creative writing. I selected the poem, according to the following criteria: it had to be in English (because the group wanted to learn English); of a complexity which was at the same time a learning challenge and also understandable; connected to a theme which could constitute a topic of both conversation and language learning (such as Burns Night, or summertime, or light returning).

Throughout each workshop, I took notes of what was happening and what people were saying. As a facilitator, I read the original poem; explained the meaning of vocabulary and the context of the poem; invited women to respond to the poem and express their reactions and opinions. Participants were invited to write their own sentences and words, but all the Syrian women preferred to write down vocabulary and asked me to write down their sentences. They knew that creating a group poem was part of the workshop process, and often indicated the expressions I should transcribe: 'Write that down, write that down'. After the workshop I collated my notes transcribing their reactions, shaped them into a poem and shared it on the group WhatsApp, inviting all and any comments or suggestions for changes.

As a participant observer, I listened and watched for interactions and events related to narrative exchange and intercultural encounter. I noted these down in the same pages as my facilitator transcriptions, demarcating research observations by marking with a star relevant sections of my notes, and then transcribing them into my research field journal. This process helped to remind me of what happened during the workshops, as well as enabling me to reflect on my own positionally in the different roles I inhabited.

In this section I will discuss three particular workshops and the poems which grew from them, as these featured interactions which are significant in the light of the research questions guiding this thesis through different aspects and dynamics of intercultural encounter facilitated by narrative exchange - in this case, centred around poetry.

A wee reminder to help the reader navigate: vignettes are written in the Times New Roman font, with analysis resuming in the present tense and the main Trebuchet font.

4.1.1 Digging, gathering

We met in the usual place: a community centre created out of a small, white detached bungalow in a street lined with small, white detached bungalows. This was in a part of Edinburgh close to a stadium, a transport hub, a park and a big road, but this place is quiet and 'very nicely safe', as Sadiah said when she arrived at the same time as I did, 'nice for the children as well'. Her two young children were already making for the toys which had been laid out on the floor by the befriending volunteers, at a strategic distance from the big table around which the group of Syrian women sat. Sara was already here too, and had set on the table a big metal teapot of hot water. From the nearby kitchenette she had also brought out an assortment of mugs, fruit, teabags; milk and sugar, and sachets of instant cappuccino mix. Gradually other women arrived, settled their children, helped themselves to food and drink, greeted each other with three kisses in the Syrian way they had taught me too.

The conversation was mostly in Arabic, apart from two women who had arrived after everyone else and were new to the group. They sat speaking to each other in Kurdish at one end of the table. Sara went to sit next to them and gently introduced them to the me at their end of the table. They arrived in Edinburgh two weeks ago. Sara served as the bridge initially between old members of the group and the new arrivals; then one of the older women - Hala - sat next to Sara, served the new arrivals tea and asked, 'Do you speak Arabic?' It turned out that they did, and that they had enough English to introduce themselves to the other people present: let's call them Gul and Nada. The other Syrian women welcomed them with expressions of greeting and blessing on their safe arrival in Arabic and Kurdish. Hala then made a joke about the terrible Scottish tea and coffee, and everyone laughed.

This vignette shows the dynamics of welcome and hospitality within the group. Sara is the person who usually provides continuity with her presence: she is there every week and creates an atmosphere of welcome by preparing refreshments, remembering everyone's name, recognising who is new from week to week. I observe that welcome becomes a practice shared within the group, with women like Hala who were once 'new' taking on the role of building connections and conversations in tandem with Sara's active remembering of names and practices of hospitality.

In this context, hospitality and welcome are closely intertwined, and expressed in the action of offering tea and coffee. This is laden with cultural connections; it is not a story, but a gesture which contains the memory of other similar gestures made in the past (in a time before leaving Syria) and in a different place (at home in Syria), while also containing the realities of the new time and place inhabited in the present (living in Scotland now as refugees). These temporal connections are made explicit by Hala's joke about how terrible the tea and coffee are in Scotland - the difference between then and there, now and here, are softened by deprecatory humour which is shared by everyone present.

The Syrian women laughed and some seemed to enjoy the fact that Hala was voicing a sentiment which might seem 'ungrateful' and runs against cultural mores of being guests: Fatima gently said '*haram ya Hala*, [oh, Hala, that is shameful/forbidden] - we are guests here', while at the same time smiling broadly. Alice and Julia also laughed, and Julia says 'Ach, maybe you can make us your tea and coffee next time'.

This creates a narrative opening into a possible future where we see an 'us / them' narrative defused of any negative othering because it is an invitation to share practices of hospitality and places the Syrian women as knowledge-sharers. I also laugh, saying 'Oh I remember how disgusting I found the coffee here when I first came to Edinburgh; but I am used to the milky tea because of my Glasgow Grandparents'. This leads to a sharing of my particular biography, moving through two different times and places (Italy / Scotland) and across the affective dimension of family relationships.

My presence in the group is established, expected and welcomed after many months of running these workshops. Hala, who is addressed by everyone with an honorific term that translates as 'Auntie', calls me 'Teacher'. Initially I insisted that I am not there as a teacher. Hala responded: 'But why not? You teach us, you teach us new words in English and how to use them!'. The rest of the group listened, nodded in agreement with Hala, and chuckled at my expression which was a mixture of confusion and agreement. 'Stop worrying about it, yalla, Teacher, let's do the poem', said Hala, with a smile twinkling in her eyes.

I realised that, as well as using the word 'teacher' as a mark of respect, she was right: I do teach. The poems we read - and the discussions which follow - are the vehicle for learning English, which all group members explain is an important need. 'We need to bractice English bronounciation', Fatima reminds me every time, with the p/b substitution common in native speakers of Arabic, a language which does not feature the 'p' sound. 'I need English to find a good job', Sara says. 'I want to help my children when they go to school', Sadiah adds. All these expressions of needs resonate with Ager and Strang's framework for understanding integration (Ager & Strang 2008), where language is one of the two fundamental facilitators of integration. It is also a reality that many women from refugee communities having lower levels of fluency as well as literacy compared to their men (Cheung and Phillimore 2017).

The poem of today was 'Digging' by Seamus Heaney (see Appendix 1). We went through the poem together and I realised that this was a challenge for the English level of some women in the group, especially the new arrivals. Sara helped by translating the vocabulary for them into Kurdish. 'Digging' was a new word for most of the group, and Hala kept forgetting what it means in Arabic. The women were, in general, confused as to why the poet talked about digging when it turns out that he doesn't actually physically dig. I laboured on, trying to explain the metaphors contained in Heaney's description, because I saw it as the point of the whole poem. As I did so, with Hala occasionally asking, 'What is this 'digging' again, Teacher?', with two of the children fighting, with Sara translating into Kurdish as I speak, I was hit by two realisations. One: these women were entirely uninterested in what according to me was the 'true meaning' of the poem. Two: it was going to be impossible to translate 'peat' meaningfully because it does not feature in the lives these women have led, and I really should have thought of this beforehand. Peat is not found in Syria, these women

had never needed to know what it is, and I was fast losing my grip on being able to explain anything.

My role had slipped from teacher to translator to listener, as Fatima took out her phone and used Google translate and image search. Hala responded to my explanation that ‘peat is burned for fuel’ by suggesting a variety of animal dung as the obvious translation - ‘this is what we burn in my village’. Julia was drawing peat stacks for the Kurdish women, since they don’t share a verbal language and Sara was talking with Fatima. Julia used arrows and diagrams and mimes to indicate layers of formation and how best to dig, sketching a family tree to show that her grandparents lived in a croft in the Highlands and used to dig peat. She then drew a croft house, and Gul drew a house from her village in Northern Syria, with Sara now free to translate explanations of how the family burned wood in the stove and dried mountain sage in the summer sun’s heat.

We all arrived at an agreement on what peat is, but by this point the focus had veered away from the poem towards home-village ways, grandparents and extended families. I was, by now, silent: I sat listening to stories of people far away - parents and children, grandchildren and grandparents - and realised that one woman has started making a map of family members resettled in different countries, using teabags and grapes and cutlery on the table to represent people and places. Everyone joined in, watching and listening, and the grief in the air was strong. Women showed each other photos of the people they missed. I poured tea. Julia and Alice drew family trees and wrote out the English words for family relationships.

Eventually we returned to the poem, and the consensus from the Syrian women was that ‘This Irish man, he says too much ‘digging’ ‘. They were not interested in digging - ‘Also, why would we did? We lost our land’, says Fatima. ‘And anyway, it is the men who dig. We…’ - she was lost in concentration for a moment, then found the English word she wanted - ‘we gather’.

Gathering

women from Syria meet Seamus Heaney in Scotland, through his poem ‘Digging’

What is this ‘digging’?

Digging is *hafar* - you do it with a spade,

What is this 'spade'?

Well, it is a tool for digging, a -

And what is 'bog'? And 'peat'?

It is a type of earth, you dig it up
and dry it, then
you burn it in your house
for heat, it is -

I know! It is the poo of the cow!

No no, it is -

the poo of the sheep? The donkey?

No, peat is not poo.
It happens in the cold and wet. I think
in Syria there is no bog -

I have it, sisters: my phone

says *fahm nabatee*
something like
'vegetable coal'
maybe?

I guess... but yes,
you dig
in bogs for peat.

What is this 'digging' again, please? Ah
yes,
hafar,
ok ok.

I think, you know, this Irish man
he says too much
'digging'

Well, maybe...

I like this poem but
where would we dig?
We lost our land.

And anyway, sister,
the men dig.

We
gather.

Gather?

Yes, gather.
I learned this word.
We gathered plants for food
and money to leave
and here
we gather together
remembering.

This poem depicts a conversation. On the left are my words; on the right the voices of Syrian women. It is different things simultaneously. It is a field text, made during fieldwork. It is a story within itself, presenting a narration of something that happened; this takes the form of dialogue between my voice (represented on the left side of the page) and the voices of Syrian women (represented on the right-hand side of the page). It is an account of intercultural encounter.

On one level, this encounter was between a group of women from Syria and the poem of an Irish man, unknown to them and famous in the cultural landscape of Scotland. Seamus Heaney's poem provided the catalyst for linguistic encounter with the meaning of new vocabulary in English; this vocabulary, in turn, engendered intercultural exchanges between the Syrian women and the native British women present (myself and the two befriending volunteers). Exchanges took the shape of stories which moved between places and time: stories of life in Syria before exile; stories of how it is to be in Scotland now; family memories.

Encounter also occurs between women who, while all being from Syria, come from very different cultures (Kurdish / Arab), socioeconomic backgrounds (farming families with low literacy / primary school teacher) and places (northern Syrian villages / cities in central Syria / towns bordering Iraq). This expression of intercultural encounter within a group of people who are all refugees from the same country counters the narrative tendencies expressed by European

representations of migratory arrivals discussed in Chapter 1, whereby forced migrants are a homogeneous 'mass'.

Dialogue, then, is in this context catalysed by a shared text which generates exchanges about stories. This exchange is expressed in another poem, generated by the group - a collaborative text. The process of facilitating this involves intercultural encounter between myself and the Syrian women, which can be seen through the pedagogical framework of language learning and sharing. In this pedagogical context, I am called 'Teacher' in a way that implies respect, affection and also a certain level of friendly teasing: I am not officially a teacher, but the workshop becomes a place of language learning. This aspect of the poetry sessions is expected, desired, enjoyed and needed by participants.

However, my role shifts, changing from teacher to translator to listener as intercultural exchanges take directions that I had not foreseen and that I did not attempt to control because of the ethically informed methodological choices explained in chapter 3, whereby an 'openness to multiple voices' (Clandinin 2006, p. 52) means that I choose to ask open questions and observe interactions even if they do not initially seem 'useful'. In the case of this workshop, these unexpected directions are catalysed by Heaney's poem and facilitated by my methodological research choices. The poem traces the shift in roles: as we move down the page, my voice moves from a place of certainty (explaining meanings and vocabulary) to uncertainty ('I guess… maybe…') and ends up questioning ('Gather?'). On the other hand - on the other side of the page - are the voices of the Syrian women. They start up asking questions about what words mean ('What is this 'digging?'' What is this peat?'), then move to finding answers in a way that is independent of my explanations (I have it, sisters: my phone / says *fahm nabatee*'). From here they move to form reflections which are critical of the original poem ('this Irish man / he says too much / 'digging'') and lead to formulating an understanding of vocabulary and experience which reflects their own stories of home and of exile.

The group poem is, in itself, a journey through different stages of learning - from questions to clarity of knowing - where I start as the teacher and end as the questioner, and the Syrian women start as the learners and end as those who are most certain of meaning. In this process everyone is learning: new ways of seeing

English; new ways of practising language teaching and learning; new ways of interpreting things such as the ‘true’ meaning of a poem.

4.1.2 Washing, sharing

The next poem was the product of a workshop held on a cold, windy day in Spring, when the sun was pale yellow between rain squalls and all the Syrian women arrived bundled up in layers of cardigans, coats and shawls. There were three very young children present, who were mostly peaceful in their mothers’ arms apart from when they needed fed or their nappies changed.

The poem of the day was ‘The washing never gets done’ by Jaan Kaplinski (see Appendix 1). I chose this partly because I myself was feeling tired after the winter, tired amidst my own domestic duties of childcare, and needing to be reminded of wonder in between busyness. I also had planned a session looking at the vocabulary of household things, because that had been requested by the group at the previous session. Reading through the poem this time there were no particular issues with understanding the meaning of words, so we moved on to brainstorming nouns and verbs connected to household appliances and domestic tasks.

As soon as we started this, all three babies needed their nappies changed after being fed. While their mothers queued up to use the changing table in the bathroom, Hala started reminiscing about how she remembered nappies working in Syria: soft flour sacks cut up and washed many times. Alice responded by remembering how her granny used to wash cloth nappies too - and a conversation evolved between the Syrian women and the befriending volunteers, revolving around the task of doing the laundry. I watched and listened, being told ‘Write that one down!’, noting sentences and observations, reflecting that we would explore the words about other household things another time, that I might not have time to ask what people thought about the element of wonder introduced by the poem we had just read.

The stories being exchanged today were about hanging up the washing, mostly, about being outside and about the weather, and the group poem easily shaped itself as a conversation, illustrated by drawings made by Hala and Gul:

Lines of washing

In Syria
we cut up soft flour sacks
to make nappies for eight children
boiling the cloth three times to get it
really clean

My granny
boiled nappies too

The washing lines hung between trees,
I remember, there were trees of
olive,
pomegranate,
apple,
fig,
apricot,
pistachio
and cherry
with doves and swallows and sparrows

Here
we have those birds
but not those trees –

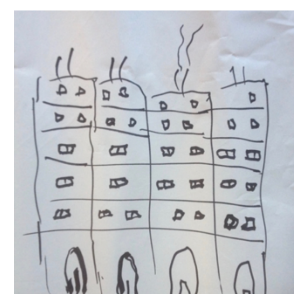
- they need hot sun, real sun.
The neighbour's daughter,
too young for a hijab,
hung out their laundry
with a sky-blue scarf around her neck

I wish my daughter would help
with the washing
it's mostly her clothes anyway

A [illegible]ell
of the earth,
brown, wet.
Birdsong mixed with the sounds
of sheep, donkeys and chickens

Here you smell the sea
and the seagulls
are louder than chickens

We went to the city and there were buildings
high beyond the washing lines
the sounds of cars,
scooters, Suzuki minivans,
motorbikes



Now here in Scotland I worry:
what if it rains?

My mother would hang up the wash
and then shout if it rained:
everybody out!!!
You had to run
and help
or else

Here there are no washing lines in flats.
In my tiny kitchen, no space for washing.
I hang clothes inside on a rigid, flat clothes rack

We have my gran's pulley
it's great

And anyway, in Scotland
the sun is like a drawing in the sky,
a liar
without strength to dry anything

The wind, though,
it does the ironing for you

Life is too short for ironing

Yes

Life is too short for ironing

This poem expresses an intercultural encounter mediated through the sharing of domestic details about laundry. Here the voices of the Syrian women are on the left side, and the Scottish women are on the right, as suggested by participants.

The narrative element of time is presented in terms of 'before / now' in two main ways. Firstly, we see different generations being described in relation to hanging up washing: people describe how their grandmothers used to do the laundry and

how their daughters do it (or don't, in some cases). The future is not overtly spoken of, but the babies whose nappies were washed and the daughters mentioned are the next generation after the women speaking in the poem. Another before / now frame of reference is linked to place: living in Syria before, and in Scotland now.

The movement from Syria to Scotland is also expressed through elements related to place, in particular the natural world, with names of birds and plants particular to each country. Weather - that most British of conversational topics - becomes a vehicle for memory and nostalgia, channelling memories of warmer and more spacious living conditions in Syria and disappointment at how cold it is in Scotland ('the sun is a liar'). Memory and description of place features strongly in the voices of the Syrian women, with lists of remembered birds and plants and urban soundscapes.

The words of the volunteer befrienders are in response to the Syrian women and include more references to elements related to family ties. I know, from previous conversations shared, that the mothers and grandmothers of many Syrian participants have died, and wonder if this is the reason for them not being brought into the conversation. Commonly held memories centre around the tasks involved the domestic labour of raising children, in particular the work surrounding laundry; these are experiences held in common between women from Syria and women from Scotland. The poem expresses series of comparisons: between here/there, before / now. Here, intercultural encounter involves an exchange of stories which respond to each other as an ongoing comparison between one shared experience: the ways of doing laundry in different times and places. It ends on a note of agreement, after the volunteer befrienders talk about how the wind 'does the ironing for you': that life is too short for ironing.

There is shared agreement, and shared experience of gendered domestic activities. There is also shared activity while the discussion evolves: drinking tea and coffee together and engaging with the same original text. Even when experiences (such as exile) and memories (such as specifics of different places) are not in common, these other shared activities help to connect the stories exchanged and facilitate the co-creation of a shared text.

4.1.3 Words for love

The third poem presented here was made at the end of January, around the time of Burns Night. I chose ‘My Love is like a Red Red Rose’ by Robert Burns (see Appendix 1) because several of the women had expressed an interest in learning about flowers and reading a poem ‘about nice feelings’. The day outside was cold, grey, full of blattering rain. Women stepped into the room shaking water off umbrellas and jackets. No children were with us today - they were all at school or nursery.

I started by explaining about Robert Burns, his work and status in Scotland as a poet who wrote a lot about love. Hala asked, ‘Like fire?’, sparking a discussion about names and their meaning. I read out the poem, which participants enjoyed : ’because of the sound, it is like a song’, said Sara. This prompted Alice to start singing the song, with myself and Alice joining in. The Syrian women were delighted: ‘What a beautiful poet, he must have been a wonderful man’, said Fatima. I explained that, yes, he is considered a fine poet but he was not always kind to women and wrote lots of love poems to different ladies. This was greeted with much hilarity and Hala said, ‘Ah yes! Like Adonis!’ So then Alice and the other volunteers asked who Adonis is and we established that he was an Arab poet, not the Greek god Adonis. Sara asked if we could sing the song again, and after we had finished she responded by singing a lullaby in Kurdish.

Everyone applauded her, and then the befriending volunteers asked her to explaining its meaning. They were particularly interested in the different terms of endearment, and the conversation evolved into an exchange of expressions for loved ones. I drew a family tree of different family relationships and their names in English. We discussed these for a while, and also the difference between the meanings of ‘love’ and ‘like’ in English. Hala commented that in Scotland people use ‘love’ when they mean ‘like’ - in Arabic there are specific words for different kinds of love. The Syrian women explained these words, with much laughter as they sometimes couldn’t find the words in English to say what they mean and so mimed different types of love, making starry-eyed facial expressions and extravagant kissing noises.

Words for love

The other day someone bumped into me
on Princes Street, it was, and then
they said, ‘Sorry, hen!’
and I walked on, wondering
why here a hen is a kind thing
to call someone.

Although - I call my children ‘lovely sheep’
when they are soft and gentle
this might sounds strange
but it is what we say.

I read about a love like a red rose
I learn the difference between love and like
I like coffee and tea and gardens where flowers grow
I love my husband, my family,
my children.

They are my greatest joy.
They mean the world to me.
I walked away from war
across the desert
for their future.

My love for them stretches
further than the sky -
ab'ad min al sama'

Beyindir min - my sheep.
Albee - my heart.
My eyes - *ah yoon ee*
Helw - sweet

We can speak Scottish now.
Our words for love are mixing up

into a new belonging.

Yesterday my son came home
and I said to him
'Hello ya *helw*'
and he smiled.

This co-created poem tells a story which starts by narrating an event situated in a specific time and place: 'the other day', in Princes St, Edinburgh.

From this event, a reflection on language ensues, and particularly expressions of endearment with the speaker's children as central. The story starts in Scotland, with a reference to Robert Burns and his poem about a 'red, red rose'; then we move into the speaker's languages, Arabic and Kurdish, with a list of endearments and their meanings. These are linked to a place which belongs to past stories (Syria), expressing sentiments that are still strong in the present and are described as stretching vastly ('further than the sky') into space and time.

The poem returns again to Scotland and the present, where the language of endearments is shown as evolving with the new linguistic context. It closes with description of a hybrid expression of endearment, playing on the words hello and helw [sweet]. The son smiling constitutes a narrative element which is both temporal and relational, projecting affection and growth into the future of the family in Scotland. The poem ends on a note of laughter, reflecting the levity and fun which pervades the workshop as the poem's contents were being spoken out in the group. The topic of the original poem, then, also becomes an element contributing to intercultural encounter and narrative exchange: love and affection are shared emotions which contributed to the dialogue between the Syrian women and the befriending volunteers being one of fun and reciprocal language learning.

Themes in section 4.1

In this section I have presented situations where intercultural encounter occurs between women who are refugees from Syria resettled in Edinburgh, and befriending volunteers who are white British women. Intercultural encounter occurs between the Syrian women participants, and the volunteer befrienders. Intercultural encounter also happens within the group of Syrian women, between people from different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. And finally, I also bring my own stories to moments of intercultural encounter with the Syrian women.

In the stories and vignettes discussed, narrative exchange is catalysed by the text of the original poem, a shared text. Stories are exchanged as a response to this: there is a common endeavour of understanding the original poem, discussing it, sharing reactions and stories which ensue, and co-creating a new poem. There is often grief, and there is always laughter, sooner or later, too. From this mix of words and emotions, group poems are born – a tangible 'field text' which is both an outcome and a process of intercultural encounter and dialogue.

The shared activity of English language learning (and teaching) also generates narrative exchanges which initially have pedagogical aims (for example eliciting, brainstorming and explaining new vocabulary) and then become part of the group's conversations and co-creations. In terms of process, workshops begin by reading the poem, enjoying the sounds and chatting about words or meanings new to the group. Participants then often share related proverbs, expressions and songs in Arabic or Kurdish. We also play with word associations connected to the poem or its themes, which lead us to talk about reactions and opinions related to the poetry.

While learning and practicing English is one of the aims of the group, participants are free to speak whatever language they are most comfortable with, as people are there who can translate and understand / enable understanding. This is the work of linguistic hospitality as part of translation processes discussed by Ricoeur (2006). The process of language learning, here, is akin to 'languaging' as conceptualised by Phipps and Gonzalez (2004), whereby language students act as "reflective sojourners, translators and border crossers" (Phipps and Gonzales

2004:8) and are active agents in creating their environment within a complex intercultural reality.

Drawing is used as a language, too, when words are not found. The group is held not as a classroom but as a site of exchange – one of the sites of possibility described by hooks (1994) Reflecting on the way language and learning features in the Syrian Women's Group, I see that this is also an example of shared doing, a way of mixing creative writing and language teaching which also shifts the power dynamics of welcome and hospitality within the group. I am teaching, but I am also a listener and a learner. The women in the group are learning from me, but they are also teaching me and taking control of which directions conversations and learning take. The concepts of 'shared doing' recurs in different fieldwork contexts and becomes a research finding, discussed in further detail in Chapter 8. The creative languaging that happens in this group is a critical element which enables our exchanges of stories to happen in an atmosphere of trust and co-creation.

While reflecting on the boundaries between facilitating and teaching, which are blurred with regards my role in the Syrian Women's Group, I realise that bridging the role between facilitating and teaching makes sense in a group where many bridges are formed: of friendship, of support, of understanding. The poems in themselves also act like bridges between learning English words, writing English sentences and discussing a wide variety of topics. Learning English together in this way - where language learning is a way of building dialogue if based around needs of students and not framed as competitive skills-based enterprise - has also facilitated conversations and relationships of trust between women who would not have met each other in Syria.

Personal stories, ideas and emotions are all shared in a supportive atmosphere: this is a place of safety, a community centre very familiar to participants. Rituals of hospitality and welcome are enacted here at every meeting: sharing tea and coffee, helping with childcare. There are no conditions attached to welcome: being present is enough. This contributes to a context of intercultural encounter where trust can develop. It is also a gendered place: no men are ever present at these meetings. This, too, contributes to increase trust and a sense of safety for

participants. Place also features in the narrative exchanges, with shared stories of remembering which move across time (before exile; during childhood; into the future) and place (memories of Syria). These stories, which also encompass loss and grief, are listened to without asking questions which probe into emotions, and without trying to fix the grief. This also increases the sense of trust and safety.

My role here is to facilitate workshops where we explore a poem together and then, prompted by that, to support the creation of a group poem. In practice, what happens is a mixture of creative writing facilitation, informal English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL) teaching, and facilitating dialogue between the Syrian women and the befriending volunteers, as well as between the women of the group itself. In terms of power dynamics, as the group facilitator I hold a position of authority. There are often moments when my plans as facilitator are disrupted by unexpected directions taken by conversations.

Here, narrative exchange is not an extractive process, where stories are currency used to obtain something. Here, the exchange of stories occurs in a place of safety, trust and flexibility, and it influences intercultural encounter towards dialogue and reciprocal learning.

4.2 Torino: exchanging information and stories in the *Casa del Quartiere*

San Salvario is a densely populated residential area, a rectangle-shaped grid of apartment blocks near Torino's main station - Stazione Porta Nuova - and adjacent to one of Torino's main parks, the Parco del Valentino, through which the river Po flows. It is an area which has historically hosted different waves of migrants. Southern Italians migrated here in significant numbers from the 1950s, coming to work for FIAT and other industries. In the second half of the 1990s San Salvario underwent another phase of demographic change: a rapid increase in the number of immigrants from North and Sub-Saharan Africa added more pressure to the neighbourhood's already degraded housing conditions and led to tensions and conflicts with the resident population (Allasino, Bobbio, & Neri, 2000). I will address conflictual encounters in the next section; for now, we are stopping at the *Casa del Quartiere*, which was planned by local agencies and activists as a

place which would address these tensions and 'show that foreigners could be a key element for the renovation of the neighbourhood' (Roman 2014, p. 18).

I was having a coffee with Mamadou as he explained that the *Casa del Quartiere* was converted from being an old public bath house into a space where community events could take place for the benefit of the whole neighbourhood. The Agency for the Local Development of San Salvario is responsible for managing the *Casa del Quartiere*; it also provides organisational support to groups like *Insieme* who base their activities here, but doesn't tell the organisations what do do. 'They let us get on with it', said Mamadou, 'they trust us. Their goal is to get lots of different people and groups together in the same space, to make a place for us all to connect and work together'.

I noticed the recurrent use of 'us' in his words, and asked him, 'who is 'us'?'. He answered, 'Well - that is - us - us *extracomunitari*, I mean, I suppose also us, all of us people who come to the *Casa del Quartiere* which includes Italians. Although I am Italian too now, really, and people here treat me like one of them, I am happy here, but still in general Italians just see me as one of the many *extracomunitari'*.

This word is worth our attention, because of its repeated use and its connection to the us/them dichotomy. '*Extracomunitario*' in theory translates as 'from outside the community', technically meaning any person from outside the European community of nations. In practice, though, '*extracomunitari*' is only used to refer to people from outside Europe who are not white - for African, Middle Eastern, Latin American and Asian people whose skin and facial features are not caucasian - but it is never used for white Australian or North American or British people. It is a word which is employed according to racialised interpretations of belonging; a form of verbal othering centred on being visibly different from the hegemonic norm and coming from 'outside' a community of nations.

Mamadou's story touches on many things, starting from one small word (which expresses a vast and complex concept): 'us'. He locates his words within the context of the *Casa del Quartiere* as a place - the place - where he is 'happy': here he is treated as an equal by Italians who used the *Casa del Quartiere* and also by the Agency responsible for management of the place. In this place Mamadou feels that 'they' (Italians) treat him like 'one of them': the distance of

othering is reduced to the 'us' of belonging. In the *Casa del Quartiere* the 'us' includes Italians and *extracomunitari*, in contrast to the general situation (outside the Casa del Quartiere) where Mamadou is seen just as one of many 'extracomunitari'.

So, Mamadou identifies that in this place, a place of safety and welcome, he is not treated as an *extracomunitario*; he reminds himself that he too is an Italian 'now, really', by acquired rights of residence as a refugee, although his skin colour means that outside of this place he is not automatically treated as an Italian citizen. Being treated as an equal is at the heart of the personal and social interactions of his 'story about here'. In the terms of narrative inquiry, the element of place is closely connected to the relational factor of belonging and/or othering. In this story, the pressure of navigating belonging / othering (expressed by 'us' / '*extracomunitari*') is lessened due to the *Casa del Quartiere*'s prevailing cultural narrative of shared belonging and welcome.

The *Casa del Quartiere* is an old building on the corner of two streets, with big wooden doors that are open all day and late into the evening, leading into a hallway which opens on to the smells and bustle of a cafe-restaurant area which spills out into the courtyard. When I sat there with Mamadou, tables were filled with people having their lunch: parents speaking different languages as they negotiated toddler tantrums, white Italian university students smoking and chatting, groups of tall young black men resting from selling the racks of sunglasses which lay at their feet. Mamadou started to explain about the Information Desk which was due to open soon, and where I was invited to engage as a participant observer. 'It's an initiative based on solidarity: people who are migrants offering information and support and practical help to migrants. Also willing Italian volunteers, mostly students from the university and people who live in San Salvario, they come to help. We let them, they are welcome, they help too'.

We can see echoes of patterns from his previous words, when 'they' (the people running the Casa del Quartiere) 'let us' (*extracomunitari*) 'get on with it'; now 'we' (migrants) 'let them' (volunteers) come and help. This is a reversal of roles and power dynamics in many ways: in the first story, people from the white Italian receiving population have the relational power to allow *extracomunitari* space and freedom to act. In the second story, people who are migrants (a word which

is used instead of *extracomunitari*) have the power to allow white Italian volunteers from the receiving population to 'help' their project ('their' meaning belonging to and run by migrants to support migrants). The temporal dimension is not overtly present in this story; the prevalent elements are connected to personal interactions in a specific place.

I asked Mamadou how he found the experience of the Information Desk. He said, 'I really enjoy it. It is good to be able to give information, to help people like me. It also helps the Italian volunteers to understand, they hear the stories and they understand that life isn't the same for everyone in Torino'. Then he laughed and said many people coming for advice for the first time are surprised to see him 'On the other side of the counter' and often ask him '*Ma perché sei qui*?' [why are you here?]' He laughed again and explained: 'It's funny because these are my brother migrants asking the same question I hear from Italians who want me to 'go back home''. I asked him how he answered this question, and he shrugged, smiling and stirring his espresso. 'Well - I tell them - I'm here because here is where I arrived, and I'm fine here'. He continued, 'Then they get used to the Information Desk being run by migrants for migrants, they like it, they know they can trust us to understand their stories'.

Here, again, is a story which contains many implicit categories of 'us' and 'them'. The Italians (outside the *Casa del Quartiere*) who tell Mamadou to 'go back home' because he is not 'one of them'. The migrants seeking advice who are surprised that 'one of them' is behind the counter; this seems to imply that in their usual experience (again, outside the *Casa del Quartiere*) it is white Italians who sit giving advice. The question, 'why are you here', points to a wider social story where people like 'you' (a 'brother migrant') are not meant to be 'here', thus creating the need for explanations and justifications. These categories of belonging are centred on the perceived right of different groups of people to belong in a place, which in this case is Torino and more in general Italy. Mamadou approaches this question not by telling the story of how he got here, or explaining how he came to be involved in the Information Desk. His answer removes temporal aspects of narrative (in the sense of a past or a future timeline) and focusses on place ('here') and on a present situation linked to place ('I am fine here').

Trust is also a word that appears related to story and belonging. People who are migrants trust Mamadou and his colleagues, who are migrants too, to 'understand

their stories'. Being classed as 'one of them', belonging, implies the ability to understand stories because of a presumed commonality of experience. The volunteers who come to help are not immediately trusted to understand stories; their relationship to stories is presented as a pedagogical one, with the white Italians learning from the migrants' stories. It is worth noting here that all people at the Information Desk are volunteers: nobody is paid. There appears to be a hierarchy whereby value and status (in this case being worthy of trust) derive not from remuneration but from shared experience of being a migrant: of sharing and understanding of a common experience.

I was finishing my coffee, thinking about what Mamadou had just said, when Karim joined us with a big smile and a loud, 'Esa! Welcome back from Scotland!'. Karim was my original contact within the Insieme organisation, and it was he who emailed me telling me about the Information Desk and inviting me to join in. He advised us that it was time to go and set up the room for today's session. Karim insisted on paying for my coffee, dismissing my protests with a smiling 'No no, you are a guest here'. Mamadou shrugged, smiled, said 'Let him pay - he's the boss!', and we went inside.

The room where the Information Desk sessions happened was upstairs, away from the clatter of the bar, in a room containing a collection of old, disparate chairs and tables. Mamadou and Karim started organising them so that the tables were in a long rectangle, with chairs set up along each side. I followed their lead and helped rearrange the room. The space was being changed so that all the furniture was in the centre of the room where it would be the first focus of anyone walking in. Mamadou and Karim sat at the side of the tables facing the door, so that they would face whoever walked in, but the table would be between those asking for information and those giving it. I wondered if this was another 'us and them' demarcation, or a practice of welcome, or just a practical choice confirmed by experience or the examples of other Information Desk layouts.

Another volunteer arrived: a young woman we will call Maria. She told me that she was born and grew up in Torino, 'but my family are Romany gypsies from the East of Europe, but I'm a citizen by birth'. I found it interesting that she felt the need to specify her belonging to me, a person she has only just met. I responded in kind by explaining about my own double belongings, and she smiled. She asked, 'Do you have children? Do they feel more

Scottish or Italian?', but before we could talk any further, the first people arrived seeking advice and answers.

Two hours went by very fast, in a succession of focussed conversations. People arrived and sat in the chairs, waiting their turn. There was no system of queues, just what I started to call in my head the 'question' side of the table and the 'answer' side. People took turns to ask their questions, loosely based on order of arrival. Some people who were in more haste were gestured to speak first by others who waited and scrolled on their phones while listening. There was no option of confidential talks. Sometimes men waiting on the 'answer' side chipped in with their own experience if this helped to answer a question.

Mamadou, Karim, Maria and I all contributed with answers and advice. Only men came to seek advice. Karim especially seemed to know most of them. Their questions concerned help with job applications; finding free Italian lessons; help with the many complexities of Italian bureaucracy; advice before a job interview; help with changing immigration lawyers; help finding a new flat. Conversations happened in Italian, Arabic and French. The men coming were mostly from African countries, a few from the Middle East. Sometimes men got angry, if a situation was impossible to resolve or if there was no clear answer. When this happened, Karim intervened and pacified the situation by saying 'I know, it is difficult, but *non bisogna arrendersi* [one can't give up], we're here to try and help'.

All the stories told - both as a preamble to and explanation of the problems and questions shared - have a quality of urgency, manifested in the fact that they are not narratives of events which happen over the course of a long temporal arc: they are all situational stories, descriptions of a 'now' in which some problem had arisen. The men telling their stories have different, unspoken 'before' stories of provenance and journey; they are together in a shared place, the 'here' of the Information Desk, hoping to leave with advice which might help the 'after' be easier to navigate. All our focus is on here, now, how to resolve this or that problem. Nobody is asked to share any information about past or future. Immigration status is only mentioned if it is relevant to the issue at hand.

This problem-solving, on reflection, is linked to the pedagogical practice of problem-posing considered by Freire as key to transformative education (Freire 2005). Freire writes of it in contexts of classroom education, with teachers

engaging alongside students to contribute to - but not steer or dominate - discussion (ibid.). The Information Desk is not a classroom; but here we see that the shared activity of finding solutions to people's problems is something which engenders dialogue 'between the oppressed and those who support them in solidarity' (Freire, 2000, p. 87).

Nobody asked me where I was from, or why I was there, beyond the information I provided them when explaining my research aims and checking for consent. I took notes in my research journal, in Italian as the lingua franca we all shared. Slowly, as it became clear that I could understand the languages being used and could provide answers and advice, more questions and stories were addressed to me. Karim, among all of us on the 'answer side', was the preferred interlocutor in an order of preference which I noticed emerging within the first fifteen minutes: if Karim was free, questions went to him; if he was busy, Mamadou; if both Karim and Mamadou were busy, then Maria was asked, with myself as the last option.

Information and answers were often scribbled on bits of paper and handed over, along with diagrams of bus and tram routes for how to get to places. Directions were also given by drawing marks on maps of Torino city centre - the free ones given out to tourists. Maria brought the paper, pens and the maps; her cousin's girlfriend's best friend had procured them through her work at the tourist information office.

Reflecting on the drawings and marks made I think of Ingold's words: 'At the same time that the hand draws out its traces on a surface, the observing eye is drawn into the labyrinthine entanglements of the lifeworld' (Ingold 2011:224). He writes in the context of critiquing the dichotomy between text and image invested in by some anthropologists. I see how it makes no sense to try to define these lines, scribbles and marks as either text or image: at the Information Desk they are both, and they are more than both: they are diagrams of the process needed to survive and get through Italian bureaucracy. They are, in a sense, maps at the same time as they are stories of how to navigate the steps of this particular journey: these are the costs and the obstacles, these are some ways through to your desired destination or result.

After two hours had passed, Karim got up and closed the door, then returned to help answer the questions of the three men still sitting at the table. When the last one had left, we all sat

around in silence - it felt as if we were drained of words after all that thickly talking and listening to stories - then I offered to go and get us coffees at the bar. I payed for the coffees, brought them up on a tray and returned to the room to find everyone still in silence. 'It's tiring', said Mamadou, 'all these people passing through needing help. *A volte bisogna prendersi una pausa per ricaricare e poi ripartire*'. [Sometimes one has to take a break to recharge and restart]. I nodded, distributed the coffees, joined in the silent sitting.

The silence between us was not awkward, although initially I did find myself wanting to interrupt it with questions about the information desk session. Waiting, however, was the better choice: this was a time to absorb the many stories which had been shared, time to follow the lead of the people surrounding me. This was not the silence of listening, or of waiting; it was a pause, a rest, a resetting. Karim's words resonated in my head with many adverts on Italian TV telling people to *prendersi una pausa* [take a break] for coffee and *merende* [snacks to be eaten specifically at *merenda* time, usually about 10:00 and 16:00, during pauses to rest and eat between main meals]. It was now afternoon merenda time, but I was struck by how different this was from the adverts which featured white, Italian, expensively dressed people indulging in self care through consumption. Most people here were not white, only two were Italian by birth, and nobody was expensively dressed. The language of rest and resetting used by Karim came from a deep knowledge of the fatigue brought on by listening to stories and giving advice to others, rather than a marketing slogan. The silence felt like a sort of hospitality: a welcome to rest.

After a few minutes Mamadou sighed and said, 'OK, end of the break'. I then spoke, commenting on how Karim seemed to know most of the people already, and he laughed: 'Yes, well I've been doing this for a while. It helps them if someone already knows their background, they are tired of having to explain their story to new people all the time'.

The dynamics of trust observed at the Information Desk are here specifically related to stories as a sort of currency - and to tiredness, resurfacing again, but this time not in relation to the people providing the advice: people who used the Information Desk are tired of being expected to repeat their stories every time they needed support. Trust not only implies that stories and the place where they were exchanged are safe; here there is an additional element of trusting not to be obliged to put stories on display, gratuitously, repeatedly.

I observe an element of language connected to trust and othering which his specific to Italy: the use of *tu* or *lei*. *Tu* is the informal mode of address in Italian, as opposed to the formal *lei*. In Arabic, like in English, this form of address doesn't exist. In Italy *tu* is used between people who are equals in age or social status, or family members, or in some way peers: it indicates an equality of status, of belonging, of relationship. Everyone in the *Casa del Quartiere* addressed each other in Italian as *tu*. However, *lei* is also used to indicate and manifest power dynamics: a teacher will address students with *tu*, but students will always address teachers with *lei*. Younger people address their elders with *lei* and are addressed with *tu*. I have observed that *tu* is also, almost invariably, used by Italian people to address foreigners. The shape taken by the Italian language when *tu* is used is simpler, the verbal conjugations easier to learn; many Italian people I spoke to said 'I use *tu* with foreigners to be kind, to help them with our language'. But there is also an infantilisation implicit in this mode of address. Codes of communication are used to establish what seems like welcome, but it is actually a declaration of status, power and superior knowledge of a language and its country.

Karim and Maria left. Mamadou and I went downstairs. He stopped at the bar, found out that I had paid for the coffees, and became very cross, speaking sharply: 'Why did you pay for the coffees? You shouldn't have! You are our guest!', he frowned. 'But Karim had already paid before!', I answered, 'And I wanted to say thank you for having me as your guest'! My tone was apologetic and placatory. I was upset: somehow I had got the hospitality rules surrounding coffee wrong, which wounded my pride as an Italian, and I was also sad at having upset Mamadou who had been so welcoming. He said, 'Yes but you are our guest, you shouldn't pay!' I apologised again, and patched over tensions by saying 'Maybe I have become too Scottish' - meaning, maybe I have lived in Scotland so long that I have forgotten the rules. Mamadou laughed then, saying. '*Beh, almeno sei una scozzese generosa'* [Well, at least you are a generous Scottish person]. He had misunderstood, and thought that I was joking about the fact that *Scozzese* in Italy is an adjective often used to mean penny-pinching, ungenerous with money. We said goodbye amicably, he left.

Reflected on the story that had unfolded I see how my self-image was been challenged on different levels: as an Italian who 'knows the rules about coffee', as a generous person who knows how to reciprocate hospitality, as a researcher

skilled at knowing what is appropriate cultural behaviour. Belonging to these categories is important to me, and Mamadou's disapproval left me shaken, my certainties 'contaminated' by encounter and unexpectedness, as Tsing (2015) would say.

Another afternoon I attended the Sportello Informativo with Reine, another volunteer at *Insieme* who was a refugee from the Middle East and worked as an Arabic language teacher in Torino. Maria joined us together with Clara, a university student from the nearby town of Alessandria. Raine said that Karim would not be coming because of work commitments. We set up the room upstairs and sat down waiting for people to arrive.

Only men came, but this time many of them refused to speak to us, saying, 'Where is Karim? He knows our stories and you don't. We don't want to have to tell our stories again and again'. It felt as if we were being blamed for not being Karim. I could see that Reine was getting annoyed: she began to frown, to fidget and answer with impatience, 'Karim isn't here today, you'll have to make do with us'. To shift the narrative, away from what was not there (Karim's knowledge of people's stories) to what was there (the volunteers present and their knowledge), we offered to show people where things were around town on the tourist maps we had. We explicitly stated that we did not want to know their stories, but could give directions to that was helpful. This changed things, and soon again dialogue ensued centred around how to get to places, the practicalities of public transport, where services were in the city. Afterwards, Clara explained that she studied geography at university, so she was very interested in how 'I understood what they needed through the city. I learned a lot about their lives even through that.'

Maps here act as vehicles for stories and narrative exchange. Place, expressed through maps, becomes a common element of knowledge and experience, a shared narrative element. Maps help to keep the focus of stories on practical responses to need, rather than on 'repeating stories again' - which would have created a situation where stories were a currency that has been often overspent and demanded in exchange for support.

4.2.2 Unexpectedness and welcome: the Villaggio Olympic (ex-MOI)

A few days later I was having lunch at the *Casa del Quartiere*, reading *Non sulle mie scale* by Dr Italo Fontana (Fontana 2001): a book about the San Salvario neighbourhood, which describes a conflictual intercultural encounter between 'locals' and 'immigrants'- specifically North African men working as drug dealers and pimps on street corners and within stairwells, including the stairwell of Dr Fontana's apartment. We will meet Dr Fontana and his book again in chapter 7; in this section, the book acts as a catalyst for conversations about encounter.

Karim walked up to me, saw that I had nearly finished eating and joined me for coffee. He looked at my book and sighed. 'Ah, yes', he said, 'It is difficult. It is difficult because some immigrants are drug dealers, but I am not, and yet Italians look at all *extracomunitari* as if we were criminals'. I gently pointed out that he was generalising about all Italians whilst lamenting that they generalised about all *extracomunitari*. I was struck by how Karim had sighed and repeated 'it is difficult' twice. I wanted to know more, and was annoyed at myself for not responding with an open question: maybe now Karim would not talk further about this. He laughed, '*Beh*, you're not wrong, ok, ok!', then he became serious and said, 'Listen, to Dr Fontana it was shocking that his stairwell became dangerous. But he is rich and used to being safe. So many *extracomunitari* don't have anywhere safe to go. Have you heard about the ex-MOI?' I had not, and asked Karim to tell me more.

He explained that the ex-MOI was also called the *ex Villaggio Olimpico* [ex Olympic Village]. It was a group of apartment blocks built to house athletes for the 2006 Winter Olympics in Torino. Before that it was the site of an old, huge marketplace: the initials MOI stand for *Mercato Ortofrutticoli all'Ingrosso* [Wholesale Fruit and Vegetables Market]. After the Winter Olympics were over the city council wanted to rent the flats out, but there were delays, and Karim said that the buildings had been poorly built in a hurry and were of such low quality that they degraded fast and 'Italians wouldn't live there. So Africans went there, refugees, because those flats were better than nothing'. MOI became a place where forced migrants, mostly people who had arrived from sub-Saharan African countries, lived *'illegalmente - cioè, il MOI è occupato'* [illegally - I mean, the MOI is a squat].

Place, in this story, means housing, and is described using adjectives expressing quality - in this case, 'poor' and 'low' quality. This quality is deemed not good

enough for Italians (meaning white native Italians) who ‘wouldn’t live there’; Africans, on the other hand, ‘refugees’ (as opposed to Italians) went to live there. Here is another us / them narrative, with the division of those who think they deserve high quality housing and those who make do with something that is ‘better than nothing’. The rule of law also appears as a factor which divides us / them: it is acknowledged that the African people living in the MOI are living there ‘illegally’. No mention is made of the potentially illegal shortcuts in the process of building the MOI which meant that it was built so ‘poorly in a hurry’. The temporal arc of this story is linked to the trajectory of building the MOI accommodation, and moves along a hierarchical trajectory linked to quality / deservingness: in the beginning the ex-MOI was inhabited by elite athletes; then offered to white Italians; then left to black people from African countries.

Karim checked the time and said, ‘I am heading there now, there are some guys I need to check in on, do you want to come and see? There’s nowhere else like it in Torino, it is off the map. I mean, this place is a non-place, it is not what it seems, it has its own reality and rules. You will meet some good people there’.

I hesitated: should I go with Karim? This was a sudden and unplanned new direction. Would this be useful for my research? How could this visit be termed a community education project? Would this MOI place feature narrative exchange and intercultural encounter? All these questions sloshed around my head while Karim was on his phone, speaking in Arabic, checking with somebody if it was ok that he ‘came with someone, she’s a researcher from Scotland. She doesn’t want anything from you, she just wants to see the MOI. She speaks Arabic, yes’.

Not a ‘rush of stories’ as described by Tsing (2015), but a ‘slosh of questions’ - which tell a story about of my feelings of vulnerability and doubt in the face of unexpectedness. The situation has changed, suddenly, and I am no longer deciding the next step: I am being invited on a path which, my questions show, was not part of what I had planned or thought would be ‘useful’. This did not fit into my parameters and expectations - and, after all my resentment of the parameters and expectations of others (such as ethical forms and funders) there I was, clearly full of them myself, struggling to keep that ‘openness to multiple voices’ I had so admired in theory.

Karim's description of the MOI had caught my attention, though: a 'place that is a non-place': what did that mean? What did 'its own reality and rules' mean? How was it 'off the map'? What map? I decided to trust Karim, just as he trusted me through his invitation, even if I did not know where we were going. Karim ended his call and said, 'They're ok if you come too.' I thanked him and followed him to his car. Just in case, I texted a friend as we walked to let him know where I was going.

We arrived in front of a collection of buildings painted with faded blue and orange. In the courtyard a group of young men were playing ping-pong on a table with clothes piled in a line to make the net, while a group of other young men watched. We walked past them, into a corridor where other men were standing chatting and smoking. Everyone had black skin, everyone greeted Karim. Up two flights of stairs, Karim knocked at a grey door from behind which came the music of the Egyptian singer Umm Kalthoum, and men's voices.

I noticed myself noticing all this, with the heightened awareness that comes from being on guard. Against what? All these men? Later on that day I wrote:

> Today the ex-MOI, for me, was simultaneously a place of welcome and completely unfamiliar territory. I did not look like anyone else, I had seen no other women, I was not sure how to get back to the parts of Torino I was familiar with. People had shown welcome, with waves and smiles and invitations to come on in; here was a table, chairs and the smell of coffee, but at the same time it was neither a bar or a home. Would I have felt this way, this unsettled, arriving unannounced to a residential complex full of Italian men, brought in by a trusted Italian man? Probably, a bit, yes, but I'd have felt far more sure of how to navigate exchanges. I could hear all the Italian men in my family warning me not to go in, to be careful; all their casually racist comments about '*come vivono quell lì*' [how that lot live]. Following Karim into that door I was literally crossing a threshold into a place of *chissà* [who knows].

Why is this important? Is this another story of a privileged white researcher centering her discomfort? What would the story be like if told by Karim, or by the door? My intention, in presenting my reactions, is to examined them in the wider context of intercultural encounter and narrative exchange. My discomfort is rooted in cultural narratives where the Other (*quello/a lì*) is feared as dangerous and uncivilised. The decision to go - to engage in intercultural encounter - is framed as taking a risk, a leap of trust. Trust, then, recurs here as a key element in enabling encounter. It is centred around Karim, who is trusted both by me (who lets him take me to a place where I will 'meet some good people') and by the men at the ex-MOI (who let him bring an unknown person into their home). The hesitation generated by fear of unknown others is overcome by trust, which makes encounter possible - this feels like an important dynamic in the wider context of this thesis. Furthermore, accepting risk ('unfamiliar territory') related to the unexpected and unknown ('chissà') seems to be part of a methodological approach which opens my research to new directions.

The door was opened by a man who greeted Karim in Arabic with delight and invited us both in. Karim stepped inside and I followed, saying '*permesso'* - an expression always said in Italy when coming into someone else's house, meaning 'permission - with your permission I enter'. The man replied in Arabic, saying

اهلين ، اهلين!

[welcome , welcome!]

There was a formica table in the room, with plastic chairs pulled up around it; it looked like the furniture from a bar. Everything was clean and tidy. Along the walls were mattresses propped up on their sides and covered with bright cloths. The smells were of cardamom coffee, cigarette smoke, and underneath these a faint air of damp.

Here the description classifies what I saw according to cultural parameters: what the furniture reminds me of, the pleasant smell of coffee and less pleasant smell of damp; the fact that it is 'clean and tidy', in contrast to the received narrative of 'how that lot live'. This is a de-creation of the assumptions on which my fear had rested, a re-positioning of experience within different narrative landscapes.

Karim introduced me to the two men there: 'Aziz and Muhammad. We sat down and were served coffee. Karim was there to check in on them, listen to their stories and support them: 'Aziz had a legal appointment in a few days to pursue his asylum claim, Muhammad had not been feeling well but was reluctant to visit a doctor. They were from Sudan. They asked me about my family, where I lived, why I spoke Arabic. I showed them pictures of my children. We drank a lot of coffee. Aziz poured us another cup and said he needed to leave soon for work, then turned to me, saying, 'I work, you know - cleaning bathrooms in the *Stadio delle Alpi* [a big football stadium in Torino]. It is great! There is always work! Italians, they don't want to clean their own toilets anymore. Or pick their own tomatoes'. Karim and Muhammad laughed, and I followed suit after a second of uncertainty: the way 'Aziz told the story was very funny, but the content of his joke held a lot of things which did not seem to be a laughing matter, in its description of hard physical work which was refused by Italians.

This story contains clear dynamics of othering and discrimination, already delineated by housing, and here echoed in terms of employment: the ex-MOI was not acceptable for Italians, but is deemed good enough for African migrants, like the labour of cleaning toilets and harvesting tomatoes. This is a hierarchy of who deserves what, with clear differentiation of places and activities that were clean / unclean, suitable / unsuitable, good or not good enough. 'Aziz makes a joke out of it, reclaiming through his story his side of the dichotomy: in this joke the Italians are implied to be lazy for not cleaning their own toilets or picking their own food. My discomfort, I realise, stemmed from thinking that cleaning toilets and picking tomatoes was, indeed, dirty and difficult work and should not be laughed about. 'Aziz subverts this, taking on agency and shifting the narrative expectations by choosing to laugh.

In this vignette, the intercultural encounter and narrative exchange involve me, as a researcher who hesitated to explore a path which was suddenly and unexpectedly presented. I am also involved as a person who was formed and informed by cultural narratives of othering which led me to fear an encounter that seems to mean moving into the territory of the 'Other' while still being in 'my own' country. I observe and learn, through experience, the significance of internalised cultural narratives in informing attitude towards the narrative exchange which is part of intercultural encounter. My shift from fear to trust to

encounter and narrative exchange happens when I accept the de-construction and re-forming of previously held expectations.

Wider systemic elements also are present, whose reach and extent I do not quite grasp yet - these are to do with othering, classifying the other as ‘deserving’, ‘clean’ or otherwise. Overarchingly, these themes are linked to the experience and perception of abundance and scarcity. There is a scarcity of accommodation accessible to forced migrants from Africa; that which is available is low quality housing; the many mattresses in the room I visited spoke of a lack of space within the ex-MOI. There is also abundance, however: of coffee, of welcome, of trust in Karim. The occupied ex-MOI goes from being abandoned to becoming a place where many people live. They live ‘off the map’ of official legality, power supply and census; they live according to rules they establish, in a place which was on the map as the centre of an elite sports event, then was abandoned. There is much humour in the story told by ‘Aziz - a story which in itself challenges the scarcity narrative and posits Italy as a place where there is a lot of work, because the Italians don’t want to do it themselves.

Themes in section 4.2

In this section I have presented and discussed situations where intercultural encounter occurs in Torino, between white Italians and forced migrants who are from sub-Saharan Africa.

In the context of the *Sportello Informativo*, narrative exchange is catalysed by shared engagement in providing support and advice to forced migrants: ‘It is good to be able to give information, to help people like me, migrants. It also helps the Italian volunteers to understand’, in Mamadou’s words. These exchanges of stories, then, facilitate intercultural encounter to become a process whereby not only information is exchanged, but greater understanding arises regarding people’s lives and needs. **Maps** feature as a way to express these needs, to share stories and support answering questions.

In Torino, more so than in Edinburgh, stories exchanged speak of racism and wider cultural narratives of hostility as experienced outside the places of safety. This is

expressed through language related to othering and belonging: us / them, Italians / extracomunitari. There is no pedagogical element related to language in this section. Exchanges occur in Italian, French and Arabic, with language as a vehicle to access or provide support and express othering, welcome or belonging. In the MOI, terminology around legal / illegal also occurs. Within places of safety and relationships of trust, there can be a reversal of roles and codes of othering and belonging : people who are forced migrants become the hegemonic group, in a sense. Mamadou tells me off for not respecting rules of hospitality around coffee, saying that 'Karim is the boss'. The Sportello Informativo is run by migrant people for migrant people, with Italians there to help but also to learn; here, having lived the experience of migration brings expertise and respect rather than racism.

An unexpected visit to the *ex-MOI* leads to reflexive observations of my vulnerability reaction to this situation, highlighting the importance of unspoken cultural narratives of othering as a factor in intercultural encounter. The discomfort I experience when being invited to the *ex-MOI* by Karim or told off by Mamadou tells me that I am on some level threatened by the role reversal which challenges expectations of my role and puts me in the position of being a minority in terms of skin colour and gender, or a guest abiding by other's hospitality rules.

Chapter 4 – themes

Place is a key element to intercultural encounter here: in both research contexts, narrative exchange is facilitated by the fact that they occur in places of **safety and mutual trust**. This trust is strongly linked to individuals, in particular Karim, whose presence facilitates encounter and story exchange. All the settings for the encounters described in this chapter are deliberately designed or adapted to be places of safety, offering an environment where narrative exchange is facilitated by a setting of welcome. This creates contexts where narrative exchanges can evolve into dialogue and relationship. This safety is not only a matter of physical shelter and absence of danger: it is about being able to share stories knowing that they are not judged, or used extractively, or seen as currency. Interpersonal relationships of trust, often based on long-standing acquaintance, recurs as a critical element in engendering safety across all research settings in this chapter.

In these places of safety there are recurrent instances of **reversal of the power dynamics prevalent in wider society:** in the *Sportello Informativo*, for example, people who are forced migrants are in charge of the projects, and are the ones with most knowledge and capacity for 'understanding stories': they are experts through their experience. The Syrian women carry stories exchanged along the directions of their interests, emotions and needs, often in their own languages. In the *ex-MOI*, men who are forced migrants can enact rituals of hospitality and redefine some of the dominant narrative parameters surrounding their work and dignity.

Language of othering surfaces, particularly in the Italian context, as a contrast to the sense of belonging which is associated with safety. This is expressed through markers such as us / them, Italians / migrants. Language itself - the language spoken during moments of narrative exchange - is also connected to trust and safety. Being able to speak Arabic, for example, allows me to be welcomed in the ex-MOI, take part in the Sportello Informativo and interact with the Syrian Women's group in a way which does not impose a hegemonic language on our encounter. In these settings, there is no pressure to speak only Italian or English: this removes barriers to access and enables participants to express their stories in their native language.

Learning the dominant language of the receiving country is a desired outcome named in particular as important by the Syrian women's group. Pedagogical choices mean that these workshops are not facilitated like traditional language learning classrooms, but rather as places for co-creation and reciprocal learning relationships. Here language learning becomes a shared endeavour which supports narrative exchange in a context of intercultural encounter, rather than a lesson based on competency models.

In this sense, language becomes a shared activity - what I will call **'shared doing'**, another key factor which emerges in all research contexts in this chapter. By this I mean that all the projects involve focus on an activity which is undertaken jointly by people from receiving and forced migrant communities. Sharing information; drinking coffee; learning languages; discussing and writing poetry: all these are shared doing.

Some of these activities are gendered, in particular those related to the Syrian women's group. In this case, gender can become be a focus of commonality - a factor which allows common ground to be found in intercultural encounter, through the reality of similarly gendered bodies and the experiences they share in common. A women-only place, furthermore, means that participants feel safe in sharing and discussing stories related to specifically gendered experiences, including vulnerabilities.

Vulnerability is also a theme in my own story, observed as occurring especially when unexpected directions appear. When this happens in the Syrian women's group I am able to note it and let it happen, because I feel safe and am ultimately in a position of control as the group facilitator. When an unexpected visit to the ex-MOI happens, however, my feelings of vulnerability and unsettledness are complex: they are gendered (I am the only woman) and connected to internalised fear-based narratives which are uncomfortable to reflect on. Related narratives of othering and fear are addressed in chapter 7, which discusses situations where intercultural encounters observed during fieldwork involved conflict.

Summary of Chapter 4

In this chapter we have seen different types of narrative exchange, which are determined by the settings and activities that catalyse the exchange of stories. In Edinburgh, with the Syrian women's group, this catalyst is poems and language learning. In Torino, the *Sportello Informativo* centres the provision of information, advice and support. These projects provide different types of focus to the activities which generate narrative exchange. In both contexts, narrative exchange influences intercultural encounter to become a process of dialogue and reciprocal learning. Some key factors contribute to this and recur in both research contexts. These are place; safety and trust; shared doing; language and languaging.

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Chapter 5: on maps and (un)mapping

During fieldwork I noticed that maps and mapping appear and reappear, even though they are not the main feature of the projects or situations described: in the Syrian women’s group maps of relationships, emotional ties and memories are constructed with drawings on paper, and with objects on tables. At the *Sportello Informativo*, maps are a catalyst for conversations.

This incremental noticing, and the consequent realisation of how recurrent and significant maps and mapping were becoming, caught me by surprise. It catalysed a desire to learn more about maps and mapping. A research journal entry documents this:

> I feel at a crossroads. The path I thought I’d be following is interrupted by noticing how much maps and mapping have been present in fieldwork observations – hah, another twist in the tale as part of an ‘evolving, dynamic process of PhD research’.

There needs to be a shift in the focus of my PhD to considering mapping initiatives as part of narrative exchange - not as a way of facilitating dialogue and encounter but as a thing that happens anyway in these contexts and which needs more investigating.

It feels like following the organic development of the path - taking the invitation of the crossroads and then seeing where it all goes. This slightly shifted focus would still respond to issues and questions raised in that initial proposal: how to facilitate encounter and story exchange, including maps and mapping. It would also allow me to include and expand on ideas, readings and conversations that I have been having.

The language of this entry tells a story of growing realisation, of the need to change focus to incorporate this realisation, and of the need to find a way which would 'allow' me to follow this new path. The scholarship of ethnographers and narrative inquirers already explored in Part 1 gives me the resources and methodological permission needed to follow the 'invitation of the crossroads' and follow an unplanned research path.

So - this chapter is an interruption, a change of direction, a 'making the way by going' and looping back into literature concerning maps, mapping and cartography. In particular, I consider issues surrounding cartography and related issues of power in European contexts of forced migration; and learn about counter-cartographies attempting a decolonial response to these power dynamics.

5.1 Cartography as representation: problems and paradoxes

Maps visually express the intersection between narrative representation and place. Maps can also be seen as a communication, in the sense described by Bourdieu in relation to language , if we substitute 'cartographers' for 'speakers':

'relations of symbolic power in which the power relations between speakers or their respective groups are actualized' (Bourdieu 1991,p. 37). Because this research takes place in Europe, it is important to remember that maps have served many purposes and in the hands of state actors or powerful rulers their uses must be critically interrogated for their claims to domination. Maps have been used as a communication of power: to measure, claim, define and control colonised provinces, empires, slave trade routes and more. Maps are still made to measure, define and control place - and also, as relevant to this thesis, the people who move from one place to the other across politically defined borders.

Ingold observes that at the heart of modern cartography lies the following paradox: the more the discipline tries to provide a 'precise and comprehensive representation of reality, the less true to life this representation appears' (Ingold 2000, p. 242). This is because the world which we experience as living people is in continuous flux; it moves and changes, just as we do, and in our changing and moving we contribute to the transformation of the world. On the other hand, 'all is still and silent' (Ingold 2000, p. 242) in the world of cartographical representations.

This paradox relates to the problems surrounding the power dynamics inherent in map-making, especially when we consider maps to be visual narratives - image-stories of migration, in the context of this thesis. Who holds the power in the making or reading of these maps? Whose story is represented, how and why? Whose story is excluded? Scholarship around narrative cartography helps approach these questions, focussing on how narratives can be integrated in cartographic depictions to represent space as shaped by human experience (Pearce, 2008) and studying the spatiotemporal structures of stories and their relationships with places as represented on maps (Caquard & Cartwright 2014).

Ingold makes a further investigation into cartography by drawing a distinction between mapping and map-making. While conceding that the distinction between the two concepts is not fixed, Ingold considers mapping as 'the re-enactment, in narrative gesture, of the experience of moving from place to place within a region' (Ingold 2000, p. 232). Map making, on the other hand, is a process whereby 'the making of maps came to be divorced from the experience of bodily movement in

the world' (Ingold 2000, p. 234) with the cartographer having no need to travel or have been to the places represented. The heart of this difference, then, becomes the fact that 'maps cease to be generated as by-products of storytelling, and are created instead as end-products of projects of spatial representation' (ibid.).

Maps created and used outwith academic literature are important narrative artefacts, such as the depictions of migratory journeys exchanged by those who have undertaken those journeys. Abdul - Ahad (2015) writes about such communication between forced migrants journeying to Europe, and in his article he reproduces the following map, written in Arabic and originally posted on Facebook by a Kurdish person living in Iraq:

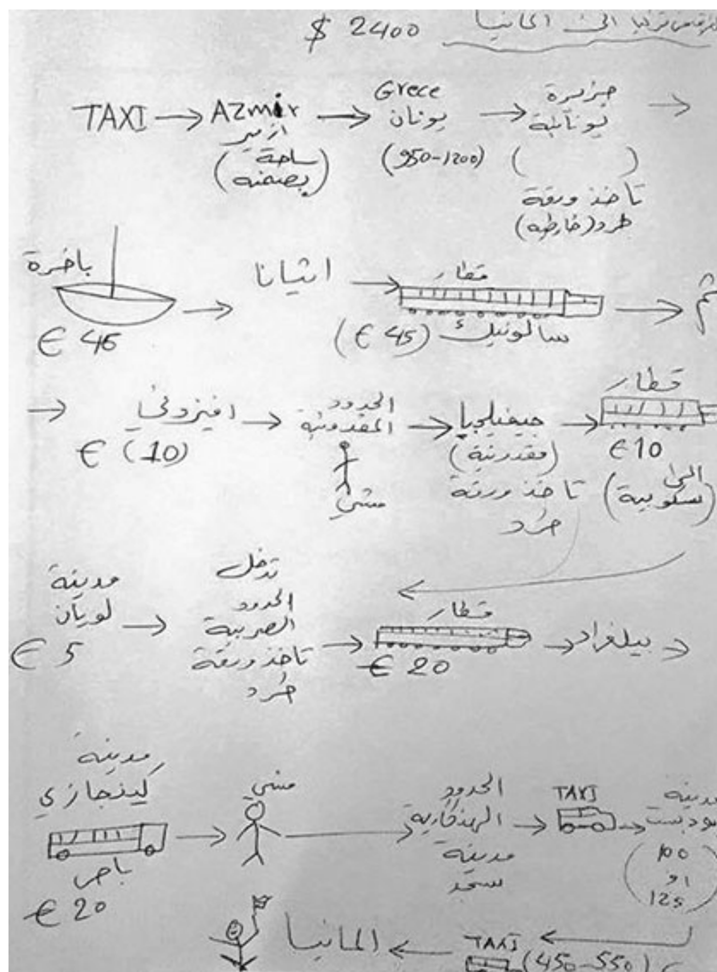

Fig. 8: Travel map
Source: Abdul-Ahad (2015, p. 39)

It depicts the steps to get from Izmir in Turkey to Germany, via the Mediterranean, Greece and Eastern Europe. It is a travel guide, witness, tale of exile, an account of journey through space that contains emotion and story. It adds in the lived

details of such a journey: the monetary costs (made explicit), the risks (understated), the relief (at arrival), all handwritten.

This is a map made after, and made about, a lengthy journey undertaken by the cartographer; it is subjective, personal, descriptive of details and emotions. It is not what Ingold describes as a 'modern, 'scientific' map', (Ingold 2000, p. 230), which on the contrary involves the 'elimination, or erasure, of the practices and itineraries that contributed to its production (Turnbull 1996:62, quoted in Ingold 2000, p .230).

The intended readers and users are people who speak Arabic, not any European languages. It is, then, in many ways the opposite to the technologically precise maps of migratory routes, produced by European states and border agencies, that show precise geographical details but no realities of human emotion or story - such as the map below:

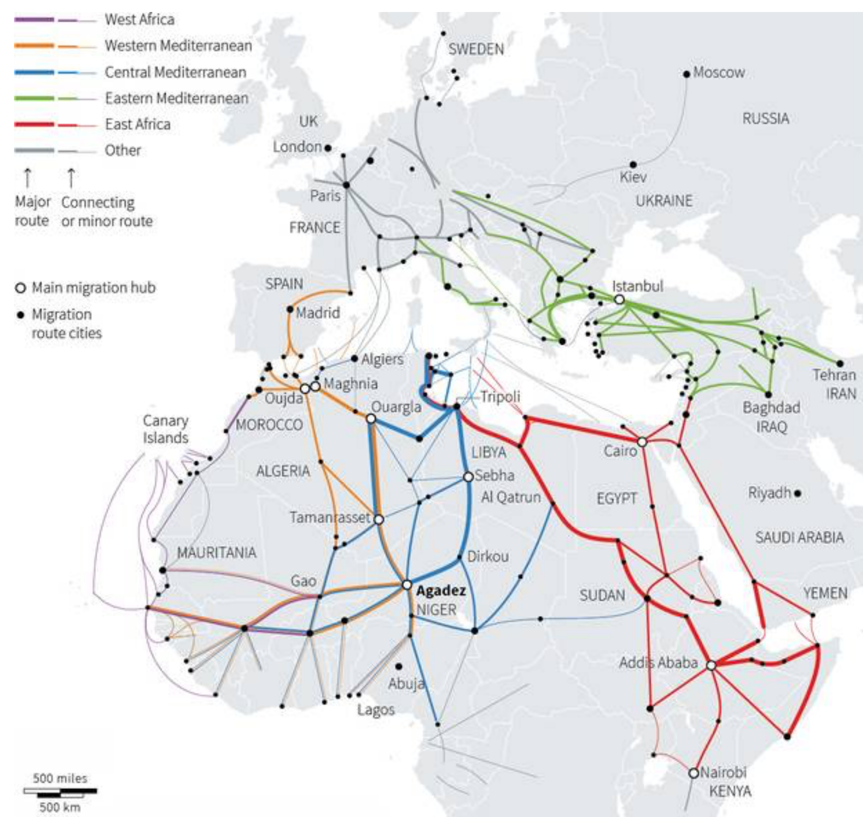

Fig. 9 Migratory routes

Source: http://graphics.thomsonreuters.com/15/migrants/index.html

‘Migratory route’ is an expression which carries associations with something that is undertaken regularly, seasonally, a defined route on a map like the migratory routes of birds. The map below, called *Viajeros sin fronteras* [Travellers without borders], depicts similar routes to the one in fig. 9:

Fig. 10 *Viajeros sin Fronteras* - information poster made by SEO (Sociedad Española de Ornitología)

Contrast, however, the language used about the journeys of birds – ‘travellers without borders’ - versus the language surrounding human migration over very similar areas. Fig. XX emphasises the lack of borders and the characteristics of the migrating birds depicted, offering more individual details about the travellers than the Fig XXX affords the human beings who migrate along its depicted routes.

These different maps are presented as types of representations of migratory journey, as part of observing that maps are as a significant element of narration in conveying stories related to forced migration. Issues of power, agency, voice and control are again present, intrinsic to the creation and use of maps as visual narrative elements.

One of the primary motivations for making and reading maps is to help and guide through a journey - but what if, as is the case for many experiences, the journey is not linear? I think of the 'maze' of the UK asylum system, which means that people seeking asylum have to experience repeated returns (to report their presence, to appeal decisions, to attend legal appointments).

A reflexive extract from my research journal further illustrates these considerations around non-linear movements:

> I am beginning to see that this research journey – I am not sure you can generalise for all of them – is nothing like Jenga. The tripartite model (year 1 = literature review; year 2 = fieldwork; year 3 = writing up) does not work for me. I am still reading new ideas. Fieldwork was happening before I even started. I have been and still am writing as I go. The Annual Progress Review, the boxes trying to simplify and classify – they don't help to get a sense of what this process really is about. Undoubtedly, they help keep track of costs and outputs, but that is not the work itself. Not the inner workings.
>
> If it is like anything, it is a path that spirals and loops, following an idea of a landscape that is both over the next hill and contained in everything already visited. Spirals and loops – for sure – very much also within myself there are spirals and loops, workings that are not linear.

Here, again, we find a tension between the lived experience of complex and non-linear journeys and processes, and the requirements of dominant systems which need (and assume) things to be measurable according to positivistic, quantitative parameters. Throughout the diverse phases and iterations of this thesis, I tried to encapsulate its sections and connections in map-form. Every iteration of the Thesis Map In Progress brought more doubts and frustrations; none of my attempts brought clarity or seemed to move much forward from the initial explosion of concepts which informed a mind-map made at the very beginning of the thesis-journey:

Fig. 11: Mind-map made at the beginning of the thesis journey

A concept which helps to address this tension, this sense of forever trying to map the unmappable, is one which is central in the making and critiquing of maps, drawn from Korzybski's work on semantics:

> 'The map is not the territory, the word is not the thing it describes. Whenever the map is confused with the territory, a 'semantic disturbance' is set up in the organism. The disturbance continues until the limitation of the map is recognized.' (Korzybski 1933)

This opens up the understanding that maps can only ever present (or demand) models of reality. Being reminded of this opens up the possibility of a relationship with knowledge systems which require exact and precise representation through maps – a relationship based on negotiation where alternative models of knowledge and representation can be presented as ways of expressing experience mapped in specific contexts. This relates back to the negotiatory research approaches suggested by narrative inquiry scholars, discussed in Chapter 3. It also connects with how post-modernist geographers argue that maps are not the only way to represent geography (Soja 2003), leading my path on to investigate counter-cartographies.

5.2 Counter-cartography

Alternative, radical and counter-cartographies have sought to address the issues of power and representation inherent in European, positivistic cartographic traditions (Kollektiv orangotango, 2018). Such scholarship is relevant because it seeks to critique and disrupt the hegemonic norms surrounding mapping - especially important regarding the movement of people between the Global South and the Global North, and the questions of whose perspectives and narratives are represented, in the light of the decolonising perspectives discussed throughout this thesis (e.g. Mbembé 2001; Tuwaihi Smith 2012; Phipps 2019). The travel-map of Fig. 8 (p. 150) is an example of counter-cartography, in that its depictions of forced migratory journeys help to 'unhinge our beliefs about the world, and to provoke new perceptions of the networks, lineages, associations and representations of places, people and power'. (Mogel & Bhagat 2008, p. 2). Counter-cartography has also been enacted, in practices which question the

prevalent European narratives of borders, danger and safety regarding journeys of forced migration and the people who undertake these journeys.

One example of such practice is the 'forensic mapping' of the Liquid Traces project (Forensic Architecture 2012). This presents a forensic investigation of the story of the 'Left to die boat', described briefly in Chapter 2. This was an overcrowded rubber boat which left Libya heading towards Italy. The boat ran out of fuel, drifted for 14 days, then was returned by the sea to its point of departure. 63 of its 72 passengers had died. The themes of the story, as (re)told and (re)mapped in Liquid Traces, are death and culpability. The map becomes a moving, narrative entity used to make sense of events; it changes and presents new evidence as answers unfold and forensic methods are applied to cartography. A calm, measured voice narrates what happened as a succession of vessels encountered the drifting boat, decided not to intervene or assist, and left its passengers to die. The story and the map are centred around the sea which is described as an 'unwilling killer and witness to murder—the murder weapon being 'the water itself' (Aldegheri, Boyd & MacKinnon 2018). This is mapping as investigation and as witness, presenting a non-hegemonic perspective.

'Alarm Phone' is a project which uses maps of sea-routes towards Europe from Africa and the Middle East as a reference point for action and intervention, to catalyse rescue operations and save people in danger during sea crossings towards Europe (https://alarmphone.org/en/safety-at-sea/). The language of the sea continues to be present when migratory experiences move beyond the journey stage, past arrival, and reach the point of having to 'navigate' the asylum system of the receiving country. Such systems are also often described using the metaphor of the 'maze' because of their complexity and unpredictability. Projects have developed to create maps, guides and toolkits to support people through these journeys.

The 'Right to Remain' toolkit is another example of mapping practice which provides a 'guide to the UK immigration and asylum system', aimed at supporting people who have to 'make their way through this very complicated system' (from the Right to Remain website: https://righttoremain.org.uk/toolkit/). Here we see the metaphors of being 'lost at sea' or 'navigating a maze' are taken and used

as a catalyst for map-related practices of support and solidarity which challenge and disrupt the hegemonic balance of power.

The ways in which maps are produced also related to dynamics of power; increasingly, diverse digital alternatives to the atlas or the paper map are moving coutercartographic practices beyond the parameters of times when geographic information was produced, distributed and controlled by official authorities (Strawmann et al 2014). Content creation, too, is increasingly accessible to people without the need for specialised cartographic resources thanks to software such as Open Street Map. This circumvents the top-down depiction of space by an elite of cartographers and opens up new possibilities of studying how people make sense of space (Agnew 2005). In Chapter 7 we will see how supporters of the *Lega Nord* in Torino use maps - to target places of migrant solidarity for attack, to identify those areas of Torino 'degraded' by 'dirty immigrants' – this is a reminder that map making can also be used with violent, othering intent, returning analysis to the issues of power and representation which are so critical in narrative inquiry.

Summary of Chapter 5

Following 'the invitation of the crossroads' posed by a growing realisation that maps were a significant feature in my research, this chapter took a detour to consider relevant issues and complexities surrounding mapping and map-making in contexts of forced migration. I interrogated different perspectives on cartography, and some practices centred around maps in relation to forced migration. These helped to widen my perspective ahead of investigating maps and mapping in spaces of intercultural encounter, migratory resettlement and integration.

In European contexts of forced migration, encounter often happens in settings (places) and on terms (timetables, language, cultural parameters including cartographic ones) heavily influenced by the culture of the receiving country, with all the implicit (and not so implicit) power dynamics this involves. The work of decentering my positionality, as a white European researcher and educator (see Ladegaard & Phipps 2020) is especially critical in contexts of forced migration. Given this, and in the light of the literature discussed in this 'crossroads' chapter,

I will now move on to interrogate how maps used in these contexts can help facilitate dialogic narrative exchange.

Chapter 6: Maps, encounter, stories

This chapter presents observation and analysis of instances in which maps and mapping featured as part of narrative exchange, both connected to and embodied in a shared space of intercultural encounter. To be clear, these projects did not deliberately set out to use maps as a tool to facilitate intercultural encounter through narrative exchange. Rather, maps and mapping are a surprise, a revelation, a finding within my fieldwork observations. This chapter therefore considers the role of maps and mapping which emerged during the narrative exchange and intercultural encounter that ensued anyway. The literature considered in Chapter 5 helps me to do this; particularly relevant are the caveats raised therein about the power dynamics and colonial legacies inherent in the making and use of maps in European contexts of forced migration.

Section 6.1 concerns a project run by the *Insieme* organisation in Torino - let us call this *Progetto Rifugio* [the Refuge Project]. This involved volunteers meeting people who were forced migrants as they arrived at Stazione Porta Nuova and giving them a 'survival pack' which containing a blanket, water, and a paper map of the San Salvario neighbourhood. On the map were marked places where people could find free shelter, food and the opportunity of a warm shower.

We then return to Edinburgh in section 6.2, where I consider a community mapping day which was part of a wider project to build a digital 'sanctuary map' for Edinburgh. During this day, New Scots and people already living in Edinburgh took part in a process aimed at locating places of welcome across the city. I was involved in organising this as part of my work for the City of Sanctuary network. Analysis includes self-reflexive considerations of my own practice and positionality.

6.1 Torino: mapping survival

Back in Torino, in a bar near the city's main train station: Stazione Porta Nuova, which delimitates one side of the San Salvario neighbourhood. I was waiting for a woman called Mariam to come and tell me more about a project where maps were used as part of intercultural encounter. Karim had put me in touch with Mariam after telling me about Project Refuge: this involved volunteers from *Insieme* going to Stazione Porta Nuova where, in Karim's words, they 'intercept migrants' who 'arrive from the South' or who 'have been sent back from the mountains'.

Karim's choice of wording echoes the language used in media stories where the coastguard or the police intercept migrants as they try to cross borders into or across Europe. The migrants who are intercepted by *Insieme* volunteers are in transit, in a place of transit. Their direction of travel is from the South of Italy, either to stay in Torino or head further North into France; or coming from the border crossings into France, where they have been intercepted by state authorities and sent back. How could this encounter, which involved being intercepted, be a story of welcome and solidarity rather than a reminder of other stories of journeys forbidden?

The web page of *Insieme* described the project in different terminology:

[This project (…) aims to provide assistance at various levels in the city (*territorio cittadino*), allowing people who are in a situation of need or vulnerability - especially due to their migratory journey - to obtain support and orientation in knowing the information and services offered by the city itself.

(…) the aims of the project: providing orientation to migrants who stop or move through key areas of the city (*territorio cittadino*); offering listening through the work of our volunteer workers - themselves refugees - to give people back dignity and comfort; guaranteeing support as people manage their needs; and indicating the path towards integration of people in all their humanity in a context which is often hostile.

The main stated aim, then, is to offer support to individuals, promoting the creation of bridges and channels of communication between migrants and local (*del territorio*) organisations with the services these organisations offer. In this way we intend to promote the process of integration and reciprocal knowledge between organisations, civil society and people who have immigrated to the city *(territorio*)]

This is a measured, careful description setting out the intent to provide welcome and support, framed in language of movement and journey ('migrants who stop or move'… 'indicate the path towards') and also the language of geography ('bridges and channels'). The word 'territory' is repeated four times over three paragraphs, referring to the city of Torino. In contrast to how 'territory' is used by the *Lega* protesters we will meet in the next chapter, here the city is a place with resources which the Project Refuge intends to share.

The word 'migrant' is used interchangeably with 'refugee'; people are never called *extracomunitari*. There is an emphasis on the fact that the volunteers are themselves refugees. This choice of language reflects a project where one of the central aims is to base welcome on shared understanding of migratory journeys and empathy of listening: migrants are both the experts and beneficiaries of expertise, which lies in shared experience.

Mariam arrived and greeted me, using the informal '*Ciao'* and '*tu'* mode of address. I thanked her for her time and asked what coffee she would like. Mariam sat down and got straight to the point: 'So, you're interested in the Project Refuge? What do you want to know?' I was immediately put at ease by Mariam's direct manner, the way she skipped formalities of address and entered immediately into conversation about why I was there and how she could help me. I explained that I was developing an interest in how maps could be part of encounter and story exchange. She nodded. 'Yes. But we focus on solidarity, not the stories, you know'. Mariam said that the volunteers from Insieme greet and talk to migrant people arriving, 'new arrivals', and provide them with life-saving basic equipment: warm waterproof clothes, a silver foil blanket, some food, a map. She showed me a paper map of San Salvario, which featured 'places where people can go to get basic things'.

There are no words for these 'things' on the map, just images of a bed, a shower, some bread. It is a map for survival, where place and its resources are depicted using the most simple imagery, so that written language is not needed as a condition to access basic necessities.

These volunteers are themselves refugees. Mariam told me that she had escaped from the Gambia. I asked her about this aspect of the project, saying it seemed an important one from the website. 'Yes', she confirmed. 'we found that these people who are arriving only trust other people who have arrived before. We know how to do this because we have been them'.

Mariam's story here confounds the narrative whereby refugees arriving are saved by white people from receiving countries. Here we see the relational approach described by the Refugee Hosts Project (see Refugee Hosts Project 2021), which recognises the significant role that refugees themselves play as providers of support and assistance. This also confirms the story of the project website: experience of forced migration becomes expertise which is then used as a skill to share resources. This too subverts the narratives surrounding forced migratory arrivals (discussed in Chapter 1) whereby migrants arriving are to be pitied as needing salvation, or repelled as threatening Other. Here, arrival is a part of people's 'migratory journey' which might entail a 'situation of need or vulnerability'; this journey can also entail other parts with more 'dignity and comfort', and a future of 'integration of people in all their humanity'. This future is embodied by the people who are providing welcome, 'intercepting' in order to 'create bridges and channels of communication' rather than enforce borders and barriers to movement. In this narrative, movement through place is linked to movement through time, with the key relational aspect of shared experience being a bridge linking the moment and place of arrival with a future of support and integration.

Mariam invited me to join her, 'so you can see how it works', and I gladly accepted. We went into Stazione Porta Nuova. The platforms were arranged in parallel rows which all led to a wide, open space underneath huge electronic displays showing arrivals and departures. We waited in the vicinity of the platform where trains arrived from Savona, a town to the South of Torino on the coast of the Liguria region.

I stood by her in silence as a train pulled in. She told me to stay 'a bit distant, please, but where you can still see, but I will need space to work'. The train arrived, people started to get off. I had asked her how she knew which people would be in need of her support, and she had shrugged, answering, 'Sometimes they have heard of us through the networks and see my badge' - she pointed to a bright blue badge on her jacket with *Insieme - Progetto Rifugio* written on it - 'sometimes I can tell from their faces, their expressions, and how they walk. Sometimes we will miss them. But' - another shrug - 'what can you do, we have to keep on trying, we have to be present anyway'.

Mariam describes the process of recognising who is a newly arrived migrant in need of support, according to categories based on people's physical aspect and demeanour. There are strong parallels here with the way police in Italy stop - intercept - people with darker skin much more often than white people. Mariam's story continues the subversion of the terminology of border guards, describing the process of intercepting people as similar to that employed by police but with entirely opposite aims. The role and positionality of the *Insieme* volunteers is here also diametrically opposed to that of the police, who are Italians, representing the Italian state authority, who identify migrants as 'Other' and stop their journeys. The *Insieme* volunteers are themselves part of this 'Other' group, and use this as a strength in order to welcome fellow migrant people in such a way as to subvert categories of othering and bordering, transforming interception into an encounter of solidarity and welcome.

I watched as a tall young man got off the train and Mariam focussed her attention on him. She didn't smile or move towards him, but waited until he passed by. He had dark olive skin, dark brown eyes, black hair, and I found myself reminded of a close friend from Sicily. As he walked he looked around him, sideways and behind, as if checking if he was being followed. When he drew level with Mariam she walked up alongside him and said, in Italian, 'Hello, brother, do you need any help?' The young man stopped and looked at her, seeming uncertain; Mariam immediately brought out a little rucksack which she opened, pulling out first a paper map and opening it as she walked with him to stand by a wall where they were not in the middle of a busy thoroughfare. I watched as she talked gently, explaining that the map showed where he could get a shower or meal or bed if he needed it, then waited for his response. The young man started speaking, and talked for almost five minutes without

interruption. Mariam handed him the rucksack, showing him its contents, and he walked towards the exit she indicated. Mariam came over to me and said, ‘Syrian. I thought so. They took his fingerprints in Sicily so they turned him back at Ventimiglia. Hopefully he will be able to find the basic things he needs here in San Salvario, until he is recovers some strength’.

Here we see categorising according to appearance happening: the young man reminded me of my Sicilian friend because of his colouring and facial features, but Mariam knew he was not Italian and acted to support him. His demeanour is uncertain and fearful. Her approach to him is calm, framed in language of welcome (‘Hello brother’) and assistance. When the young man stops and seems suspicious, she brings out the rucksack as tangible ‘proof’ that she is there to provide help without any conditions. She pulls out the map and uses it to start an explanation of the immediate neighbourhood. Her demeanour is gentle, sheltering, slow. She steers the young man to a quieter part of the station, and listens as he talks without interrupting him, before showing him how to move on from there.

The station is here a place of arrival, welcome and encounter. The wider place - the immediate neighbourhood adjacent to the station - is depicted on a map, and this depiction of place is the focus for an exchange of stories expressed through the language of needs and support. The young man’s journey links the temporal and spatial aspects of his story: he came from Syria, arrived in Sicily, tried to get into France, was sent to Torino where he recounts his journey. The encounter with Mariam, the map and the rucksack she gives him provides a first step into an immediate future of accessing resources in San Salvario.

In Mariam’s account we see the repeated use of ‘they’, to indicate those who stopped and changed the young man’s journey. ‘They’ could indicate people (border guards, police) but could also refer to the impersonal forces and organisations whose representatives did the fingerprinting and stopping, whose decisions translated into law mean that a person seeking asylum must remain in the country of first arrival.

I accompanied Mariam another two times, and on both she did not speak to any migrants because two separate *pattuglie* [roving squads of two officers] of police came up to us. They

questioned Mariam, asked to see her papers. She calmly showed them her residence permit and then the paper map, explaining what she was doing in the station. They police did not ask me for documents or justification for my presence. On the second occasion they stopped halfway through their questioning because one of the police officers recognised her *Insieme* badge and said, 'No, no, leave her, these guys are connected to the church just around the corner, they are *regolari* [within the rules / ok to be here / not irregular or illegal] '.

This is an encounter with police, representatives of state authority, who stop Mariam in the middle of her work. She is identified as a person who needs to be checked; who needs to show that she has the right to be there, and justify her presence in the station. She is a black African woman; I, a white Italian woman, am not asked for any documents or explanations. The process of judging by appearance who should be intercepted is here applied to Mariam, along racial lines. She is calm throughout this process, showing the police through documents and words that she has a right to be there. Her badge becomes a symbol showing that she 'deserves' to be there, connecting her with a local church (whose premises are used by *Insieme* for their offices) which legitimises her in the eyes of the police: she is one of the *'regolari'*. This word means that she and her official documents are *in regola* - within the rules, regularised, legitimate. It is the antonym of *'irregolari'*, used to describe people like the young Syrian man – migrants who do not have documents permitting them to stay.

After this second shift Mariam and I have coffee together, and I asked her how she was feeling. 'Fine', she said, 'and you?' I commented on the interactions with the police, saying it felt unfair that they only checked her documents. She shrugged: 'What can you do? I have to stay calm otherwise they will stop me doing my work'. Her body language reminded me of our fist meeting, and of how she had shrugged and said, 'What can you do, we have to keep on trying, we have to be present anyway'.

Mariam's shrugging might seem to indicate an attitude of 'what can you do' in the sense of 'I don't know, I'm not sure, I don't care' - but this is belied by her next words, which tell a story of determination and perseverance. Sometimes the police stop and question her; sometimes she misses stopping people who need her help; regardless, the focus is on continued presence to bring support and welcome into the lives of migrants as they arrive in Torino.

When I next met Karim I asked him if the map was also digital or on an app, and he laughed. ‘No no’, he said, ‘this is for people who often don't even have a phone anymore. But maybe, some day, an app would be useful.’

His laughter makes me wonder if he thought me naïve to ask that question; or if it indicates amusement at how much I had misunderstood the resources available to the people arriving in Stazione Porta Nuova, who often didn’t ‘even have a phone anymore’. Both are possible. My question opens up a future aspect of the *Progetto Rifugio* story, with the possibility of a digital map. But for now, this is not the most ‘useful’ thing, and the paper map is sufficient to the project’s needs; and the immediately tangible nature of a piece of paper - handed from one person to another - contributed to the map becoming a catalyst for the exchange of stories and welcome.

Themes in section 6.1

In this section, intercultural encounter features narrative exchange which centres around and is **mediated by a map.** The encounter occurs on a variety of levels. First, between migrants who are ‘new arrivals’ and volunteers who are also migrants, now resident in Torino. Secondly, between new arrivals and the city of Torino. Thirdly, we see the encounter between the Italian state (represented by the police) and migrants (in the person of Mariam).

The map has a variety of functions. It is a tangible artefact which becomes the central focus of an act of welcome, exchanged during a moment of encounter which occurs at a liminal moment (arrival) in a liminal place (Stazione Porta Nuova). This is a map geared towards supporting arrival and survival: it is a simplified depiction of place in response to / made around basic needs such as food, shelter, hygiene. Mariam says that ‘we focus on solidarity, not the stories, you know’ - but I observe that the map is a vehicle for story exchange, acting as facilitator and catalyst for the exchange of stories. It is a channel of communication which allow the young man to tell his story. It also acts as an explanatory document which justifies Mariam’s presence in the station when the police stop and question her: the map tells her story and is accepted by the authorities.

Place here is depicted **as a resource**: the map tells a story of what is available to people who need to access services within the city. While these services are basic necessities, the map contributes to a story where the focus is on what is available, rather than on what is not: this is not a narrative of scarcity, but rather one of possibility, if not quite one of abundance. The map shows that there are resources in this place, and that they can be shared, and that they are enough to support the next step on people's migratory journey. The story shared by the young man is exchanged in a context of welcome and solidarity, where future possibilities are supported rather than curtailed. Mariam has a vast reserve of determination to continue her work, even if this work is disrupted by hostile bordering practices on behalf of the police. Karim's laughter is part of a reframing of the project as good enough for now in its current form: it does not (yet) need digital technology, there is enough to work with as it is.

The relational aspect of this project sees the map become the **focus of a shared doing**: an act of solidarity and hospitality where common experience of forced migration becomes the central element. This is also the factor which underpins processes of categorising people in order to identify and intercept them in order to provide welcome. Here, 'Us / them' categories are disrupted not because they don't exist but because recognising someone as a 'migrant' means recognising them as 'one of us'. This is using processes of labelling and categorising to create belonging rather than othering. This is also linked to the ways in which narrative exchange is allowed to evolve: Mariam does not question the young Syrian man's story, she does not treat it as suspect or require it to contain particular elements which would 'allow' him to receive support and welcome. In the actions of the police, however, we see stories approached as justifications for continued presence being permitted; this is othering undertaken with the aim to stop, question, judge.

The temporal element, too, is connected to the story told by and through the map: Mariam is providing the basic information needed for survival, in the very short term. This encounter occurs in a place of transit, at a time of vulnerability and uncertainty for the young Syrian man arriving; the narrative exchange centres around the needs of his arrival. His past story of migration is the premise for his

arrival; the narrative exchange is not aimed at generating an in-depth exchange of stories. The map provides a focus, a central physical object to hold on to and exchange; a token of arrival and survival in the immediate present, with the possibility of a future story unfolding outside the station.

6.2 Edinburgh: mapping sanctuary

This section discusses a community mapping initiative which I co-organised as part of my work with Edinburgh City of Sanctuary. I employ self-reflexive autoethnographic methods to explore how this project used mapping as a way to facilitate narrative exchange in a context of intercultural encounter.

6.2.1 Community mapping day: background

In 2015, Syrian refugees were resettled across city councils in Scotland, including Edinburgh, through the Vulnerable People Resettlement (VPR) scheme. This development, together with increased media coverage of people seeking sanctuary in Europe (see chapter 1 for discussion of narratives surrounding migratory journey and arrival, including the image of Aylan Kurdi and its effects), meant that many residents of Edinburgh offered their time and support to organisations working to welcome people seeking sanctuary. While there was a large number of people willing to support refugees, there were not large or pre-established networks of organisations already engaged in supporting refugees - because, as discussed in chapter 1, Glasgow city council was the only one to enter into an agreement with the UK Home Office to become a city where forced migrants were 'dispersed'.

Edinburgh City Council, through their Refugee and Migration Team, were responsible for the immediate reception of the Syrian refugees, and then for providing housing, healthcare and access to education. Through colleagues and friends active in different spheres across the city (in primary and higher education, the city council, homeless charities, churches, healthcare) I learned of many other initiatives which rapidly formed or adapted to assist with supporting newly arrival Syrian people, working in particular to offer practical support such

as delivering clothes and baby items to families, volunteering as interpreters, providing information regarding systems of healthcare and schooling to families.

My colleagues and I heard repeated stories of similar initiatives being set up by separate organisations in the same area. This on the one hand resulted in frustrations and tensions between organisations and groups, with people speaking of 'competition', of ideas being 'copied'. On the other hand, there were situations where resources were available in abundance but people did not know about them and so could not access them. An example of this became referred to as 'pramgate', where an organisation collected a whole church hall full of prams but did not know how to 'access' refugee families to then distribute the prams, which remained in the hall for weeks.

A series of conversations with people coordinating the City Council Refugee and Migration Team, with people from Syria and with people from other organisations indicated the need for an overview of what was happening to welcome refugees in Edinburgh. I therefore worked with colleagues at Edinburgh City of Sanctuary to organise and host a 'community mapping day'. The aim was to bring together newly arrived Syrian refugees and people from across receiving communities in Edinburgh in order to identify and share resources (both places and initiatives) of sanctuary and welcome across our city.

In this background story, the temporal aspect revolves around the VPR scheme which brought Syrian refugees to Edinburgh following changes in public perception of refugee journeys and arrivals, as discussed in chapter 2. One result of these changes was the formation of an Edinburgh City of Sanctuary group in 2016. Edinburgh, then, is the central place in this story. Here there is an abundance of good will, resources and people willing to welcome and support newly arrived Syrian refugees. However, there is also a narrative aspect showing a lack of reciprocal awareness or communication between different organisations and groups across in the city. The language used speaks of relationality which features 'frustration', 'tension', 'competition'.

My role in this story is multilayered: I am recounting and analysing it now, and I was also heavily involved in the events being described, being the chair of

Edinburgh City of Sanctuary and active in community education projects in Edinburgh. The following description of the community mapping day is drawn from a variety of sources, including my personal journal, emails and City of Sanctuary Edinburgh blog posts.

6.2.2 Community mapping day: what happened

The City of Edinburgh Council Refugee and Migration Team provided catering and one of the city chambers as a venue for the community mapping day. The event was oversubscribed, so we worked to ensure as diverse a range of perspectives as possible, with the following groups represented as participants: people from refugee communities, people from organisations working to welcome refugees, and people working in healthcare and education. There were childcare facilities available in a room nearby; all food was *halal*; interpreters were present, with the languages they spoke written on labels attached to their tops.

The day began with a welcome to everyone, introducing the event as a 'conversations starter': an opportunity to work out the important questions rather than give definitive answers; a chance to being a variety of people together to map out what was already happening across our city in terms of welcome and sanctuary. We were all in a large hall where ten big round tables had been covered with paper tablecloths. On these, City of Sanctuary Edinburgh volunteers had drawn out maps of different areas of the city, featuring main landmarks (such as the Meadows park, Edinburgh Castle, the Catholic Cathedral and the Central Mosque) and main roads - elements in the landscape used as pointers and references to navigate the city and define its areas. These initial drawings were not to scale, but intended as prompts for further collective mapping. Any language was welcome, as were drawings. Experienced facilitators were present to help people if they had any questions. On each table were put post-its, wooden blocks in the shape of buildings, Lego blocks, pens, pencils and colouring pens and crayons for participants to use.

So far this is a story of inclusion, welcome, with an open approach to gathering information. However, reading about counter-cartographies has increased my awareness of the power dynamics implicit in choosing how to represent place. The

fact of having maps already pre-drawn on the tables can be seen as contradicting the inclusion and welcome described above: here we have parameters already set, according to cartographic choices which privilege big, recognisable markers to define and delineate the city landscape. There is also the question of who decided these initial representations. While the community mapping day had been set up following conversations with people who were refugees, there were none in the core team of volunteers: colleagues and friends who were refugees had indicated that they did not have any spare time to contribute as volunteers, but they would be happy to attend the mapping day itself.

After welcoming everyone, we invited participants to move around the room freely, adding to the map any places or initiatives of safety, welcome and solidarity which they knew of. Participants immediately started to walk around the room, at first looking at the maps and then starting to draw and write places they knew. The information was mostly written in English, with some entries in Arabic and some drawings. Interpreters helped the Arabic speakers to understand what the English entries were, and wrote translations on the map. Soon clusters began to form on the maps, with places and initiatives more thickly present in particular places such as the Central Mosque, community centres, schools whose halls were used after hours for community activities:

Fig. 12: Community mapping day in Edinburgh. Photograph by Emily McInnes.

At every table people were swapping tips about how to get to places and stories of experiences in different places. I heard one Syrian woman, at a table where a child-friendly cafe had been marked by a Scottish woman on the map, asking the Scottish woman for advice about similar places near where she lived. The Syrian woman led the Scottish woman to the table with her local area; this led to the discovery that they lived close to each other and had children of similar ages; they then arranged to meet in a local cafe the following week. A football club which met in a park was noted by a group of young Syrian men who lived nearby. One woman marked a wavy line on Princes St which I thought looked a bit like the Arabic letter *seen* - س . I asked her, 'Why the letter *seen?*'. She looked at me uncomprehendingly for a few seconds, before laughing and saying, 'No no it is the number 3! Because of the telephone shop, the Three shop. There is kind girl working there, she is Arab, she helped me very much with my mobile phone when I arrived first so that I could speak with my family still in Syria'.

These are examples of how collective map-making facilitated the exchange of stories. As the maps became filled with notes, people shared more stories: it was a snowballing story effect. The invitation for participants to include their own depictions of places and initiatives of welcome had been open enough to ensure that information was not limited by the cartographic biases implicit in the maps already there. By lunchtime the tablecloth-maps were full of writing and drawings, and people had started to slow down in their moving around the room. Participants paused, had some food, and then regrouped for the afternoon, where the invitation was to identify what - if anything - was lacking / needed across the city in terms of services, based on what had been identified as being present. While participants were having lunch, City of Sanctuary volunteers worked with the facilitators to flip the tablecloths over and allocate each one to a particular 'area' or 'theme', out of those identified by participants as most important during the morning. Examples of these included mental health, children and young people, food.

The main outcome of the afternoon was that there were 'many services' - but that there was a lack of information sharing and connection between

organisations, so that people did not know where to find things or who was doing what. This also seemed to imply a lack of encounter and communication between organisations, groups and individuals. A majority of people suggested as feedback that a 'welcome map' of the city would help: an online directory, with the information shared during the morning information made digital and available to all. City of Sanctuary Edinburgh, it was suggested, could act as a hub for information.

6.2.3 Online sanctuary map: a story of failings and learnings

This outcome motivated the City of Sanctuary Edinburgh team of volunteers to undertake a new project, stemming from the community mapping day: to create an online system whereby the information contained in drawings, post-its and scribbles on the tablecloths could be translated into an online map.

The process whereby this was approached involved one volunteer who was a coder creating an online platform, using open access software; we all then transcribed what was on the paper tablecloths into a database on this platform. The information then became available as a prototype online database, searchable via a map of the city or via a directory of places and services.

However, as the process evolved it became clear that there were many challenges I had not initially anticipated. One such challenge was maintaining the information up to date, for example if a place closed or a service changed its schedule. Another was how to moderate information, which could be posted by anybody who had a suggestion for the sanctuary map, but which needed to be checked for accuracy before being put online. Another challenge was ensuring that the people working at a 'new entry' - whether a cafe or a big organisation - were happy to be on the sanctuary map. Yet another was translation: making the sanctuary map available in different languages, starting with Arabic as requested by participants in the community mapping event. We established a rota of volunteers, so that one person each day could check for updates and permissions; but it became clear that people did not have enough time. We were contacted by translators, but there were problems with the coding which did not fully support the Arabic script.

My journal shows that this process became very frustrating and demoralising. It opened up a whole other level of linguistic incompetence to me: code. I found this very difficult, because I did not understand it and was in a position of depending on one person to do a task I could not help with. The work in developing an online welcome map put me in a condition of vulnerability where I had to trust the volunteer who was a coder. Friends who were themselves at various stages in the UK asylum system wryly commented, 'now you know what it feels to have to trust an interpreter'. I also began to feel a constant scarcity of time and resources to maintain this project as it had been requested and envisaged. We tried to obtain funds to enable me to have more time to spend on this, but no funds were forthcoming. We contacted the people involved in the community mapping day, but they did not have resources spare to support the project. Eventually the sanctuary map became static, in that no new information was being uploaded; and, during the Coronavirus pandemic, we agreed to take the map offline.

Themes from section 6.2

This is a narrative arc which starts from a situation where the community mapping day generates a great deal of enthusiasm and motivation and ends with the online sanctuary map at a point of frustration and stasis. What is relevant here in terms of intercultural encounter and narrative is not my personal sense of frustration and failure per se, but what can be learned from observing the story of the community mapping day in contrast to the online sanctuary map process in terms of how maps and mapping contribute to narrative exchange and intercultural encounter.

The community mapping day saw narrative exchange happen between New Scots and people from Edinburgh, the receiving city; between people from different refugee communities (in particular Sudanese and Syrian); and between people from different parts of Edinburgh and different organisations. This exchange of stories was centred around maps: tangible representations of a concrete place, the city of Edinburgh, spread across tables throughout a big room, co-developed by participants in a way that was open, creative and multilingual. The day had a specific focus: places and initiatives of welcome and sanctuary. Stories exchanged were initially of practical knowledge or need, then evolved into the sharing of

experiences centred around places and events linked to the map being co-created. It was a dynamic event, full of exchanges, where an abundance of people and ideas and stories met. The conversations were key to the rich map-making that happened: people were able to exchange ideas, questions and stories because they were there, in person, gathered for a shared purpose.

In the online map, there is growing focus on lack of resources and capacity to take forward the map as planned and requested. The process loses connection with the people who made the community mapping day so rich in narrative exchange and intercultural encounter: it becomes the domain (if you will excuse the expression) of a small group of volunteers, none of whom have themselves experience of being a forced migrant. In this situation, I do not stop and learn from my own vulnerabilities, or listen to what my feelings of incompetence might teach me. As a group, we do not stop to reconsider, we do not adapt the scope of the project to the resources available: we keep on trying to follow The Original Plan, and in the end become exhausted.

Themes and Summary of Chapter 6

This part of the journey has shown that maps and mapping can be a practice which facilitates narrative exchange in contexts of intercultural encounter. While undoubtedly 'The map is not the territory it represents' (Korzybski 1933:58), **maps can support narrative exchange if they are part of a process of shared doing, centred around shared place.**

By 'shared', I mean a process where forced migrant communities are involved to the extent that the project could not continue without their input. The *Progetto Rifugio* in Torino and the community mapping day in Edinburgh are examples of this. Here, **maps are narrative artefacts** that bridge the tension between meeting practical needs (of orientation, of information sharing) and telling stories (of arrival, of possibility, of resources available, of daily living). In this way, **maps can catalyse both solidarity and story**; the **power dynamics inherent in cartographical representations of territory are challenged by placing the knowledge of forced migrant people as centrally important.**

The online Edinburgh sanctuary map provides an example of a process which loses this critical ‘shared’ element; when this happens, the story turns from one of connection and abundance to one of scarcity and frustration. In contrast, the Progetto Rifugio was refugee led, with a specific focus: one place in the city, one moment in migratory journeys; it started from there and maintained its momentum. It was less ambitious in scope, more immediately practical. It also focussed on what was abundantly available (volunteers, determined and with personal expertise based on experience) instead of on what was not available, or not going as planned.

This is not an easy thing for me to write, but it is also exemplifies the truth that failure is a finding, a learning. Observing my own work critically has helped me to see how trying to make a map ended up unmaking many of my previously held certainties about process and priorities. This is a painful process of self-decolonising; of examining one’s own practice in the light of new realisations. The hope is that these learnings will serve to enrich future work.

Chapter 7: Encounter and conflict

This thesis has so far investigated the influence of narrative exchange in contexts of intercultural encounter which have featured welcome and solidarity; but what happens when such encounter is conflictual? What happens in places where narrative exchanges are informed by emotions such as fear and anger?

In this section I discuss intercultural encounters which involve conflict rather than dialogue and welcome. Although these were some of the most uncomfortable moments of fieldwork, they were also important steps on the way to answering my research questions: observing and analysing conflictual situations helped me to understand new aspects related to the influence of narrative in intercultural encounter.

These encounters happened in Torino within San Salvario and near the ex- MOI, very close to the places of safety described in chapter 4. In Edinburgh, conflict occurred during demonstrations in solidarity with Syrian refugees in a public square of the city centre, and on a city bus.

7.1 Torino

7.1.1 San Salvario

As described previously, the San Salvario neighbourhood is where the *Casa del Quartiere* is situated. As well as this and other initiatives designed to promote intercultural dialogue, San Salvario has also seen sustained anti-migrant protests, as described by Dr Italo Fontana in his book *Non sulle mie scale* (Fontana 2001).

This book is a personal story of intercultural encounter told from the perspective of the author, a long-term residents of San Salvario who himself came to Torino as an immigrant from Puglia in the South of Italy. He describes the changes that occur in the late 1990s in his neighbourhood with the arrival of people from North Africa. Many of these people were young men who lived in crowded conditions in the many attic rooms of this neighbourhood, which were rented out cheaply by Italian

landlords. The book describes how immigration became linked with criminality, with many of the North African men working as drug dealers and pimps, operating from street corners and within stairwells - *Non sulle mie scale* translates as ‘not in my close / stairwell’; ‘not on my doorstep.’ Dr Fontana described his attempts to engage with his neighbours, with local authorities, with political parties and with the North African men on his street corner whom he grows to fear.

This text is relevant because it is a story of conflictual intercultural encounter told from the perspective of someone from the receiving community in the same neighbourhood where I observed narrative exchange in contexts of intercultural encounter involving dialogue, safety and reciprocal learning. I wanted to know more, so I contacted Dr Fontana after reading his book and a conversation developed between us, conducted via email and in person. Dr Fontana's story is also relevant because it is an account of intercultural encounter described in its negative aspects, but it is not framed as an overtly xenophobic narrative: it is presented as a story of someone who seeks to dialogue with people he finds different, difficult, dangerous and ‘Other’, frankly discussing the difficulties of doing so.

Dr Fontana shared with me a diary of events, coupled with his letters in response to these events. Following the framework of narrative enquiry, we see that the timeline of his narrative is delineated by these documents, which he kept carefully to remind himself of how things unfolded. His letters - addressed to a wide variety of local authorities - cajole, persuade, expose, implore, always in exquisitely polite and correctly official Italian, as the situation he lives through becomes more and more ‘intolerable’. People ‘from North Africa - many more people than legally allowed’, as he told me, lived in the attic flat in the apartment block, owned and rented out to them by an Italian landlord. They made and distributed multiple copies of the key to the stairwell, used the lift to stash and transport heroin, threatened Dr Fontana’s wife, defecated and urinated in the communal stairwell and on Dr Fontana’s doormat. They sold heroin to other North Africans and to Italians who died of overdoses and left bloody syringes on the stairs - it seemed to him like an escalating torment without clear resolution.

The aspect of place is central to Dr Fontana's story. The very title of the book points to the importance of place, claiming it as 'mine' (my stairwell / close), with a '*Non'* in front to indicate the rejection of behaviour deemed 'unacceptable' - and by extension the people doing the behaving. The stairwell of Dr Fontana's home can be seen as a synecdoche for wider dynamics of conflictual intercultural encounter linked to migration described in the book. It is a safe, regulated communal place that is transformed into a place of dangerous and terrifying transactions. These are controlled by a group of people who use the place communally, but according to a new series of rules that have nothing to do with the will or acceptance of those who were already living in the shared place. Dr Fontana's narrative extends into the pavement outside - to the street corner now occupied by drug dealers and their patrols looking out for police, to the entire neighbourhood where people who have lived and worked there for years have begun to leave in fear. Once, as we drank coffee from exquisitely crafted cups in his elegant dining room, he sketched a map of his stairwell and one of the street below his flat, showing where dead bodies and bloody syringes had been found.

He repeatedly told me that he 'refused to contemplate accepting living like this; it would have been a defeat, and admission of something terrible'. He also said that 'The alternative to taking a stand - which would be *omertà* - I also found intolerable'. *Omertà* is the word used to express the attitude of 'see nothing, hear nothing, say nothing' associated with people who witness crimes but do not report or challenge them for fear of reprisals. It is usually used in connection with the Mafia and has strong cultural connotations of cowardice but also accepted (and acceptable) self-preservation. Dr Fontana went on to draw parallels between the threat of violence and reprisals which he experienced under Fascism, as someone who opposed Mussolini, and the threat of physical violence which he experiences under the 'regime' of the drug gangs and other criminals who patrol his street, as someone who objects to 'living like this'. He also spoke of threats received from the police, municipal authorities and neighbours: they too wanted him to stop his appeals to resolve 'the illegality of the immigrants but also of the Italians who rented them slum attics and organised the drug trade, and the police who were bribed to look the other way'.

Place is contested; control over place and what happens there is asserted by different groups with different priorities. Fear and danger are constant narrative element, linked to a place which is described in terms of temporal comparisons: before it was safe, before it was civilised; now it is dangerous, unacceptable. The change is traced to the arrival of the young North African men. The relational aspect of the story centres around relationships of conflict, fear and enmity with them, in particular with one of them who is called 'The Boss' and is described as shouting loudly in Arabic and acting menacingly against Dr Fontana and his wife.

The relationality aspect of Dr Fontana's story presents complexities and conflicts both with the Italian institutions he considers allies and with the North African people he considers a threat. The encounter between Dr Fontana and the immigrants in his stairwell was coloured by the reality of violence and criminal behaviour, which meant that their exchanges were informed by fear and resentment. The encounter between Dr Fontana and those to whom he appealed for resolution was initially mediated by commonly held standards of civic responsibility, but these became meaningless when not enacted - for example, when the police did not intervene to stop crime because, in Dr Fontana's account, they too were implicated through corruption.

Words related to safety (such as peace, tranquillity, calm) and fear (such as threat, menace, death) recur throughout Dr Fontana's book. Fear of the unknown; fear of the other; fear of criminality; fear of difference are centred around the actions and bodies of unknown, different, criminal and criminalised immigrants. I suggested to Dr Fontana that a lot of his language used images connected to fear, with the North African men depicted in terms that made them Other and uncivilised in ways that echoed Orientalist tropes. He considered this calmly, and replied that he had always considered 'the problem' from the point of view of legality and criminality - 'not if these people are illegal migrants, I don't care about that, but their behaviour is illegal and criminal, that is unacceptable, and it would be so if they were Italians'.

Dr Fontana defines himself primarily as a citizen, someone with rights and duties, who inhabits a space which is threatened by criminal activity. This focus on rights and responsibilities links his story to the critiques of unconditional hospitality

discussed in chapter 2.1, in particular Derrida's work on hospitality (Derrida 2005) which presents specific, localised conventions of hospitality in a necessary but impossible tension with the concept of absolute hospitality. In Dr Fontana's words: 'I don't know why those people came here. Maybe they were forced to leave their homes, I don't know. I don't care. They are welcome to come and live here, like I did too, but only if they behave in a civil way and not if they threaten my home and my safety.' This is the benchmark for hospitality in this story: behaving 'in a civil way', rather than the parameters set out by the Refugee Convention (UNHCR 1951). Dr Fontana was a member of the respected (and respectable) Torino establishment: a psychoanalist, male, white, heterosexual, married, with a record of opposing the Fascist regime in his youth. To his dismay, he was accused of being a racist and a xenophobe by colleagues, neighbours and journalists 'because I called those North Africans criminals and said I was afraid. But they were criminals. I lived in fear of them. Is that a racist thing to say?'

There was no happy ending for everyone. Relationships with many friends and colleagues were never healed. Dr Fontana eventually clubbed together with some neighbours to raise funds and enlisted an Egyptian friend to mediate the purchase of the attic flat; the people staying there were evicted, the lock changed, and so 'peace returned to our stairwell, at least'.

7.1.2 Outside the ex-MOI: a protest

In a different part of the city, Karim and I left the ex-MOI. As we walked towards his car a protest was gathering outside the gates. Banners of the *Lega Nord* were prevalent - a political party whose manifesto centres anti-immigrant policies. I made a quick decision and explained to Karim that I wanted to hear their stories too, asking him if he could let me out a few blocks away so I could walk back to the protest without putting him at risk: we both knew that such protest gatherings could include individuals who deliberately targeted black people for violent attacks. He looked worried and said, 'Are you sure? I don't know, those people, they are violent men, you can't know that you'll be safe with them…'. I persuaded him, saying wryly, 'Look, I was at school with people like these. My cousin voted *Lega*. It's ok.' He reluctantly agreed.

This interaction tells a story where relational categories of othering are understood and implicitly accepted: the *Lega* protest is dangerous to people like

Karim whose black skin made him visibly Other and a potential target for racist violence. I want to hear their stories, but also to protect Karim. He, in turn, is worried about me, and wants to protect me, expressing this in a gendered way with concerns about the 'violent men'. I realise that he is voicing the same narratives that my own family expressed about '*quelli lì'* [that lot] which surfaced in my worries about vititing the ex-MOI – 'that lot' meaning people like Karim, migrants, black people. In this exchange, Karim and I are an 'us' - people who are aware of dangers surrounding the *Lega* protest, although we identify different dangers; but I am also of 'them' in the sense that I am connected relationally with people like the *Leghisti*, the violent men. I am from their culture, in a sense; I have shared past stories with them, of schooling and family ties. Narratives of fear, othering and belonging weave all the way through this exchange.

Standing between people in the protest, I observed the slogans on the placards and banners being held up. '*Fuori gli abusivi'* [Out with the illegal migrants / illegal occupants], *'Ripuliamo la nostra città'* [Let's clean up our city], '*Basta occupazione'* [enough with the occupation / squatting].

The discourse here is about contested place, centred around the *occupazione* of the ex-MOI. This word literally means occupation, and is used also in contexts of military occupation; it also means 'squatting', with a *casa occupata* being a squat. This *occupazione* is framed in a narrative framework of (il)legality: the squatters are *abusivi*, there without legal permission. *Abusivi* is a word which is also used to signify illegal migrants - those who are in Italy without legal permission. The protest was catalysed by the ex-MOI, a localised situation, but employs the language used by the Lega and other far-right parties to talk about migrants at a national level. It is a continuum of narrative whereby migrants are categorised not only as illegal but also dirty: they make the city (our city, not theirs) a place that needs to be 'cleaned up'. In terms of relationality, there ia again a clear language of othering, described along racial lines.

As I took notes, a man asked me if I was a journalist. I explained that I was a researcher, interested in intercultural encounter and story exchange. 'Intercultural encounter!', he said with raised eyebrows. 'How can it be an encounter if that lot live like animals? *È una vergogna che questa occupazione esista sul nostro territorio cittadino* [it is a shameful thing

that this squat exists in our city (literally, on our city's territory)]' His voice and body language expressed outrage and rage. I asked him if he had been inside the ex-MOI. 'Inside there? No. They wouldn't let me, anyway.' A woman joined us. She introduced herself as his wife, Morena, and him as Luca. He told her why I was there. 'Where do you live, then? You sound Lombard', she asked. When I explained that I lived in Scotland, she looked delighted and talked about how much she would love to visit - 'So romantic!'

This exchange shows an absolute refusal to contemplate encounter with the people occupying the ex-MOI, using language which expresses a narrative whereby Others are so dehumanised as to be compared to animals. This narrative justifies the need to end the *occupazione*. The right to occupy space is determined by adherence to acceptable codes of legality, cleanliness and behaviour. Being a black migrant means being one of 'that lot'. The ongoing 'illegal' presence of these Others in a place which is linguistically appropriated as belonging to 'us' (the protesters) engenders outrage and rage. A white person identified as a Lombard living in Scotland, on the other hand, is acceptable, even 'romantic'.

Before I could reply, people from the front of the protest started singing '*Faccetta Nera'*, a song which originated in Italy's colonial occupation of Africa under Fascism and is mentioned in Chapter 1. It felt deeply uncomfortable: suddenly my presence there felt like complicity with the history and political affiliation expressed by the song, which more and more people were picking up and singing. I could not bring myself to stay, and said goodbye to Morena saying that I had to go. She noticed my discomfort and said 'I don't like this song either. We're leaving too, it's those idiots from *Fratelli d'Italia*. Would you like to have a coffee together? *Possiamo darci del tu?* [Can we address each other as *tu*?]'

We sat in a bar a few blocks away from the protest. I had agreed to using *tu*, wondering if this indicated a perceived comradeship. Luca had not wanted to leave and was complaining: 'It's just a song.' Morena said, 'But no, I don't like those people from *Fratelli d'Italia*, they are too extremist'. I stirred sugar into my coffee and asked where they thought the people should go, if they were removed from the ex-MOI. 'I hadn't thought of that, really', said Morena. 'I don't know!' said Luca. 'But I know that it is not acceptable to have them there. They don't even speak Italian, they speak Arabic or whatever it is. If you come here you have to follow certain rules. I was an immigrant in America and the rules there are extremely strict and I had to follow them, that's how it should be. If you come here and you want to

work, you have to speak the language and follow the rules that we all have to follow'. Morena nodded. 'My family is from Calabria, we came up North to work in Lingotto. But, see, they worked, my parents! They were *terroni*, yes, but *gente che lavora*, *non come quelli lì* [people who work / grafters, not like that lot].' Luca went on to talk about their son who had finished his studies and was struggling to get a job, never mind a place of his own, 'while these *abusivi* just sit about all day in occupied apartments'.

The narratives of othering / belonging are expanded here to include language and rules as markers of who deserves to inhabit contested space. Personal history is brought in as an element which spans place, time and relationships. Luca talks of his own past experience as an immigrant in America; Morena brings up the past of her family's migration to the North of Italy from Calabria. Their relationality with these places of immigration is framed as being within the rules - working hard, learning the language - presented in contrast to *quelli lì* [that lot] who are described as not working and not speaking Italian. Language (specifically Arabic) is suspect because associated with immigrants. Learning Italian is presented as a necessary step for acceptance.

The word '*Terrone*' deserves attention because of the narratives of othering / belonging it contains. Its use stems from the decades of South-North internal migration in Italy, when millions of people moved to the North (which experienced a rapid and sustained industrial development following the end of World War II and the effects of the Marshal plan) from the South (where land had for centuries been owned by a few rich families and where industrialisation occurred such more slowly). In Torino whole new neighbourhoods were built in areas like Lingotto to house the workers – like Morena's family - who enabled the growth of Fiat. This population shift brought resentment from those people already living in the North, and 'terrone' began to be used as an insult against the incomers.

The word derives from 'terra', with the suffix '-one' that indicates something big. In this case, 'earth' stands for mud: the dirt of fields and agricultural labour. 'Big' is to be understood as loud, uncouth, clumsy. Possible translations could be 'muddy lout', or 'muddy knuckle-dragger', or 'stupid peasant'. The meaning is 'filthy Southerner'. People from the South of Italy quite often have darker skin than Northerners: *terroni* were doubly dirty, grimed with earth and dark-skinned

even when clean. It is a word that has started fights and caused deaths. There are records of shops in Torino with signs barring the entrance to 'dogs and *terroni*'. The *Lega Nord* started off its political life as a movement channelling the resentment of people in the North against the *terroni* who stole their jobs. Here Morena is reclaiming the term, using it for her own family, redeeming it by finding people who are even darker skinned and who are perceived as not deserving welcome because they don't work.

In this narrative, the rage and outrage expressed by Luca are shifted towards resentment caused by perceived injustice, embodied in the experience of Morena's son who struggles to find work or accommodation. A member of a 'hard working' Italian family cannot access resources, while 'illegal squatters' from 'that lot' occupy place in a city which they are not deemed deserving to be part of. This perceived injustice is closely related to scarcity: of work, of housing.

7.1.3 Ex-MOI no more

I returned to Scotland shortly after that protest. When I was next in Torino, walking into the *Casa del Quartiere* for a coffee with Karim, I saw that he was sitting hunched forwards at the table, rubbing his face with his hands. As I joined him he smiled, welcomed me and then sighed. This demeanour was so different from the energetic, enthusiastic behaviour I was used to - I asked what was happening, what was wrong. 'I am exhausted', Karim said. He let his hands flop down to the table and said, '*Hanno sgomberato l'ex-MOI'* [they cleared out the ex-MOI]. I almost asked, 'who are 'they'? When? Why?', but Karim was so tired, so sad, that I didn't want to load him with more questions. I brought him another coffee, and listened as he slowly explained what had happened.

As well as the long-standing protests outside the MOI there had been lengthy political talk of a *sgombero* [an eviction; literally a clearing out, the verb also used for unwanted clutter or old furniture] of the inhabitants. Now, with the new government headed by the Lega politician Salvini, the *sgombero* had moved from being a promise (or threat) to being a fact. MOI was experienced by its inhabitants and those who supported them as a place of shelter and safety; by others like Morena and Luca it was seen as a place of outrage, a shameful presence on the map of the city; a sign of how 'their' city was being taken over by 'illegals'. The place of safety had been disrupted. The place of shame had been cleaned. Out of these two conflicting narratives, the one told by the Lega had been transmuted into action; in

Karim's words, '*hanno vinto loro'* [they have won]. This was the language of conflict and defeat: a clear drawing of lines between us / them.

After a silence, I asked, 'Who do you mean by 'them'?' Karim shrugged, tiredly: '*I leghisti, quelli al governo e quelli che li votano*' [The Lega people, those in government and those who vote Lega]. I remembered Luca, his othering of people inside the ex-MOI, how he had not thought about where they could live instead. 'Where are the people from the *ex-MOI* now?', I ask. Karim shook his head: 'It's been a disaster'. His body language indicated tiredness, sadness at what had happened. He did not seem angry as he carried on explaining.

People had been dispersed to centres in the periphery of Torino, removed from the communities that had formed over the years of the MOI being occupied. Banca San Paolo, who had financed the building of the MOI and technically owns the buildings, had promised 'boatloads of cash' to support programmes retraining the people living in MOI so that they could gain skills and employment. 'That has happened for four people that I know of. Out of all the people I know there. Four.', repeated Karim, shaking his head again.

The element of place in the story here becomes tied to the language of financial gain and loss: the *ex-MOI* was 'technically' owned by a bank. The relational networks formed between people over time at the ex-MOI were being disrupted by programmes or relocation and 'retraining' - this disruption of social capital was countered by promised reparations of financial capital. The aim was to help people gain 'skills and employment', again using language related to the world of work rather than that of social relations. This was another iteration of the discourse presented by Morena and Luca: a justification for removing communities because they were not seen as working and were not producing profit. Compensation for removal was promised in lavish terms, but in reality it had translated into a very scarce provision of retraining.

Karim said that a big NGO had been put in charge of the the '*smistamento'* of people - a word that translates roughly as 'redistribution', but which like '*sgombero'* is often used for goods in factory settings or supply chains. Karim went on to say that this NGO had 'put one employee in a hut outside' and invited people living in the MOI to 'put their names and signatures forward on a list for *smistamento*, without even an interpreter'. By this point Karim has his head in his hands. 'Can you imagine? These people being asked to put their

names and signatures on a list by an Italian man from a big official agency? After what they have escaped from? Well. It didn't work'.

Here is a continued use of the language of economics, which describes people like goods to be redistributed, or like elements which can be re-skilled and retrained to become part of a system of work and production. This is another form of dehumanisation: in this framework individual stories and experiences are erased, becoming names on a list which is part of a process organised by a 'big official agency'. Karim critiques the way this process is carried out, identifying two main problematic aspects: firstly, the 'big NGO' did not employ an interpreter, but people in the *ex-MOI* did not all understand or speak Italian. Secondly, the system presented by the NGO assumed that people living in the *ex-MOI* would be fine with coming forward to put their names on lists for *smistamento*, which was not the case. These were the two reasons, in Karim's story, which seemed to explain why only four people were retrained: hardly anybody wanted to put their names forward and be part of this process.

Was this lack of awareness, not even using an interpreter? Being unaware of the reluctance of people who were undocumented migrants to overcome their mistrust of 'official', 'big', 'Italian' institutions and write their name on a list? Karim's sentence, 'What they have escaped from', encompassed the experience of people who had to leave their homes because of danger, but also the experiences of migrants whose experience of navigating the Italian system of documents, permits and hostile bureaucracy left them deeply mistrustful of official forms and lists.

'So they came to us at *Insieme* and asked if we could help', Karim continued. He told me that he went to the ex-MOI with a colleague, another black man from an African country. When they arrived the man in the NGO hut 'looked at us and asked us what we wanted, what could he help us with - because we were two black men, he treated us like we were there asking for favours'. The interactions with the NGO did not improve: *Insieme* agreed to send interpreters and people to help with cultural mediation; the NGO had agreed to pay them but didn't. Karim explained that it became clear that the NGO was using their presence and the name of *Insieme* 'to make itself look good and absolve itself from accusations of incompetence'. He stirred his empty espresso cup slowly. 'So we came away. It was a shame, but what can you do. We couldn't fix it for them'.

This development of the story opens another interpretation regarding the seeming 'incompetence' of the NGO: in a sense, the process did work. This system - rooted in and expressed through the parameters of economic worth - resulted in a low turnout of people willing to be 'retrained and reskilled', because they did not trust the process and did not want to trade their name on a list for the support offer: the risks were too high. So people in the *ex-MOI* were shown to be lazy and work-shy, according to the *Lega's* narrative whereby migrants were associated with dirt and 'unacceptable' behaviour. This was confirmed by a process which operated from a specifically, culturally biased system and disregarded the individual stories of the migrants involved. Parameters were loaded towards classifying and 'redistributing' according to a narrative framework which originated in the economic systems of banks. This was enacted by a 'big official agency', with no provision for intercultural awareness or mediation. The results both confirmed and reinforced the discourse of the *Lega*, a right-wing party which was now in power as the municipal administration which enabled the *sgombero*.

Within this system, according to these parameters, people in the ex-MOI had two options: either put themselves forward and their names on the official list, or move on. Karim describes how the NGO attempted to use the knowledge and skills of *Insieme* to assist with its work - while at the same time disrespecting the people who embodied and shared these skills, by enacting racist assumptions against Karim and his colleague and by not paying interpreters and cultural mediators. Workers from *Insieme* realised that this request for help was in fact an extractive process, where their presence and knowledge was being used by the NGO to 'absolve' themselves from any accusations of incompetence. Again, this system left *Insieme* with two options: to be part of it, or to leave. So they 'came away', with regret but awareness that they 'could not fix it'. Within this system an approach which assumed equal human rights for everyone and involved intercultural encounter based on dialogue could not exist.

Throughout this story, Karim's body language becomes more slow, more sad, more tired. His language also expresses sadness and a sense of defeat. I thought of my research journal entry expressing 'heavy, melancholy tiredness'. There was

nothing I could think of saying which could help lift Karim's sadness. I brought us another coffee each, and we sat in silence. He said, in Arabic,

'… iareit mish lazim el beit..
Bas lazim na'ish, w nihna hon…'

['I wish houses were not necessary
But we need to live, and we are here…']
or
['If only we didn't need a home…
but one must live, and here we are…']

There was a poetry to these words: the internal rhyme between *iareit* [I wish] and *beit* [house / home]; the repetition of *lazim*; the assonance of the 'N' in *na'ish* [live] and *nihna* [us]. There was a rhythm in his Sudanese accent which caught my ear and repeated itself, like a slow beat, accompanying the fall of my footsteps as I walked away from the *Casa del Quartiere* after a muted goodbye with Karim.

By the time I got back to my flat it was evening and I was exhausted. I made myself transcribe the observations and conversations of that day, and then wrote in my personal research journal:

A heavy, melancholy tiredness seeps into me if I spend too much time alone with this work. All the stories and names and faces, their sadness, the fear, it is like water rising up in a tent as you sleep, and you don't realise it until everything is soaked.

This is a deep, slithering melancholy at the roots of my thoughts. Possible causes: Brexit and the xenophia it enables; the vicousness that increases in Italian political discourse with every month that passes. How can there even be encounter if pre-conceived narratives are used as walls against even meeting?

The melancholy is lifted by the good things of the world: good food, trees and grass and running water, sunshine, colours, fine smells. Poetry. People, too, my

heart-people. They are like tonics, or antidotes, enough to give me strength until the next draught of sadness; beautiful sticking plasters.

This text tells a story of sadness, with metaphors of weight and depth indicating the extent of this emotion. It also tells of much tiredness, and links both these emotions to being alone with the work of researching and writing. Conversely, it shows a situation of scarcity: a lack of hope, gladness, comradeship. Things which are identified as alleviations for 'melancholy' – poetry, nature, dear friends and good food - all connect with the external world, moving away from solitary sadness. The story concludes with the acceptance that these are just 'beautiful sticking plasters': the sadness will keep on coming.

Themes from section 7.1

In this section there are few instances of intercultural encounter which occurs directly between people from forced migrant and receiving populations. However, the stories and situations discussed are relevant because they help to understand **dynamics of othering, fear and hostility which inform pre-conceived narratives.** These, in turn, lead to situations of conflict, where there is little or no intercultural encounter featuring dialogue because people from the 'receiving' community are actually rejecting, refusing the presence of forced migrants.

The stories and situations here also feature place as a central narrative element. **Place is claimed and contested** by forced migrants and receiving communities in stories where the relational aspect is conflictual, with two groups of people expressing differing narratives around place and their right to be there. In the previous chapter the ex-MOI was described in a positive way as being 'off the maps' and therefore a safe place for migrants, in a world where official maps and rules do not bring them safety. This same element was depicted as negative by *Leghisti*, as in 'off the maps' of what we consider acceptable; a place of threat where unknown, Other, dangerous people live 'illegally'; a place to be 'cleared out'. The language of maps and cartography is used to delineate contested places and mark those which need to be 'reclaimed' and 'cleaned up'. Dr Fontana sketches a map to demarcate his home territory.

This oppositional relationality is expressed in all stories through language of othering: us / them, clean / dirty, recalling the categories of dirt and cleanliness in the work of Douglas (1976).We also see people divided as those who work / don't work, who follow the rules or break them. Language itself is also a marker of 'civility', of who is deserving to belong. Dr Fontana's cultured, precise Italian matches his stylish apartment, which was a place of safety and 'civility' threatened by migrants experienced as danger; one of them is described as 'The Boss' who is always shouting in Arabic. Here and elsewhere we see that languages are placed in **hierarchy of status**: Arabic is suspect, Italian is dominant.

Fear is related to othering, but also to a theme which recurs throughout this section: **scarcity**. Stories speak of scarce availability of jobs and of accommodation - both for Morena's son who can't find employment, and for the people in the ex-MOI who are forced to live as squatters because 'it's better than nothing'. This **scarcity generates fear** that migrants are appropriating scarce resources; and rage at perceived injustice in the allocation of resources. There is also scarcity of energy or optimism, in Karim and myself; and scarcity of options for the migrant people *sgomberati* from the *ex-MOI* and for the workers of *Insieme*.

7.2 Edinburgh

We now go back to Edinburgh, to more situations in which intercultural encounter involves conflict.

7.2.1 A rally in Edinburgh

One of these took place in the centre of town, where I stood with Fatima at a rally called by organisations supporting refugees, to express solidarity with Syrian people enduring ongoing conflict. We were in an open public square, on a cold and windy day. Fatima was shivering, and I gave her my gloves, feeling protective. A young woman was shouting angrily about the injustice of the war in Syria. She was white, with a 'received pronunciation' English accent. Fatima said to me, in Arabic, 'I do not understand this woman very well, her accent is different from Scottish accent. Why is she shouting this much?' I explained that this was an English accent and was about to attempt an explanation of the British class system as

expressed through accent, when a man's voice shouted from behind: 'Oi!' Fatima and I turned round, and saw a man sitting on the ground gesticulating. I went towards him, thinking that he might be unwell. Fatima looked worried and said, 'We should not go, we do not know this man'. I told her it would be fine, and we went over to him.

In terms of place, this is a public gathering in solidarity, and also a place of physical discomfort because of the cold. This brings out protective feelings in me towards Fatima: she reminds me of my Italian friends, who always seem unprepared for how cold the Edinburgh winds can be. There is also some discomfort in terms of relationally and communication, because Fatima does not understand the shouting woman. Language here is connected to access - not just to the meaning of words, but to an understanding of the socioeconomic implications of accent in the UK. A sudden disruption to the timeline of the story occurs when the man shouts out. My explanation of accent and class is interrupted; my protective attitude is taken on by Fatima towards me. Her worried look tells me that she thinks the man is dangerous. She advises against going towards him because we 'do not know' him: he is categorised as a potentially dangerous stranger, best left alone. I do not heed her warning because I do not deem the man a threat, think it will be fine and that he might need help.

'Spare some change, pal?', the man asked. His voice was slurred, his pupils dilated. I said I had no change but offered him a sweetie. He shrugged, accepted and ate it. 'You one ae them, then? Them Syrians?', he asked. I shook my head. 'Is she?' he said, gesturing towards Fatima. I nodded. She was silent. He said, angrily, 'Ah wish posh burds wid make a fuss about me too. Do ah need tae get bombed tae get a hoose, ken?' He started to cough, closed his eyes, leaned back against the low wall behind him and was silent. Fatima tugged at my arm and we left.

I have transcribed the man's accent to indicate how broad it was, how markedly Scottish and not upper class, in contrast to the 'posh burd' who is 'making a fuss' and whose accent - in the socioeconomic context of Scotland - meant that she probably came from an wealthy family and went to a private school. Unlike the man, who is homeless and begging and seemed drunk. His description categorises the 'posh burd' as 'other' than him; he also uses othering language when he refers

to ‘them Syrians’. Within this relationally of othering, he places himself as someone who is not ‘made a fuss of’.

There is an assumption of conditionality for support in his story, when he asks if he ‘needs to get bombed in order to get a house’. His anger is related to a perceived injustice; it is not clear whether he thinks it is fair that people whose homes are bombed should not get rehoused, but it is clear that he wants rich people to ‘make a fuss’ of him as well. Here is story telling an experience of scarcity, where the most basic elements of housing and sustenance are lacking. The man is implicitly comparing himself with ‘them Syrians’ - meaning refugees who have lost their homes - and asking why he should not also be allocated the resources they receive.

There are also a lot of assumptions made here concerning accent as a marker of belonging. My interpretation of this vignette allocates whole backstories to the homeless man and to the shouting woman based on how they speak. The man himself calls her ‘posh’. Fatima does not share these assumptions, which can be seen as cultural narratives and classifications. She remains silent as the man speaks. He is unwell, and drunk, and ends the conversation by closing his eyes to remove himself from it. He refuses any further engagement; Fatima, with her silence, also refuses. Their intercultural encounter is not one of dialogue.

Fatima said after a while, ‘I did not think people in Scotland could be like this man. His face is the face of someone who saw war, but what war did he see? I was scared of him’. I invited her to share more thoughts, but she refused: ‘I am tired now, and it is very cold, I will get the bus home’.

Fatima expresses her reactions to the encounter once it is concluded, once she has taken some time to reflect. There is fear: the man scared her. There is also surprise: that in Scotland there are people ‘like him’, with the face of ‘someone who saw war’. Here, too, we see an assumption based on a pre-existing narrative whereby Scotland is place where peace and safety are in abundance, where people do not see war: ‘what war did he see’? Fatima chooses to remove herself from this situation through her silence during the encounter, and then by leaving on the bus home.

The next day I was able to check in on Fatima and ask her how she was doing at a workshop with the Syrian's women group. I chose not to ask her any more about her thoughts, as she had placed a limit on our conversation which I didn't want to disrespect. However, Hala overheard me and asked 'why, what happened, why should she not be ok?' and Fatima was then willing to describe what had happened to the other women. The disturbing encounter was already becoming a story in the past, in a place outside the group: it was safe now to talk about it. '*Haram'* was the single word repeated while shaking their heads by many women in reaction - meaning in this context 'that shouldn't happen / what a shame / that's shameful'. Sara said, '*Mescheen* [poor him]. He was angry. I feel sorry for him'.

7.2.2 Bus from the Botanics

This reaction - of pity, of shaking heads, of ascribing emotions - was repeated a few months later.

This time it was a warmer day, and I had gone to Edinburgh's Botanic Gardens with Ruba and Farah, two women from the Syrian women's group. We were on the top floor of a double decker bus heading back from our trip, recollecting the best parts of the day, laughing and chatting in Arabic. When the bus reached our stop, we got up and went down the stairs, taking our time because they were steep, still chatting. A woman carrying a young child got off after us. As soon as the bus had pulled away she began to shout at us, saying 'Can't you even get off the bus properly? After taking up half the bus! Holding up the queue, talking your bastard Muslim language! Do you not have buses where you come from? Fuck off back home!'

We were all stunned from a moment: the outburst was sudden and unexpected. The woman walked away. I made to run after her and remonstrate, but Ruba took hold of my arm and held me back, saying 'This happens. She was angry. Let her go'. Farah shook her head and said, '*Haram*, [shameful] she should not use bad words like that with her child there'. 'She should not use them anyway!', retorted Ruba. 'But *mescheena*, [poor her] I feel sorry for her'. 'How can you feel sorry for her!', I exclaimed. 'She was awful to you!' 'To you too, my dear', said Farah laughing, 'even if you were not wearing *hijab'*. '*Khalas* [enough]' said Ruba, 'don't let her ruin the nice day. She is gone.' We said goodbye and headed homewards.

The relational aspects of this story made a strong impression on me: especially the lack of fear in Ruba and Farah, their feeling sorry for the woman, and the amount of anger in me against her. Were they not afraid because the aggressive person was a woman with a young child, not physically threatening? Was it easier to feel sorry for someone who did not pose a threat, and who was a mother like they were? Either way, Ruba and Farah's reactions tell a story in which roles are subverted and reversed: the aggressive woman is pitied, talked of with language used for victims (*mescheena*, I feel sorry for her).

My anger, too, is challenged and put into a different perspective. It was protective, vengeful anger, and very much not what was needed: Farah was right in saying that an escalation of conflict would have ruined our nice day. Ruba pointed out that in any case my protectiveness was misplaced, as the woman had been rude to all of us. The more I reflected on the encounter, the more I saw that Ruba and Farah had been wise, whereas I had been barely able to contain an anger which, on reflection, was perhaps rooted in years of being told to 'fuck off home to Scotland' by bullies at school in Italy. Furthermore, I had expected Farah and Ruba to react in the same way as me. Again, a role reversal: a 'teacher' being taught.

In terms of place in this story, the woman's words refer to the immediate setting (a bus in Edinburgh) while also referring to elsewhere: the 'home' to which we were told to 'fuck off'. There is hostility revolving around the space on buses: 'holding up the queue', 'taking up half the bus'. These accusations are so exaggerated as to seem absurd: three women walking down the stairs do not a bus hold up. There is no actual, objective scarcity of either time or space. The hostile words which immediately follow, however, indicate that the reason behind the woman's hostility is having identified us as 'Other': people talking a 'bastard Muslim language'.

Themes in section 7.2

Both situations discussed in this section involve an intercultural encounter which featured anger and aggression but minimal direct narrative exchange: the encounter was cut off before it could evolve into further conflict or into dialogue.

Reflection on what happened happens only after the conflictual encounter, and because of my relationships as a researcher I only gather reactions and stories from the Syrian women. They repeatedly use the word '*mescheen, mescheena*', which has the meaning of 'poor him, poor her, what a shame' – it carries the emotion of pity.

Place is not overtly contested like in Torino, but it is again present as a resource which is lacking. This scarcity is objectively true in the case of the homeless man's anger which centres around hierarchies of merit which decide and define who deserves to be given housing. The woman on the bus expresses her aggression by complaining about bus space, which is objectively ample, but is a narrative vehicle for her hostility to the Other.

Chapter 7 - themes

At the start of this chapter I asked, what happens in places where narrative exchanges are informed by emotions such as fear and anger? In many of the intercultural encounters observed, however, direct narrative exchange between forced migrants and people from receiving communities hardly happens: any such conversations are either cut off, or mediated by myself. But **many narratives are present, powerfully, as pre-conceived ideas about the Other.** It is these narratives which make any direct interaction hostile and which inform violence such as that of the *Lega* protest and the related evictions at the *ex-MOI*. These vignettes and the stories they contain tell of the dynamics which make narrative exchange impossible or extremely difficult: in other words, what can be learned from situations where direct narrative exchange can hardly happen.

Scarcity is a recurrent theme here, in particular scarcity of housing: the homeless man in Edinburgh, Morena and Luca's son, the migrant people in the ex-MOI all struggle to find the accommodation they need. Energy and optimism are also often scarce: for myself and Karim, in the context of the protests and evictions at the ex-MOI; for the homeless man in Edinburgh; for Luca and his son's prospects. In this chapter I am struck by how little listening there is in many encounters: they often feature monologues, statements of need or of othering (or both).

But scarcity is most closely linked to **place**, which **features repeatedly as a narrative element and as a limited and contested resource**: unlike in Chapter 4, the encounters observed here do not occur in places deliberately curated to be places of safety and trust. Stories expressed in this chapter feature demands that are centred around places such as the streets of San Salvario, the ex-MOI, the Edinburgh bus. **Maps** are sometimes present as ways of demarcating and claiming contested place; the language of cartography is also used to define and claim places as belonging to 'us', not 'that lot'.

Language is a vehicle for othering in this chapter. It is employed as a violence: by the *Lega* protesters when they sing *Faccetta Nera*, by the woman on the bus in Edinburgh, by the use of terms like *sgombero* and *smistamento* at the ex-MOI. Different languages, furthermore, are placed in a hierarchy, with Arabic repeatedly featuring as suspect and dangerously Other - a 'bastard Muslim language', the language spoken by the men dealing drugs in Dr Fontana's stairwell. Language becomes a barrier which demarcates who deserves to belong in contested space; accent and language also serves to identify the Other, both in terms of nationality and of social class.

The Other causes fear. We also see anger, often related to loss. This, for example, is expressed by Dr Fontana at the changes brought by 'criminal immigrants' to 'his' Torino. Luca and Morena are also angry at the loss of a certain future for their son, the loss of part of 'their' territory to 'that lot'. This sense of loss reconnects to time as a narrative element of stories discussed, with the past often idealised, the present now sullied by migrants, the future feared as further deterioration if migrants are not *smistati*. The Other also engenders pity and surprise, in that language is also used by the Syrian women to express emotions of pity which disrupt and unsettle roles: the refugees here are pitying the white Europeans, not the other way round.

Summary of Chapter 7

Narrative exchange, in this chapter, is often not in the form of direct conversations but rather a counterclaim of needs, centred around contested space and posited

within a framework of scarcity (feared and experienced) which results in conflict over resources. The absence or paucity of direct narrative exchange does not mean that encounter does not occur: the analysis and observations of this chapter have led to the following insights which relate to my research aims and questions.

Conflict is a form of encounter, even though the two 'sides' may not directly communicate; this encounter is expressed through pre-existing narratives of fear and othering which can translate into actions of violence, rejection, avoidance. These actions are communications.

Place is a critical element in these interactions. It is both a narrative vehicle for stories expressing needs (for safety, for housing), and the setting in which these stories are translated into conflictual action. Place is closely tied to the narrative of scarcity, becoming a resource for which people compete.

These insights are woven together with those from other chapters, and presented as learnings from the journey, in Part 3.

PART THREE - ARRIVING

(…) y al volver la vista atrás
se ve la senda que nunca
se ha de volver a pisar.
Caminante no hay camino
sino estelas en la mar.

(…) and looking back you see
the way that never again
you will return to tread.
Traveller, there is no road
other than foam-trails in the sea.

From *Caminante, no hay camino*
by Antonio Machado (Machado 1912)

Looking back, I see
a spiral trail of learnings
looping between
places, people, languages, stories.

Here I present these learnings - what I have found in answer to my research questions - and consider what next steps could be taken.

In chapter 8 I identify themes and observations which recur throughout the preceding fieldwork chapters. I relate these to my research questions in order to share the learnings of this thesis. I also reflect on the research process itself as a place of learning, include its failings and difficulties.

Moving on towards the future, in chapter 9 I consider what could next evolve from the original contributions made by this thesis. In a sense, this is a non-conclusion, an acknowledgement that the journey does not end with this thesis ending.

Chapter 8: What I found / learned

In this chapter I select those themes identified as significant during the analysis conducted in Part 2 and weave them into the story of what I found and learned in the light of the research questions. Let us revisit them, again checking the research compass:

1. How does narrative exchange influence the intercultural encounter between forced migrant people and people from receiving communities?

2. How do different kinds of narrative exchange influence such encounter?

Through observing community education projects in Edinburgh and Torino, I learned that narrative exchange can influence intercultural encounter to becoming a process of reciprocal learning, when it is an exchange that facilitates communication as dialogue. Dialogic narrative exchange is supported by particular types of practices: particular types of narrative exchange are more likely to influence intercultural encounter towards dialogue. These involve shared doing; places of safety and trust; approaches to knowledge production and sharing which subvert hegemonic power dynamics; perspectives which privilege abundance over scarcity; multilingual working.

I also observed situations of conflictual intercultural encounter. These observations confirmed learnings about dialogical narrative exchange by showing what happened in opposite circumstances. Here I learned that narrative exchange can influence intercultural encounter to become conflictual, when it is not open

to dialogue but focuses on real or perceived competing claims on resources. When narrative exchange is static - as opposed to dialogical - and constrained by pre-existing representations and expectations, it leads to communication which is conflictual and unresolved. In these contexts communication is often indirect, mediated through protest slogans or violent attacks, and involves a process of one-way statements, claims and counterclaims. These are informed by preconceived narratives which focus on scarcity, fear and othering. Hegemonic and negative cultural narratives towards forced migrants (discussed in chapter 1) are critical in shaping the context of intercultural encounter. Furthermore, place is not experienced as safe; trust is lacking; language is used to enforce categories of othering, as a violence.

I will now expand on these learning-statements, explaining findings from fieldwork and linking these to relevant scholarly literature.

8.1 Shared doing

Practices of shared doing do not focus on story exchange through words as the primary aim of the project. Rather there is a joint focus on an activity which, then, catalyses an exchange of stories which leads to dialogue. The sharing of information at the Sportello Informativo; learning English and responding to a shared text in Edinburgh; co-creating a map of places of welcome - these are all examples of shared doing.

This shared doing gives a sense of purpose to the encounter which, to a large extent, reduces the affective ambivalence often present in intercultural encounter (Van Leouwen 2008) and allows narrative exchange to develop towards dialogue. It helps to avoid tokenistic approaches to intercultural encounters as described by Kymlicka (2003), where only superficial aspects of cultural diversity are addressed. Rather, shared doing is a way of acting interculturally which helps people to 'decentre in order to help others to act together – or indeed to act oneself with others – in ways that overcome obstacles of difference' (Byram 2008: 75).

In terms of narrative inquiry parameters (Downey & Clandinin 2010), shared doing also anchors the narrative focus to the present: the present task, the place where

it is happening, the present moment and the interactions occurring therein. It keeps the focus on the place currently inhabited by all people present in the encounter: rather than the 'there' of where forced migrants came from, with its connotations of loss and longing, or its being named as the place people should 'go back to' in the language of the *Lega*.

Shared doing also connects back to the scholarship on embodied knowledge and pedagogy (e.g. hooks 1994). The *Progetto Rifugio*, the *Sportello Informativo*, the community mapping day and the co-creating of poems with the Syrian Women's group are all community education projects based on shared activities where the lived, embodied experiences of forced migrants as positioned central to knowledge production and exchange. These projects are informed by pedagogical choices linked to Freirean concept of praxis & transformation, whereby 'To no longer be prey to [oppressive] force, one must emerge from it and turn upon it. This can be done only by means of the praxis: reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it' (Freire, 2000, p. 51). The fact and act of positioning people who are forced migrants as experts through experience subverts the power dynamics implicit in dominant narratives wherein forced migrants are victims (to be saved), deserving or undeserving (according to the cultural parameters of the receiving country), a threat (to be repelled), an emergency (to be solved).

Shared doing, in the projects observed during fieldwork, revolves around narrative themes concerned with shared elements of lived experience such as motherhood, gendered domestic activities, information sharing, mapping a shared city. These can be seen as linked to Freire's concept of generative themes (Freire 2000): because everyone involved in the process of intercultural encounter has experience of these themes, everyone has something unique to contribute, and this generates a richness of story exchange.

8.1.1 Mapping as shared doing: a pedagogical practice, a resource

During fieldwork I noticed more and more ways in which maps are present - used, talked about, made - in contexts of intercultural encounter. I chose to follow this noticing, and this led to a finding: maps can be a narrative artefact which facilitates dialogical narrative exchange. Map-making can be a form of shared doing which also facilitates dialogical narrative exchange. Maps can be both a tool

to catalyse story exchange; and a language in which stories are told. I have also used maps as a way of signposting and shaping the thesis, as part of an attempt to (re)claim the legacies and metaphors of maps, and disrupt them so that they can be used in unexpected ways

I observed map-making as a dialogic pedagogical practice, expressing the lived, embodied stories of people's geographical, social and emotional realities in the context of forced migration and the intercultural encounter dynamics it engenders. By this I mean a shared doing undertaken in contexts of community education, a process that brings people 'closer' (hooks 2003, p.197), where dialogue understood as "the encounter between [people], mediated by the world, in order to name the world" (Freire, 2000, p. 69) is generated by people coming together over map-making to, quite literally, name the part of the world in which they all live. I also observed that this practice facilitates narrative exchange when the map is 'a point of departure - not a conclusion' (kollektiv orangotango, 2018), as illustrated by the story of the online welcome map of Edinburgh becoming focused on completing a process where the map was the conclusion, and losing the richness of connections and exchange which happened when map-making was a point of departure for dialogue.

Moving between map and place echoes the movement which occurs during narrative exchange and intercultural encounter, as stories go between individual people, and as perspectives shift through dialogue and reciprocal learning. This is the transformative movement from preconceived narratives and representations towards the complex, evolving lived reality of the people who are forced to undertake migratory journeys, and the people who live in receiving communities. When maps are used to facilitate dialogical narrative exchange as part of a process which is open to movement and change, they support transformative reciprocal learning.

It is important to acknowledge that maps and the wider language of cartography can also be used in such a way as to reinforce conflictual claims on contested territory, as seen in the story of Luca and Morena in Torino. Maps such as those discussed in Chapter 1, furthermore, contribute to the wider discourses of forced migration as an emergency and threat which then inform negative cultural

narratives against forced migrants. These translate into violent actions of individuals during moments of intercultural encounter, such as the woman on the bus in Edinburgh.

Maps, then, can also be used as instruments used to identify the Other and control their movements - whether this is a map of migratory routes to be intercepted, or a map of the ex-MOI in Torino to be cleared of inhabitants. This use of maps takes moral problems posed by forced migration - such as violence, hospitality, belonging - and presents them as problems which can be resolved through practical actions such as preventing migrant people from crossing the Mediterranean or removing migrant people from where they live. This is a perspective closely related to colonial practices of using maps to claim, delimitate and control both territory and the movement of people in - and into - that territory.

In a sense, the process of making the online welcome map of Edinburgh can be seen as having shifted towards such a perspective: the focus changed from a shared doing aimed at facilitating narrative exchange, to a technological solution 'answering' the moral 'problem' of hospitality and sanctuary highlighted by the arrival of Syrian refugees in Edinburgh. This is close to framing forced migratory arrival as an emergency which white saviours can fix (see Palladino & Woolley 2018 and the wider discussion in sectio 2.1). A key question suggested by this observation is, who is the mapping for? This helps to discern whether maps and mapping are being used as tools for decolonised pedagogical practices which generate dialogical narrative exchange, rather than as instruments of control. The Freirean concept of problem-solving is relevant here - taken from a classroom setting and applied to community education contexts - as a process which catalyses transformation, noting that "transformation... must be conducted through utilizing dialogue between the oppressed and those who support them in solidarity" (Freire, 2000, p. 87).

Dialogue and *solidarity* are key here. Map-making as a pedagogical practice can engender dialogue, helping people to express problems or needs or questions linked to the place they inhabit together. This dialogue, in my observations and learnings, is transformative when it is cooperative and participatory - not a 'top-

down' model where people from receiving communities speak and the forced migrants listen, mirroring the "banking education" model which takes place in schools, according to which teachers 'deposit' knowledge in students without any negotiation or dialogue. (Freire, 2000, p. 71).

Cooperation and participation of this kind happens if map-making is a practice rooted in understandings of expertise and knowledge as something which is rooted in embodied, anti-hierarchical approaches to education such as those conceptualised by hooks (1994). In this way, map-making can help to show and share knowledge based on the experiences of bodies who inhabit a specific shared space, carrying their own stories, transgressing oppressive conceptions of race, class and gender (ibid.). While map-making cannot erase systemic racism or dominant narratives of Othering – and, as seen in chapter 5, cartography has often been complicit in perpetuating such narratives – it can be used as a practice which can open up ways of creating dialogue based on and in shared places of intercultural encounter.

8.1.2 Poetry and shared doing

Poetry is another learning found in the thesis-journey: poetry as a method which can facilitate dialogical narrative exchange and shared making. This is illustrated in the stories of the Syrian women's group - both the stories told through the co-create poems, and the stories of that co-creating as a process of intercultural encounter and reciprocal learning.

Here, poetry is the focus of shared doing: the reading and responding to poems which are short, yet tell many stories and support the exchange of stories - initially as a reaction to the poem itself, and then as a dialogue between women of different cultural backgrounds. Poetry in this context is 'a way of knowing and attending, being and becoming' which 'can transform our hearts, imaginations, intellects, and conversations' (Leggo 2011, p. 73) and facilitates narrative exchange. The shared doing lies in many parts of this process: in reading the poem; reacting to the poem; sharing experiences related to the native themes present in the poem, which are generative ones (Freire 2000) that related to emotions or activities in some way relatable for all members of the group.

Poetry is employed in this context to support another shared doing which is directly related to the pedagogies of language learning discussed in Chapter 1: the joint endeavour of learning English. This is an educational setting where emotions and embodied knowledge are as important as vocabulary and grammar. Following the insights of bell hooks who writes that 'I rely on the sharing of personal narratives to remind folks that we are all struggling to raise our consciousness and figure out the best action to take' (hooks 2003, p. 107), here personal narratives inform conversations and define both the direction of workshop and the content of the co-created poems. Emotions and stories which involve grief or loss are not easy, but they are not avoided or seen as difficult, either. This is due to the trust and safety felt between participants and in the place of encounter. It is also because poetry 'is at ease with the difficult, the absolutely difficult' (Nancy 2006 p. 4): the original poems explore grief and loss, in a sense validating them as elements of a story, as important experiences which can be discussed and shared.

Poetry is also a methodological element of my research process, presented as the field texts which I composed in reaction to moments of difficulty. The compressed, incisive nature of poetry helped me to reflect on 'messy things' and realise that they, too, are an important finding of this thesis - as discussed below. It has supported my use of language and terminology surrounding loss and sadness which doesn't always easily fit in academic work, but is more traditionally associated with therapeutic or spiritual contexts. In this sense, poetry has helped to illuminate a lack, which is a finding: the need for academic discursive frameworks to expand, to allow space for such language and terminology to develop as part of our scholarly work.

8.2 Place

Place is another key dimension of learnings, and is confirmed as a critical factor in considering narrative exchange in contexts of forced migration, intercultural encounter and community education.

Furthermore, place is an important element of narrative inquiry as a research methodology (see Connelly & Clandinin 2000 and section 3.1). This perspective on

place has supported me as the research journey progressed through places where intercultural encounters happen, and I told the stories of what I observed and experienced. Place is both an element of narrative analysis of stories exchanged; and a significant factor in the setting of these narratives, the place within which stories are exchanged being critical to the intercultural encounter observed.

La Casa del Quartiere and the Syrian Women's group are experienced as places of safety. Safety is one of the key elements which facilitates and enables narrative exchanges which are open to dialogue and mutual listening. It is also strongly linked to one of the other facilitators in Ager and Strang's original indicators of integration framework: safety and stability (Ager & Strang 2008; see Fig. 5 p. 69)

When intercultural encounter happens in a place that is experienced by everyone as safe, then narrative exchange can develop to involve trust. Freire explicitly links trust to dialogue: 'dialogue becomes a horizontal relationship of which mutual trust between the dialoguers is the logical consequence' (Freire, 2000, p. 71). Trust is also a critical element in processes of integration. Strang & Quinn (2019) conducted research analyzing data on the social connections of men from Iran and Afghanistan who lived in the UK with little community contact. They found instances of extreme social isolation and poverty of personal relationships, as well as severely limited access to services. As a result they recommended a revision to the original framework of indicators of integration (Ager & Strang 2008), suggesting that trust should be added as a facilitator of integration. When trust is lacking; when people don't feel safe; when place is contested and claimed as a limited resource - then intercultural encounter is more likely to be conflictual, as illustrated by the stories of Dr Fontana, the *Lega* protest, and the homeless man in Edinburgh.

In terms of research process, these observations underline the strategic relevance of neighbourhoods as contexts where significant everyday interactions between immigrants and national residents take place (Caponio & Ricucci, 2015). Schmidtke & Zaslove (2014) contend that there is much to learn from focusing on specific local contexts and comparing them, because unlike studies which look at policies at a national level these are cases where the issue of integration is more likely to be 'prone to more pragmatic discursive negotiation, often across party

lines.' (Schmidtke & Zaslove 2014 p. 17). While the legislative and constitutional setup of the UK and Italy are very different, and Scotland is not a region of the UK in the same way as Piedmont is a region of Italy, the nature of devolution in Scotland means that many aspects which impact on the context of intercultural encounter are decided in Scotland, similar to regionally decided integration policies in Italy. In the course of my fieldwork in these specific local contexts I find that the sub-national level is where action happens that is based on local needs, not on national-level politics that are often driven by competitive claims to be the toughest on immigration.

8.3 Messy things

Many unexpected events occurred during this thesis, from the change of methodology discussed in Part 1 to the change of fieldwork path presented in chapters 5 and 6. Repeatedly, I learned and unlearned and relearned to not be afraid of surprise, of the unplanned or unexpected. Downey and Clandinin write, 'learning begins only when certainty ends' (2006, p. 47) and, looking back on my journey, I see that unexpectedness and uncertainty can be places of possibility (hooks 1994) and transformation: a generative place, where assumptions are challenged and new directions take shape.

In terms of research process and ethics, I realised how much my discomfort with uncertainty was tied to my positionality: a white European researcher, with a scholarship at a Scottish university, formed by a lifetime of security and European epistemological approaches, however much I critiqued them. The research practice of keeping a reflexive journal helped in this learning from discomfort, related to research as a cycle of acting and reflecting, where I was an active element of the intercultural encounters observed. It also confirmed that, while choosing specific methods is often seen as a 'guarantee' of certain research outcomes, that is not always the case: research often does not evolve in a linear fashion, and outcomes are likely to be different than envisaged (Law 2007).

One learning related to process recurred throughout this thesis-journey: this was trusting the research methodologies which both supported me and helped me to appreciate that 'unexpectedness is not only expected in narrative inquiry but also

one of its goals, as inquiring narratively with others opens up the possibility for growth' (Downey and Clandinin 2012, p. 390) Trusting that unexpectedness is both part of the research process and a generative result: this did not sit easily with the need to remain in control of the research process.

Vulnerability experienced as a researcher revealed and unsettled internalised hegemonic narratives of which I was unaware, and led to new insights. This occurred, for example, on my first visit to the *ex-MOI* where I experienced the fact that 'In narrative inquiry, unexpectedness also lives in, and through, the unfolding relationship between researchers and participants' (Downey and Clandinin 2012, p. 390). This was not a comfortable process for me; but it was a moment of de-creation in a decolonising sense (see Phipps 2019), and a transformative moment in my personal experience of intercultural encounter.

Vulnerability surfaced, messily, when I was confronted with my own linguistic incompetence while building the online welcome map in Edinburgh. Freire notes how 'many political and educational plans have failed because their authors designed them according to their own personal views of reality' (Freire 2000 p. 94) and, similarly, I felt failure when the process did not evolve as I thought it should, struggling with the need to let go of that which I thought should happen. Observing and analysing these feelings and stories, using methods from autoethnography and narrative inquiry, generated important reflections and learnings.

The need for things to be predictable, measurable and replicable is inherent in positivist epistemological approaches. However, it is also a need of people who have to get on with life: plan meals ahead, know when the kids are in school, be certain of their employment status, get ethical approval for their research plans. Here, again, is a tension: between the need for tidy answers and the messiness of the real world.

These learnings are relevant in relation to research as a process. They are also related to my research questions, though, because the processes of dialogical narrative exchange discussed all operate with the understanding that unexpectedness and vulnerability is also integral to intercultural encounter. If

narrative exchange occurs in places of safety and trust, through practices which acknowledge 'messy things' as integral to the process and generative of possibility, rather than as threatening, then this narrative exchange is more likely to lead to dialogue and reciprocal learning.

8.4 Binaries (and their dangers)

This approach to 'messy things' also serves to challenge binary categories of classification. Feminist scholars warn that 'This tendency to dichotomize human experiences is persistent, powerful, and pernicious. Dualistic categories are such an organizing force because they provide a simple classification system that allows even the most complex and elusive qualities to be compared and contrasted in bold, clear terms.' (Belenky, Bond, & Weinstock, 1997, p. 119).

This 'simple classification system' can be seen in the narratives analysed in chapter 7, where intercultural encounter is conflictual and narrative exchange is not a dialogue but a series of counterclaims and monologues. These are based on a series of binary categorisations such as clean / dirty, belonging / other, Italian / extracomunitario, deserving / undeserving. Bourdieu's analysis of such oppositions shows how they '[…] always derive their ideological strength from the fact that they refer back, more or less discreetly, to the most fundamental opposition within the social order: the opposition between the dominant and the dominated […]' (Bourdieu 1979 p. 469). This relates binary classifications to hegemonic narratives and power dynamics relevant to contexts of forced migration and intercultural encounter.

This thesis, too, uses language and analysis based on binaries such as othering / belonging, conflictual / dialogical. I am aware of this, and realise that sometimes binaries have helped to identify learnings through observing one kind of situation and its opposite. Furthermore, it is often difficult to conduct comparisons without resorting to binaries such as 'this works / does not work', 'this features more / less'. However, as this thesis-journey has evolved I have developed an increased awareness of the dangers and problematic uses of binaries, leading me to realise that practices of dialogical narrative exchange often move beyond oppositional binaries, drawing more on the semantics of and / and rather than either / or.

This is supported by the focus derived from shared doing, as discussed above, which draws people together in joint activity. It is enabled by places of safety, where binaries of belonging / othering are not a threat, and by the use of narrative methods such as poetry and maps which facilitate shared doing and allow for different stories to interweave rather than compete. It is related to the ability to accept complexity as a necessary and generative part of processes. The semantics of 'and / and' helps to open up dialogue based on a perspective whereby two seemingly oppositional things can both be present and experienced as true at the same time.

It also leads to a critical shift in my own work as a researcher, in particular in the analysis of key themes observed during research such as scarcity / abundance, extraction / exchange, loss / healing. Approaching these themes as correlated, rather than opposed, allows me to see beyond immediate stories and experiences featuring these themes, to systemic patterns where these themes are key narrative elements in wider hegemonic dynamics which influence intercultural encounter and narrative exchange. I expand on this below, relating my learnings to specific themes.

8.5 Scarcity and abundance

Scarcity and abundance are themes that recur often in fieldwork, and are closely related to how narrative exchange influences intercultural encounter.

In situations of conflict, such as those explored in chapter 7, stories feature lots of scarcity. An abundance of lack. There is scarcity of resources such as places to live in safety, money, work. We find very little freedom to work or move or choose, of optimism or energy or hope. This scarcity is both true experience and narrative theme. Its acceptance as a prevailing reality generates a narrative of competition over resources. (Mehta et al. 2019). This in turn contributes to conflictual intercultural encounter. The language of hostility and othering prevalent in these situations uses scarcity to classify who is 'deserving' of the (scarce) resources according to criteria which are derived from dominant cultural parameters. In Italy, outside the ex-MOI and in the *San Salvario* neighbourhood, *extracomunitari* are categorised as criminals, lazy, uncivilised, illegal, dangerous. In Scotland, in the streets and buses of Edinburgh, Syrian refugees are identified as other through

their dress and (suspect) language; they are also seen as being in competition with people from receiving communities for scarce resources such as housing.

However, in the same cities I also observe situations where stories exchanged feature abundance. While not denying the truth of stories of scarcity (such as not having a safe home or a job), placing scarcity alongside and not instead of abundance helps me to see that the picture is one of complexity instead of oppositional binaries. Inside the ex-MOI, 'Aziz tells of work which is plentiful because Italians don't want it. Undoubtedly, the story is told as a joke and 'Aziz is also employing categories of clean / unclean, deserving / undeserving as part of his story. However, the fact remains that while Italians say there is not enough work, 'Aziz says that he can always find work.

More widely, in Torino at the ex-MOI I find an abundance of hospitality and creativity. In the company of Karim, Reine, Mamadou and Mariam I find much hospitality, patience, determination to find ways to provide support and solidarity. In Edinburgh The Syrian women's group shares stories where the capacity to listen is great, as well as the ability to create new stories and interpretations of stories. Ruba and Farah show an abundance of compassion and forbearance in reacting to verbal abuse from a Scottish woman on a bus. The parameters of narrative inquiry help me to see that this abundance is all about the relational aspect, rather than the spatial or temporal one. These resources are all about ways of being in relation to other people, rather than ownership of things in a particular place or time.

Furthermore, this relational abundance happens in the same place and at the same time as the conflictual narratives presented by people from receiving communities which are rooted in premises of scarcity. In reflecting on this, I also consider that Italy and Scotland are two very wealthy countries in terms of global economic comparison. I think of the work of Franz Fanon, according to whom Europe is full of riches which are stolen from poorer countries which were colonised by European powers (Fanon 1961).

So, in this situation of lack narrated in a wider context of riches and wealth, why are stories of scarcity so abundant? One possible answer is that scarcity is linked to systemic approaches to wealth distribution - in other words, to political choices

and discourses that serves to maintain the advantage of select social groups, as explored by Bhatia et al (2020). Askins links political choices, such as those framed as 'austerity reform', to dominant narratives which centre around receiving communities having to 'defend scarce local resources against racialized incoming others, contributing to an increase in boundary-making and narrowing of the category of deserving citizen' (Askins 2016 p. 3).

Pepino (2016) links fear to scarcity and impoverishment; not merely economic impoverishment, but moral and cultural as well. He traces the history of fear in Italian society from the Middle Ages to modern times, arguing that the political class in Italy has not found a way to address a progressive impoverishment which would not also implicate them as responsible, through neglect and corruption. In order to avoid a narrative which frames them as culpable, they turn to scapegoating migrants as a way to channel fear of scarcity away from their own responsibility for wasting abundant resources.

Scarcity, then, can be seen as a situation generated by political choices, as well as a reality experienced by people from both forced migrant and receiving communities. This shifts the parameters of arguments around whether super-diversity increases conflict, especially in an age of austerity (Meer and Modood 2014), and places both forced migrants and receiving communities as sharing the negative consequences of austerity politics.

This analysis also helps to understand the tension - described all the way back in the Introduction - which led to this thesis. This tension sees community education organisations needing to describe and justify practices of narrative exchange to funders in order to continue these practices. Here we see a requirement to define work which is centred around relationship, reciprocal trust and story in quantitative terms. This requirement is a condition of funding, in a situation where such funding is scarce. This scarcity, however, derives from systemic choices: policies could be enacted to privilege funding for community education projects supporting intercultural encounter and narrative exchange, but they are not. So organisations who would benefit more from collaboration and sharing resources have to compete for funds, and research such as this is undertaken.

Reflections related to power and control surface here, again, as they have throughout the thesis. In relation to maps, these prompted the question, 'Who is the mapping for?'. Here they focus attention to exploring who the scarcity is for - who benefits from it. In answer, I argue that narratives which need scarcity as a premise benefit here; and those hegemonic groups who derive power from such narratives being dominant. The beneficiaries of scarcity policies are regimes which seek to accumulate wealth and maintain hegemonic hierarchies. These aims are supported by conflict based on fear of the threatening 'other', because this conflict deflects attention and blame for scarcity away from the regimes themselves.

Needs such as housing, employment and safety are part of the indicators of integration framework developed by Ager and Strang (2008). They are also the same needs expressed by the stories and struggles of Morena and Luca and the homeless man in Edinburgh. This relates to the work of hooks, who argues that different struggles are interconnected, and binary divisions serve to replicate structures of domination (hooks 19994, 2003). It is in the interest of such structures to maintain a dominant narrative whereby there are not enough resources for everyone, because this avoids analysis which leads to complex and difficult realisations. One such realisation is that the abundance of resources available in European nations like Italy and Scotland derives from the legacy of European colonialism, which has contributed to the circumstances that force people to migrate towards Europe. (Fanon 1961).

This connects to the scholarship and struggles of those who engage in the work of decolonising research (e.g.Tuhiwai Smith 2012; Phipps 2019), in the sense of dismantling or disrupting knowledge production systems based on colonial models of extraction and othering. This work is relevant both in the context of community education practice and research. It supports the realisation that systems of knowledge production that promote and benefit from narratives of scarcity are also based on extractive approaches to resources. Fostering a culture of scarcity helps to perpetuate systems of resource allocation based on competition, where those who control the distribution of resources belong to the hegemonic group and perpetuate its narratives.

The insights of decolonising scholars help to support the work of projects - such as the *Sportello Informativo*, the *Progetto Rifugio* and the Syrian Women's Group - which subvert and challenge these systems by operating according to models based on exchange (of narratives, of skills, of knowledge) and abundance (of volunteer time, of experience, of determination). If the focus is on exchange, this disrupts the narratives and power dynamics of epistemological models based on scarcity and extraction. This is not easy; it is a struggle; the lives of people involved in the above mentioned projects feature precarity and difficulty. As Butler wrote, 'we struggle in, from, and against precarity' (Butler 2011, p. 24). But, just as the scholarship of narrative inquiry helped to reclaim unexpectedness as a necessary process leading to possibility rather than (only) vulnerability, so the scholarship of decolonising helps to reclaim struggle as a necessary experience which can lead to solidarity and learning rather than (only) an experience of difficulty. Ngugi wa Thiong'o writes that the work of decolonising is a ''rediscovery of the real language of humankind: the language of struggle.' (Ngugi wa 1986, p.108).

These reflections, following the observations and analysis of fieldwork, lead to the learnings that:

Where narrative exchange privileges dialogue, based on practices and models which seek and share abundance of relational resources and shared experiences, then it can facilitate intercultural encounter to become reciprocal learning and enrichment. This also contributes to the work of decolonising by subverting hegemonic hierarchies and narratives based on scarcity, fear and othering; and by making the struggle about sharing resources rather than claiming resources.

Where narrative exchange privileges competing claims - based on premises of scarcity, othering and struggle over resources - intercultural encounter is more likely to see people enter into patterns of conflict. This conflict prevents people from examining the root causes of scarcity, or identifying what resources are available.

Below is a ‘field text’ in the form of a poem, written by myself, illustrating some of the internal struggle which was part of this process of learning:

(Not) enough

Daily the stories come, daily
the images: broken
people, homes destroyed, hope
a child dug dead from rubble.

Daily the questions come, daily
the clarity: nobody
is without guilt if the sin
is sacrificing less than

everything.

I am not enough.

So / how
can we
raise the rubble, dig deep, again, dig
deep and make a marker
from each stone, break
our millstones of failure into pebbles,
sharp, small, unrelenting.

Make them into our daily questioning.

There’s enough for us all.
Share them out: look, they keep coming,
they can fill our shoes so we can walk
a little less comfortably.

They can fill our houses
our foundations
so that what we build is solid with knowing
how easily buildings can fall.

Give us each day
our daily questions
and anger
but lead us not into despair

Give us this day
our daily questions, stones we can carry
hard and sharp
to mark our way
to put in our pockets and shoes
to save us from complacency
to make foundations

for gardens where children play
tomorrow.

8.6 Loss and healing

Hannah Arendt, writing about the experience of being a refugee, said that, 'We lost our home, which means the familiarity of daily life. We lost our occupation, which means the confidence that we are of some use in the world. We lost our language, which means the naturalness of reactions, the simplicity of gestures, the unaffected expression of feelings' (Arendt 1943, p. 70). This kind of loss is echoed in the stories shared by the Syrian women's group. It is expressed through language, and it is also connected to language. The context of safety and trust, and the possibility of using Arabic and Kurdish as well as English, make it possible for stories related to loss to be shared in a way that is not extractive but healing.

While it is important to remain aware that culturally specific approaches of healing through talking are not always appropriate, here stories are not sought or exchanged as a form of therapy. Narrative exchange, here, is a way of sharing loss in a way that accepts it, without conditions or judgements, as part of a wider story. Co-creating texts which include loss and grief is a way of validating these emotions, a shared doing which allows lamentation. As Willis writes: 'In order for our work to be healing, we must be open to having our selves transformed by our research practices and our engagements with others. On occasion, this can mean making our selves available to bear witness to pain.' (Willis 2009 p. 90) In this shared doing, women from the receiving community are witnesses. They (we) are also changed by this witnessing, because the relationships of trust in the group open us up to empathy, to sharing the grief, and learning about experiences we have never had.

Listening, empathy and silence are key elements of this approach to stores related to loss. These are all connected to the 'openness to multiple voices' described by Clandinin as part of the process of narrative inquiry (2006, p. 52). This type of work, however, brings the risk of uncomfortable emotions and unpredicted developments; the risk of vulnerability, of sadness, unexpected transformation. Narrative inquiry, again, helps to see this as part of the research process:

'Unexpectedness lies in the process of inquiry, as it opens up the possibility of seeing, telling and living our stories differently' (Downey and Clandinin 2010, p. 390.). Again, vulnerability is a place of possibility. Following these insights, we can then say that practices of narrative exchange which occur in contexts of safety, trust and openness can support grieving loss, and can lead to processes of dialogue and healing.

But there is loss - an abundance of loss - also in the stories of people from receiving communities encountered during fieldwork, particularly in chapter 7. Dr Fontana has lost the sense that his neighbourhood, his building ands stairwell are places of safety and familiarity. Luca and Morena have lost hope that their son will be able to find a job or a house of his own, even if he is from a family of 'hard workers'. The homeless man in Edinburgh has no home or job, and seems to be losing his health. These are all significant losses, and lead to a situation of precarity which, as Butler wrote, 'is indissociable from that dimension of politics that addresses the organization and protection of bodily needs'. (Butler 2011 p. 20). These needs are claimed through anger and aggression, with the aim to regain access to resources. These are experienced as scarce, as needing to be reclaimed from the 'other' who is blamed for the scarcity and loss. Reclaiming lost resources is the solution which will heal the loss, the precarity, the fear.

We see here a hierarchy of losses; categories whereby some losses are more urgent, more important, more deserving of healing than others. The questions raised by Butler's work on grievability (Butler 2009) are relevant here: in this situation of competitive claims to resources, whose life - and whose loss - is more grievable? According to the narratives which inform the *Lega* protests, the lives and losses of native Italians are more grievable, their claims more important. Accepting and acceding to this narrative leads to the *sgombero* of the ex-MOI, which creates more loss for the migrant people living there. In this situation of unequal grievability, it is not possible to share stories of loss in a way that allows for witnessing, listening, validation without judgement - because the judgement is already made by the dominant narrative which decides whose loss is more important.

Narrative exchange which leads to dialogue and healing is not possible or sustainable if the dominant narratives impose unequal grievability of loss. It is not enough to organise and run community education projects supporting narrative exchange and intercultural encounter, if the dominant sociopolitical narrative is one of unequal grievability such as that supported by the *Lega*. New narratives need to be supported and told at the level of policies and politics. The Scottish Government's New Scots Integration Strategy (Scottish Government 2018) is one such attempt, in that it deliberately frames the encounter between receiving and migrant populations as based on the same set of rights. This rights-based approach means that - to a certain extent - differential hierarchies of need and of grievability are removed.

8.7 Language and creative languaging

In this section I discuss findings related to language as a recurrent and critical element of narrative exchange in contexts of intercultural encounter between forced migrant and receiving communities.

A key finding is that language learning can be a pedagogical practice catalysing dialogical narrative exchange. This can be seen in the Syrian women's group, in the way learning English together provides opportunities for shared stories and reciprocal learning between all members of the group. Many of the practices present are related to what I call creative languaging - were language is a process of co-creationg and shared learning, not a product of learning. Here we see that 'Languaging as a mode of being is a skilled, embodied and situated practice' (Phipps & Gonzales 2004, p. 91). Skills are embodied both in'learners' (the Syrian women) and 'experts' (the native speakers and myself, the 'teacher'), so that these roles often end up being reversed in a process of Freirean education and dialogue, which evolves from learning and evolves into reciprocal teaching. Here language becomes not just pretty words of good intention or noble sentiment: creative languaging becomes an active, critical element in facilitating narrative exchange, which itself becomes a shared doing.

Multimodal and translingual practices, in the sense of moving between variants of a language in different contexts (Canagarajah, 2013) are prevalent across this thesis, including in my own work as a researcher. As relationships and contexts

change, people switch between registers and dialects within languages, in a range that goes from colloquial spoken language to formal, academic writing. The poetry co-created by the Syrian women's group - while taking place in a context where English is the dominant language and where learning English is an important aim - is a translingual creative practice in the sense described by Dowling (2018) of deliberately placing itself between different languages and moving across linguistic borders. This movement across registers and linguistic borders helps to facilitate trust and freedom of expression - it mirrors what Phipps calls the 'quick' of life – in the 'back and forth movement between languaging' (Phipps, 2007, p. 64). Creative languaging and translanguaging then, is a key ingredient of pedagogical practices aimed at catalysing dialogical narrative exchange.

However, language learning can also be used as part of processes which impede narrative exchange and present intercultural encounter within a framework of othering. If, for example, the focus of educational processes is the need for migrants to become incorporated in the receiving community and become employable, leaving the host society largely unaffected, then these educational processes are flawed (Martin 2003). There is no two-way dialogue; the encounter becomes one of elision. This is an approach that sees education as a way to produce commodities rather than integrated communities. It relates to the work of Cameron (2012), who talks about arguments and perspectives on verbal hygiene which treat linguistic standards as equivalent to moral ones: people who don't speak 'properly' must be less able, or less deserving of belonging to the community of those who do. 'Civilised' people speak English (Cameron 2012, p.242) - or Italian, as in the story of Dr Fontana.

Normative assumptions centred around linguistic competence are closely related to dynamics of power and status, and to the use of language as a marker of belonging and othering. The concept of language status is also important in terms of the status transferred to stories according to the language in which they are spoken. Thus we see, for example, that Arabic is a 'suspect' language for Dr Fontana in *San Salvario* and for the woman on the bus in Edinburgh; this suspicion extends to the people who speak this language, and the stories they tell, which are perceived as of lesser status than those of native speakers of Italian or English. Furthermore, in contexts of conflictual intercultural encounter language itself is

used as a form of violence which precludes dialogue, promotes oppositional claims and perpetuates narratives of scarcity, fear and othering.

Linguistic incompetence is a contrasting and equally important concept, especially when seen as a resource to forge human relationships based on re-negotiated trust and power balances between researcher and participants (Phipps 2013). This is relevant in research contexts such as the Syrian Women's group, where intercultural encounter occurs in the context of language learning and moves beyond pedagogies based on competence to a view of language learning 'in opposition to a deficit-driven educational discourse' (Frimberger 2016, p. 296). We also see re-negotiated trust and power balances between myself and people at the *Sportello Informativo*, where despite my competence in speaking the languages used, I do not have competence or expertise in the language of migratory experience. Intercultural encounter centres around the stories, needs and competencies of people who are deemed less deserving by deficit-focussed discourses of linguistic competency. This is a rebalancing of relationships and power, and relates to the struggles of decolonising discussed above.

Listening to the language of the body is also an important element in this rebalancing. This is a further expansion of language variety, which goes beyond the acceptance of 'linguistic incompetence' and actively considers language which is beyond words and grammar as relevant to narrative exchange, as part of an embodied approach to knowledge as theorised by hooks (1994) . I think of Mariam's shrugs, Karim's laughter and head-in-hands, how my body expressed fear in moments of unexpected vulnerability; I see that all these are part of a wider understanding of language variety which links to the embodied pedagogy of hooks explored in Chapter 1. The close links between emotion and language register are also recognised by Kramsch (2006, 2009) when she affirms the need to include aesthetic and affective dimensions in working with multilingual people in migratory contexts. This too forms part of a process which further challenges traditional hierarchies of power between researcher and researched, and between receiving communities and forced migrants, contributing to relationships featuring mutual trust and learning.

Over the course of this thesis-journey, I have experienced multilingual working as a method which subverts patterns and expectations of control over the research process. This happens when 'multilingual working' means that I have to let go of my notions of linguistic competence (such as at the *Sportello Informativo*), my internalised hierarchies of linguistic status (as an ESOL teacher balancing English with Arabic and Kurdish), my expectations of what language should be used (when I struggle to interpret shrugs or laughter and wish for explanations instead). This is a multilingual subjectivity (q.v. Phipps 2019) which enables me to be part of processed of decolonising which are uncomfortable because I am not in control of them - which is precisely the point of such processes.

Here, then, we see that practices of narrative exchange which are open to linguistic incompetence and variety are more able to subvert hegemonic power dynamics. This contributes to intercultural encounter which is not formed by deficit-driven discourses but rather is informed by the relationship-based approach to 'languaging' advocated by Phipps and Gonzalez (2004).

Summary of Chapter 8

This chapter has presented and explained the key findings and learnings, in answer to the research questions. Findings and learnings were presented in relation to distinct thematic elements, identified as significant and recurring throughout fieldwork and the process of analysis. These themes, however, intertwined with each other, spilled into each other, drew out resonances and echoes of each other - like stories do, like people do when 'we are contaminated by our encounters; they change who we are as we make way for others' (Tsing 2015, p. 27). This chapter has been an attempt to explain the contaminations I both observed and experienced, and the consequent learnings which I found and which changed me.

It is now time to move to the next and final chapter of this thesis-journey, and consider implications and possible future developments of this work.

Chapter 9: Where next / a non conclusion

> 'Muddling through with others is always in the middle of things; it does not properly conclude. Even as I reiterate key points, I hope a whiff of the adventure-in-process comes through.'
> Tsing 2015, p. 278

9.1 Achievements, contributions / muddling through

I have 'muddled through with others', and I am still muddling through, in the midst of evolving stories and learnings. How then to 'properly conclude', as Tsing (2015) writes in the above quote? I will lean again on the language and structure of formal academic writing to start this non-conclusion with a summarising; a looking back on the looking back; a series of statements about this thesis.

The learnings presented in the previous chapter answer my research questions and form a substantive contribution to knowledge: a comparative study grounded in the field of intercultural community education. They are also related to migration and narrative studies, critical pedagogies, critical cartographies and multilingual practices.

This thesis constitutes a distinctive contribution to the field of comparative studies. Firstly, it presents a unique focus on narrative inquiry as a methodology of comparison in the context of forced migration. Secondly, it responds to a gap in scholarly literature about the research contexts compared, in particular the city of Edinburgh with regards to community education projects employing narrative exchange in relation to intercultural encounter and forced migration.

Furthermore, this thesis adopts a distinctive and explicitly three-fold approach to narrative inquiry. On one level, narrative inquiry forms the theoretical and methodological underpinning for the research process itself. In terms of research

method, ethnographic narrative is utilised to conduct and present fieldwork observations. And finally, the form of the thesis itself is deliberately aligned to that of a travel narrative; I have rested in literary narrative - its form and metaphors - to prove the value of it as a part of my research.

This thesis has been a work of weaving into a cross-disciplinary comparative analysis the following elements: the methodology of narrative inquiry; discussions around language and poetics; and the insights of social science, in particular education and migration studies. It has provided a map - a composite, narrative map - to illustrate / navigate the ongoing (evolving) entanglements, paths, interactions, journeys that lead towards dialogue through intercultural encounter mediated by narrative exchange.

The learnings presented also link back to the aims of the thesis: to produce a text which can be a resource for policymakers and community-education practitioners in Scotland and beyond to support both policy decisions and applications for funding, in order to ensure that my research has impact beyond academia. Through conducting a critical comparative study, my research findings point to best practices to support narrative exchange which can influence intercultural encounter towards dialogue and integration in contexts of community education and forced migration. This is an academic text which can be relevant to the wider circle of community education practitioners who, like myself so many times, often ‘know’ that something ‘works’ but feel that they are working in isolation; struggle to find research to back up and explain their practice-based knowledge; and need research to justify their need for funds in an increasingly competitive working environment.

I have been an agent actively steering this thesis and also a traveller who is changed by the process: my self and my work are changed, and these changes affect the direction of my future research. Having got this far, I wish to conclude this non-conclusion with a brief discussion of possible directions in which the findings of this thesis could be developed; an attempt to answer the question which looms at the end of any journey: what next? This renews a sense of ongoing ‘adventure-in-process’ (Tsing 2015, p. 278) and takes the temporal element of the

thesis story and projects it into the future, opening up potential space of possibility.

9.2 Possible direction # 1: seeking abundance

This direction stems from realising, during fieldwork, that opposed and conflicting groups - people from receiving communities who were hostile to forced migrants, and people from forced migrant communities - shared the common factor of struggling against scarcity. They struggled against scarcity; they struggled with each other to claim contested resources; they struggled within the same neoliberal systems of politics and epistemologies which exert control through, and benefit from, narratives of continued scarcity. Where a system is extractive - whether it is a funding system, a political system, an economic system - then scarcity narratives are perpetuated.

I would hold on to this realisation, and pursue directions of research and work which follow the paths formed by the work of those projects encountered whose work facilitate practices of transformative, dialogical narrative exchange operated.

These projects, it must be noted, are often dependent on funding decided according to parameters that negate the experience of transformative intercultural encounter by focusing on metric and scalable formulae (Tsing 2015) - hence the tension which initiated the thesis you are still (admirably) reading. However, within these circumstances, these projects operate according to epistemologies which focus on asking: Where is the abundance? What can be done to subvert systems and narratives that promote scarcity and conflict?

They do not give up when faced with scarcity. They seek abundance. They seek abundance within the resources of their own supporters (volunteers, funders, members); they manufacture support and goodwill. They build community and networks beyond the extractive practices predicated by funding-driven work - they build alliances of solidarity and shared knowledge. They refuse to accept narratives promoted by representatives of systems which benefit from scarcity. They listen to the people they seek to support; they listen to needs, then they act

to meet those needs based on what they can give, and in doing so they create a model of practice which in itself negates the scarcity narrative.

They, hopefully, will be able to use this work and its findings to continue operating within the parameters of positivist requirements tied to funding, while at the same time using this research to confirm and support their ways of working. I would continue to undertake work - as a researcher and as a practitioner of community education - which both supports and learns from the ways these projects work.

Practically speaking, I will continue to develop research and practice to explore the overlap between language learning and narrative exchange, in particular the use of poetry (q.v. Leggo 2011) and maps as resources and pedagogical tools in intercultural settings of encounter.

9.3 Possible direction # 2: seeking transformation

Conducting this PhD has involved a process I would describe as spiralling, rather than as linear: involving cyclically recurring themes, returning to the same places to find them changed, inward and outward journeys that loop back and forwards. Recognising this iteratively spiralling process has been an important learning from an early stage, as it has freed me from the need to adhere to positivist, linear, formulaic processes which have no relation to the material I have collected or to the situations I have travelled through.

I would further explore similar cyclical / spiral / non-linear models of narrative analysis and intercultural encounter. In particular, I would pursue investigations of narrative exchange and intercultural encounter as non-linear processes linked to integration - with integration seen as one element of wider educational dynamics of healing and peace-building. In the words of Richardson (1995, p.213): ‘If the available narrative is limiting, destructive, or at odds with actual life, peoples’ lives end up being limited and textually disenfranchised. Collective stories that deviate from standard cultural plots provide new narratives; hearing

them legitimates a replotting of one's own life. New narratives offer the patterns for new lives.'

In this way, the learnings from this thesis-journey could be carried forward to investigate how such approaches to narrative exchange could transform conflict into 'the possibility of mutual criticism between groups and mutual learning across difference' (Rodríguez- García, 2010, p.261). This would open up the possibility of engaging in narrative exchange as a community education and peace-building practice modelled on conflict transformation as conceptualised by J P Lederach (2010), who writes of the need to shift metaphors in discourse from linear or sequential notions of change because conflict happens along linear lines, and peace is brought by a sequence of events – the experience and expertise of practitioners and people from conflict-affected communities shows that social healing is achieved through circular and multidirectional processes.

This thesis ends with a non-conclusion because, as I have learned, a journey is never truly over, but always evolving from what came before to what will come next; intercultural encounter is not static but a movement between the poles of conflict and welcome; there is always a next choice, a next step, a next question.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: poems explored with the Syrian Women's Group

Digging

Between my finger and my thumb
The squat pen rests; snug as a gun.

Under my window, a clean rasping sound
When the spade sinks into gravelly ground:
My father, digging. I look down

Till his straining rump among the flowerbeds
Bends low, comes up twenty years away
Stooping in rhythm through potato drills
Where he was digging.

The coarse boot nestled on the lug, the shaft
Against the inside knee was levered firmly.
He rooted out tall tops, buried the bright edge deep
To scatter new potatoes that we picked,
Loving their cool hardness in our hands.

By God, the old man could handle a spade.
Just like his old man.

My grandfather cut more turf in a day
Than any other man on Toner's bog.
Once I carried him milk in a bottle
Corked sloppily with paper. He straightened up
To drink it, then fell to right away
Nicking and slicing neatly, heaving sods
Over his shoulder, going down and down

For the good turf. Digging.

The cold smell of potato mould, the squelch and slap
Of soggy peat, the curt cuts of an edge
Through living roots awaken in my head.
But I've no spade to follow men like them.

Between my finger and my thumb
The squat pen rests.
I'll dig with it.

by Seamus Heaney

The Washing

The washing never gets done.
The furnace never gets heated.
Books never get read.
Life is never completed.
Life is like a ball which one must continually
catch and hit so it won't fall.
When the fence is repaired at one end,
it collapses on the other. The roof leaks,
the kitchen door won't close, there are cracks in the foundation,
the torn knees of children's pants …
One can't keep everything in mind. The wonder is
that beside all this one can notice
the spring which is so full of everything
continuing in all directions - into the evening clouds,
into the redwing's song and into every
drop of dew on every blade of grass in the meadow,
as far as the eye can see, into the dusk.

by Jaan Kaplinski

A red, red rose

O my Luve is like a red, red rose
  That's newly sprung in June;
O my Luve is like the melody
  That's sweetly played in tune.

So fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
  So deep in luve am I;
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
  Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
  And the rocks melt wi' the sun;
I will love thee still, my dear,
  While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only luve!
  And fare thee weel awhile!
And I will come again, my luve,
  Though it were ten thousand mile.

by Robert Burns

Appendix 2: a Consent Form for Ethical Approval

College of Social
Sciences

Consent Form

Project title: Not just pretty words: investigating how different ways of story exchange inform the encounter between people forced to migrate to Scotland and Italy and local host communities.

Researcher details: Esa Aldegheri, PhD Candidate, Glasgow University.

email: e.aldegheri.1@research.gla.ac.uk

I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

I consent / do not consent (delete as applicable) to interviews being audio-recorded.
(I acknowledge that copies of transcripts will be returned to participants for verification.)

I acknowledge that participants will be referred to by pseudonym unless they give express permission for their names to be used. All other material likely to identify individuals will be anonymised.

The material will be treated as confidential and kept in secure storage at all times. The material will be retained in secure storage. The researcher will analyse the data and use it for her research project, and for future academic research and publications, both print and online.

I give / do not give my permission for anonymised data to be accessed by third parties in the future, only upon personal request via the researcher.

College of Social Sciences

I do not agree to take part in this research study

I agree to take part in the following elements of this research study:

Informal interviews

Mapping activities

Group discussions

Existing activities with researcher taking part and observing

Name of Participant ……………………………………………

Signature ………………………………………………………..

Date ……………………………………

Name of Researcher …………………………………………………

Signature ………………………………………………………..

Date ……………………………………

Esa (Elena) Aldegheri -

Appendix 3: planned discussion themes for conversations

Exploring motivation and hopes: reasons for participating in this particular community education project

Exploring journey: open questions about how participants got to the location of the interview today. Opening up to discussion about how people got to the country they are currently in. I am aware that in the case of forced migration the experience of journey is often very traumatic, as is recounting that experience, and I will approach this with great care and sensitivity.

Exploring provenance: open questions as to where the participant came from today, opening up to where they and their family came from. Both Scotland and Northern Italy have a long history of internal migration and this theme will resonate with local people as well as those forced to migrate recently.

Exploring belonging: things that imply welcome and belonging. Based on previous research experience, this theme is relevant to both local people and those forced to migrate recently

Exploring alienation: things that imply danger, exclusion, threat. This will resonate with local people as well as with those forced to migrate recently and may open the conversation to feelings of being threatened or 'taken over' by immigrants.

Exploring encounter: given the things talked about so far, opening up the conversation to what experiences of encounter with locals / migrants have happened, both positive and negative.

Exploring story exchange as a way of informing encounter: talking about participants' experience with the current project that is being researched, and also with other wider / previous experiences of exchanging stories with locals / migrants that have shaped encounters either positively or negatively.

Appendix 4: Participant Information Sheet

College of Social Sciences

Participant Information Sheet

Study Title:

Not just pretty words: investigating how different ways of story exchange inform the encounter between people forced to migrate to Scotland and Italy and local host communities.

Researcher details:

Esa Aldegheri, PhD Candidate, Glasgow University.

email: e.aldegheri.1@research.gla.ac.uk

An invitation

Thank you for reading this!

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide if you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information and feel free to take some time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

About the study:

The study is investigating which methods of story exchange work best in making the encounter between local people and refugees or asylum seekers a positive one. So, for example, is sharing food a good way to build positive encounters? Or theatre, music, storytelling or writing? The study wants to find out what works and why it works. I want to find this out because it will be useful information for other similar projects in the future, as well as for people writing policy and giving out funding.

In order to put things in a European context, the study will compare two projects that do community education and integration work; one in Scotland and one in Italy. I will be observing these two projects and talking to people taking part, gathering information through interviews and group mapping activities.

What participating means:

Participation is voluntary, and will involve allowing me to take part in group activities organised by The Welcoming as a participant and an observer. I will take notes of what happens and what is said, and may record group activities if I have the permission to do so.

I may also ask you if you would like to have a separate conversation with me to talk some more about your thoughts regarding the group activities. This conversation will be informal and will last about an hour. I would like to record our conversations if you allow me to do so, so it will be easier for me to wrtie up what we talked about afterwards.

I will be organising some mapping activities and group discussions as well, which you can join if you wish. Again, if permitted to do so I would like to record these for ease of remembering what happening.

If you feel uncomfortable participating, at any time and for whatever reason, you can stop taking part or ask for the conversation to be continued another time. You are not obliged to participate if you do not want to.

What I will do with your personal details

All your personal details, recordings and transcribing of your words will be kept confidential. I will transcribe our conversations using coded identifiers; only I will have the key to these codes so your words won't be traced back to you and will remain anonymous. When I write up and publish research about your words, I will change your name so you will not be recognised. I will only use your real name if you give me permission to do so.

Confidentiality will be respected unless there are compelling and legitimate reasons for this to be breached, such as harm to another person. If this were the case I would inform you of any decisions that might limit your confidentiality

I will store data collected on a password-protected computer and if on paper in a locked cabinet in my office. Only I have access to the password and keys.

University of Glasgow guidelines require researchers to keep data for 10 years before it can be destroyed.

What I will use the data for

I am collecting this research data as part of my PhD and I will use it to write my thesis. I will also use research data to write articles and blog posts about my findings, beyond my PhD and the world of academia. I will create a resource for community education groups so that they know what works and what doesn't, so that they can be connected with other groups doing similar work, and so that they can best be funded and continue their work in the future. If in the future other researchers want to use the anonymised data, they will only be able to do so following my approval, after asking me personally, if you agree to this.

My research is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. This project has been considered and approved by the College Research Ethics Committee.

You can ask me for any further information you need. You can also contact my research supervisor, Prof. Alison Phipps, via her email: Alison.Phipps@gla.ac.uk

Should you have any complaints about this project please contact the College of Social Sciences Ethics Officer at University of Glasgow, **Dr Muir Houston: Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk**