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University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

Understanding How the Educational and Social Experiences of Syrian Muslim Refugee Families Contribute to Their Identity Construction

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

School of Education

College of Social Sciences

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Abstract

This research project is interested in the experiences of Syrian Muslim refugee students, as well as of their parents, in a social context of growing Islamophobia. More specifically, the project focuses on their educational experiences after resettlement in Glasgow, Scotland, and how those experiences compare to the ones they remember from before they fled the war in Syria. There are three main aspects of education around which this thesis is structured: pedagogy, curriculum, and identity construction as an ever-ongoing process. This research addresses three gaps within the existing literature. First, the literature either discusses the social or the educational factors contributing to the identity construction of refugees, but rarely both together. Second, when pedagogical or curricular issues are discussed, they are not often connected to the process of constructing identities. Third, the literature does not usually discuss both the parents' and the students' views, together in the same study, nor in relation to the three elements: pedagogy, curriculum, and identity.

My study confronts these gaps by creating a framework in which some of the central elements, identity, pedagogy and curriculum, are addressed relationally. Following Hall (1991) and drawing from Anthias (2002) as well, identity in this study is understood as a process of becoming, and not a static way of being. The interviews conducted for the research highlight some of the ways the Muslim identity has been essentialised and homogenised, as argued with reference to the concepts of Orientalism (Said, 1978) and Othering (Fanon, 1986). The research further explores how creating an imagined community within a nation where Muslims are a minority can exacerbate their social exclusion (Anderson, 2006). While some identities are strengthened and legitimised, other identities are weakened and delegitimised, creating hegemony in curriculum (Apple, 2004). This hegemony creates a conflict between who is considered part of the nation and who is not, given that curricula help create the national identity of nations (Anderson, 2006; Doherty, 2018). Pedagogy is understood and analysed as a combination of different continua of educational practices (Schweisfurth, 2013). The critical theories of Bernstein (2000) and Freire (1970, 2018) are called on in order to understand the construction of identity positions in relation to two different kinds of pedagogical models.

Snowball sampling was used to recruit participants in Glasgow. Semi-structured interviews and vignettes were used to generate data with 12 parents and 12 school-aged children in 12 refugee families. Key research findings suggest there are different central aspects within pedagogy, such as homework, student-teacher relationship, and ways of teaching; and within curriculum, such as religious education and sex education, that contribute to the process of identity construction for both the students and parents. There are also social factors contributing to changes in the family dynamics, including racism, peers and gender. Even though the parents reported different challenges and concerns about their new life, they all shared similar aspirations for the life and education of their children which might guarantee better future opportunities in new conditions.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Acknowledgments

For my family,

For my supervisors,

For my friends,

Thank you.

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: Nihaya Jaber

Signature:

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Prologue

In order to introduce the questions asked in this thesis and my reasons for asking those questions, let me begin with a short personal narrative of an experience that changed my life. It was August 19th, 2014, when, after more than a month of brutal fighting had turned my city of Gaza, Palestine, into a living nightmare, a short ceasefire finally allowed me to escape the war. Now known as the 2014 Gaza War, it was not the first war waged on our city, and it would not be the last – though I did not, of course, know that at the time. Recalling that day now, it appears to me as a foggy, cloudy and cold day. It cannot have been however, since it was the middle of summer – and there are no such days in summer in Palestine. The night before, the radio had unexpectedly announced that the ceasefire would take place. After hearing the news, I immediately ran to my mother and told her that this was my chance to leave Gaza through the Egyptian checkpoint. I had been very worried that I would lose my Fulbright scholarship which I had been granted to pursue my Master's in Oklahoma, in the United States. The Egyptian checkpoint was my last chance since the Israeli occupiers did not grant me a permit to pass the Northern border controlled by them.

I come from a big family, consisting of a mother, a father, six sisters and four brothers. Half of them were against the idea of even trying to go to the Egyptian border. They knew that this might not be a real ceasefire at all, in which case my life would be in danger if I left my house in the North of Gaza to travel to the checkpoint in the South. I decided to leave anyway, even though their concern was valid, and even though being allowed passage through the Egyptian checkpoint was not guaranteed. Perhaps my urge to leave stemmed from my fear of dying in the war. I remember thinking: 'I do not want to die now. I think I could achieve more in my life'. The first big achievement I hoped to reach was getting a degree in higher education. I was right: I did not stop after getting my MA and now I am almost finishing my PhD.

Luckily, I passed the checkpoint, which was a miracle. However, a nagging feeling of guilt passed that checkpoint with me, and it stayed with me even when I arrived in the United States. I was feeling guilty for leaving my family to suffer without me. I know I was not able to help them; yet not suffering with them and enjoying the peace in the US were the source of that guilt. That feeling of guilt did not have to last long though, as the war, which had started on July 8th, finally ended on August 26th.

August 19th, 2014, is now long past. Still, I never forgot it, and I recalled it many times while working on this thesis. My experiences of that day enflamed a desire in me to think about refugees who try to flee war and leave everything behind to find a better future. Born and raised in a refugee camp in Gaza, I did not experience the resettlement dilemma many refugees go through – except on that day. That day was the catalyst for this thesis to be about refugees. It was a clear manifestation

of the refugee experience of running away, and of risking one's life in the hope of finding peace and better education.

Living in Gaza, a monocultural and heavily restricted area, and then spending two years in the United States, a diverse and an open country to a great extent, has changed a lot about me. As a student in the United States, I experienced teaching methods and a curricular content that were very different from the ones I knew. It took me some time to get used to, and to find the space where I could express my views in relation to topics within the curriculum. For example, the way students were given more space to express their thoughts and to reflect in the classroom was very different from the more teacher-centred forms of pedagogy I had been used to. Instead of just listening to what the teacher said, I was given a chance to think and explore. This freedom was intimidating at first, but eventually I found the courage to speak and express my perspective, even when I knew it was different from those around me. I remember one class in which the lecturer was talking about different Gods in different religions. She mentioned that Muslims pray to Allah. I raised my hand and explained that Allah is the Arabic word for God, and that Arab Christians also pray for Allah. I could tell that the teacher and some of my classmates were shocked to learn this, and I was happy that I spoke up at that moment.

Beside the educational challenges, there were also social challenges I encountered. I was a Muslim wearing the headscarf in a Western country with Christianity as its major religion. Hence, I felt that I had to be extra nice all the time, even when I did not have the energy for it, because I was scared to exemplify all the negative stereotypes related to Muslims. I had to suffer from some people looking down on me judgingly. I believe that Khawaja and Mørck (2009) are describing this look when they state: 'This gaze can be interpreted as expressing the efficacy of the normalising panoptic "eye of power" ' (p. 33). The authors build on several theoretical sources, most centrally Foucault's concepts of panopticism and discipline. They explain in detail how looking with suspicion and judgement at those considered to be "other" can function as a way to enforce a normalised mode of behaviour, and to punish people for being different. This is what I recognised strongly in the way some people looked at me. That look affected my self-consciousness. For instance, my confidence while walking in the street when I wore a headscarf was lower than when I wore a hat and people did not look at me in that way. I still remember how comfortable I could be when I wore a winter hat that covered all my hair. Wearing it made me feel part of the community where I did not seem like an outsider. Related to this, the concept of "Othering" will play an important role in this thesis. Part of the reason for me to conduct this study is that I want to understand better the mechanism of Othering in the context of refugees settling in Scotland, and the impact it has on their life experience and on the way in which they perceive themselves. Hegel argued:

> Self-consciousness exists in itself and for itself, in that and by the fact that it exists for another self-consciousness; that is to say, it *is* only by being acknowledged or recognized. (Hegel, 1967, p. 64)

In other words, one cannot be recognised when living alone. We need others to frame our understanding of ourselves. My definition of myself and my role in the community changed according to the way I was perceived by others. Seeing myself in the eyes of others has made me want to explore the experiences of Muslim newcomers in the West, because I know how challenging it can be to start accepting who we are seen to be in others' eyes.

To summarize the points discussed in the previous sections, my experiences of leaving a war zone, being a student in the US, the challenges I experienced as a Muslim female, and the changes I witnessed myself going through had me reflect on who I am and on my shifting identities (plural). These reflections in turn were the essence for choosing a research topic about the extent to which, and in what ways, education can affect identity construction of Muslim refugees in Scotland. I wanted to find out how other Muslim refugees who are (supposedly) like me reflect on the changes in their social and educational context. How do they deal with the challenges they face in their host countries? This is generally the concern that drives me in this study. By researching this question through in-depth interviews, I hope to give some insight to readers of this thesis into the many challenges faced by my participants, and those like them, after settling in Glasgow.

An important note must be made here about my own positionality in this study. Sharing similar experiences with the participants might have influenced the interview process because of the way the participants perceived me. Positively speaking, similarities in our experiences of war and survival as well as my cultural and religious background helped me to be perceived as an insider by the participants. However, my positionality became more complicated at times. I felt I was perceived as an insider and outsider in the same interview. For example, my age positioned me as an insider for the parents but as an outsider for some of the young participants. Furthermore, I was more an insider for the females than for the males. My positionality might also have influenced how I perceived my participants and interpreted their stories. This is discussed more in-depth in Chapter 5.

Beside my personal interest in this research, there is an academic interest stemming from the gaps in the existing literature in regard to this question, which are further explored in Chapter 4. The details of these gaps are explained in-depth in that chapter. However, I would like to mention them briefly here to justify my rationale for choosing to study this question for over three years. Issues in relation to the social and educational experiences of Muslim Syrian refugees in Scotland are not discussed enough in the existing literature because of their recent arrival to Scotland. Another gap is that the literature either discusses the social or the educational factors contributing to identity construction of refugees, but not both together. Also, when pedagogical or curricular issues are discussed, they are not often connected to the process of producing identities. Through this project, I hope to provide insight into the question of how education can more appropriately assist refugees in positive forms of identity formation within the highly complex context in which they have to navigate their identities. In the following section I will explain the way I approach and frame these issues.

1.2 Setting the Scene

The previous section provided reasons for choosing identity formation of refugees in Scotland as the focus of this thesis. This section tries to set the political, social and educational scene in which this thesis is framed and presented. The educational scene is mentioned here briefly but is discussed in more depth in the next Chapter, where I explore the educational contexts of the participants in detail. The reason I called this section 'setting the scene' is that I want to invite the reader to look at it as a play. The play has two major elements. The first element is the actor. The second one is the place. The actor or actress is a Muslim refugee who looks and speaks differently from everyone around him or her. The place is Scotland where the majority of people identify as White with a different culture, traditions, and religions than those of the main actor or actress.

To understand how the differences of the main actor or actress, such as Hijab, colour, accent or lack of English fluency which are the most visible parts of their identity, influenced their experiences in this new place, Islamophobia is explored. I am also discussing Islamophobia because literature about Muslim refugees shows that there is a considerable amount of Islamophobic practices against them. Therefore, I start by defining this concept and then go into some of its more detailed characteristics. All participants in this study are Muslim refugees from Syria, and some of them encountered Islamophobia. Hence, understanding their experience through the lens of Islamophobia helps to draw an image of what it is like to be a Muslim in Scotland, and perhaps in the West more generally. The second aspect is the Scottish scene. I describe the diversity in Scotland and some of the discussions around Muslims and refugees there. I will discuss both of these aspects in what follows.

1.2.1 Islamophobia

The word Islamophobia can be divided into two parts. The first one, "Islam", refers to one of the monotheistic religions in the world. The second part, "phobia", is a Greek affix used in English words to mean "fear". This does not fully capture the meaning of the word however, since beside fear, Islamophobia also entails other affects, such as contempt and hatred. According to Allen (2010), the word Islamophobia was probably first used in 1925 by two French writers, Etienne Dinet and Slima Ben Ibrahim, in their book 'Accès de Délire Islamophobe'(Allen, 2010, p. 3). The word started to be used more frequently after a report named "Islamophobia: A challenge for us all" was released by the Runnymede Trust in 1997 in the United Kingdom (Bakali, 2016). In 2017, the Runnymede Trust published another report in relation to Islamophobia called "Islamophobia: Still a challenge for us all". Both reports gave details about the history of Muslims in the United Kingdom, the factors leading to the increase in prejudice against Muslims in the media, and the social exclusion of Muslims coupled with the perception of Muslims as the "Other".

Different resources offer different definitions for Islamophobia. On the one hand, Allen (2010) describes how, at some point during the Iranian revolution in 1978-1979, the word was used to describe Muslims' fear of Islam. The reason was that during the Iranian revolution, Iranian women

refused to wear the headscarf which made some groups react aggressively against these women, resulting in a general fear of the religion. Allen goes on to explain that this is not the way in which the word is used today. A closer approximation for this can be found in the Runnymede Report. The Report offers two definitions, a short and a long one. The short definition given in the Report is: 'Islamophobia is anti-Muslim racism' (The Runnymede Trust, 2017, p.1). The long definition is:

> Islamophobia is any distinction, exclusion, or restriction towards, or preference against, Muslims (or those perceived to be Muslims) that has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life. (The Runnymede Trust, 2017, p. 1)

The Report suggests that Islamophobia is a kind of racism which divides between a superior group and an inferior group. It is the same kind of division Foucault (2003) suggests when he traces the rise of racism through the emergence of 'superrace and a subrace' (p. 61). According to Foucault, for the 'superrace', it is important to keep its race 'pure' even if it requires 'killing' the 'subrace' (p. 256). By "killing", Foucault, however, did not literally mean murder. He rather used it to refer to any kind of indirect killing, such as expulsion or prejudice. Drawing on Foucault, we can perhaps see how the same logic of prejudice plays out in the context of Muslims experiencing Islamophobia, resulting in creating certain distinctions between "us" (non-Muslims) and "them" (Muslims), which is at the same time perceived to be a distinction between "good" (non-Muslims) and "evil" (Muslims) (Poynting et al., 2004, p. 50). According to the Report written by the Runnymede Trust (1997), there are generally four aspects to Islamophobia: discrimination, prejudice, exclusion, and violence. I will discuss these in turn.

The first aspect of Islamophobia mentioned in the Report is discrimination (The Runnymede Trust, 1997). One of the reasons for this discrimination is that some people think that Islam justifies the horrible actions done by those people who bomb themselves to kill innocents (Hussain & Bagguley, 2012). Being Muslim is then directly linked to terrorism. For instance, Ann Coulter, an American columnist, said: 'not all Muslims are terrorists, but all terrorists are Muslims' (cited in Bakali, 2016, p. 69). Statements like these sustain the idea of the barbarism of Islam as imagined in people's minds (Said, 1978). More specifically, this means that Islam is perceived as: 'not only incapable of modernity, but also resistant to it' (Bakali, 2016, p. 28).

Recent events have affirmed that this discriminatory mode of perception is still with us today. After the refugee crisis resulted from the war between Russia and Ukraine, different resources reported the double standards in dealing with Muslim versus Ukrainian refugees. In Germany, Afghani refugees who fled Taliban were evicted from their temporary houses to accommodate Ukrainian refugees (Arab News, 2022; Glinski, 2022). According to Hardman (2022), there is a 'mismatch' (para. 4) in the way Syrians and Ukrainian refugees are treated in Denmark; Ukrainians were treated with more humanity. Ukrainian refugees are treated with more dignity and sympathy for many reasons (MEND, 2022). The reasons given for this discrimination are themselves evidence

of the different perceptions underlying the discrimination. Hardman (2022) stated many examples from different reporters. For example, one reporter stated that Ukraine is not 'Iraq or Afghanistan. This is a relatively civilised, relatively European city'. Another reporter said: 'this is not a developing, third-world nation, this is Europe'. Such narratives belie a discourse in which civilisation only exists in Europe and third-world Muslim countries are uncivilised. Therefore, those who are considered to be "civilised" are more welcome than those who are not.

The second aspect of Islamophobia mentioned in the Report is prejudice (The Runnymede Trust, 1997). To explain the role of prejudice in Islamophobia, Said (1997) argues that it is generally built on a distorted, Western version of Islam. This is a different Islam from how Muslims elsewhere in the world often experience their religion. Still, it is the Western version which is used as a justification for the fear of Islam. This fear is thus based on a lack of knowledge and communication, and it produces prejudice. Prejudice is not innate; rather, it grows in people's hearts due to some acquired beliefs or learnt knowledge (Fanon, 1986). A possible reason for why these beliefs develop, as Huntington (1996) argues, is that humans need prejudice to create enemies in order to compete with them and to expand one sides' authority over the other.

One of the ways in which prejudice is formed can be found in how Muslims are represented in a substantial portion of the media (The Runnymede Trust, 1997). On the role of media in creating Islamophobia, it follows a selective process of choosing what, how, and who to portray (Said, 1997). Muslims in the media are represented as 'troublemakers' (Khawaja & Mørck, 2009, p. 32), 'wrongdoers' (Poynting et al., 2004, p. 50), and 'barbaric' (Said, 1978, p. 150). Moreover, the language media use to describe attacks perpetrated by Muslims differs from the language used around attacks perpetrated by non-Muslims. Generally, attacks by Muslims are much more often referred to as 'terrorist' (Bakali, 2016, p. 69). McQueeney (2014) explains that words such as "terrorist" are used to describe crimes committed by Muslims. If the same crime was committed by a non-Muslim, this word would not be used. In other words, being Muslim is conflated with terrorism. For instance, the word "terrorist" was not used when describing the religion of the man or the man himself who bombed the Federal Building in Oklahoma City in 1995 (McQueeney, 2014). Nor was it used in 2010 to describe Joseph Stack, who crashed into a building in Texas while flying an aircraft (Bakali, 2016). In other words, there is a tendency by some Western entities to see Islam as inherently violent. This leads to the generalisation of any terrorist action done by some extremists to all Muslims and to the religion itself, unlike the way Christianity is perceived. If a violent action was done by Christians, it does not get generalised to the nation or the religious community (Bakali, 2016).

Media reports also tend to use words such as 'jihadist' (Bakali, 2004, p. 68), 'fundamentalists' (Poynting et al., 2004, p. 256), and 'radical' (Allen, 2010, p. 37) when addressing any issue related to attacks by Muslims which all contribute to forming a negative image about Muslims (Allen, 2010). Interestingly, in the past, the word "fundamentalism" was used to refer to American Protestants or the political right. It only started to be associated with Islam in 1981, when an article written by

Anthony Burgess was published (The Runnymede Trust, 1997). The author's article 'Islam in the Dark' reviewed a book called 'Among the Believers: An Islamic Journey' where the author of the book was describing his Islamic journey. Burgess argued in his review article that Islam is associated with 'more blood and stupidity' and 'dangerous fundamentalism' (Burgess cited in The Runnymede Trust, 1997, p. 7). According to The Runnymede Trust, this article had huge influence on Western media as the word fundamentalist became 'inseparable' from Muslims (p. 7). Also, the word was used excessively in Huntington's (1996) infamous but influential book "The Clash of Civilizations". He did not give the word a clear definition but did suggest an inseparable link between fundamentalism and Islam. For example, he stated:

> In most countries, fundamentalists winning control of student unions and similar organizations was the first phase in the process of political Islamization, with the Islamist "breakthrough" in universities occurring in the 1970s. (Huntington, 1996, p. 112)

There are different individuals with different religious beliefs who can be part of student unions. Yet Huntington seems to assume that fundamentalism is always *Islamic* fundamentalism. This assumption can be seen more broadly in the media as well.

The media have a big role in shaping how good and bad Muslims are constructed: a "good" Muslim is the one who is like "us" in the "West", but the "bad" Muslim is the other who refuses to be like "us" (Jackson, 2018). Muslim representation in such a negative way happens not only in the news but also in movies. There, Muslims are often represented as violent terrorists and rarely as normal or peaceful people. Bakali (2016) analysed three movies which exemplify this tendency: The Kingdom (2007), Iron Man (2008), and Body of Lies (2008). The three plots of these movies lean heavily on an image in which the West is more civilised than other parts of the world, and all three movies include Western actors who have to save Muslims. In the three movies, Muslim characters are represented as bad, aggressive and stupid. As an exception to this rule, all three movies include one "good" Muslim character who helps the Western hero to accomplish his mission. Bakali argues convincingly that these movies indicate a preference in Western movie-goers for Muslims who show similarities to them.

The third aspect of Islamophobia mentioned in the Runnymede report is exclusion, which has its source in the world of politics (The Runnymede Trust, 1997). The basic message given by anti-Islam politicians is the need to fear Muslims and to draw a line between "us" and "them"; it is to say: 'Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists' (Poynting et al., 2004). Looking at the two and a half decades since the report was published – which was, it should be noted, even before the attacks on the Twin Towers, an event that made Islamophobia considerably worse throughout the West – this call for exclusion of Muslims by politicians seems to have only grown in Europe and other countries in the West. Let me give just a few of the many examples that can be given. Former Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said on television that 'Islamicism' (Bakali, 2016, p. 16) is a threat to the country. According to Ali (2017) some American politicians are also spreading

Islamophobia; for instance, the ban which former president of the United States Donald Trump started in 2017 can be considered as a direct expression of Islamophobia. Trump declared that people from seven Islamic countries (Syria, Iraq, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen) were not allowed to enter the United States because he wanted 'total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States' (Trump cited in Bhutta, 2019, para. 7). In England, a politician and leading figure of the Brexit movement Nigel Farage has said that Muslims in the United Kingdom have 'split loyalties' (Bhutta, 2019, para. 6; The Guardian, 2015, para. 3) between their religion and British identity. Moreover, both the British National Party (BNP) and the English Defence League (EDL) have explicitly doubted Muslims' Britishness and ability to integrate, and the BNP even considered Muslims as their 'new enemy' (Hussain & Bagguley, 2012, p. 717).

Exclusion of Muslims in politics is not only visible in the statements of explicitly anti-Muslim politicians. It can be found in the more normal functioning of governments as well. One such example of how governments exclude Muslims is found in one of the policies in the United Kingdom. According to the "Counter-extremism Strategy" document, the United Kingdom's government defined extremism as actions opposing "our" values (Home Office, 2015b). This recalls the binary of "us", who are included in the society and, "them", who are excluded. In formulating their counter-extremism measures, the government sets two strategies. The first one is called *Prevent*, which is aimed at eradicating terrorism by preventing people from being drawn in terrorism or from supporting it (Home Office, 2011, 2021a, 2021b). This strategy is implemented in different sectors and institutions, such as schools. Its goal is to eradicate terrorism and is aimed specifically at people who are suspected of terrorism. The *Prevent* strategy has been criticised for its major focus on Muslims in the United Kingdom (The Runnymede Trust, 2017). For instance, radicalisation, as argued by *Prevent*, appears when people are struggling to find their identity. They then add that:

> … it has been argued in particular that some second or third generation Muslims in Europe, facing apparent or real discrimination and socio-economic disadvantage, can find in terrorism a 'value system', a community and an apparently just cause. (HM Government, 2011, p. 17)

The article they cite for this (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010), which explores radicalisation, mentions only Muslims as a radical group with identity clashes. Its title suggests that the article discusses violent radicalisation in Europe in a general sense. It then immediately zones in specifically on 'militant Islamism' (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010, p. 797) in a way that suggests that this is the only form of violent radicalisation we should be worried about. Furthermore, 40% of the projects conducted by *Prevent* aiming at promoting cohesion and integration focused only on Muslims (Home Office, 2011). This strategy included adding surveillance cameras specifically to neighbourhoods populated with Muslims such as Washwood Heath and Sparkbrook in Birmingham (Lewis, 2010).

The other United Kingdom government strategy is called *Channel*. In this strategy, individuals are first identified as suspected of terrorism, then they are assessed based on a framework called "Vulnerability Assessment". Under this framework, there are three criteria for assessing whether

someone is a terrorist, which are being engaged with 'group, cause or ideology' (Home Office, 2015a, p. 11), having the intent to harm and being able to harm. If someone is considered to have been drawn into terrorism, an action plan will be developed to de-radicalise them, and then their progress will be viewed (Home Office, 2015a). The disproportionate numbers of Muslims dealt with under this strategy could translate the extent the UK government doubt Muslims as shown in the following excerpt:

> For the two-year period, March 2014 to March 2016, when the religion of persons under 18 referred to Channel was recorded, the total recorded as Muslim was nearly six times greater than the total recorded as belonging to any other religion. If we take population size into account, Muslim children were 44 times more likely to be referred compared to those belonging to any other religion. (The Runnymede Trust, 2017, p. 44)

The fourth aspect of Islamophobia mentioned in the Runnymede report is violence (The Runnymede Trust, 1997). Racism of extermination is when one race is seen to be dangerous and needs to be eliminated (Hage, 2016). This can be applied to Muslims who suffered from violence presented in anti-Islam hate crimes since there is rise in such crimes recorded annually (Home Office, 2015b). Between 2020 and 2021, 45% of hate crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales were against Muslims (HM Government, 2021). In Scotland, too, violent attacks, threats and vandalism against Muslims were recorded (Bonino, 2015). During the process of writing this chapter in 2019, a horrific incident occurred in New Zealand which is supposedly a peaceful and tolerant country. An Islamophobic White Australian opened fire on Muslims praying in mosques in Christchurch killing 50 people and injuring others (Child, 2019). After this incident, different Islamophobic crimes occurred, such as stabbing a Muslims in Surrey (Green & Scully 2019), and vandalising mosques in Birmingham (ITV, 2019).

Practicing violence against Muslims can have long-lasting effects on their psychology, such as a constant fear of being rejected or judged negatively. Hopkins (2021) study showed how 79% of Muslim respondents reported that because of the violence against Muslims in Scotland and worldwide, they 'fear not only primarily for their own safety but for the safety of the friends and family members, especially women and children' (p. 4). The particular fear about Muslim women's safety stems from the 'gendered Islamophobia' (Hopkins, 2021, p. 3) where women wearing the Hijab are more targeted because of their obvious visibility.

Islam is also considered 'one dominant modality of racism today' (Race et al., 2022, p. 49). Scotland has seen a considerable rise in racist violence generally in recent years. According to the Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (2015), the rate of racism murders in Scotland between 2000 and 2013, at 1.8 murders per million, was higher than in the United Kingdom, 1.3 murders per million. In addition, racist incidents rose to be 3.9% higher during 2014 than the year before (Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights, 2015). These racist incidents can also occur at schools. According to BBC (2013), schools in Scotland are experiencing more racist incidents which reached 1,274

incidents during 2012. There is even noticeable rise in experiences of racism in higher education in Scotland (Race et al., 2022).

Having discussed Islamophobia in terms of its four major aspects, I will conclude this section by giving an indication of the impact Islamophobia can have on young Muslim refugees and their parents in Scotland in the formation of their identity. Several studies show how Muslim students suffer from stress and from the struggle to belong as they are lost between who they are, and who society wants them to be (Bonino, 2015; Karlsson, 2019; Kebede, 2010). This experience is astutely described by Hage (2010) in terms of 'vacillation' (p. 117). He observes that racialised people, such as Arabs in the West, need to shift between integration into a new cultural group and continuation of belonging to the group they were born into. In the midst of this vacillation, they fear being trapped in either universality (mainstream community) or particularity (Muslim community) and not finding space in between. This is an important aspect of the experience of refugees and migrants more generally, yet it is often overlooked by those who take belonging to the mainstream identity for granted. This is especially important for teachers in Scotland to realise when they have refugee children in their classroom, as the interviews with my participants will further underline.

My own experience has been of great value in this regard, because it has given me an understanding of what the experience of vacillation can be like. After living in Oklahoma for some time, I noticed changes in my attitudes and behaviours, such as the way I greet people. Yet looking different because of my Hijab and colour and sounding different because of my accent kept me at a distance from mainstream American society. At the same time, I did not feel like I really fit in the Arab Muslim community either. Though my Hijab, colour, and accent made it easier to be identified as part of the Arab Muslim community I found in Oklahoma, they still had their own traditions which were sometimes very different from those I had known in Gaza. Reflecting on this experience of vacillation – which is still a part of my life today, in Scotland – has allowed me to develop a sensitivity to this matter which supports my curiosity in interviewing the participants of this study.

This section has discussed the definition of the word Islamophobia in terms of its four most important aspects. It explored how Muslims in the West, and Scotland specifically, experience prejudice, discrimination, exclusion, and violence on a daily basis. This includes how they are presented in media, politics, movies and everyday life. The section has also shed light on the risks of Islamophobia for Muslims' lives. The first scene for this thesis is thus set. The next section gives information about Scotland to set the second scene of this thesis.

1.2.2 The Scottish Scene

In this section, I will discuss the Scottish scene in terms of its statistics on diversity, including race and religion. I will look specifically at the way in which Muslims are perceived by the majority non-Muslim population. I will then zone into educational projects initiated by the Scottish government that aim at the integration of minorities, including Muslim refugees, into Scottish society.

This discussion will function as a way to contextualise the experiences of the families interviewed in this study.

Scotland has a surprisingly low amount of diversity in relation to most other countries in Western Europe. According to the Scottish Census (2011), which was about the period between 2001-2011, there was a decrease in the White ethnic population in Scotland. Yet the census also showed that, with 96% the great majority of the people in Scotland still identify as White. The rest of the population in Scotland identified with other minority ethnicities such as Asian, Black, and Arab. In terms of religion, there was an increase in people who had no religion and a decrease in people who identified as Christian. 36.7% of people in Scotland said they do not have a religion, while 32.4% identified as Christian. However, there was an increase of 0.6% in those who identified as Muslims. Islam is the largest faith in Scotland after Christianity, and the Muslim population continues to grow by 'over 34,000 between the 2001 and 2011 Censuses' (Elshayyal, 2016, p. 8) and constituted 1.45% of the whole population of Scotland in 2011. In Scotland, 43.6% of Muslims live in Glasgow which thus accommodates the largest Muslim population in one city in Scotland (Elshayyal, 2016). Nevertheless, there is surprisingly little research done on the life experiences of Muslims in Scotland. Finding literature on Muslims' presence and experiences in England for example is easier than finding literature on their presence and experiences in Scotland.

What is clear though, and as discussed in the previous section, Muslims' experiences in Scotland are affected by the rise of Islamophobia. But it is difficult to raise this issue to the level of public debate. As Harris (2018) shows, discussing racism (including Islamophobia) in Scotland is often avoided by the majority population, because there is a myth that Scotland is a 'utopia' (p. 119) where racism does not exist. Harris argues that one of the reasons for such a myth is the small number of Muslims in Scotland compared to England, and thus, when Islamophobia in the United Kingdom is discussed, the focus is on Muslims' experiences in England. The view that Scotland has no racism is further supported by pointing to figures such as employment rate. Employment among Muslims in Scotland is then considered high (31%), when compared with England and Wales (19.8%) (Elshayyal, 2016). But these numbers do not disprove the prevalence of Islamophobia in Scotland. Elshayyal (2016), in a thorough analysis of the 2011 United Kingdom national census, shows that although most Muslims try to prove their integration in the Scottish community by working hard to adapt, the growth of the Muslim population is nonetheless perceived by many non-Muslim Scots as a 'potential threat to Scottish life and identity' (Elshayyal, 2016, p. 24). In light of the fact that all the participants in this study are located in Glasgow, it is also important to note that, when comparing Islamophobia within Scotland, Islamophobia in Glasgow is shown to be worse than, for example, in Dundee (MWRC, 2005).

An important question to ask is to what extent Islamophobia and racism more generally encountered by Muslim refugees are acknowledged and addressed by the Scottish Government. One way of addressing this question is by looking at an initiative started by the Scottish Government titled

"New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy" (The Scottish Government, 2022a). This project is aimed at helping refugees and asylum seekers 'be welcomed and supported to integrate into our communities from day one' (The Scottish Government, 2022a, p. 6). To facilitate their integration in Scottish society, this project details the specific needs of refugees and asylum seekers and how to address those needs. The project recognises the importance of education in this process and emphasises that it is a right for all. Therefore, it endorses the role of the Scottish curriculum, underpinned by diversity and equality, in promoting tolerance and acceptance for refugees and Muslims at schools. Also, teachers at Scottish schools are required to meet the needs of refugees to ensure their wellbeing and academic progress. I critically discuss the way Islam is taught in the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence, as well as the families' views on this, in Chapter 7.

Another important focus in the New Scots strategy is the inclusion of parents in their children's education. It gives attention to the kind of support both refugee children and parents need. The report emphasises that students and their parents are often in need of support to clarify their rights and responsibilities (The Scottish Government, 2022a). The report states that to correspond to this issue, school staff should learn how to communicate effectively with refugee children and their parents. This could be done through organising formal and informal activities aimed at spreading awareness and information about education in Scotland.

This thesis recognises the importance, when supporting refugee children in integrating in Scottish society, of attending not only to the children, but also to their parents. Hence, one of the main points of focus in this thesis is exploring how both the students and their parents, who are also interviewed, are supported in Scottish schools. It further examines the extent to which the participant students know their role and rights at school and whether or not participant parents are aware of their entitlement in terms of being part of their children's education. The thesis also investigates the opportunities provided for participant students and parents at school for encouraging others to understand their culture, religion and background. Previous research such as AMINA (2017), Rah et al., (2009), and Weedon et al., (2013) have raised concerns about the extent to which their children are included at schools, observing that their children's identities as Muslims are not supported enough at schools. This thesis is thus timely, especially considering the observations made above about the difficulties Muslim refugee children face in their daily lives in Scotland.

To conclude, then, a context has now been given of the lives of the participants of this thesis. This has been done in terms of two interconnected scenes: Islamophobia and the Scottish scene. In the latter section I zoomed in specifically on the ways in which the Scottish Government wants education to contribute to make the lives of refugees better. In the final part of this introduction, I will succinctly outline my research aims and questions, to then give an overview of the rest of the thesis.

1.3 Study Outline and Research Questions

This study will be based on interviews with twelve Syrian refugee families in Glasgow: a parent and school-aged child from each family. The interviews will help reflect on perspectives of the participants about educational differences between Scotland and their home country of Syria, as well as their social interactions inside and outside home. The parents are asked about the views they have on their children's education hopes and concerns, and the changes they notice on who they are and who their children are becoming. The children are asked about the different schools they attended and how different or similar these were, as well as their social life in Scotland.

In order to approach the question of how the participants experience their education or that of their children, the study will focus on two elements: pedagogy and curriculum. Both of these elements are compared between Scotland and the participants' previous setting, which is mainly Syria. Because of the importance of these concepts in the study, it is important to give a definition for both, so it is clear what will be meant by these concepts throughout the thesis. Both concepts will be discussed more in-depth in Chapter 3 on the theoretical framework used in the thesis.

A definition for pedagogy is taken from Alexander, who defines it in the following way:

> Pedagogy is not a mere matter of teaching technique. It is a purposive cultural intervention in individual human development which is deeply saturated with the values and history of the society and community in which it is located. Pedagogy is best defined, then, as the act of teaching together with the ideas, values and collective histories which inform, shape and explain that act. (Alexander, 2005, p. 92)

Since the act of teaching is of central importance to pedagogy, teachers and the way they teach or deal with students are the main pillars for pedagogy. Teachers play an important role for students, not just on an academic level, but also in terms of their identity formation. First, because they have the ability to encourage their students to learn. Second, because the support students get from their teacher includes them more in the learning process (Jasmi & Hin, 2014). Furthermore, teachers can build a secure space where students can be themselves with comfort (Milner, 2018). Conversely, teachers can also negatively affect students' motivation. Thus, Granot (2014) argues that a good relationship between teachers and students can give students greater capacity to participate and engage in different academic tasks.

The second element I discuss in the thesis is curriculum, which is defined as 'the totality of the experiences the pupil has as a result of the provision made' (Kelly, 2009, p. 8). The knowledge and experiences in the curriculum should be suitable for all students, even if they are from different backgrounds. Curriculum is potentially an important tool to give students a chance to present themselves and learn about each other. It even could clarify some of the misconceptions behind different social phenomena such as Islamophobia (Bakali, 2016). The New Scots document explicitly states that the Scottish Government wants education to play a role in the lives of refugee students and their parents in addressing issues in relation to their educational needs. Even though the New

Scots strategy does not use the word Islamophobia, it gives attention to issues of racism which Muslim refugees might encounter. However, the question is to what extent such a goal is actually met in real practice. This is one of the important reasons why I am doing this research, to find an answer to that question in the lives of the participants in this study. Focusing on pedagogy and curriculum allows observing the way in which actual practices in education influence the participant's lives – especially in terms of their identity formation. Both pedagogy and curriculum, even if they have good intentions, can still functions as a way to reinforce prejudice against Muslims. The following chapters will shed more light on these issues which Muslim refugee parents and students face in their host country to give a more in-depth understanding for their experiences at school.

1.3.1 Research Questions

There are two main questions for this thesis. The first question has two sub-questions.

1. How do the educational experiences of participant Syrian Muslim refugee families contribute to their identity construction?
    a. What are the differences and the similarities observed by the participants between pedagogy in Syria and Scotland? How have these differences affected the participants' identities?
    b. What are the differences and the similarities observed by the participants between curriculum in Syria and Scotland? How have these differences affected the participants' identities?
2. What are the social experiences that contribute to the identity construction of participant Syrian Muslim refugee families?

1.4 Overview of the Thesis

Chapter 1 has introduced the background of this study. It set up the premise of this research that considers Syrian Muslim refugees, as a minority in Scotland, are at possible risk of being excluded at school. Research questions are introduced, and an overview is given of the structure of the study.

Chapter 2 will introduce the contexts of Syrian refugees in Syria and Scotland. It will outline the political context which forced them to leave Syria. Then a description of the Syrian and Scottish educational contexts is offered.

Chapter 3 unpacks the theoretical frames of identity, curriculum and pedagogy that are used to think about new lenses of understanding the data obtained from the field work on this thesis. Chapter 3 will explore these theories in detail and further explain their relevance to this project.

Chapter 4 will outline the depth of empirical literature which informs the research. It will explore documented resettlement experiences of refugee students and their parents including social

and educational experiences such as language, family dynamics, and curricular and pedagogical issues.

Chapter 5 explains the ontological and epistemological frames and how they inform the methodology of this thesis. The research design and methods will also be explained. A thematic analytic approach is adopted to analyse the participants' experiences. Lastly, ethical and validity considerations are examined.

Chapter 6,7,8 include the analysis of major themes. Chapter 6 and 7 answer the first research question (RQ): How are the educational experiences that contribute to the identity construction of participant Syrian Muslim refugee families? Chapter 6 answers the first sub-question of RQ1: What are the differences and the similarities observed by the participants between pedagogy in Syria and Scotland? How have these differences affected the participants' identities? Chapter 7 will analyse data in relation to this second sub-question of RQ1: What are the differences and the similarities observed by the participants between curriculum in Syria and Scotland? How have these differences affected the participants' identities? Chapter 8 corresponds to RQ2: What are the social experiences that contribute to the identity construction of participant Syrian Muslim refugee families? And how do they contribute?

Chapter 9 concludes the findings of this study. This chapter will discuss the significance of this study for the field of refugee education. I also highlight some of the recommendations and limitations for further directions for future research in refugee education.

Chapter 2: Educational and Political Contexts

The aim of this chapter is to provide an outline of the main contexts of the education of Syrian refugee participants in this study in their home country and their host country, Scotland. Some of the participants went directly from Syria to Scotland, others stayed in other countries in between. I decided to write this chapter after I had been working on my data analysis for a while. I began to realise that it would be very helpful to gain an overview of both the Syrian and Scottish education systems, in order to better understand the participants' experience of resettlement in Scotland, as well as of the educational context in Syria and Scotland. This overview will give an idea of the possible differences and similarities between the two systems and what these differences and similarities mean for the experience of resettlement of the participants.

This chapter has two main sections. The first section will explain the conflict in Syria which made it necessary for the participants to flee their country. The section that follows will discuss the educational context in both Syria and Scotland. All the children in the study experienced schooling (either public or private) in either just Syria or in Syria and another country before resettling in Scotland, such as Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon and Turkey. None of the participants attended refugee schools (schools which are just for refugees to attend in their host country) in their temporary host countries. The educational context in these other countries will not be explained in depth; however, they are mentioned briefly. There are two reasons for that. The first reason is that all parents were schooled in Syria and most of the children as well. The second reason is that the participants noted that the education in these countries was very similar to the education in Syria. Hence, understanding the Syrian educational context is enough for the purpose of this thesis, which is to compare the experiences of the participants in their previous and current educational contexts

2.1 The Syrian Conflict

Although the conflict in Syria has a long history reaching back far into the 20th century (and perhaps even earlier), it can be said to have started when Syrian civilians started an uprising against the Assad regime in 2011. The massive and peaceful pro-democracy protests of which the uprising consisted were inspired by the Arab spring in Tunisia and Egypt, demanding an end of repressive governments (Reid, 2021, p. 3). The protests initially began in the city of Deraa, after the Assad regime's capture and torture of two teenage boys who had written graffiti against the government (BBC, 2021; Britannica, 2020). When the Syrian regime used deadly weapons against the protesters, further protests erupted, and violence from the government against these protests escalated nationwide. In turn, anti-regime armed forces were organised as a response to Assad's backlashes, and the conflict turned into a civil war.

Since the beginning of the war, which is still ongoing, over 600 thousand people have been killed (SOHR, 2021). The war in Syria has resulted in displacing millions of Syrians whose lives

were at risk: in 2021, the number of displaced Syrians reached 13.5 million, which is over half of the Syrian population (UNHCR, 2021b). This has made the Syrian refugee crisis the world's worst humanitarian ongoing crisis (UNESCO, 2018). Beside violence, there are other consequences of the war, such as damaged infrastructure, diseases, malnutrition, child labour and abuse, and disrupting two decades of education progress (Reid, 2021). Syrians have sought refuge in different neighbouring countries. According to UNCHR (2021), the highest number recorded of Syrian refugees is in Turkey which is hosting over 3 million Syrian refugees, and Lebanon is the second by hosting over 800,000. The highest number of refugees recorded in Europe is in Sweden with roughly 100,000 refugees. The UK have around 11,000 refugees. Some of those arrived the UK through resettlement (UNHCR, 2021a). In Scotland, in 2017, two thousand Syrians arrived under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (SVPRS). By 2020, the number of Syrian refugees in Scotland had risen to around 3,000 (Migration Scotland, 2020). As mentioned in the previous chapter, the majority resided in Glasgow.

The next sub-section provides further insights into the Syrian refugee crisis, with a particular focus on education.

2.1.1 Defining Refugees

Let me begin by shortly discussing what I understand to be a "refugee". The 1951 Refugee Convention defines a refugee as:

> … someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion. (UNHCR, 1951, p. 3)

When refugees leave their homes, they often flee with few of their possessions. They leave their loved ones behind to survive because they have no other option. Many refugees, as in the case of Syrians, lived through bombing and life-threatening situations. Those who decide to leave the war and find a new life in other countries can sometimes leave through legal ways, such as some refugee schemes offered by a host country. However, they are often forced to resort to illegal means, such as smuggling. Refugees' traumatic experiences thus often do not end after they have left their country; they have to endure further hardships, such as cold, thirst and hunger, in their journey to find refuge and peace.

2.1.2 Impact on Education

To give some indication of the impact the Syrian conflict has had on Syria's educational landscape, we can look at some numbers. Before the conflict escalated, the average school dropout in Syria was 1.09%, and the enrolment rate was 98.9% (UNESCO, 2011). Syria further recorded an estimated 97% of primary school students attending schools, and 67% high school students (UNIICEF, 2013). Due to the conflict, around half of the children and young people below 18 in Syria have dropped out of school (Assistance Coordination Unit, 2017; Qaddour & Husain, 2022;

UNIICEF, 2013), and 72% of Syrians between the ages of 18 and 24 have left schools forcibly for at least two years (UNESCO, 2018). Some children's schooling was disrupted for even more than two years (Qaddour & Husain, 2022; UNESCO, 2015).

Internally displaced refugees (that is, refugees who have stayed within Syria but fled to another region) often have difficulty accessing schools, due to insecurity in some regions, decreased availability of educational spaces and lack of teachers (UNESCO, 2019). Furthermore, the quality of education in Syria has decreased because of overcrowded classrooms, shortage of supplies, and dire conditions of work (UNICEF, 2016). Furthermore, many schools have been closed to be used as refugee centre or for military services (Assistance Coordination Unit, 2017). Even before the war, there was a lack in the availability of libraries, computer labs and science lab (Assistance Coordination Unit, 2017), an issue which has become worse because of the conflict.

The disruption of children's education because of the conflict often does not end, however, when they flee to a new country. Despite the efforts of host countries to increase children's enrolment – for example by creating "second shifts" at public schools where Syrian children go to classes after other students have left – there are still difficulties facing the children, such as not knowing the host country's language or not meeting registration requirements (Human Rights Watch, n.d.). In Scotland, programmes have been developed in order to try and ameliorate these issues. One example is a Scottish government programme, already shortly touched upon in the introduction, called "New Scots", which began in 2013 and is still running today. In this programme Syrian refugees are supported with their integration by addressing their resettlement needs such as education (The Scottish Government, 2017). Education is considered a pivotal aspect of life that can bring a sense of normalcy and hope to the everyday lives of refugee children and their parents (Guo et al., 2019; UNESCO, 2018). The next two sections will discuss the educational contexts in Syria and Scotland further.

2.2 Education before Scotland

This section focuses on the main educational context for the participants before arriving in Scotland, which is the Syrian educational context. It also tries to capture, briefly, the educational contexts Syrians experienced in other neighbouring countries, as mentioned earlier. This section is divided into three sub-sections. The first two outline general information about the education system in Syria. As explained in the introduction, education in this thesis is divided into two main elements: curriculum and pedagogy. The first sub-section explores the curriculum used in Syrian schools. Getting an idea of the content and load of the curriculum students are requested to study in Syria will help observe some of the differences and similarities between the curriculum in Syria and Scotland. It will also help with the data analysis when the participants talk about their experiences and reflections on the curriculum in Syria. The second sub-section explores pedagogy in Syrian schools. The third sub-section explores the educational challenges in neighbouring countries of Syria.

2.2.1 Education in Syria: Curriculum

As mentioned earlier, I decided to write this chapter after I started my data analysis. It was challenging to find enough resources about education in Syria before the war. It seems like more attention started to be given to education in Syria after the war. In this section, there will be references from before and after the war. Finding references from before the war was my goal to capture the education the participants experienced before arriving to Scotland. Since there was not enough information from before the war, I started to search for any resource regardless of the year. Even though some of these references are recent, the information from these sources matches the description of what the participants said about their education. That could mean education in Syria before and after the war did not change much (Integrity, 2019).

In Syria, school is divided into three levels: primary school (Grade 1-6), middle school (Grade 7-9), and high school (Grade 10-12). Education in Syria is compulsory from Grade 1-9 (Integrity, 2019) and free (UNESCO, 2011). The academic year starts in September and finishes in May (UNESCO, 2020). According to Syrian Ministry of Education (2020), school day starts either at 7:30 or 8:00 until 12:30 or 13:00 for the morning session, and from 12:30 or 13:00 until 16:50 or 17:30 for the afternoon session. Students get an average of 6 classes a day. Each class lasts for 45 minutes. After the second and the fourth class, there is a 15-minute break.

According to UNESCO (2011), Arab nationalism is one of the main objectives for education in Syria by 'bringing up citizens rooted in their Arab homeland, having deep faith in their Arab nationalism' (p. 1). It also aims at dissolving all dividing social categories in terms of religion, sect, or tribe to create 'pan-Arab unity' (p. 1). There are also other aims such as bringing up citizens who are well-mannered, social, ethical, capable of giving back to their society and family, and respectful of their culture and values.

To achieve these aims, the Syrian Ministry of Education have planned a weekly timetable (Table 2.1) of how much each class should be taught. The student participants, who went to school in Syria, only attended primary school there, except for one who attended school in Syria until Grade 7 (middle school). Thus, only the timetable for primary school is presented.

Table 2.1

Primary education: Weekly lesson timetable

Class	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
Religion	1	1	2	2	2	2
Arabic	9	9	8	8	7	7
English	3	3	3	3	3	3
Maths	4	4	4	4	4	4
Social studies	3	3	3	3	3	3
Science	3	3	3	3	4	4
Music	2	2	2	2	2	2
Art	2	2	2	2	2	2
P.E.	2	2	2	2	2	2
Total	29	29	29	29	29	29
Vanguard activities	2	2	2	2	2	2
Vocational activities					2	2
Total	31	31	31	31	33	33

Note: Translated from (Syrian Ministry of Education, 2020)

Curriculum books are given to students for free and returned to school at the end of the year or semester to be used again if they are in a good condition (Assistance Coordination Unit, 2017). The Syrian Ministry of Education website explains what curriculum content students learn in each grade as follows (Syrian Ministry of Education, n.d.). In Grade 1-6, students learn religion (Islam or Christianity), Arabic, English, maths, social studies, art, science, and P.E. Students in Grade 7 study the same as Grade 6, with the addition of geography, history, and instead of science students learn biology and another class for both chemistry and physics. Also, instead of social science, they learn national studies. Students also need to choose between two foreign languages (French or Russian). In Grade 7, students learn about math in a general sense, while in Grade 8 and 9 maths is further divided into two classes: algebra and geometry. In Grade 10, students get the same classes as in

Grade 8 and 9, but philosophy is added. In Grade 11 and 12, students decide between a science and a literature route. If they choose the science route, students learn biology, arts, technology, chemistry, physics, maths, Arabic, English, another foreign language (French or Russian), religion, and national studies. If they choose the literature route, students learn history, Arabic, English, another foreign language (French or Russian), geography, religion, philosophy, and national studies. When compared with the curriculum in Scotland, which is explained in a section further below, the curriculum in Syria seems denser and more loaded. Indeed, the curriculum in Syria has been reported to be 'too difficult' (UNICEF, 2016, p. 9).

2.2.2 Education in Syria: Pedagogy

Integrity (2009) published a report which provides some insight into teaching practices in Syria. It was conducted by Integrity and funded by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (Integrity, 2019). This report was, in its own words, the 'first wide-scale analysis since the start of the Syrian conflict of how teacher practice and learning spaces influence child learning and wellbeing in Syria' (Integrity, 2019, p. 2). The information provided in the report is limited to Grade 2 and Grade 3 classrooms, and to areas in Syria not controlled by the Syrian Government at the time of the study. Despite these limitations, the study was conducted with considerable scope within the areas it did cover, including interviews with over 5000 participants (teachers, children, and parents) in 300 schools. The report provides great insight into an educational landscape that had been mostly inaccessible for foreign eyes before the report was published, and it is therefore a valuable source for understanding the kind of pedagogical environment the children participating in this study have experienced.

The Integrity report investigates the pedagogies used in Syrian schools. It concludes that the pedagogies used in 2019 were very similar to the ones used before the start of the conflict, because of participant teachers 'traditional use' (Integrity, 2019, p. 19) of these pedagogies. After interviewing the teachers, the report argues that there is a lack of quality lesson planning, a lack of active learning, a lack of formative assessment and a huge dependence on summative assessment (mainly tests). Furthermore, it observes that threatening is one aspect of the relationship between students and teachers in Syria as around forty percent of the participant students reported that 'some' or 'all' teachers 'hit' (Integrity, 2019, p. 6) students. On the positive side of the relationship between teachers and students, while observing teachers inside classrooms, around 70% of them were noted to 'support a sense of self-control control through rule setting and routines, and 68% were found to use praise and positive feedback often' (Integrity, 2019, p. 29). In a pre-war report on Syria's education, UNESCO (2011) argued that students depended heavily on memorisation with limited integration for higher intellectual skills such as analysis and deduction. Furthermore, according to this latter report, didactics adopted in Syrian education did not give enough space for students to

improve their mental skills and had too little consideration for individual differences and capacities between students (UNESCO, 2011).

The Assistance Coordination Unit (2017) notes that teachers are not screened often to evaluate their methods and behaviour inside the classroom. Most participant teachers in the report mention that they use practices which ensure their control on the class. According to this report, rote education is more commonly used than active learning. Several reasons are given for this, such as an ingrained tradition of using rote education and a lack of resources to use active learning. Having limited resources means that there are not enough materials and spaces for children to use for their learning and for play time. Even when there are some materials which students creatively turn into instruments for play, their work is not usually displayed in the classroom. According to the report, this shows that 'even simple practices in support of child motivation and wellbeing are not being undertaken' (Assistance Coordination Unit, p. 35). As a result, the report maintains that 'most students rely on textbooks only to pass the educational stage without being motivated to do research or problem-solving' (Assistance Coordination Unit, 2017, p. 22).

Overall, a rough sketch can be given about the kind of schooling the children participants in this study were given in Syria on the basis of the available information discussed above. Education in Syria depended on a huge, fixed curriculum, and teachers were responsible to deliver the curriculum content during the academic year. The main teaching method to deliver this curriculum depended on teachers' dictating the information for students who were not given space to express their views or to be critical about what they learn. Teachers were also controlling the classroom dynamics.

2.2.3 Educational Challenges in Neighbouring Countries

Regarding education for Syrians in their neighbouring host countries, a regional study conducted by UNICEF (2015) discusses Syrian refugee's education in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq. A persistent issue reported by the UNICEF report in the education of refugee children in this region is a language barrier, a problem that occurs in Turkey, Lebanon (where Arabic is spoken, but English or French are often the medium of instruction in schools), and Iraq (since Syrian refugees mostly settle in the Kurdish region there, where Kurdish is the medium of instruction). Language is less problematic in Jordan, because the curriculum there is mainly given in Arabic. However, Jordan is reported to have overcrowded classes, an issue which also occurs often in Syrian classrooms since the beginning of the conflict. The situation in Egypt is similar to Jordan in that schools use Arabic; yet the Egyptian Arabic dialect forms a challenge for Syrian students. Another issue Syrian refugee students encounter is that they are suddenly confronted with a curriculum aimed at teaching them about the local country in terms of its history, geography, and national studies. These topics often do not connect with what they have learned previously in Syria. However, some similarities in curriculum of all some of these countries such as Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq do exist, such as religious education, Arabic, science and maths. In order to make the education more in line with the personal

background of Syrian refugees, UNICEF (2015) has started initiatives in some of these countries where Syrians are taught a modified Syrian curriculum.

Since this study focuses on the educational experiences of Syrian refugees in Scotland, the next section explores the Scottish curriculum and the pedagogies used to deliver it.

2.3 Education in Scotland

There are two main kinds of schools in Scotland. There are non-denominational schools and denominational schools. Both kinds teach the same curriculum. However, the main difference is that in denominational schools, which are mainly Catholic, there is more focus within the subject of religious education on Christianity. According to Glasgow City Council (n.d.), parents can apply to more than one school when they enrol their children. Parents should fill in one application for each child, and the council considers each application separately. They can choose between non-denominational, and denominational, as long as family lives within the school's so-called catchment area, which is the area around each school. The decision is made by the council (Scottish Government, 2022b), and priority is given to parents' first choice (Glasgow City Council, n.d.). Parents can also submit a placing request to move their child from one school to another. If the application is not successful, parents can appeal. The main reason for this unsuccess is a school lacking capacity to take on more students. The impact of not getting first choice can be great. For example, one of the parents told me that they wanted both of their children to attend the same school, yet the school only had the capacity for one of them. Thus, the parent chose another school which had space for both of the children. To deal with the capacity issue, the Glasgow City Council has set three criteria for allocating children to specific schools. The first criterion is for students who need additional support provided only in the requested school. The second one is only for denominational schools. For this criterion, parents who 'can demonstrate an affinity with the religious ethos of the school' (Glasgow City Council, n.d, p.8), are given recognition from the council provided the parents give evidence. The third criterion is having a sibling in the requested school. The participants in this study did not consider school choice to be a complicated issue. The majority of them told me they simply chose the school 'nearest to our home'. Based on my understanding of what they told me, it is likely that they were not aware of the choice they have, nor of the impact school choice can have.

Other than choosing school based on the location of the house, the school staff could also be important to the school choice. Gender of school staff is worth noting here since gender is a theme that emerges in the literature review chapter and the analysis chapters. Put simply, the teaching profession in Scotland is feminised. According to the annual census condicted by The Scottish Government (2021), the majority of teachers in Scotland (more specifically, 89% of teachers in primary schools and 65% of teachers in secondary schools) are women. Ethnicity of school staff is also of importance to this study since the focus of this study is a minority group of different ethnicity, culture and religion from the mainstream community . 70% of primary school teachers are White Scottish, and 21% are White (other British). 63% of secondary school teachers are White Scottish,

and 24% are White (other British). In other words, teachers in Scotland are mainly White (The Scottish Government, 2021).

The current Curriculum in Scotland is called Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). It is aimed at children and young people between 3 and 18 years old (Education Scotland, 2012). It was developed over a period of more than a decade, and ultimately implemented in 2010 (University of Sterling, n.d.). The significance of the development of CfE can be understood in the context of a shifting political landscape in Scotland (Smith, 2018). Before CfE, there was the 5-14 Guidelines Curriculum, which stemmed from before Scottish devolution and the formation of a Scottish parliament in 1999. Smith (2018) argues that, although the Scottish curriculum in that time was distinct from that of the rest of the United Kingdom, it was still created within the United Kingdom's parliament, and thus 'implied a somewhat colonial relationship between Scotland and London' (Smith, 2018, p. 31). Hence, the growing importance ascribed to a Scottish national identity can plausibly be linked to a growing desire for a new curriculum, one that could truly be said to be Scottish. Three years after the election, Scotland's Education Minister called for a 'National debate on Education' (Smith, 2018, p. 31). In that debate, educators, parents, students and others evaluated the existing 5-14 Guidelines Curriculum and discussed what to keep or to change in that curriculum (The Scottish Executive, 2004). CfE was the outcome of that debate, as in 2004 the first outline document for CfE was published (Smith, 2018).

Not everything in the old curriculum was considered bad. For example, 'flexibility' and 'quality of teaching' (The Scottish Executive, 2004, p. 6) were some of the aspects to be kept. On the other hand, over-crowdedness of the curriculum content and the limited choices for students – such as choosing activities and topics to discuss – were some of the 'educational backdrops' (The Scottish Executive, 2004, p. 7) in that curriculum which were taken in consideration when CfE was designed.

2.3.1 Curriculum for Excellence

The current Scottish curriculum is divided into five levels. Early level: Age 3 to P1, First level: P2, P3, P4, Second level: P5, P6, P7, Third/Fourth level: S1, S2, S3, Senior phase: S4, S5, S6 (Education Scotland, n.d.-a). For each school subject, students are expected to gain specific knowledge and skills for each level about each of the following curriculum areas: expressive arts, health and wellbeing, languages, mathematics, religious and moral education, sciences, social studies, and technologies (Education Scotland, n.d.-b). For example, in maths, students in Early level are expected to develop their knowledge about 2D and 3D through investigating, describing and being creative with figures and shapes (The Scottish Government, n.d.-a).

According to Education Scotland (2012), early years (until the end of S3) is called 'a broad general education phase' (p. 1) which is supposed to equip students with a range of skills and experiences that can prepare them for the 21st century. During this phase, students are assessed based on teachers' observations, students' participation and tests. Teachers are expected to prepare a report

and share it with parents. This phase is the foundation for the future choices and career decisions students will make. Unlike in Syria, where exams decide their future educational rote, and where students have to study a huge curriculum and are only offered to choose between science or humanities in Grade 11, in Scotland students are prepared to move to S4 - S6 where they start to have options choosing courses for qualification.

CfE has two main concepts for each curriculum area: experiences (Es) and outcomes (Os) (Education Scotland, 2012, n.d.-b). The experiences describe the learning, and the outcomes describe what the child will achieve in every lesson. CfE also outlined benchmarks, which are clear statements about what the learner should know or be able to do in order to have achieved a certain level and move to the next level (Education Scotland, 2017a, 2017b, 2017e). For instance, in maths when students learn about time, one of the benchmarks for their learning in Level 1 is:

> I can use a calendar to plan and be organised for key events for myself and my class throughout the year. (The Scottish Government, n.d.-a, p. 76).

In CfE, students are supposed to acquire four capacities' which are: becoming 'successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors' (Hedge & MacKenzie, 2016, p. 1) (Figure 2.1). According to The Scottish Government (2009) "successful learners" means students who are expressive, innovative, interactive, problems-solvers, and who have knowledge and 'skills for life, and skills for work' (p. i). Another capacity is creating "confident individuals" who are self-aware, self-disciplined, determined, committed, and confident. "Responsible citizens" covers the production of students who have independent views, have respect for other societies and their issues, and are culturally insightful. The last capacity is "effective contributors", that is, students who can show a sense of leadership and initiative, and work with others. These capacities offer an image of the Scottish identity as 'inheritors of a tradition that values fairness and inclusivity, while also achieving academic excellence' (Arnott & Ozga, 2016, p. 256). Of special relevance for this thesis is the emphasis placed on the importance of understanding different beliefs and cultures as part of the "responsible citizen" capacity. A question that could be asked is how teachers could accomplish such a thing, and how parents perceive the way in which the teachers in their children's classrooms do it. As some of the interviews will show, not all the parents and children feel that there is enough engagement with their cultures for others to really learn about it.

Figure 2.1: The four capacities of CFE (Education Scotland, n.d.-c)

CfE does not prescribe in detail how and what teachers should teach. Rather, beside the Es and Os, there are seven principles for curriculum design which guide teachers in their practice (The Scottish Executive, 2004). The first principle is that students from all levels 'should find their learning challenging, engaging and motivating' (The Scottish Executive, 2004, p. 14). The second principle is that the knowledge of curriculum should have breadth. The third principle is that students should progress their learning. The fourth principle is that students should develop their thinking by deepening their understanding. The fifth principle is that students should be provided with choices and options that address their needs. It follows from the fourth and fifth principle that students should get space to develop intellectual operations such as debating, self-learning, and analysis. Also, they are encouraged to be 'autonomous choosers' (Hedge & MacKenzie, 2016, p. 4). Contrary to this, in Syria students are expected to mainly memorise with little chances to expand on such skills inside the classroom, as mentioned earlier (UNESCO, 2011). While in Syria 'student responses are usually limited to understanding and memorizing' (UNESCO, 2011, p. 9), Scottish students are expected to not provide 'a single 'answer' to debatable issues, but a range of informed responses' (Hedge & MacKenzie, 2016, p. 8).

The sixth principle is coherence, meaning that there should be links between different learning aspects. The seventh and last principle is students' understanding of the relevance between what they learn and their lives. This can be especially challenging for Scottish teachers since Scotland has recently become much more diverse than it was in the past. If teachers do not have enough knowledge about the backgrounds of, for example, Syrian students, teachers might not be able to address the educational needs for those students or to make a relevant connection between the content of curriculum and students' lives. Moreover, what the teachers consider as "good practice" might not necessarily meet the parent's expectations and children's background. So, the question here is how

teachers could ensure the implications of all these principles in a meaningful and equitable way for all students in diverse classrooms?

Having given an overview of CfE in terms of its content and general aims, I will now turn to some of the ways in which CfE has been critiqued.

2.3.2 Critique of CfE

Even though the "four capacities" described above as well as CfE's framework more generally seem promising for the new generation, CfE has been criticised for various reasons. I will describe three central forms of critique in what follows.

The first form of critique is that, although CfE and its proposed changes away from the 5-14 Curriculum sound good on paper, its actual practical implementation leaves much to be desired. The main aspect of this critique is about the shift from a focus on *knowledge* in the 5-14 Curriculum to a focus on *skills* in CfE. The framing of the "four capacities" in CfE is here perceived as 'over-simplifying … the complex relationship between skills and knowledge' (Priestley & Minty, 2013, p. 41). This critique is echoed by Convery (2017) who argues that 'CfE privileges skills over specific content' (p. 6). Priestley and Minty (2013), too, observe that there is no balance between knowledge and skills, with too strong of a focus on the latter. Moreover, Paterson (2018) mentions that one of the arguments often given by proponents for CfE is that it is 'based on the application of knowledge, not its abstract propositions' (p. 1). Giving more focus to skills could be problematic to some parents if they care about the quantity of information their children learn at schools. As will be explained in the Chapter 4, some parents who are used to a content-based curriculum felt that their children are not learning from such pedagogies.

The second form of critique is, to put it shortly, that the general outline provided by CfE is incoherent and vague. Priestley and Humes (2010) argue that the four capacities are 'general principles' (p. 353) which makes CfE lacking explicit purposes. For lacking such explicitly and conceptual clarity, Priestley and Humes (2010) describe it as 'a mystery curriculum' (p. 355), and 'ahistorical and atheoretical' (p. 358). Convery (2017) further argues that CfE's content contains 'a vague framework into which individual schools and teachers must reinsert knowledge of their choosing' (p. 2). According to this critique, CfE provides the general principles teachers should teach, yet it suffers from a lack in specific details in content. As Convery (2017) states: 'CfE does not prescribe the particular people, past events and societies that should be studies and in what order' (Convery, 2017, p. 4). This absence of details can pose a challenge between what parents hope their children will learn and what the teacher actually teaches. It also poses another challenge alluded by (Pashby & Swanson, 2016). In their argument in regard to producing 'global citizen', the authors argue that the curriculum should engage students in complex conversations that could lead to deeper understanding and actions in relation to students' responsibilities toward, for example, their nations and global crises, and the vague framework of CfE might not address such deeper understanding. On the other hand, Hedge and MacKenzie (2016) defend this vagueness by arguing that it 'leaves room

for choice, interpretation, flexibility, reflection, collective deliberation, and responsiveness to emerging needs and ideas' (p. 9). Hedge and MacKenzie (2016) also argue that the four capacities are not atheoritical, even though they acknowledge that CfE is 'a work in progress' (p. 10) which 'demands greater conceptual clarity' (p. 13). Their reason is that the aim of the four capacities is to 'reflect the values and aspirations of the nation' and not to 'provide a philosophical justification for CfE' (Hedge & MacKenzie, 2016, p. 3). A critique arises here in relation to this aim which is explored next.

The third form of critique on CfE is aimed at its inherent nationalism. In light of this, it is argued to produce a 'set of exclusions, elisions, contradictions, and silences' (Gamal & Swanson, 2017, p. 27). According to Gamal and Swanson (2017) the "four capacities" are the voice of the government within curriculum where the focus is on Scotland, which the authors consider a 'nationalistic, self-referencing and self-regarding mantra' (p. 24). Arnott and Ozga (2016) argue that the Scottish government tries to promote nationalism in CfE through two discourses; the first one is outward and the second is inward. The outward focuses on Scotland's place and competitiveness in the global economy. CfE helps prepare students to have the skills of global citizens who are equipped with the necessary knowledge to contribute to economic growth. The inward focuses on the national identity of Scotland. CfE fosters students' cultural identity and national sentiments through reading about history and narratives of Scotland. Gamal and Swanson (2017) argue that these national narratives are 'invoking nationalist sentiments of a more 'traditional and exclusionary nature' (p. 9). For example, within curriculum students read novels and narratives which formulate "Scottishness" sentiments. In other words, these narratives emphasise the homogeneity of Scotland, and they do not 'foster plural ways of belonging and being' (Gamal & Swanson, 2017, p. 14). According to the The Scottish Executive (2004), Scotland is becoming more diverse, thus, CfE was partly created to address this diversity. However, according to this critique, within these texts there is a lack a sense of the real diversity in Scotland, even though these texts imply a 'mythology of fairness' (Arnott & Ozga, 2016, p. 261). It is noted in the previous section that the Syrian curriculum experienced by the participants in this study also aimed to instil a sense of nationalism in students, a form of Arab nationalism, not Syrian nationalism in particular. However, the important thing is that both are forms of nationalism, and thus, the nationalistic aspect of the curriculum can be considered as a similarity between the curricula in Syria and Scotland since they both try to develop nationalistic ideology.

Despite all the efforts CfE tries to include students from diverse background, questions such as 'Who are we and where do we belong? If not here, then where?' (Race et al., 2022, p. 8), still arise In their defence for CfE, Hedge and MacKenzie (2016) argue that the autonomy of CfE articulates the:

> … self-governing and self-choosing capacity we have to manage areas of critical importance in our lives according to our principles, beliefs, values, aims and goals. (p. 9)

In the case of Syrian Muslim parents, who come from a more family-centred culture, how would this "self-governing" and "self-choosing" affect the family as a whole, and their relationship with their children? Moreover, what are the possible clashes, if there are any, that could occur between the teaching of "our principles, beliefs, values, aims and goals", and the teachings of the parents to their children about their values and beliefs? These are questions I hope to answer in this thesis.

With all this critique, how is CfE planned and taught? The answer is in the next section.

2.3.3 How is CfE Implemented?

As discussed, CfE, instead of prescribing in great detail how teachers should teach, provides general outlines that guide the teacher about the skills and knowledge for students. Education Scotland (2012), an agency that is part of the Scottish Government and that is responsible for the quality of Scottish education, argues that, since each school is different in terms of resources, community, and expertise, schools must have the authority to choose how to design and implement the curriculum. They do have to adhere to the general guidelines discussed above, mainly the Es and Os. Thus, what students learn in one school might not be the same in another. Indeed, Priestley and Minty (2013) consider teachers in Scottish schools 'agents of change' (p. 1) as they have the autonomy to choose the content they teach in their classes. On the other hand, and in line with some of the critiques raised above, Convery (2017) finds this autonomy (defined as a lack of prescription) problematic, in particular in history classes, because:

> … CfE views history as a skills-based discipline and does not attach much importance to the periods of history to be studied or the order in which they should be studied. (p. 4)

That might lead to a possible outcome in which students lack knowledge about specific historical eras or may acquire 'unconnected knowledge' in this regard (Convery, 2017, p. 4).

In their empirical studies, Priestley and Minty (2013) support Convery's critique by arguing that at first most teachers welcomed the autonomy they were given and the main ideas of CfE. However, a number of those teachers found the application of CfE too complex, especially those teachers who had teaching experience with the older curriculum. For example, one of the teachers found it hard to give students a role in controlling the dynamics of classroom and knowledge transmission. Moreover, teachers' educational theories might not be 'congruent' (Priestley & Minty, 2013, p. 47) with CfE's philosophies and tenants. Some teachers favour explicit transmission of knowledge whereas CfE favours implicit ones. CfE is based on 'a constructivist view of learning' (Priestley & Minty, 2013, p. 16) which is more implicit than explicitly stated. This view is problematic for those teachers who are used to teaching differently. Therefore, there is tension between the policy behind CfE and its implementation in the classroom. This is at least partly, according to this critique, because reading CfE on paper makes it easier to implement. This makes many teachers feel enthusiastic about it, but it is implicitly based on a constructivist outlook, which

those teachers who are enthusiastic about CfE on its surface level do not actually agree with. Therefore, as these authors argue, there is a need for clarity about the underpinning pillars for CfE in order to avoid teachers' confusion, misunderstanding and disengagement (Priestley & Minty, 2013; Priestley et al., 2014). Teachers in Syria do not have this kind of autonomy as there is fixed knowledge about particular curricular content they need to teach in all Syrian schools.

Convery (2017) raised another issue with CfE related to teachers' autonomy in choosing what they teach. As discussed above, even though CfE gives teachers a broad idea of the knowledge students should acquire in each stage, teachers are the ones responsible for designing the content of the syllabus. Thus 'the limits of a teacher's knowledge become the limits of her students' world' (Convery, 2017, p. 5). According to Convery (2017), CfE can produce students with 'a slimmed down curriculum' (p. 9). This might contradict what Gamal and Swanson (2017) contend that CfE has the vision to produce 'global citizens' (p. 6). According to Yates and Grumet (2011), too, education systems are grappling with the challenge of how to prepare global citizens, and how to balance that with producing the national citizen because there is decline in the 'clarity of national identities' (p. 12). Therefore, the production of global or national citizens poses a challenge to the application of CfE's vision inside classrooms.

One recommended way to apply the principles of CfE and achieving the four capacities of CfE is using active learning. CfE recommends active learning when applying it inside classrooms (Paterson, 2018; The Scottish Executive, 2007). Active learning is defined as 'learning which engages and challenges children's thinking using real-life and imaginary situations' (The Scottish Executive, 2007, p. 5), and it is expected to achieve the four capacities discussed above. Active learning is encouraged to be used because it integrates imagination and creativity which can assumably lead students to be successful self-directed learners. It is also assumed that completion of tasks makes students confident individuals. Furthermore, when teachers teach students about the world through different eyes, students can become responsible citizens who respect difference. Lastly, active learning is where students work together in groups to discuss or solve problems which makes them effective contributors.

Accordingly, staff are supposed to observe and then support learning based on the students' needs and to avoid 'dictating' (The Scottish Executive, 2007, p. 16). Teachers are also encouraged to use the experiences children bring from home and to involve parents in the children's learning, because 'parents are the first and the most influential educators of their children' (The Scottish Executive, 2007, p. 19). Thus, it can be said that CfE is mostly built on learner-centred pedagogies. Refugee parents and students might not be used to learner-centred pedagogies as will be explained in Chapter 4. This unfamiliarity with such pedagogies creates struggles and concerns.

According to Britton et al., (2019), learner-centred education (LCE) has a political discourse. In the case of Scotland, this pedagogy can be used 'to reference particular images of itself to itself and on the world stage, and to differentiate it from its larger near neighbour' (Britton et al., 2019, p.

42). The larger near neighbour is England, and this statement can be interpreted as meaning that Scotland has implemented LCE as a way to reflect its 'indigenous preferences' (Britton et al., 2019, p. 42). In this way, CfE is a way to create a Scottish nationalism that differentiates it from other nations. This observation resonates with Anderson (2006) argument of creating imagined community through curriculum, and Doherty (2018) argument regarding "curricular nationalism" as will be further explored in Chapter 3.

As there is a growing Syrian population in Scotland, there is a need to find out how CfE includes Syrian students in the curriculum, given the fact that these students come from a different culture and religions and have different backgrounds and mentalities. As a minority, those students are at more risks of being left out. Exploring minority experiences requires a theoretical framework to help understand the layers for these experiences. That framework will be built in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

The previous chapter explored the main contexts which affected the educational experiences for the participants in this study. This chapter outlines the theories which form the lens through which their experiences will be investigated. This research project is interested in the experiences of Syrian Muslim refugee in a social context of growing Islamophobia. Their experiences contribute to their ongoing identity construction. Also, I am interested in exploring the way experiences at school, with forms of pedagogy and curriculum that are vastly different from those they experienced in Syria in particular, contribute to their identity construction.

There are three main sections in this chapter. The first section focuses on the concept of identity. I start by exploring Hall's (1991, 1996, 2005) definition of identity. Then I move to other concepts which contribute to understanding the identity construction of the participants in this study, including Othering (Fanon, 1986; Said, 1978), imagined community (Anderson, 2006), and translocational positionality (Anthias, 2002). Since this thesis examines two main elements within the educational context – curriculum and pedagogy – understanding how identities are constructed in light of these two elements is particularly important. Thus, the second and third sections build theoretical frameworks of curriculum and pedagogy respectively.

3.1 Identity

To explore how identities can be constructed, Hall's conceptualisation of identity will be used (Hall, 1996, 2005). Translocational positionality will further help to understand identity construction because of its particular focus on contextual aspects of time and place (Anthias, 2002). Exploring the identity construction of Muslims in a time where Islamophobia is on the rise and many Muslims face forms of discrimination, prejudice, exclusion, and violence on a daily basis, necessitates an understanding of the concept of "Othering". Fanon's work articulates what it means to be the "Other", and the emotional and cognitive processes the Other endures (Fanon, 1986). Then, Said (1978) work on Orientalism will be explored in order to understand how Muslims have been constructed as the "Other" in the West. Through his concept of Orientalism, Said explains the historical source of stereotypes about Muslims and Arabs, how they have been portrayed in some Western media in a certain way, and why they have been portrayed in this way. Finally, Anderson's (2006) writing on imagined community will provide an outline of how the image of "us and them" is constructed within the community through the work of schools and other institutions.

Using the work of these theorists, I will argue that the way Muslims perceive themselves or are perceived by a considerable part of the non-Muslim majority in the West is constructed in relation to historical narratives (Said), imagination (Fanon, Anderson), and the formation of social settings (Hall), including schools and in light of certain times and places (Anthias).

3.1.1 Hall on Identity

Hall's (1991, 1996, 2005, 2014) concept of identity encapsulates theories of change, language, representation and difference. These theories are of relevance to this research project's theoretical framework since all the participants in this research experienced the influence of all or some of these elements due to their resettlement in a country with a different culture, religion and language. Hall (2005) argues that identity cannot be an 'accomplished fact', but that it is instead 'a production' that is 'always in process' (p. 110). Hall defines identity in the following way:

> The process of becoming rather than being: not 'who we are' or 'where we came from', so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves. (Hall, 1996, p. 4)

This definition offers two elements necessary for understanding the process of forming identities: history and language. I will discuss these elements in what follows.

The first element is history (Hall, 2005). Hall disagrees with the idea that identities are fixed and inherited because, as he argues, identities 'undergo constant transformation' because they are 'subject to the continuous play of history' (Hall, 2005, p. 225). Also, identity is not only about the past, a state of 'being', but also about the future, a state of 'becoming' (Hall, 2005, p. 225), under the effect of culture, context, and other power conditions. Even if people from the same culture have similarities in their history or tradition, this does not necessarily mean that they all think or behave the same way during different times and in different places. Historical intervention raises the question of 'what we have become' (Hall, 2005, p. 445). According to Hall (1996), looking at identity as inherited and fixed has become especially problematic due to free and forced migration in a globalised world, and he argues that it promotes essentialisation and homogenisation.

The second element in Hall's definition of identity is language (Hall, 1991a). Identity is constructed through the language we use to talk about ourselves. Hall states that 'Identity is a narrative of the self; it's the story we tell about the self in order to know who we are' (Hall, 1991a, p. 23). Also, the story we tell about the "Other" is part of building the story we tell about ourselves. Furthermore, part of the element of language is representation. Hall contends that identity is 'always constituted within, not outside, representation' (Hall, 2005, p. 222). The language used to represent a group can affect the way in which they are perceived and the way they perceive themselves. For instance, the language used today to represent people of African descent is different than the way they were represented during the time of slavery. Fanon's (1986) work (which is explained further in this chapter) reflects on how the language used to represent Black people made them feel inferior. Similarly, the language used to describe Arab Muslims during the era of oil discovery is different from the language used after the September 9th, 2001 ("9/11") attacks on the Twin Towers. Most of the oil discovery was in Arab Muslim countries such as Saudi Arabia and Iraq, thus Arab Muslims were often represented and perceived as wealthy (Said, 1997). However, after 9/11 a shift took place, after which Arab Muslims were more typically represented and perceived as potential terrorists (Poynting et al., 2004). This language led some Muslims to feel threatened and affected their

confidence (Bartlett et al., 2017; Poppitt & Frey, 2007), pride in their religious identity (Moulin-Stożek & Schirr, 2017), and mental health (Sirin & Rogers-Sirin, 2015).

For Hall, identity is 'not an essence but a positioning' (Hall, 2005, p. 226). In other words, identities are not a binary for him; rather, they are a position on a spectrum where the binary extremes occupy both ends (Hall, 1997). Understanding identity as a positionality means moving beyond essentialising or homogenising individual or collective identities; it is about looking at identity as a spectrum rather than "either this or that". Hall also contends that 'what you might call your 'self' is composed of the different positionalities or identities that you are willing to 'subject' yourself to, to be 'subjected' to' (Hall, 1997, p. 33). An individual's choices and surrounding discourses could position him or her differently on the spectrum, and such shifts are part of the identity construction process.

Hall's theory challenges other identity theories by emphasising that identity is a complex concept that cannot be essentialised, that is, treated as an essence. For instance, one of the notions Hall aims to refute is that 'identity is a "a sort of collective" one true self' (Hall, 2005, p. 223). If that were true, argues Hall, it would mean that similarities between people would give them a fixed 'frame of reference' (Hall, 2005, p. 223) that fully determines who they are. For example, the Muslim identity becomes fixed when only one point in history, such as 9/11, is referred to when defining what it means to be a Muslim. By privileging that one point when framing "Muslimness", all Muslims would *a priori* be considered potential terrorists. Rather, Hall argues that identity is not centred on any one point. And neither is it fixed; rather, it is 'decentred' (Hall, 1991a, p. 19) and fluid.

Difference is another factor for identity construction in Hall's theory. Difference is integral for identity as Hall argued that 'identities are constructed through, not outside, difference' (Hall, 1996, p. 4). According to Hall, people perceive their identities as positive when they can distinguish themselves from an Other; what they possess, the Other 'lacks' (Hall, 1996, p. 4). Hall asserts as well that we cannot know who we are without the need to differentiate ourselves from the "Other". Hall describes the 'Other' as if it is 'inside the self' (Hall, 1991a, p. 23). This description can be presented through discourse; as in the example given above, in which it is observed that the language used to describe Arab Muslims during the era of oil discovery (Said, 1997) was different than the language used after the events of 9/11.

From the above it follows that Hall's theory of identity as a decentred, dynamic process of becoming, which includes "Othering", a differentiating aspect, can help us understand the possible role played by representations in the curriculum in constructing identities. It shows that who "we" are is often constructed in relation to, but also in opposition to, who "they" are – a mechanism which might play an integral role in shaping Muslim identities inside Scottish classrooms. If Muslim students or their communities serve as the "Other" for comparative purposes, their own sense of belonging to the Scottish community will very often be negatively affected by such representations.

Hall offered another premise for his conceptualisation of identity, namely that it is 'the point of suture between the social and the psychic' (Hall, 1997, p. 33). This concept refers to the point of being in a particular position because of particular social discourse. Thus, the suturing occurs between the social context of particular discourse and practices and the production of one's position due to the processing of these practices and discourse. In simpler words, an example for the point of suture would be the point where one positions himself or herself due to one's processing of his or her own position within a particular society (psychic) which is based on who the society allows him or her to be or how the society pictures him or her (social). Hall argues that this position is temporary and not fixed since it could change due to a shift in the social discourse. How someone is positioned within any particular social practice changes based on the different ways in which relational discourses frame the individual's subjectivities. Similarly, one's perceptions of one's own self or of others can also change based on shifting contexts.

Identity can thus change due to shifting contextual positioning. Such shifts in contextual positioning include various factors. Social settings are one of these factors, and I argue that schools can be one of these social settings. If Muslim students are perceived and represented in their school with a degree of prejudice or essentialism – and as I discuss below in terms of "hidden curriculum", this often happens in covert rather than overt ways – this may very well negatively impact their identity construction process, as well as their perception of themselves and the wider Muslim community. As I will discuss in Chapter 4, research done among Muslim students in some Western countries has shown that this happens much more often than generally recognised. As discussed in Chapter 1, this is one of the reasons why I believe gaining more insight into this in the Scottish context is essential. For Muslims living in some Western countries, Islamophobia imposes a lot of challenges because they need to endure racism and prejudice from society. Schools can be one of the social structures where difference and discursive practices can be either reproduced or disrupted. Muslims students can learn about others and themselves at schools in various ways, they can position themselves or be positioned through institutional mechanisms of power, including pedagogy and curriculum.

In order to further deepen our understanding of the notion social position here discussed, the next section explores the concept of translocational positionality, a term introduced and developed by Anthias (2002). This concept focuses on the contextual and spatial positioning aspects which contribute to identity construction.

3.1.2 Translocational Positionality

Translocational positionality was developed as an approach related to intersectionality (Anthias, 2008, 2011). Therefore, before discussing translocational positionality, intersectionality is briefly explored. The concept of intersectionality was coined by Crenshaw (1994). Crenshaw argues that experiences of marginalisation should be explored by looking at different analytical categories such as gender, race, and class. This means acknowledging that different forms of oppression, such

as racism and sexism, might be present at the same time in one's life. Intersectionality emphasises the complexity of the intersections between these social categories, in order to further reflect on the relations between them and the recognition of their impact on individuals' attitudes. Intersectionality moves beyond treating any group as homogenous and tries to explore more aspects of one's life that could shape their decisions. Therefore, examining one singular analytical category is not enough to tackle the marginalisation of minorities such as the participants in this study. Translocational positionality adds more to the theorisation of intersectionality by emphasising the role of other elements (such as time) in the process of identity construction, as explored next.

Anthias (2008) concept of translocational positionality supports Hall's argument that identity is not fixed but rather a dynamic process. What Anthias adds to the theorisation of identity is the focus on the situated aspects of identity construction – in particular the 'spatial and contextual' (Anthias, 2002, p. 494) aspects. As mentioned earlier, Hall argues that identity is positional due to social contexts and change. Likewise, Anthias' translocational positionality pays attention to the importance of 'the broader social context and temporality' (Anthias, 2012, p. 108) and moves beyond essentialising and homogenising. In other words, it recognizes that time, context and place are major factors to positionalities. This concept is important for this study which tries to understand how the changes in the educational contexts, experienced by refugees in a different country than their own, ultimately contribute to new ways of adaptation to fit into their new positions. A concrete example is given in detail in Chapter 8, where restrictions were imposed at an earlier age in Scotland upon one of the participants as part of her identity as a Muslim female than if she had stayed in Syria.

Translocational positionality as a concept has three layers. The first layer is *social positioning*, which is the negotiation one experiences during social interaction. The second layer is *social position* which is the outcome one produces after the process of negotiation. Lastly is *location*, which focuses on social categories such as gender or ethnicity. One's positionality indicates their understanding of how society perceives them, along with their negotiations with the different social representations (Anthias, 2009).

The concept of translocation positionality is of relevance to this study because of its situated and relational theorisation to the production of identity. It will help explore the different positions of the participants in the different stages of their resettlement journey. This concept will offer insights into how identity negotiations positioned the participants before and after the war, during their education in Syria and in Scotland, and during their resettlement in Scottish society, including some of the social issues they encountered in that process. Anthias argued that translocational positionality:

> … recognizes that issues of exclusion, political mobilization on the basis of collective identity and narrations of belonging and otherness cannot be addressed adequately unless they are located within other constructions of difference and identity. (Anthias, 2002, p. 502)

Similar to Hall's (1996) argument around difference as a factor for identity construction, Anthias (2008) maintains that 'belonging emerges in relational terms: both in terms of the construction of we-ness - i.e., those who can stand as selves - and the construction of otherness' (p. 8). One's social positionings change due to spatial factors; therefore, belonging is not fixed. Anthias (2008) argues that belonging 'lives together' (p. 8) with another concept which is identity. However, there are distinctions between the two. Identity emphasises on 'stories about who we think we are' and belonging emphasises the 'social fabric' in which we feel included or excluded 'manifested in practices, experiences and emotions' (p. 8).

Anthias (2008) further argues that identity is a key element in discourses about refugees. Discussion about the Other's identities is not only connected to ethnic or religious markers, but also connected to other invisible aspects which leads to 'categorising desirable and undesirable persons' (p. 7). An example of those persons are refugees. Anthias (2008) describes this in the following way:

> … refugees whose 'culture' and 'ways of life' are seen to be incompatible or undesirable within Western societies, and the fear of social breakdown and unrest attached to these. (p. 7)

Creating an identity which includes or excludes specific categories of people, such as refugees, can be based on one's understanding of the "us" and "them" binary. The degree to which a person identifies with his or her surroundings or develops a sense of belonging to the community could vary based on their social positionings. How we imagine ourselves and others whom we think are similar to us or different can construct a process of essentialising. When a group considers its members superior if compared to another group, the other group becomes the reflective mirror for what the "superior" group imagines about itself. The other group then comes to stand for all the negative things that "we" are not (Hall, 1996, 2005). Such perceptions about the "Other" become "essentialised", such as when the Muslim is constructed to be "Other" and perceived as inferior and backward (Said, 1978). When the "Other" starts to internalise such perceptions, the self-image of the "Other" will be affected (Fanon, 1986). I will further explain this in the next section.

3.1.3 Fanon and the Effects of Othering

The concept of "Othering" has already been touched upon in the sections above, and I will discuss it in more depth here. Othering is a term developed to express how the colonised were represented, perceived and treated in an inferior way by the coloniser (Fanon, 1986).

Fanon (1986), in his book *Black Skin, White Mask*, reflects on his own experience of being Othered during the era of colonisation. Fanon lived in Martinique, a French colony island in the Caribbean. Fanon writes about how people reacted to his physical difference represented by his black skin which created and marked his Otherness. Fanon (1986) explained that the supposed superiority of the White coloniser placed him in the position of the inferior, and that colonisation was justified in reference to colour and power differences.

Fanon (1986) further argues, through reflection on his own experiences, that being Othered in such a way has negative consequences on the "Othered". The Othered starts to internalise the idea that he or she is inferior to the dominant group and cannot even question why and how that is. Fanon argues that Othering is associated with feelings such as those he describes in the following reflection: 'A feeling of inferiority? No, a feeling of nonexistence. Sin is Negro as virtue is white' (Fanon, 1986, p. 106). Othering results in a feeling of self-rejection, exclusion, and being 'superfluous' and 'in a shaky position' (Fanon, 1986, p. 55). Fanon asserts that when the superior and the Othered come into contact, the Othered will feel less confident and less valuable. In other words, these emotions affect one's self-esteem unconsciously and eventually inform one's identity, so difference becomes internalised. Thus, in order to be accepted, the Othered learns to wear a mask that will show his or her similarities to the oppressor. Yet, this mask hides and suppresses the identity of the oppressed.

The effects of colonisation on the Other as argued by Fanon (1986), represent the dilemma of perceiving oneself as inferior due to the way the coloniser looks at him or her. Fanon pointed to his Blackness as the reason for why he was Othered by the dominant group in a specific society. Building on the argument that physical difference is used as a justification for Othering, Muslim women wearing the Hijab or Niqab are also possible – and often actual – victims of Othering. In this regard, I argue that Othering is not limited to physical appearance but could also be based on other differences, be they cultural, national or religious. Important in all of these cases is that the Other is perceived in negative terms, that is, in their difference from the dominant group. In that way, the negative of the Othered minority serves to highlight the positive of the self of the Othering majority.

I will now discuss the Muslim "Other" further through Said's concept of "Orientalism" (Said, 1978), beginning with an outline of the history and the meaning behind that concept.

3.1.4 The Muslim "Other": Orientalism

The concept of Orientalism relates to the Othering and essentialism of those living in the Orient ("the East"), including most Muslim-majority countries, by those living in the Occident ("the West") (Said, 1978). Historically speaking, Orientalism refers to the way the West, which had colonised large parts of the East, thought about and represented that colonised part of the world. The way of thinking developed in those times, which thus has deep roots in history, still effects some of the dominant ways of thinking about the East, and about Muslims in particular, in the West today (Said, 1997). Orientalism is defined by Said as:

> … a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between "the Orient" and (most of the time) "the Occident." Thus, a very large mass of writers, among whom are poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists, and imperial administrators, have accepted the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, "mind," destiny, and so on. (Said, 1978, p. 2)

In other words, the concept of Orientalism stems from the way in which the Occident perceives itself in relations of difference to others, the Orient. Echoing the discussion of identity above, what defines the Occident in this view is understood as the positive opposite of that which defines the Orient negatively. Therefore, for those who write about the Orient, it is easy for them to describe because it means everything that falls outside of their perception of themselves. For example, the Orient has often been described as 'exotic' (Said, 1978, p. 1).

Said (1978) argues that, during colonisation and even after it, Orientalism was visible in many forms of literature, scholarly texts or art, and that it created and presented a distorted image full of imagination about the Orient. This tendency was especially influenced by Orientalists, those who studied cultures to the East of Europe and were thus believed to possess adequate knowledge about those cultures. Yet as Said shows, Orientalists' knowledge about the "Orient" was ethnocentric, as they judged others' values, traditions and lifestyles as inferior compared to their own, and presented the coloniser as the saviour of the colonised. They exaggerated in their pieces the binary between the moral "us" and the immoral Orient. For example, some of their drawings and novels depicting the Orient were full of 'sexual fantasy' (Said, 1978, p. 190) that had nothing to do with reality but was depicted as if it represented actually existing practices. Said (1978) further shows how Orientalists such as Ernest Renan, who lived in the 19th century, based their imagination on claims of rationality and science. To them, their imagination was justified and true.

Said (1978), in his concept of Orientalism, observes that it entails a process of Othering in the way described above, that is, by asserting the Other's identity in a negative way in order to allow a positive construction of one's own identity. For example, if any written or artistic pieces from the East were analysed, a simple comparison between the Orient and the West functions as a way to define "our" Occident as superior. Thus, in Orientalism, the Orient becomes important, because representing it as inferior is a means by which to establish "our" superiority in the Occident. Such representations support perceiving the Occident as developed, civilised, and modern by affirming the identity of the Orient as violent, barbaric, and undeveloped. During colonisation, this was the way in which justification was provided for the colonising powers to assign to themselves the task of civilising those they had colonised. As a result, the concept of Othering and its binary of "us" and "them" has acquired specific meanings. For instance, 'we' the West are 'rational, developed, humane, superior' (Said, 1978, p. 227). On the other hand, the Orient is represented as 'aberrant, undeveloped, inferior, eternal, uniform, and incapable of defining itself' (p. 300). Said argues that all the meanings related to the Orient in this binary are dogmatically interpreted through the lens of superiority and inferiority. For example, if there is anything to consider good in the Orient, it is assumed to be a product of the West.

In this way, Westerners' knowledge about the Orient was "essentialised", which means that Muslims and Arabs were presented as one group with 'No individuality, no personal characteristics or experiences' (p. 287). On the concept of essentialism, Said (1978) argued:

> Orientalism was the distillation of essential ideas about the Orient—its sensuality, its tendency to despotism, its aberrant mentality, its habits of inaccuracy, its backwardness—into a separate and un-challenged coherence; thus for a writer to use the word *Oriental* was a reference for the reader sufficient to identify a specific body of information about the Orient. This information seemed to be morally neutral and objectively valid; it seemed to have an epistemological status equal to that of historical chronology or geographical location. (Said, 1978, p. 205)

That is to say, the way Muslims were perceived was justified because the epistemology behind Orientalism was fixed and generalised. Said (1978) observes similarly the essentialised role of Arabs and Muslims in American movies in the 20th century where they are mainly portrayed as 'Slave trader, camel driver, moneychanger, colourful scoundrel' (p. 287). Orientalism today has partly taken on different forms than during colonial times, but its workings are still similar. Muslims and Arabs, as part of the imagined Orient, are often represented as a homogenised group which is characterised as violent and backward. Aspects of Orientalism still exists until this day. As explained in Chapter 1, negative attitudes in the form of Islamophobia are rising and affecting Muslims in different countries. They are treated as one homogenous group; one bad person or bad event represents the whole group. The theory of Othering Muslim students helps explore Orientalist constructions in the curriculum and pedagogy inside classrooms, and how such representations and differences inform identity processes of becoming, production and suturing. For this study, the focus will be on Muslim students at schools, and the possible kinds of representation – or, importantly, a lack of representation – in curriculum and pedagogy.

In Hall's, Anthias's, Said's and Fanon's discussion to their concepts, imagination seems to be an element within all these concepts. Both Said's concept of Orientalism and Fanon's concept of Othering are constructed based on an imaginative picture of who the colonisers perceive the colonised to be. Anthias (2011) argued that one's belonging to a group exists 'at an imaginary level' (p. 211). Similarly, Hall (2005) linked the identity of a particular group to 'what Benedict Anderson calls "an imagined community" (p.117)'. This concept 'imagined community' is further explore next.

3.1.6 Imagined Communities

Anderson (2006) conceptualised the nation as an 'imagined community' (p. 6) and implicated the education system, religion, politics, and civilisation in the building and sustaining of such a shared imagination. Anderson (2006) defines the nation as 'an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign' (p. 6). In this definition, there are four characteristics of a nation. The first one is its status as imagined because there is no one who can know every member of his/her nation, yet they can all feel connected and part of the same community. The second characteristic of the nation for Anderson is that it is imagined as limited: all nations have 'elastic' (Anderson, 2006, p. 7) boundaries with other nations. This means that, to be one nation, that nation's population must recognise that there are other nations as well. Nationalism will thus never aim at the construction of a nation that encompasses all of the human race. Thirdly, a nation is imagined as "sovereign" due to the emergence of nationalism during the era of Enlightenment and

the destruction of religious, hierarchical and dynastic control over communities. Nations are thus always inherently about freedom, the freedom to have a sovereign state. Finally, a nation is imagined as a community, because of the sense of 'comradeship' and 'fraternity' (Anderson, 2006, p. 6) amongst those who belong to the nation.

Drawing on his conclusions about nationalism, Anderson highlights three mechanisms through which it became possible to imagine a nation, a historical development that took place. The first one is a common language. Old languages such as Latin were replaced by new languages such as modern English and French. These new languages enabled people from the same nation, regardless of the social classes or beliefs, to read and converse in the same language. Thus, people started to feel that they all belonged to the same nation they imagined. Second, historically before the development of nations – which Andersons traces roughly back to the late 18th century in the Western hemisphere (Anderson, 2006, p. 46) – most societies were built on the idea that their organisations require 'high centres' (Anderson, 2006, p. 36), that is, monarchs to whom people should be loyal. In place of this inherently hierarchical form of loyalty, according to Anderson, nations – even despite deep forms of inequality – are built on a horizontal loyalty toward everyone who is imagined to be part of one's own nation.

The last one is 'print-capitalism' which connects people in 'profoundly new ways' (p. 36). Print-capitalism, such as newspapers and school curriculum, has a major role in forming imagined communities for many reasons. First, it connected people with others of the same language by reading about them and eventually becoming aware of them resulting in imagining all belonging to the same circle. Second, 'print-capitalism gave a new fixity to language, which in the long run helped to build that image of antiquity so central to the subjective idea of the nation' (Anderson, 2006, p. 44). That means, printed books, for instance, have made it possible to keep the language spoken in particular nation from being changed enormously. Third, it 'created languages-of-power' (Anderson, 2006, p. 45). Anderson argued that the dialects within one nation that are similar to the printed language have higher status than other dialects.

The discussion so far allows for a deeper understanding of concepts that are commonly and often unreflectively used, such as "Britishness" and "Scottishness". Anderson shows that these terms are part of imagined communities. How do these narratives of shared heritage and language accommodate migrants who come with different languages and histories? For the sake of this thesis, the focus will be on the curriculum in Scottish schools and how the narratives included in it contribute to making Syrian Muslim refugees feel part of their school and society. As explored in Chapter 2, Scottish nationalism in schools was discussed, thus, this project tries to find out to what extent there is a place for refugees and Muslims in the Scottish identity.

Any sense of "Britishness" or "Scottishness" is to have a sense of belonging to the imagined community corresponding to these notions. Anderson's concept of imagined communities highlights the multi-layered nature of being attached to a particular community or nation. That kind of

imagination can create social consequences in relation to self-identification which could lead to exclusionary practices such as 'fear and hatred of the Other' (Anderson, 2006, p. 141). Such results could occur within the educational system. As mentioned in Chapter 2, Scottish nationalism is built through schools in Scotland and Arab nationalism as built in schools in Syria. Countries try to instil their nationalist ideology through education for the sake of the 'nation-building' (Anderson, 2006, p. 113) process. For example, within the curriculum, the national anthem can be an 'echoed physical realization of the imagined community' where students sing it at the same time and might feel connected to others without knowing them' (Anderson, 2006, p. 145). Similarly, Billig (1995) highlights how the little rituals of flags and anthems in schools sustain nationalism. In pedagogy as well, American students are taught in a way which tries to make them 'remember/forget the hostilities of 1861-65 as a great 'civil' war between 'brothers' rather than between…. two sovereign nation-states' (Anderson, 2006, p. 201). Thus, both curriculum and pedagogy can create a particular sense of nationality that serves a political agenda of nation building, sometimes directly as a means of distinguishing oneself from another nation, such as in the case of Scotland that wants to distinguish itself from England.

3.1.7 Summarising the Section on Identity

After having discussed several concepts relating to the notion of identity, it now becomes possible to formulate a conclusion on how identity will be understood in this study. First, it understands identity as a process, a point of suture in which language, difference and representation play a central part (Hall, 1997). Seeing and judging difference mapped onto a specific hierarchy can result in Othering, whether the difference marked is colour (Fanon, 1967), religion or ethnicity (Said, 1978). Fanon's discussion of the concept of Othering helps us understand the dilemma refugees endure when they arrive in a new country where they could be perceived as different and inferior. Said's concept of Orientalism goes further in specifying Othering of Muslims and Arabs, and how they have been essentialised and homogenised, both in history and today. The consideration of Othering and the essentialisation and homogenisation of Muslims and Arabs, and how these might impact processes of identity construction of young refugees in their new setting, is significant for this study. Finally, Anderson's work on imagined community allows us to understand how a sense of nationalism can be created and sustained through different factors, such as government influence and media, but also education. It goes further to explore how nationalism is inculcated through a common curriculum and certain forms of pedagogy and how textual publications in the official print-language shape 'official nationalisms' (Anderson, 2006, p. 93) as will be explained the next section. These concepts are all important to this study because they provide a vocabulary with which to explore parents' and children's account of their identity negotiations in the new setting and the resources and representations made available to them. They also enable us to understand how identity can be affected by what and how students learn at schools. Understanding all these layers in identity processes allows contemplation of the effects of the different students' experiences in different

settings, particularly at schools in terms of curriculum and pedagogy, which are the focus of the next two sections respectively.

3.2 Curriculum

This section entails an exploration of the concept of curriculum. Generally put, curriculum can be seen as all the knowledge and skills provided to students within educational institutions. However, the vast literature on the subject indicates that understanding what curriculum is and what it does in practice means that this general definition has to be expanded more thoroughly. Defining curriculum will therefore be the first task of this section. This will lead to a critical assessment of curriculum in its relationship to the education of minority students, such as the participants in this study. This will also connect to themes already discussed several times above, namely nationality and identity. Bernstein (1971) argues that curriculum is what counts as valid knowledge. The knowledge included in the curriculum has the potential to represent students' nation by building a 'sense of its citizens, their diversity, religion, values and relationships' (Yates & Grumet, 2011, p. 8). Also, Anderson (2006), whose concept of imagined communities has been explored above, explains how nationalism can be promoted through curriculum. As indicated in the introduction, the question is to what extent Muslims and Muslim refugees specifically can have a place in the Scottish nationality, as well as the extent to which refugee students have a sense of 'connectedness' through 'curricular nationalism' (Doherty, 2018, p. 202) to what they learn. Before getting into that theme, after defining curriculum, Apple's concept of *hegemony in the curriculum* will first be discussed. With this concept, he shows us how curriculum can provide knowledge that can serve the dominant group, often to the detriment of minority groups (Apple, 2004).

3.2.1 Defining Curriculum

To begin, a useful distinction has been made by Aoki (1993b), who suggests that the curriculum can be divided into two kinds: planned and lived. Curriculum as a plan occurs outside the classroom where the curriculum is designed, for example, in the Department of Education or other similar governmental institutions. It is the curriculum teachers are asked to teach inside the classroom. According to Aoki (1993a), planners' 'interests, assumptions and approaches' (p. 258) are part of the planned curriculum. The second kind of curriculum is the lived curriculum, which includes teachers' and students' lived experiences and interactions at school. Aoki pays specific attention to the question whether a generalised curriculum leaves space for the uniqueness of individual students. According to Aoki (1993a), the lived curriculum does allow for teachers to understand and attend to the uniqueness of each student. However, according to him, the uniqueness' of individual students 'disappears' into the shadow when they are spoken of in the prosaically abstract language of curriculum planner' (p. 258). This is especially relevant in the case where the abstract language used in curriculum planning is inadequate to describe the individuality of minority students.

Porter and Smithson (2001) have a similar conceptual outlook as Aoki on curriculum aspects, but under a different terminology. Porter and Smithson (2001) speak of an 'intended curriculum' (p.

2), by which they mean the curriculum policy makers plan for teachers to teach. The intended curriculum is understood by them in terms of a standardised framework, which is similar to Aoki's notion of planned curriculum. Porter and Smithson (2001) also make a further distinction in terms of what they call the 'learned curriculum' (p. 3), which does not only refer to the grades of the students, but also to all kinds of contents and knowledge students acquire at school and through which teachers can figure out what areas are to be improved. This concept is similar to Aoki's lived curriculum.

A more extensive approach to defining the curriculum is taken by Kelly (2009), who defines the curriculum as 'the totality of the experiences the pupil has as a result of the provision made' (p. 8). According to Kelly (2009), there are seven dimensions to curriculum. These dimensions to curriculum can be compared to Aoki's distinction of the planned and lived curriculum, and they can further deepen that distinction. For example, as we will see, Kelly's educational and formal curriculum further deepen Aoki's notion of planned curriculum, and Kelly's hidden and perceived curriculum further deepen Aoki's notion of lived curriculum.

The first dimension of Kelly's (2009) curriculum is what he calls the *educational curriculum*. Kelly (2009) argues that the adjective "educational" is controversial because what some consider "educational" might not be the same to others. For example, some consider educational curriculum to be the curriculum that promotes values such as freedom and equality to 'provide a liberating experience' (Kelly, 2009, p. 3); others might argue for the opposites of these values.

The second dimension is what Kelly (2009) calls *total curriculum*. This is the aspect of curriculum that connects the 'knowledge-content' and the 'subjects' (Kelly, 2009, p. 4), that is, the students. In other words, the connection between what is 'offered' by the school and what is 'received' (Kelly, 2009, p. 4) by the students.

The third dimension is the *planned curriculum* as opposed to the fourth dimension which is *received curriculum*. Kelly (2009) defines these in the following way: 'the official or planned curriculum is meant what is laid down in syllabuses, prospectuses and so on; the actual or received curriculum is the reality of the pupils' experience' (p. 6). These two kinds of curriculum help distinguish a gap between 'theory and practice' (Kelly, 2009, p. 6). The author argues that the received curriculum should be given more attention than the planned curriculum, because students' knowledge and experiences inside the classroom should be the ultimate concern of the educational process. I agree with Kelly on this point and believe that his emphasis on received curriculum is important to highlight in the context of this study. I am primarily interested in what the student participants experience and learn inside the classroom, and how what they learn helps shape who they are.

The fifth and sixth dimensions located by Kelly are the *formal curriculum* and the *informal curriculum*. The former includes the activities planned within the classroom timetable. The latter includes the other activities conducted during breaks and after schools such as trips and clubs. While

the informal curriculum can also be called 'extracurricular' (Kelly, 2009, p. 7), it still falls within Kelly's definition of curriculum, since he understand the curriculum as the totality of what children experience in school.

Lastly, there is also the hidden curriculum. Kelly (2009) defines this as:

> … those things which pupils learn at school because of the way in which the work of the school is planned and organized, and through the materials provided, but which are not in themselves overtly included in the planning or even in the consciousness of those responsible for the school arrangements. (Kelly, 2009, p. 5)

Interestingly, King (2004) argues that, throughout most of history, 'the hidden curriculum was *not* hidden at all, but was instead the overt function of schools during much of their careers as institutions' (p. 46, italics original). In that period in history, the school taught overtly what is now considered a 'by-product' (Kelly, 2009, p. 5) of curriculum, such as social roles. However, due to globalisation and the diversity associated with it, there was a huge effort by educators to make changes in the 'language of social control' (Apple, 2004, p. 46). These changes tended to make this language less direct, resulting in a situation in which those things that used to be an overt part of the curriculum are still taught in schools, but are never explicitly stated as such. They have thus become a more tacit, or hidden, part of the curriculum. The concept of hidden curriculum is important for this study as a means to consider what kinds of learning are carried out inside the participants' classrooms; not just in terms of a planned curriculum, but also in terms of what is taught in between the lines, so to speak. This also includes an observation of what values are more prevailing in the community. For example, are secular ideas considered to be the only legitimate ideas at school? King (2004) continues to explain the consequences of the hidden curriculum:

> It posits a network of assumptions that, when internalized by students, establishes the boundaries of legitimacy… The fact is that these assumptions are obligatory for the students, since at no time are the assumptions articulated or questioned. By the very fact that they are tacit, that they reside not at the roof but the root of our brains, their potency as aspects of hegemony is enlarged. (King, 2004, p. 64)

The concept of hegemony evoked by King in this excerpt will be discussed in the next section. What I believe King pinpoints here is that school experiences are not only the activities formulated in the classroom schedule and in the formal curriculum or outside the classroom schedule as part of the informal curriculum. Neither are they only the result of already prepared knowledge within the syllabus, planned curriculum, nor what is perceived by the students, that is, the perceived curriculum. Rather, students' lived curriculum experiences include all the kinds of knowledge that connect students' experiences to what is offered, the total curriculum, to produce an educational curriculum that teaches students about all aspects of life and values. However, these values, whether taught explicitly through the previous kinds of curriculum or implicitly through hidden curriculum, have the potential to create issues for Muslims refugees, when they are exposed to knowledge or values which could clash with the knowledge, culture, or religion they had been accustomed to in their

country of origin. In order to further explore this, the next section will entail an explanation of the concept of hegemony in the curriculum, as understood by Apple and King.

3.2.2 Hegemony in the Curriculum

According to Apple (2004), curriculum has been 'caught up in the history of class, race, gender, and religious conflicts' (p. xix). Apple proposes that school curricula have often been used in order to serve the groups that are dominant in any of these given categories. In order to analyse this issue, he poses two questions. The first question is: 'What knowledge is of most worth?' (Apple, 2004, p. xix), and the second one is: 'Whose knowledge is of most worth?' (Apple, 2004, p. xix). He argues that in some Western countries, the knowledge that is selected for the curriculum will serve the 'hegemonic power' (Apple, 2004, p. xxiv) in both the formal curriculum and in the hidden curriculum.

The concept of "hegemonic power" is informed by Gramsci's concept of hegemony. This concept refers to how members of a society, with all their differences – whether in social class, race, economic status, gender, religion, and so forth – start to internalise the dominant group's values and ideas to the extent to where they become common sense (Apple, 2004). All values and ideas falling outside of this common sense are then considered as abnormal or even abhorrent.

Gramsci was imprisoned for 11 years under Italy's Mussolini regime because of his critique of that regime. During his time in prison, he wrote different notebooks which were later gathered in what is called 'The Prison Notebooks' (Femia, 1975). The concept of hegemony is one of the most important concepts in these notebooks. According to Gramsci, there are two ways through which one social group manifests hegemony. They first way is domination of the state which Gramsci considers as 'direct domination' (Gramsci, 1999, p. 145) represented in the jurisdictions and laws of the state. That means the state enforces a system of control on people implemented through police, army, justice system and other means. The second way is intellectual and moral leadership of the civil society (Femia, 1975). This way is represented in the acceptance and normalisation of a certain social life imposed by the dominant group. The acceptance and normalisation come out of consent rather than force. The main reason for this consent is the prestige of the dominant group, which the rest of the population is 'manipulatively persuaded to board' (Lears, 1985, p. 568). Through this direct and indirect domination, concepts of social realities are produced and diffused in a society. Gramsci observes:

> … the "spontaneous" consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is "historically" caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production. (Gramsci, 1999, p.145)

Gramsci contends that hegemony could be moral, political, social, cultural and intellectual (Gramsci, 1999; Femia, 1975). Furthermore, education is a primary means for transmitting all these kinds of hegemony. This is done through schools' social and educational practices, routines, and ideologies which could aim at controlling people's everyday experiences and interpretations.

Following Gramsci, it can be argued that schools can be used as a means to instill a particular set of beliefs serving the interest of the dominant group. Connecting this to the study at hand, Gramsci's critical perspective indicates that hegemony in the school's curriculum might lead to minority students – such as Muslim students – being perceived as inferior. This raises the important question of how Scottish identity is being constructed by dominant groups within Scottish society, and who is considered to be part of that Scottish identity. Scottish identity is closely tied to discourses of nationalism, and it is worth reiterating that nationalism is part of CfE as discussed in the previous chapter. This study will therefore discuss the nationalistic discourses of Scottish identity as developed through curriculum and explore to what extent the participants perceive themselves as part of that identity. One of the main tools used at schools to manifest hegemony is curriculum. Therefore, Apple's (2004) work is relevant to this project because it builds on Gramsci's notion of hegemony and goes to a more particular aspect of curriculum, namely the hidden curriculum, and the way it serves hegemony.

Apple argues that, since most of the knowledge students acquire at school serves the dominant group, this will colour the construction of "our" religion, culture, ethnicity, ideology or traditions. Such knowledge then also functions to constitute everyone falling outside of this "us" as Other, a process which, as explained above, can play a crucial role in the creation of a shared identity for "us". In this way, curriculum inducts students into who is "us" and who is "them", who are our "friends'" and who are not, and whose culture is legitimated and normalised and thus part of the hegemony.

Schools can be one of the places where such cultural hegemony is taken for granted, reproduced and unquestioned. In this way, ideologies are taught in schools, either explicitly in the formal curriculum, or implicitly in the hidden curriculum. Since schools process knowledge which legitimates particular cultural aspects, the kind of knowledge students acquire from school, from the curriculum in particular, is crucial in understanding the often unequal social outcomes of the school (King, 2004). Therefore, King (2004) argues that curriculum is a tool for 'social control' (p. 44). She further argues that the 'problem of educational knowledge' is not only an 'analytic', 'technical' or 'psychological' (King, 2004, p. 43) problem. It is not only about our definition of knowledge, our organisation of this knowledge, or our effort to help students learn. Rather, it involves:

> … what is considered *legitimate* knowledge (be it knowledge of the logical type of "that," "how," or "to") by specific social groups and classes, in specific institutions, at specific historical moments. (King, 2004, p. 43)

Syrian refugee families are the specific social group and class for this study. The specific institution is Scottish schools, and the historical moment is the arrival of a new group of refugees into a system that has to learn how to accommodate and support them.

In summary, Apple (2004) and King (2004) argue that hegemony in curriculum can promote specific values and ideas that serve the dominant group. One of these values is typically nationalism.

In the following discussion, I will return to the work of Anderson (2006). He makes a distinction between two kinds of nationalism and explains how they can be represented in the curriculum. This is then connected to the work of Doherty (2018), who offers the concept of "curricular nationalism".

3.2.3 Nationalism in the Curriculum

In Anderson's theory on imagined communities, already discussed above, he pays specific attention to the way in which establishing a sense of nationalism can be a part of school curricula. According to Anderson (2006), there are two kinds of nationalism: official and popular. Official nationalism can be found in the planned or formal curriculum, while popular nationalism is found in the lived or informal curriculum. Governments use the formal curriculum at schools as a tool to (re)produce official narratives about the nation. For instance, deciding what should and should not be included in history curricula presents the nation's 'biography' (Anderson, 2006, p. 204) and formative narratives. According to Yates & Grumet (2011), 'nations construct curriculum and curriculum constructs nations (p. 13). A lucid example is given in the newspapers today as I am writing this. In the news, growing attention is being paid to the global movement called "Black Lives Matter". One of the demands of this movement is teaching the history of slavery at schools, to raise awareness about the historical supremacy of European populations in order to understand the historical and present-day oppression of Blacks. On the other hand, popular nationalism can be represented in the school celebrations and other everyday expressions such as the morning anthem the students sing.

In this study I am interested in the question of whether the Scottish nationality as represented in the Scottish curriculum gives space for the identity of Muslim refugees from Syria. Therefore, I want to further the discussion of nationalism in the curriculum through a reading of Doherty (2018), who observes and analyses the possible tension created by transnational students in a national curriculum. This argument is relevant because of her emphasis on the importance of connecting different worlds for students whose worldview differs from the 'worldview constructed and legitimated in official curricular knowledge' (Doherty, 2018, p. 202). Doherty (2018) argues that the crisis of refugees is one reason that the settled history of 'curricular nationalism' (p.202) needs challenging as the national identity is taking new shape. According to Doherty (2018), 'the school curriculum has served the homogeneously imagined nation state in diverse settings' (p. 206). Diversity, on the other hand, is the biggest challenge for curricular nationalism, and curricular nationalism is in turn a challenge for transnational families. With the flow of refugees and immigrants coming to the West, the question is whether schools are making an effort to allow students to 'recognise themselves in the worldview constructed and legitimated in official curricular knowledge' (p. 202). Due to the new demographics, the failure in addressing the newcomers' knowledge and needs, eventually might lead to hegemony in the curriculum 'under the common logic of curricular nationalism' (Doherty, 2018, p. 206). Thus, the only voice represented in the curriculum risks being the voice of a 'homogeneously imagined nation state in diverse settings' (p. 206). As an alternative

to curricular nationalism, Doherty (2018) argues for a pedagogic ethic of 'connectedness' (p. 210), making inclusive links to students' lives.

This study focuses on Syria refugee's experiences with the Scottish curriculum, CfE, and will try to find out to what extent CfE allows for the establishment of such a pedagogic ethic and for students to develop a sense of connectedness, either in terms of its intention or lived reality. The study will provide insight into these aspects from both the perspective of students participating in the curriculum and of their parents.

3.2.4 Summarising the Section on Curriculum

School curriculum has a role in telling stories related to 'nation, culture and identity' (Yates & Grumet, 2011, p. 8) which eventually should prepare students to the globalized world. The question this study is interested in is whose story is represented or more valid within the Scottish curriculum from the participants' perspective.

Through the work of Apple (2004) and King (2004), the concept of hegemony in the curriculum has been explained as an issue in which the knowledge that is considered valid in the curriculum can be invalid to those groups whose sense of identity deviates from the norm. Curriculum in an increasingly diverse world needs to provide minorities with resources in which their cultural identities are maintained, represented and respected. However, according to Apple (2004), the hidden curriculum can and does serve the hegemony – in other words, it serves the perpetuation of White privilege. In relation to this, Abu El-Haj (2007) notes that 'curricular silence' (p. 310) could be one of the consequences of hegemony in curriculum. This means that the curriculum does not give a chance for enough discussion about contemporary events, such as 9/11, which can fuel Islamophobia by portraying all Muslims as being part as the perpetrators of these attacks.

Anderson (2006) has been discussed to explain how curriculum has historically served to produce a homogenous imagined community. Anderson highlights that such a community can be characterised as a horizontal kind of brotherhood with love for all who belong to the same nation. However, Doherty (2018) gives a critique of curricular nationalism, its limitations with increasingly diverse student populations, and the importance of focusing on the principle of connectedness through which all students can relate to the knowledge they learn at schools.

According to Tsolidis (2011) there are two extreme poles of how cultural identities are treated in curriculum, either presenting different cultural identities positively within the national narrative or maintaining the cultural supremacy of the majority group. This study will explore where the curriculum in several schools in Glasgow might sit on such a continuum, as observed through the eyes and experience of refugee parents and students. It is valuable to gain insight into their viewpoint, as they know what it is like to experience being Othered and how this affects their sense of belonging. Moreover, this study is interested in both the effect of curriculum and also the effect of pedagogy on refugee students' educational journeys. According to Kelly (2009), 'in all successful curriculum

development and implementation, the teacher is the crucial element' (p. 8). In light of Anthias' theory of translocational positionality, this means it is especially important for teachers to understand the turbulent context for refugee students who have not only moved from one location to an entirely different location but are also met in their schools' curricula with images of who their new country expects them to be. Thus, pedagogy is also understood to play a big role in how implementation of the curriculum is ultimately experienced by students, as explored in the next section.

3.3 Pedagogy

Alexander (2005) defines pedagogy as 'the act of teaching together with the ideas, values and collective histories which inform, shape and explain that act' (p. 92). Based on this definition, pedagogy is not only the act of teaching, but also the underlying theories, beliefs and values affecting the act of teaching. One of the main factors affecting the act of teaching is culture (Alexander, 2000; Britton et al., 2019; Pacaña et al., 2019; Thomas, 1997). The participants in this study mainly experienced two different cultures. In Syria, the prominent form of pedagogy is rote education, which is dominantly teacher-centred and less learner-centred. In Scotland, on the other hand, the prominent form of pedagogy learner-centred education (LCE). For the sake of this research, pedagogy is approached as a continuum where LCE is one end of a continuum and rote education is the other end (Schweisfurth, 2013). Two other concepts that can be placed on this continuum are framing (Bernstein, 2000) and banking education (Freire, 1970), as shown in what follows.

Pedagogy is a complex concept. My theoretical framework is a way of looking at pedagogy through a convex lens as shown in Figure 3.1. The way a convex lens works is through "converging" different rays passing through the lens and meeting at a focal point beyond the lens. Pedagogy is the focal point. In order to see this focal point, there are three rays that complement each other and converge into the lens. These rays are Schweisfurth's, Freire's and Bernstein's work on pedagogy.

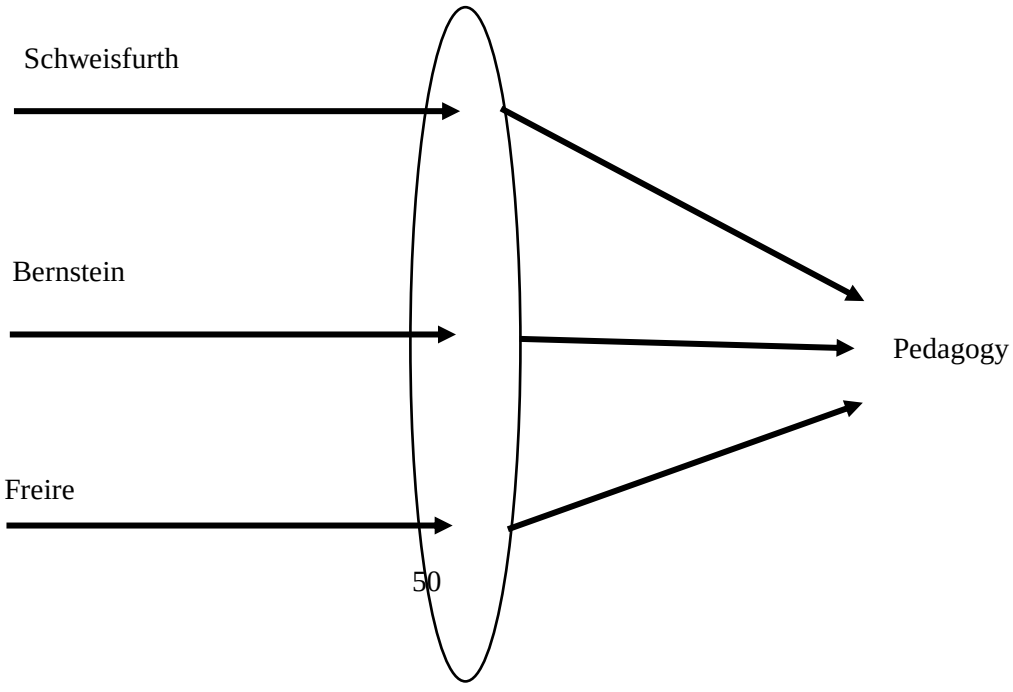


Figure 3.1: Theoretical Framework of Pedagogy.

3.3.1 Defining Pedagogy

The word pedagogy is derived from the Greek word pedagogue which referred to the person who led students to school and back to their homes (Hall, 1905; Shah & Campus, 2021). Later it started to cover different domains in the learning and teaching process at school. Scholars have offered different definitions of the word pedagogy. Some scholars have defined pedagogy specifically in relation to the act of teaching in schools (Shah & Campus, 2021). For instance, Tochon and Munby (1993) argue that 'pedagogy is concerned with our immediate image of the teaching situation' (p. 207). Similarly, Anthea Millett, as quoted in Alexander (2008) defines pedagogy simply as 'competence, excellence and failure in teaching methods' (p. 45). On the other hand, other scholars define pedagogy as a wider concept which can encompass aspects from inside and outside school. Alexander (2009) argues that understanding pedagogy is not exclusive to the classroom; rather, pedagogy 'reflects the values of the wider society' (p. 925). Moreover, Freire (1970) definition of pedagogy encompasses its political function in terms of liberating students and encouraging them to be critical thinkers. Likewise, Hinchliffe (2000) relates pedagogy to 'social, economic and political requirements which a state requires from its education system' (p. 34). Finally, Alexander (2005) defines it in the following way:

> Pedagogy is not a mere matter of teaching technique. It is a purposive cultural intervention in individual human development which is deeply saturated with the values and history of the society and community in which it is located. Pedagogy is best defined, then, as the act of teaching together with the ideas, values and collective histories which inform, shape and explain that act. (Alexander, 2005, p. 92)

This study adopts the latter definition by Alexander, because I believe it most adequately shows the multiple layers of pedagogy inside and outside the classroom. Rather than just focusing on the act of teachings, Alexander (2005) definition connects the term pedagogy with the values of the society. Corresponding to the history and culture of the community, pedagogy informs teaching alongside the practices which aim at developing human beings at school and the wider community.

3.3.2 Educational Practice as a Continuum

A distinction often made in analyses of forms of pedagogy is that between *learner-centred* and *teacher-centred* forms of pedagogy. This distinction is discussed in depth in Schweisfurth (2013), who refers to the former as learner-centred education (LCE). She contrasts LCE with less learner-centred models of education, which, she states, are mostly referred to as 'teacher-centred education' or, colloquially, 'chalk and talk' (Schweisfurth, 2013, p. 10). As the name would suggest, teachers in such pedagogies are responsible for the transmission of knowledge inside the classroom, and students are considered as learners who passively receive the knowledge transmission. Teachers

decide all aspects of the learning process, and practices usually consist of lectures and whole-class drilling.

Instead of looking at the educational practices as two different 'absolutes' (Schweisfurth, 2013, p. 19), Schweisfurth (2013) calls for an understanding of the different educational practices as a continuum, as shown in Figure 4.1. For her, educational practices usually do not fall entirely on one of the two extremes of this continuum, but rather somewhere in between. She notes that especially LCE is never practiced in its pure form at a systems level, only occasionally in isolated classrooms and schools.

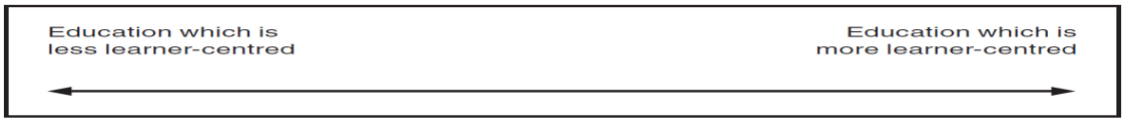


Figure 4.1: Educational practice as a continuum (Schweisfurth, 2013, p. 11).

In order to unpack the concept of educational practice as a continuum between LCE and teacher-centred pedagogies, Schweisfurth (2013) argues that other continua for aspects of pedagogical practices emerge. So, these continua all relate to the question whether a certain form of pedagogy is more LCE or more teacher-centred. The first continuum is about the techniques teachers adopt in their classrooms (Figure 4.2).

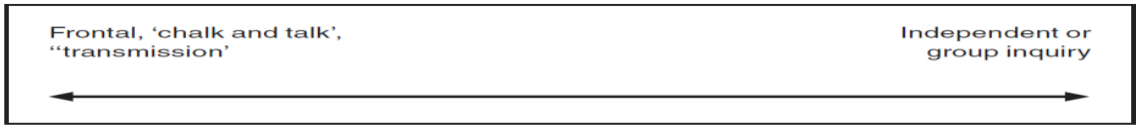


Figure 4.2: Technique as a continuum (Schweisfurth, 2013, p. 11).

The continuum of the techniques ranges from 'traditional' (Schweisfurth, 2013, p.11) teaching methods, such as lecturing, to other forms of teaching which are based on considerations for students' needs and inclusion of various activities, including discussions. Another continuum of educational practices that Schweisfurth unpacks regards the nature of knowledge teachers transmit to students (Figure 4.3).

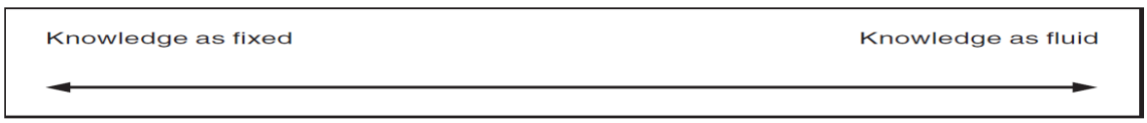


Figure 4.3: Nature of knowledge as a continuum (Schweisfurth, 2013, p. 13).

The nature of knowledge could be 'fluid' (Schweisfurth, 2013, p.13), meaning that it allows students to question and interpret the given knowledge in their own way. Or it could be fixed, in the sense that students are supposed to learn the given knowledge as unchanging and unquestionable. The influential 20th century critical pedagogue Freire (1970) was very critical of the fixed knowledge type of education, where information is poured into students' brains, even if this information is not related to students' experiences and realities. This information is poured without giving students the chance to think, contemplate, or argue about the knowledge transmitted to them. As a result, Freire argues, students' creativity will be eliminated and they will turn to 'automatons' (Freire, 1970, p. 74) because 'the student records, memorizes and repeats' (Freire, 1970, p. 71). Freire (1970) calls this pedagogical method the 'banking concept of education' (p. 72). Freire (1970) also argues that the banking pedagogy has many disadvantages. For example, it allows teachers to 'regulate the way the world "enters into" the students' (p. 76), and to 'control thinking' by depositing into students what the teachers perceive as 'true knowledge' (Freire, 1970, p. 76). The chalk and talk mode of teaching focuses on drilling, and when combined with fixed curriculum, it 'equals rote education' (Schweisfurth, 2013, p. 11).

A third continuum proposed by Schweisfurth is about the question whether learners are extrinsically or intrinsically motivated to learn. As Figure (4.4) shows, on the less learning centred end, students' motivation comes from the outside, for instance when the teacher punishes or reward the students for their work. The fear of punishment or the love of rewards is then what makes the students do the tasks assigned to them. However, on the other end, these external factors are not necessary, as students have intrinsic motivation to learn.

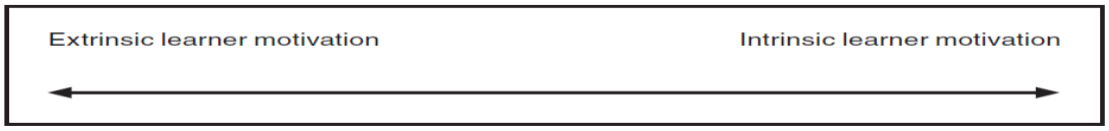


Figure 4.4: Learner motivation as a continuum (Schweisfurth, 2013, p. 11).

Another continuum is about the relationship between teachers and students (Figure 4.5). The degree of control students have inside the classroom decides whether the pedagogy is less or more learner-centred. On the less LCE end, students have no control, which means the relationship is 'authoritarian' (Schweisfurth, 2013, p. 12). However, they have total control on the other end, making the relationship 'democratic' (Schweisfurth, 2013, p. 12). Schweisfurth (2013) argues that teachers often find it difficult to find a balance in this aspect where students have freedom while maintain the order of the classroom.

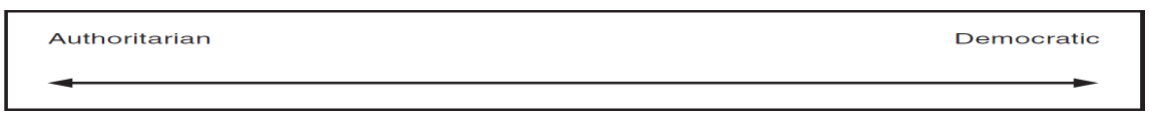


Figure 4.5: Classroom relationships as a continuum (Schweisfurth, 2013, p. 12).

The degree of control inside the classroom was also raised by Bernstein (2000) through the concept of *framing*. Framing is based on 'different forms of legitimate communication realised in any pedagogic practice' (p. 12). Bernstein (2000) defines framing as 'concerned with *how* meanings are to be put together… Framing is *who* controls *what*' (p. 12, *italics original*). In another work, Bernstein (2018) explains framing as 'the degree of control teacher and pupil possess over the selection, organization, pacing and timing of the knowledge transmitted and received in the pedagogical relationship' (p. 89). In other words, framing decides how pedagogic discourse is transmitted. Bernstein (1971) then makes the distinction between explicit 'visible pedagogy', or implicit 'invisible pedagogy' (p. 23) based on who is controlling the process of learning and teaching. Framing can be divided into weak and strong framing. According to Bernstein (2000) strong framing (F+) is when the teacher is explicitly controlling the transmission of knowledge, and the learner's control is limited. On the other hand, weak framing (F-) is when the learner is given more space and control over the pedagogic interactions.

Freire (2005) argues that in order to have what he calls a 'libertarian education' (p. 70) the relationship between teachers and students should be 'dialogical' (p. 40) and not 'narrative' (p. 71). Thus, instead of banking education, Freire (1970) suggests the concept of 'problem-posing education' (p. 79). Freire (1970) argues that this kind of education consists of addressing the teachers and the students' 'cognition' for the knowledge, and not 'transferrals' (p. 79). It is no longer the teacher who is the only source of knowledge but also the students who can be 'critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher' (Freire, 1970, p. 81). Freire (1970) distinguishes between the aim of each concept. The aim for banking education is to 'maintain the *submersion* of consciousness', whereas problem-posing education 'strives for the *emergence* of consciousness and *critical intervention* in reality' (Freire, 1970, p. 81). Through problem-posing education, students are challenged to think for themselves, which can result in a better understanding of problems and their contexts, not just an understanding of the theory behind them. Freire (1970) elaborates on the value of the problem-posing education in the following way:

> In problem-posing education, people develop their power to perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* they find themselves, they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation. (Freire, 1970, p. 83, italics original)

Thus, students are considered 'unfinished, uncompleted' beings in problem-posing education because students and education are in a continuous process of 'becoming' (Freire, 1970, p. 84). In other words, the identity of students and the way they relate to the world around them are not fixed. This resonates with Hall's (1991) concept of identity as a process of becoming. As explored in the previous chapter, education in Syria and Scotland have their differences in terms of curriculum and

pedagogy. Therefore, this research is interested in investigating how the different models of pedagogies the participants experienced in both countries – as well as the radical shift in curriculum and pedagogy they had to go through after arriving in Scotland – has shaped the identity of the participant children as students and members in the community, and the identity of their parents too. Also, a question to be asked is: what are the challenges that participant parents encountered in Scotland while trying to adapt or understand the different curriculum and pedagogies used there?

3.3.3 Summarising the Section on Pedagogy

This part summarises and concludes the pedagogical concepts that will be used for this project. There is an alignment between what Bernstein calls framing (a continuum between weak framing or F- and strong framing or F+), and Freire's concepts of dialogic or problem-posing education and banking education respectively. These four concepts could be placed on the educational practices continuum of more or less learner-centred approaches as suggested by (Schweisfurth, 2013). The participants in this research experienced education in more than one country. Pedagogies differ from one country to another; in particular if these countries differ in their economical and their political agendas. These concepts of framing and of banking education and dialogic education are relevant to this study because they reflect two different pedagogies that might reflect refugee's previous and current schooling experiences and their identity negotiations.

After reviewing the theoretical framework on this thesis, the next chapter will contain a review of the existing literature on the educational and social experiences Muslims and refugees experience in some Western countries.

Chapter 4: Literature Review

This chapter and the previous one provide an overall framework for where this thesis fits in the field of education research. The previous chapter began by constructing that framework on the basis of a number of theoretical concepts that can help us understand some of the important factors that play a role in the experience of shifting from a Syrian education to a Scottish one for Muslim refugee students. This chapter will look at empirical studies that have been conducted in this area. The chapter will help identify part of the rationale for this study. Reviewing existing literature about Muslims and refugees can guide the research in designing the study and give more insights for conducting field work. For example, reading previous literature about refugees helped me to think about other issues than the ones I had considered initially, and thus to include questions about these matters during my interviews.

The research focus of this dissertation is Muslim Syrian refugee students in Glasgow and their parents. Furthermore, the research is about students and parents' identity negotiation in relation to aspects of the Scottish curriculum and some of the pedagogies adopted at Scottish schools, and in relation to their social interaction within the society in general. Despite the attention given to Muslim refugee students in some Western countries, there is still lack of understanding to their educational needs (Guo et al., 2019; Niyozov & Pluim, 2009). The ultimate goal of this dissertation is to, hopefully, make a difference in how Muslim refugee families' schooling experiences, challenges and aspirations are perceived by their host country, and to eventually help achieve more positive educational outcomes for the students and their parents.

Participants in this study have the refugee status in the United Kingdom, they come from an Arab country, and they are affiliated to Islam. In short, they are Arab, Muslim and refugee. There is not a lot of literature focusing on this specific group. Therefore, studies focusing on either Muslims, Arabs, refugees or two of these categories, for instance Muslim refugees, are considered relevant enough to be drawn from. The chapter starts with exploring studies that have already been conducted to investigate issues Arab, refugee and/or Muslim students experience at schools. The topics discussed in these studies range from concerns of the parents after their resettlement in their host countries (Blakely 1983; Kebede, 2010; Rah et al., 2009), cultural and religious aspects affecting students' experiences (Ferfolja & Vickers, 2010; Keddie, 2012b; McBrien, 2005), and the challenges facing the students adapting to their new setting (Due et al., 2016; Harris & Marlowe, 2011). Cowen (2000) has argued that there is still a gap in understanding how pedagogy and curriculum contribute to the process of identity formation. Thus, there has been little comprehensive research which examines the effects of resettlement on the identity of Muslim refugee parents and students and how pedagogy and the curriculum interact with these – in particular in the Scottish context, which has begun welcoming Syrian refugees only quite recently, as mentioned in Chapter 2.

As mentioned earlier, there are some studies which explore the experiences of Muslim refugees in Scotland in general, and in Glasgow in particular (Sitholé et al., 2022; Meer, 2015; Strang, 2018). However, only a few of these studies are of relevance to this project. These are the studies that explore the experiences of minorities similar to the experiences of the participants in this study. In their empirical study, Sime et al. (2018) interviewed eight local services, 22 Roma parents and ten Roma children. The study concluded that engaging the parents in their children's education requires schools' attention to their cultural values. Thus, the study suggested including the parents at schools through initiatives, such as volunteering, to expand their knowledge of their children's schooling. The study also argued that Roma, as a minority in Glasgow, experience exclusion from the school and the society. Experiences of exclusion in Scotland also appear in other sectors such as the employment sector.In his mixed method study of refugees in Scotland, Mulvey (2015) conducted a survey with 262 refugees and asylum seekers, and 40 follow-up interviews. The participants in this study stressed on the way legal policies prevented them from finding work. Both of the previous studies critiqued the contradictions in UK policies by observing that some of these policies can be 'anti-discrimination policies' (Sime et al., 2018, p.329) and 'celebrate integration' (Mulvey, 2015, p. 371), whereas there are other policies that can pose barriers to integration for minority groups.

Due to the limited number of studies about Syrian Muslim refugees in the Scottish educational context, this chapter will examine studies focusing more generally on Arab and/or Muslim refugees' educational experiences in several host countries, in order to get a general idea of the shape of these experiences. The chapter also aims at reviewing existing literature related to the challenges parents might encounter in relation to their children's education. In the selection and analysis of literature, specific attention is paid to the main three aspects of this research: identity, pedagogy and curriculum.

Beside this introductory part, the chapter is divided into two sections. The first section of the chapter discusses the research evidence on some of the main issues Muslim, Arab or refugee families encounter in their country of resettlement. In the literature I discuss, these countries are all part of the very general category of "Western". Although it is important not to homogenise such a category, there are similarities between the different experiences of the participants in these different studies. The second section focuses on their experiences at school (in the case of children and young people), or in relation to the school (in the case of the parents). Throughout, the focus on identity, pedagogy and curriculum will be retained. Pedagogy and curriculum are often intertwined, so that even though they are discussed in two different sections, there will be overlap and cross-linking between the two sections.

4.1 Issues in Resettlement

As indicated above, this section discusses some of the main issues Muslim or Arab refugees or migrants more generally might encounter upon their resettlement. Though every person and every family has a different resettlement experience, the literature shows that there are several recurring motifs that play a role in the majority of people's experiences. The first motif is learning the language

of the host country for both parents and children. The second motif is Othering (a concept explored in Chapter 3) which could occur at school, in more or less subtle ways, by teachers and students and through the curriculum. The third motif will discuss concerns and challenges in communication between home and school. The fourth and last issue regards changes in family dynamics. These changes can be disruptive and relate strongly to the shifting identity roles of the members of families. Some of the important factors influencing such changes are culture of the host country and gender.

4.1.1 Language

The first aspect of the resettlement experience to be discussed is learning the language of the host country. Language plays a central role in many resettlement narratives, for several reasons. First of all, living in a country without being able to speak its majority language (or one of its majority languages) can lead, for example, to social isolation. Learning the language of the host country therefore often opens up a world of possibilities, allowing refugees 'to move beyond their adversities to acquire some form of cultural and symbolic capital that could be converted to economic capital' (Naidoo, 2009, p. 270). Language is also the main means for integration, academic achievement, and future opportunities. It should be no surprise then that lack of language skills causes stress for many refugees and disconnection from their host country (Aydin & Kaya, 2017; Harris & Marlowe, 2011; Poppitt & Frey, 2007; Sleijpen et al., 2016). Since this research focuses on both the students and their parents, the following two sections will discuss the role of language for both of them.

4.1.1.a Language for Children

Learning the national language of the host country (or the main language spoken in the region where one settles, in the case of countries that have multiple national languages) is of central importance for the educational development of young refugees, for many reasons. In what follows I will discuss two central reasons which I found to be most often mentioned in the literature. Though this overview is far from exhaustive, it will give an indication of the role played by language in the lives of young refugees.

The first reason is that lack of language skills can affect students' academic performance (Cummins et al., 2015; Harris & Marlowe, 2011; Shi & Watkinson, 2019). In a study by Harris and Marlowe (2011) interviews with ten teachers and focus groups with twenty refugee students were conducted in Australia. The teachers expressed concerns about their inability to provide sufficient support in terms of language to help students succeed. Students also complained about the way they were assessed as they were getting low grades for poor English skills, but no attention was paid to their cognitive and academic skills. One teacher acknowledged this issue and explained that no guidelines exist which can help teachers mark students with low poor language skills. This might indicate that the inequity refugee students face due to the lack of language support is a structural issue rather than one which should be ascribed to a lack of care of individual teachers, who are powerless to help due to lack of guidelines and policies. That said, the article indicates that focusing on spelling and grammar while failing to recognise the effort refugee students are making to learn

the language along with keeping up with the curriculum content, made the students in the study feel disappointed and unwilling to participate in the classroom. A similar observation was made in Khawaja and Howard (2020). After assessing the cases of three refugee students in Australia, these authors concluded that the participants performed poorly in the academic tasks given to them due to lack of language proficiency. However, the authors argue that these students' lack of English did not represent their cognitive abilities. Each of the participants showed evidence of possessing cognitive skills which, if taken into consideration and employed in their assessment, would almost certainly lead to better performance and better results.

Another factor for not contributing to classroom activities, according to Harris and Marlowe (2011), was students feeling that teachers were not expecting them to have anything to add because of their poor language skills. When students' language needs were ignored, they started to feel demotivated, and this further negatively affected the relationship between them and the teachers. In light of this, teachers in this study were critical of the enrolment policies for enrolling students without providing enough support in terms of special English training and time. Therefore, Harris and Marlowe (2011) suggest that to address refugees' language needs, governments and institutions should take into consideration bridging this gap before enrolling refugee students into the mainstream classroom. They also argue that educational policies related to refugee students' language skills should be created to guide the teachers to help and assess all the aspects of students' performance (Harris & Marlowe, 2011).

The second reason that learning a national language in the host country is important is that it can increase students' confidence and sense of belonging (Bartlett et al., 2017; Sleijpen et al., 2016). In Shi and Watkinson (2019), twenty-eight English language students were asked to fill in a questionnaire, and semi-structured interviews were conducted with one teacher and three school counsellors in the United States. The study reported that when English learners arrived in their host country, they felt that their lack of English skills affected their confidence in their academic skills and performance which eventually led to a diminished sense of belonging. Participants felt that their peers and teachers were not 'interested in them' (p. 6). In other words, the students felt they were not interesting enough for the teachers and their peers because of their inability to express themselves as expected. This shows the extent to which language can affect one's self-perception and self-esteem. The study also mentions that, because of their lack of language skills, the students had insufficient access to counselling services and extracurricular activities.

In this section, I discussed the importance of acquiring the language of the host country and how language affected students' schooling experience. This overview will help understand some of the obstacles which my participant children and young people experienced and might have shaped their identity differently from their previous setting. The next section tries to understand refugee parents' experiences in relation to the language of the host country.

4.1.1.b Language for Parents

Being involved in the schooling of their children is of great importance for most parents. A central factor in the lives of refugee parents is therefore the question to what extent they can still be involved in their children's schooling when living in a country in which they do not (yet) speak a national language. Several studies show that not knowing a national language often greatly limits refugee parents' involvement at school (Atwell et al., 2009; Bhattacharya, 2000; Blakely, 1983). Even though many parents consider their children's fluency of a host country's language as a sign of pride (Blakely, 1983), parents consider their own fluency as a major challenge for staying connected to the educational development of their children (Bhattacharya, 2000).

Blakely (1983) conducted a study on Southeast Asian refugee parents in the United States. This study was done in 1983. However, it is still as relevant today as it was then, because the role of language is a motif that plays a role in refugees' lives today just as much as it did in 1983. In that study, participants filled in a survey and then they were interviewed. The results showed that, even though the government tried to help the parents by creating an English as a Second Language programme and assigning 'special teachers' (Blakely, 1983, p. 58) to help the children in joining regular classes, parents still felt isolated because of the challenges they faced when it came to helping the children with their homework. The parents felt that assigning homework was a sign of good schooling, yet they found it difficult to help their children with the homework they were assigned by their teachers. This was for linguistic reasons, but also for academic reasons, as the parents felt that they did not possess adequate background knowledge to relate to the curriculum content of their children's schooling.

In a study by Atwell et al. (2009), the authors detail issues related to the challenges observed by Blakely. The study involved interviews with ten refugee families in Australia from different nationalities and backgrounds. According to the authors, learning the language of the host country was a major obstacle for parents' involvement in their children's schooling. It was not only a tool to communicate and facilitate their interaction with teachers, but also a tool for 'power' (Atwell et al., 2009, p. 678): the power to understand the social structure of educational and legal systems. Atwell et al. (2009) further argue that there is a relationship between language and refugees' ability to follow the norms of the host country. For example, one parent with good English felt that talking to his children and explaining their bad behaviour is the way to discipline them, which is the norm in Australia. On the other hand, a mother with no English proficiency misunderstood the reasons for her child's misbehaviour at school, which resulted in her inability to measure the size of the mistake the child made. Therefore, she sought advice from others within her community and was guided to discipline the child the way they used to by hitting the child.

Atwell et al. (2009) observation that language is a tool of power resonates with another study by Deng and Marlowe (2013). These authors conclude that a lack of language skills can diminish refugee parents' authority and confidence as they depend on their children for translation. Language

also affects parents' sense of adequacy, as there is 'role reversal' (McBrien, 2005, p.330) when the parents depend on their children to interpret and translate.

The studies reviewed show that refugee parents who cannot speak the language of their host country struggle even more than those who can speak it. It affects their ability to be as involved with their children's education as they used to be. Besides, the studies suggest that learning about the culture of the host country comes with learning more about the language of it. The studies also suggest that when the parents have limited language skills, they have limited understanding of the social norms around them. With language proficiency comes more confidence to deal with different circumstances. Yet if parents have low proficiency in their host country's language, they tend to avoid communicating in that language and depend more on their children as their interpreters.

In summary, the language of the host country is a vital element in resettlement for both the children and young people and the parents. In that respect, this thesis explores the role of learning English in the participants' new journey in Scotland, and how language affects their relationships with other social spheres, primarily at school. Also explored are how language affects their identity formation, self-perception, and adaptation in the society overall and at school in particular.

4.1.2 Othering

Othering has already been discussed in the previous chapter. It refers to a process of defining a particular category, such as "the colonised", as inferior in relation to a superior category, such as "the coloniser". Since Europeans were the main colonisers during the colonisation era, the image of the superior coloniser constituted the image for White Europeans. What defined the superior White coloniser in terms of positive traits and attributes, was the opposite of what defined the Other as inferior. Since this research focuses on Syrian Muslim refugees' experiences at school, a minority that is possibly at risk of being Othered, this section explores the literature around the Othering of Arabs, Muslims and refugees in some Western countries at schools.

4.1.2.a Othering by Peers at School

There is less sense of belonging when refugee students experience negative attitudes from their classmates through unfair judgments (Karlsson, 2019), bullying (Bartlett et al., 2017), and being alienated through the formation of an "us" and "them" narrative (Ata, 2009; Driel, 2006) which can result in making refugee students feel like 'being the other' (Isik-Ercan, 2012, p. 3026). Such attitudes affect refugee students' identities; in particular their self-esteem (Bartlett et al., 2017; Poppitt & Frey, 2007) and mental health (Sirin & Rogers-Sirin, 2015).

To better understand the role of Othering in the experience of refugee students, Edgeworth (2015) conducted in-depth interviews with two refugee students who were visibly different because they were Black in a White community. Adopting a Foucauldian theory of knowledge and power – where if one of these exists, the other necessarily exists as well – Edgeworth (2015) observes that his participant refugee students were marginalised because Whiteness was normalised. White people,

as argued by Edgeworth (2015), in this sense can have the power to decide who does or does not belong to the community. Because Whiteness was bestowed a privilege which Blackness was denied, the participants felt they were 'ignored, abused, isolated, harassed, excluded and made invisible' (Egdeworth, 2015, p. 359). The way White people in this study contested boundaries of their daily belonging can be referred to as 'micro-politics of belonging' (Karlsson, 2019, p. 431). The participant students in this study belonged to a minority. Their different appearance allowed the majority group to judge them as not part of their group.

Another example of micro-politics of belonging can be found in young students who can form a narrative of "us" and "them" (Brown et al., 2017; Revell, 2010). Brown et al. (2017) argue that children form such an "us" and "them" identification by as early as the age of five. Their research explored whether 136 American elementary students between the age of 6-11 (from different ethnicities, but mainly White American) have a sense of stereotypes against Muslims. Using three sets of pictures for three families, children showed more negatives attitudes to the family with Islamic clothing markers, such as the Hijab for women and the Kuffiyeh for men – with the notable exception of the students who had been in contact with Muslims before. Despite their lack of understanding of the word Muslim (the authors note that only 11% of the children knew that "Muslim" refers to a religion), children who had not been in contact with Muslims before still showed negative bias to the family with Islamic clothing because the family did not look like the children's 'in-group' (Brown et al., p. 78). On the basis of these observations, the authors argue that children at such age absorb 'culturally biased messages' (p. 77). One of the recommendations in the study was to teach students from young age about Islam and Muslims.

In a similar study, Revell (2010) examined 116 students between the ages of 8 and 9 to explore their perception of Islam in Kent and Medway, in the United Kingdom. Pictures from textbooks and media relating to Islam were presented to the students to incite discussion. In the findings, two thirds of the students connected Islam to war. Six percent of the students made racist comments, and the majority of these comments were about the Muslim females wearing Hijab. Similarly, in his report, Hopkins (2021) notes that the Muslim female respondents to the survey reported more prejudice against them because of their visibility as Muslims wearing the Hijab. Both (Brown et al., 2017); Revell (2010) used visuals to start discussion with the children participating in their studies. These studies all report that students from early ages can form an awareness of who belongs to "us" and who does not, and Muslims were considered a group that did not belong to "us" by some of the participants. Most of these negative attitudes were towards pictures of Muslims with Islamic clothing markers.

Such narrative of "us" and "them" also exists among older students and can affect Muslim students physically and psychologically (Bakali, 2016; Rich & Troudi, 2006; Taylor & Sidhu, 2012). Rich and Troudi (2006) conducted a study on five Arab Muslim university students in the United Kingdom. The students filled in an open-ended questionnaire and were then interviewed about the

significance of racialisation in their educational experience. The author concludes that those students were Othered, both socially and academically. This was done for political reasons such as 9/11, and for religious reasons, that is, for being Muslim. Being Othered in this way made the students' experience a 'hard time' (Rich and Troudi, 2006, p. 624). Bakali (2016) observes the same in Canada on the basis of interviews with Muslim secondary school students (five females and seven males) and six teachers. Some of the students were attacked physically and emotionally, others were called by stereotypical names such as 'Bin Laden' (Bakali, 2016, p. 93) or terms such as 'terrorists' (Bakali, 2016, p. 119). Also, in Taylor and Sidhu (2012) Muslim students were aware about being perceived as terrorists or extremist, and 22 out of the 24 students felt they were treated as suspects. Reflecting on the outcomes of these studies, it can be concluded that some Muslim students are marginalised and Othered, both inside and outside the classroom, which is a manifestation of Islamophobia.

Some Muslim students might accept discriminatory practices such as name-calling as a joke to identify themselves within the mainstream groups (Ghaffar-Kucher, 2009; Moulin-Stożek & Schirr, 2017). Jokes, in this sense, are argued to be a 'discriminatory mask' by which words such as 'Taliban' are considered 'funny' (Moulin-Stożek & Schirr, 2017, p. 587). Moulin-Stożek and Schirr (2017) argue that those students 'play with intersecting discriminatory identities and—temporally and fluidly— align themselves with them' (p. 588). The latter study focused on Muslim students in the United Kingdom and conducted interviews with fifteen students between the ages of twelve and eighteen. The study focused on two concepts: 'identification' and 'disidentification' (p. 580). In other words, the focus was on how Muslim students identify or disassociate themselves with Islam. Some of the students were affected by the Islamophobic discourse around them. For instance, two Muslim students disassociated themselves from both religion "Islam" and extremism, as if they meant the same.

Similar observations about not identifying oneself with Islam and joking as a 'micro-aggression' (Ghaffar-Kucher, 2009, p. 13) were made in a study by Ghaffar-Kucher (2009). This study, which lasted for three years in the United States, included interviews with seventeen Muslim youth and four focus group discussions with students, as well as engaging informally with 46 Muslim youth. Some of the interviewees' answers give insight to the process of identifying oneself. The author argues that even with such identity negotiation, Muslim students try to engage with the Muslim community to feel that they are 'insiders' to one group, not just 'outsiders' (Ghaffar-Kucher, 2009, p. 18) in the mainstream community. Those students are aware of their perceptions as not fully belonging to the mainstream group, but also not to the Muslim community, resulting in a feeling of being between cultures, of being neither Muslim nor American enough.

This feeling of being between cultures was also observed by Bigelow (2010), who conducted research in a different settings with four female Somali Muslims in the United States. Remarkable about Bigelow's study is her observation that Othering can be something done by a person to themselves. Bigelow (2010) saw that those students who were Othered by their peers had either fallen

victim to their own *or* their peers' 'imagined communities' (p. 3). Some of the participants in Bigelow (2010) had an imagination of the wider community in which they themselves did not belong; thus, they excluded themselves. Alternatively, those who do not consider Muslims as part of their imagined community exclude them, as in the example given above, where children in the United States do not consider Arab Muslims to be truly "American".

Being excluded – either by their peers or because of their own imagined communities – some Muslim students tend to become only friends with those who share their culture or religion to enhance their schooling experience. After conducting interviews and focus group discussions with 32 refugee students in New York, Bartlett et al. (2017) concluded that having peers from the same background and who speak their own native tongue generally helped their respondents increase their sense of belonging to school, despite the negative experiences they faced from other students. Similar findings were echoed in (Naidoo, 2009; Oikonomidoy, 2009; Sleijpen et al., 2016). Important to observe in this regard is that even though having friends from the same background seems beneficial for the participants in these studies, having only friends of the same culture can limit refugee students awareness about the culture of the host country (Poppitt & Frey, 2007). This can further lead to the perpetuation of their exclusion and marginalisation.

Muslim students can be excluded from the mainstream community by their classmates from an early age. Exclusion and micro-aggressive practices such as name calling or discriminatory jokes can lead to more anxiety and to negotiations of their belonging to their previous and current community. On the other hand, peers can help those who feel lost between cultures. 'Cross-cultural' relationships (both with teachers and peers) play a crucial role on the lives of refugee students (Fruja Amthor & Roxas, 2016, p. 155).This is especially the case because refugee students are most likely to be isolated for language-related reasons and for the tendency of the students to connect with whom they share their culture. The authors argue that occasional inclusive activities might not be enough for the children to develop an understanding about the background of the refugee; however, they might intrigue their interest.

This study will entail an exploration of the way the participants were Othered by their peers and how it affected their identity formation and their self-perception in the Scottish educational context. Beside peers, when students enrol in school, they also come in direct contact with their teachers. Therefore, the next section explores studies where Muslim, Arab or refugee students were Othered by their teachers.

4.1.2.b Othering by Teachers at School

Teachers can be a source of support for refugee students (Tadesse, 2014; Taylor & Sidhu, 2012). A good relationship between teachers and students can enhance students' performance academically (Bartlett et al., 2017; Sleijpen et al., 2016), their sense of belonging (Stebleton et al., 2014), and their trust (Niyozov & Pluim, 2009; Sleijpen et al., 2016). However, if the teachers practice microaggression, it can conversely result in students' exclusion.

For instance, in Cainkar (2008) one of the teachers pointed to a Middle Eastern student to answer questions related to Osama Bin Laden. In Bakali (2016), a student felt offended when one teacher said: 'I think we need to understand the Arab mind' (p. 89), followed by stares from students. Some teachers might misuse humour, as in the reported case where a teacher asked a Muslim student whether or not he is thinking about bombing the bridge she passes by when that student asked her about her way from school to home (Ghaffar-Kucher, 2009). Some might interpret these examples as the teachers' willingness to explain some differences between cultures, overlooking the micro-aggression contained in them.

Some teachers can be explicitly racist. In an American school, one teacher told a Muslim girl with a Hijab that she is 'a disgrace in that thing' (Abu El-Haj, 2007, p. 286). Another asked a Muslim student: 'Are you planning the next 9/11?' (Abu El-Haj, 2007, p. 302). More recently, in a Danish study, Jaffe-Walter (2019) explored what she calls 'teacher talk' (p. 285) and how teachers racialised immigrant students. She conducted semi-structured interviews with twenty Muslim and twelve White non-Muslim students, and twelve teachers, as well as observing students and teachers in the classroom. Some teachers in this study claimed that some Danish values such as 'openness' are 'challenging' for Muslim students because their ability of critical thinking is 'limited' (Jaffe-Walter, 2019, p. 291), and they do not accept Danish values. For that reason, teaching all White Danish students was considered easier. One of the teachers described Muslim students in the following way: 'They are not brought up to ask questions', unlike Danish students, who 'speak their mind' (Jaffe-Walter, 2019, p. 291). The same teacher argued that Muslim students are not 'open' to the Danish culture because they are not 'willing to embrace the culture' (Jaffe-Walter, 2019, p. 292). The author observed that this teacher was talking about openness from one side; the side where Muslim students should accept the Danish culture and did not mention the side of openness towards Muslim students and their beliefs. The teacher's 'view of openness was rooted in national norms and values' (Jaffe-Walter, 2019, p. 292). Clearly, the findings of Jaffe-Walter (2019) show how the school aims to instil a sense of nationalism in children, which includes the Othering of those who are perceived by the teacher to fall outside of the image of what it means to be a Danish citizen. The author also argued that the teachers' creation of such a negative image about Muslim students stems from their orientalist views.

Another teacher remarked, referring to Muslim students: 'They don't know their opinion. It's very hard for them to get rid of their background and say what they mean' (Jaffe-Walter, p. 293). While observing the classes, the author noticed that most of the time Islamic values or ritual would be questioned but never Danish or European values. Some of the Muslim interviewees explained that their silence stems from their belief that it was not safe for them to 'speak back to anti-Muslim discourses in the space of the class because their teachers might penalize, challenge, or belittle them' (Jaffe-Walter, 2019, p. 293). The author concluded the following:

> In the absence of reflection and training, teachers default to understanding their immigrant students through the racialized frameworks perpetuated by the media and nationalist politicians who drum up dystopic collective fears about the loss of national culture and immigrant takeover. (Jaffe-Walter, p. 297)

Similarly, Zaal (2012) explains how the pedagogy of the history teacher at a school created worry among Muslim students' parents. The teacher asked the students to write a paper about 9/11 using words such as 'terrorist' and 'Islam'. Not only that, but she also wanted them to mention how they felt about building a mosque near the 9/11 memorial. The teacher's connections between words and events can have within in aspects of the hidden curriculum where certain messages are transferred for students. In the first case, Islam and terrorist are two words which are related. The second case, having an Islamic building or feature near the 9/11 memorial is not acceptable because all Muslims are to be blamed for what happened in 9/11.

Beside resettlement challenges inside the school, there also challenges which occur at home between the parents and their children. These challenges arise due to the different culture, religion and background of the parents and the host country. As the literature shows, these challenges often affect children's identity formation, since they might be struggling with the different identifications expected from them at home and school. Some of these challenges are explained next.

4.1.3 Changes in Family Dynamics

Many studies show that family dynamics change when families move from a country to another (Miller et al., 2018; Poppitt & Frey, 2007; Sleijpen et al., 2016). This section starts by discussing how being "between cultures" affected students and parents. Then the changes in parents' authority because of cultural differences are discussed. The last dynamic explored is gender.

After reviewing twenty-six studies focusing on refugees, Sleijpen et al. (2016) found that the resettlement of refugees in a country that does not share their culture or religion, often created an intergenerational conflict (that is, a conflict between parents and their children) for the participants in the studies; especially for refugee students who arrive in the host country at an older age. Many refugee students in the studies considered it hard to be open with their parents about everything in their life because of the familial cultural rules which may collide with the culture of the host country. Being connected to two different cultures requires adjustment in the new culture while staying 'loyal' (Sleijpen et al., 2016, p. 169) to the old culture. That, again, creates a feeling of being between cultures.

The participants in a study by Poppitt and Frey (2007) also reported experiencing the feeling of being between cultures. More than half of the participants in this study (which was conducted with 20 Sudanese refugee students in Australia) felt that they were more Australian than Sudanese, yet they felt that they do not want to forget their Sudanese heritage. The participants felt in between the culture of home and the culture of school. In terms of pedagogy, the participants felt that there is a free parenting style adopted in the Australia community, unlike the authoritarian parenting style existed at home where there are more rules and less freedom. The behaviour expected from them at

home such as being quiet in front of the elderly as a sign of respect conflicted with what was expected from them at school where they were supposed to be more articulate about expressing their thoughts and feelings. According to the participants such differences in the cultural environments made them be perceived as 'crazy' (Poppitt & Frey, 2007, p. 170) at school.

Refugee parents, too, express similar feelings towards their children. Some refugee parents felt disconnection between them and their children because their children did not share what happens with them at school (Isik-Ercan, 2012). Some of the families showed concerns about their children losing their cultural and religious values as they grew up in the United States. On the other hand, some parents did not show concern (Isik-Ercan, 2012). This difference in their concerns affected how those parents identified their children. Some identified them as Burmese, American or American-Burmese. Similarly, parents in Deng and Marlowe (2013) expected their children to stay loyal to their native tongue and culture while adapting to the new culture they encounter in New Zealand. However, when the children adopted some of the values which oppose their original heritage, conflict occurred between parents and children. Living in such a state of conflict caused the children to be in the middle between integrating in the new country and maintaining their cultural heritage. Another example of such a conflict appeared in Atwell et al. (2009). Some of the parents in this study were worried their children would leave home and be independent too soon. Yet at the same time, the parents wanted their children to integrate in the community – though within limits. The question of what these limits should be brings a conflict between what the parents and the children perceive as appropriate.

Another change in family dynamics refugees might face is the 'imbalance' (Deng & Marlowe, 2013, p. 419) in parent's authority. The authors in this study argue that families might not be prepared for such a challenge. The parents in the study noted that different parenting styles between cultures such as the defining line between discipline and punishment led to parents' feeling of undermining authority and insecurity. Similarly, refugee parents in McBrien (2011), Lan (2018), and Atwell et al. (2009) expressed concerns about their ability to use corporal punishment in their new context as they felt it is not recommended to use and other tools of punishment are recommended.

Gender also is another challenging factor for family dynamics (Ajrouch, 2004; Deng & Marlowe, 2013; Miller et al., 2018; Oikonomidoy, 2009; Poppitt & Frey, 2007). Matthews (2008) discusses how, unlike the patriarchal nature in their previous setting, participant refugees in the study mentioned that in their new setting, Australia, the women are the head of the family. On the other hand, there is an argued 'antiassimilation pressure' (Ajrouch, 2004, p. 383) on Muslim females not to assimilate in the American community. During the focus group discussion, the participants talked about the double standard between males and females in their Muslim community represented in a 'gender hierarchy' (Ajrouch, 2004, p. 388) based on selective religious interpretations. Males in that sense have more freedom, this freedom was granted to them by culture and tradition not by religion.

Gender hierarchy also affected some Muslim female students from participating in school activities, such as school field trips (Chan, 2006; Weedon et al., 2013).

It is thus clear that resettlement can, and often does, create a clash between the cultural values of refugee families and the culture of the host country. This can lead to further alienation of children from their home culture and family, and it can also create a gap between children and parents. This clash greatly affects the identity formation of refugee parents and children. It also adds more pressure on the parents when raising their children in a country away of their families with different religion and norms. Such pressure would not have existed if the families stayed in their countries where the majority of people share the same values and judgments.

Now, it is important to note that two things are missing in the literature discussed so far, and to discuss how this project addresses this gap. First, the literature discusses either the social or the educational context of their participants. Second, the studies discussed focus on either the parents or the students, but not both together. In this project, I look at both the educational and the social context together to form a more complete picture about both of these contexts and how they intertwine. Moreover, I interview both the parents and the students as part of one family. By focusing on the family rather than only the parents or the students, I attend to the complex dynamics at play in the identity development of students and their parents' own shifting identity in a new country.

So far, I have discussed some issues Muslims, Arabs, and refugees might face when they resettle in a different country. I have tried to understand some of the main resettlement issues faced by these groups. In what follows, I will turn to the question of how pedagogy and curriculum could contribute to the identity formation for those families. Thus, the next two sections dig deeper into issues in pedagogy and curriculum which might be encountered after resettlement.

4.2 Issues in Pedagogy

Teachers are for an important part responsible for the way they teach because 'they have the ultimate responsibility to navigate the curriculum and instruction with their students' (Lalas, 2007, p. 19). Having a rigorous curriculum while being required to meet all students' need poses a challenge for teachers to have an inclusive atmosphere inside the classroom. Kelly (2009) argues that teachers should be aware of the implicit or explicit knowledge and practices they offer for students. This section reviews studies which discuss the education of either Muslims, Arabs or refugees, with particular focus on different aspects of pedagogy such as the engagement between students and teachers, the pedagogical tools used inside the classrooms, and the possible challenges for such engagement and for using these tools.

Different studies observed whether, and if so, how, teachers find ways to connect students' previous knowledge and background inside the classroom (Dooley, 2009; Harris et al., 2017; McGovern, 2016). Harris et al. (2017) interviewed six Muslim students and found that participants stressed the importance of engagement between the students and the teachers, in particular

concerning themes which are related to students' realities and backgrounds. Such engagement motivated the students in the study to participate in the educational process inside schools as participants felt that there was a recognition of Muslim minority students.

Using non-traditional ways of teaching, such as including plays, games and different kinds of visuals, correlates with more engagement of refugee students and more support to students' varied identities (Cummins & Early, 2011; McGovern, 2016). Cummins and Early (2011) conducted a study about different pedagogies aimed at stimulating students to express their own identity. Such pedagogies encourage refugee students to represent their backgrounds, which, the authors argue, could affirm their identity in a positive way. Cummins et al. (2015), in a similar study, state that these pedagogies affected students' identity to the point where they started to feel that they were not voiceless anymore because they were given a chance to present themselves and their cultures. However, using non-traditional pedagogical can cause conflict with parents (Bhattacharya, 2000; Tadesse et al., 2009). For example, Tadesse et al. (2009) interviewed four Sudanese parents, who all thought that teaching academic activities through 'direct instruction' is more important than playing so children can perceive their education 'seriously' (p. 353). The parents did not accept the playful approach of their children's teachers, due to its unfamiliarity, and because it contradicts their ideas about what a good pedagogy looks like. The authors suggest that to begin addressing this issue, communication between teachers and parents is important. Thus, creating links between schools and homes through hiring interpreters, teacher aids and liaison staff is beneficial for parents, students and teachers, as communication home and schools becomes easier and clearer (Taylor & Sidhu, 2012). There are two important elements in this suggestion. The first one is the link between school and home which is useful in case there was a language barrier. The second element is the communication. According to the authors, communication between home and school should not be in the form where teachers just notify parents with some information about their children's education. Instead, there should be a space for discussion between the parents and the teachers where, for instance, teachers explain to the parents why using non-traditional approaches is useful for the children.

Understanding the needs of the students can also enhance the relationship between teacher and refugee students. In Bartlett et al. (2017), refugee students praised the teachers who spent more time after the classroom to provide more academic and personal help. This study concluded that teachers can be an important source to make refugee students feel 'welcome and safe' (Bartlett et al., 2017, p. 114). One of the means to provide students with a feeling of safety is teachers' ability to understand the sensitivity of students' background which can affect their performance. On the other hand, when teachers lack that understanding, refugee students' confidence can be affected. For instance, refugee students in Harris and Marlowe (2011) did not participate in classroom discussion because they felt the teachers did not expect them to have anything to contribute to the discussions. This suggests that, in a context in which refugee children are, generally speaking, more than other children in danger of being excluded and marginalised from the imagined communities of society or even the specific

school of which they are a part, teachers can play a big role in the positive development of these children and young people's identity formation by explicitly addressing them as individuals whose contributions are important and valued. Conversely, if such forms of recognition are missing, this can contribute to educational outcomes that only worsen the divide between different groups in society. At the same time, it is crucial to note that such processes cannot be attributed only to the behaviour of individual teachers, since, as discussed throughout this thesis, there are more structural influences at play – such as on a policy level – that cannot simply be circumvented by individual teachers' choice of pedagogy.

When the teachers do not show consideration for the students' diversity and cultural differences, that might result in creating cultural misrecognition where refugee students are essentialised in terms of 'deficit' (Keddie, 2012a, p. 1295). For instance, one of the teachers in a study by Keddie (2012a) was advised to have low expectation when teaching refugee children because of their lack to the language of the host country. The author also argues that when teachers tend to ignore refugee students' experiences, such as school interruption and previous unsettlement, they will not be able to justify the children's need for more support. Teachers also might misread the children's behaviour, especially when it comes to teachers' expectations of what is considered to be appropriate behaviour, such as eye contact and straightforwardness in speaking. Refugee students in this study were expected to not look the teacher in the eye or speak bluntly with the teachers in their previous setting because such behaviours were considered rude in that setting, but in their current setting, they were expected to behave the opposite. This means that when the teacher misses a sensitivity for different forms of cultural expression, they might interpret a form behaviour which for a student is a sign of respect as disrespectful.

Furthermore, teachers are expected to instruct students and parents through the tasks' requirements and processes. Some parents and students interviewed in Khawaja and Howard (2020) mentioned that the assessment process and its purpose at their new school settings were different from their previous setting. Therefore, these differences caused a sense of unclarity and misunderstanding for the participants regarding the assessment's purpose. Thus, the authors suggest further clarification from the school staff about the assessment criteria and guidelines through enhancing the rapport between school and home. Another example of unclarity of instruction is not explaining the different process of assessing students' work such as instructing students about plagiarism. Students in Harris and Marlowe (2011) did not learn enough about plagiarism in their previous setting, therefore they got lower marks when they handed in their work to their teachers in their current setting.

To summarise this section, three issues are explored through the discussed literature. The first one is that refugee/Muslim students need extra help and support upon their first years of arrival. The second one is that teachers need to provide support to marginalised students and understand the students' backgrounds to avoid affecting their academic performance and self-image. The last one is

communication. There is a lack of communication between home and school and within the classroom itself. Refugee or Muslim parents' ideas about education could be different from what is applied in their resettlement country. Similarly, refugee/Muslim students might not be familiar with the ways of teachings in their resettlement countries. A consequence that often results from this lack of clarity is confusion.

Pedagogy is not the only focus of this study. Curriculum is another aspect of interest. The literature discussed so far focuses only on pedagogy or curriculum (as shown in the next section), but not both. By connecting these two central educational themes together in one study, I aim to show that it is important to look at both of them when we want to understand the identity construction of students in relation to their educational context. Therefore, literature discussing Muslim, Arab or refugees' experiences with curriculum in their host country is examined next.

4.3 Issues in Curriculum

To recall from Chapter 3, curriculum includes beliefs about what is or is not worth knowing, and 'it has the power to emancipate or colonize' (Goodwin, 2010, p. 2). There are 'hidden aspects' (Kelly, 2009, p. 11) of school curriculum, which can include some values or behaviours, taught directly or indirectly by teachers. The hidden curriculum can play a role in refugee students' social interaction and identity construction through learning how to negotiate with their peers and understanding their place in the host country (Naidoo, 2009). Therefore, meeting the needs of Muslim refugee students can be challenging if the curriculum neglects their previous knowledge and experiences. This section reviews literature discussing the knowledge Muslim refugee students get at school and asks what some of the possible issues are they might encounter at the new educational setting in terms of curriculum content.

One challenge regards the needs of refugees in terms of including their experiences in curricular materials which mirror their past, present and future to provide spaces of identification. Including students' diverse background can contribute to enhancing their self-confidence. According to Bartlett et al. (2017), who conducted a study in Australia with fifteen refugee children between five and 13 years old, the children's confidence and pride in their background rises when they are enabled to participate in activities related to their background. For instance, the participants felt extra-curricular activities such as projects and clubs, where they can explore their cultural identities, can help them not to give up their culture. Furthermore, participating in activities the children had enjoyed doing before coming to Australia – the example they give is planting – remind participant refugee children of their home country. This further emphasises the importance for schools to reflect on their students' identities and backgrounds.

Crawford (2017) also conducted a study in Australia. This study involved observations in three music classes and semi-structured interviews with one music teacher, other non-music teachers, refugee students coming from three Islamic countries, and the principal of the school. The case study

intended to explore the effect of the music curriculum on students' wellbeing and learning. The classes included different activities in which students expressed different aspects of their identities. For instance, the author observes that students improved their confidence by standing in front of their classmates to sing or play an instrument, and their social relations by connecting with other classmates forming new friendships. One of the activities was to build cultural awareness where students write songs about their home country or perform a traditional dance from their country along with learning more about Australian folklore. This study argues for the need of teachers to find a space where Muslim refugees can build their confidence and pride of themselves along with creating a sense of belonging. That kind of space can be created in the music class, for instance when students learn a new song by which they improve their language, or by giving them the space to sing a song from their own culture.

Another aspect of students' backgrounds that has to be taken into consideration in the context of this thesis within curriculum is their religion. According to Woolley (2017), the majority of participant teachers in their study conducted in the United Kingdom considered Islam to be one of the most controversial issues, and they considered students' religion as one of the factors which affect the sensitivity of the topic in the classroom. Moreover, Haque (2001) reports that most of the 156 teachers and 24 students who filled in a questionnaire in Australia did not have enough knowledge about Islam and had a lot of misconception about Muslims. Similar results are reported by Hussein (2009), who had 1054 teachers in the United States complete an online questionnaire, and who found that although many of them expressed a willingness to teach Islam for instruction purposes, they often also felt that they did not have enough knowledge about Islam to teach about it.

Discussion of Islam can also be one-sided (Niyozov & Pluim, 2009). For example, ethnocentric curriculums tend to ignore Muslim contributions to science and other aspects yet focus on negatives of the history of Islam (Niyozov & Pluim, 2009). Therefore, Niyozov and Pluim (2009) recommend that teachers should be provided with materials to understand the layers of Islam. The authors warn of providing materials which either idealise or demonise Islam. Therefore, such inability should be met by a new kind of education about the pedagogies teachers need, as well as by revising the content of the curriculum regarding Islam.

On parents' perspective, Weedon et al. (2013) conducted a project focuses on Muslims in England and Scotland. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 38 families. The paper recognises that Muslims are not a homogenous group and there are 'blurring boundaries of culture and religion' (Weedon et al., 2013, p. 10), and their sample of respondents was diverse. Participants come from different Islamic countries such as Pakistan, Iraq, Malaysia, Iran and others. Regarding curriculum at school, parents were welcoming to teaching their children about different religions at school; only a few parents were more critical, and they withdrew their children from religious activities such as church visits. Families also agreed that there is lack of understanding about Islam among teachers which can cause confusion inside the classroom. Parents in this research had different

views about Islamic school. Families favoured it because it is in line with the religious identity they want for their children. Others opposed it because they felt such schools isolate their children, and they felt that it is their own responsibly to teach their children about the religion, and not that of the school.

Sex education is another challenge within curriculum which Muslim parents often raise in studies that ask them about their views on the curriculum (Blakely, 1983; Niyozov & Pluim, 2009; Sanjakdar, 2009; Weedon et al., 2013). In Weedon et al. (2013) parents considered sex education 'culturally sensitive' (p. 9) which created a conflict with the parents' values. Even though some families felt it is important for their children to be educated about matters related to sex, others felt it is not needed because in Islam sex is only allowed after marriage.

In their examination of the best way to teach Muslim students about sex at an Islamic college in Australia, Sanjakdar (2009) interviewed teachers at that college to examine the way they deal with teaching this class to Muslim students. Teachers found themselves stuck between policies and students' cultural understanding of sexual health. Even though both conservative and liberal participant parents realise the importance for their children to understand their sexual development, the way it is taught and by whom remains an issue for them. According to the author, learning about sexual health is not taboo in Islam as teaching about sex is mentioned in both Quran and Hadith. However, the conflict in the sex education class is when it goes beyond the modesty norms prescribed for the Muslim students participating in the study, which lead the author to suggest separating girls and boys for that class. Some content of the sexual health curriculum such as homosexuality and sex before marriage are believed to be sinful by many Muslims based on verses from the Quran. Another issue for Muslim parents in the curriculum is the 'choice and preference' (Sanjakdar, 2009, p. 266) given to the students in choosing their lifestyle and sexuality which parents do not accept unless it is allowed in Islamic laws.

Curriculum can be a tool for social justice and equity for refugee, Muslim and Arab students by recognising and embracing diversity and accommodating diverse perspectives so children can feel that they belong and can contribute. Their parents' hopes for their children's education and the curriculum content should be taken into consideration.

There has been limited literature which investigates how curriculum and pedagogy contribute to identity negotiation for Muslim, Arab and/or refugee families (Cowen, 2000). This research project investigates this gap by investigating what resettlement issues Syrian Muslim refugees experienced in Scotland. Importantly, I do this by interviewing both parents and students, and by looking not only at the educational setting but also the social one, to address two other gaps in the existing literature. To investigate this research problem, it is necessary to use a methodological approach which could help to find an answer for these gaps and have a deeper understating of the participants' experiences. Methodology is explored in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Methodology

This chapter addresses the methodology and methods applied to conduct this research. First, I describe the paradigm underpinning this research and the way it aligns with the theoretical framework. In the next section I introduce the research design, and the justification for choosing qualitative research. After that, the methods used in the research are presented. Then, on the topic of data analysis, I present the reasons for choosing thematic analysis and the way I approached it in my research. Finally, questions of validity and ethical issues are discussed.

5.1 Research Paradigm, Ontology, and Epistemology

The paradigm informing this research is a constructivist one. Before getting into a discussion of what I believe this means, let me shortly explain what I mean by paradigm. Informed by Punch and Oancea (2014), in my understanding, a paradigm is a set of assumptions which represent a view about the reality (ontology), how it is understood (epistemology), and the methods used to understand it. Punch and Oancea (2014) propose that paradigms entail:

> … the assumptions about the nature of reality being studied, assumptions about what constitutes knowledge of reality, and assumptions about what therefore are appropriate ways (or methods) of building knowledge of that reality. (Punch & Oancea, 2014, p. 16)

Questions of ontology focus on the nature of "being" or what constitutes reality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018b). Epistemology focuses on questions of knowledge, such as what knowledge is and what justifies true knowledge. Crotty (1998) defines epistemology as: 'understanding of what is entailed in knowing, that is, how we know what we know' (p. 8). Since it is the theory of knowledge, it tries to understand and explain how one gets his or her knowledge and what the meanings are behind this knowledge (Crotty, 1998).

Ontologically speaking, this research has some major elements such as identity, pedagogy and curriculum. In this chapter, I argue that the "reality" of these elements is not fixed to one truth or meaning. Identity is not constructed outside the mind, neither is it merely a copy of already existing knowledge. Rather, it is constructed through one's interaction with the world and others in a dynamic process where social, political and economic factors give shape to one's identity. As Berger and Luckmann (1991) put it: 'Identity remains unintelligible unless it is located in a world' (p. 159). Moreover, students and the nature of pedagogy and curriculum are in constant changes; we can therefore not assume that they have a fixed reality or meaning across different times and places or to different people.

Epistemologically speaking, this research is built on understanding the participants' knowledge through the different experiences they lived before and after resettlement in Scotland. It also explores the way their knowledge and experiences contributed to their identity construction, or

their way of becoming who they are by the time of my interview with them. Stemming from the stance that knowledge is constructed and not innate, this research project uses a constructivist paradigm because its assumptions entail the ontological and epistemological stances taken in this research. I will explore this further in what follows.

5.1.1 Constructivism

According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), the ontological assumption of constructivism is that realities are 'multiple' and 'socially and experiencedly based' (p. 110) since it emphasises the knowledge of individuals based on their experiences and interactions with the world in which they live. Crotty (1998) further defines constructivism as:

> … the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context. (Crotty, 1998, p. 42)

Crotty (1998) emphasises the validations and worthiness of one's unique experiences and how the interpretations of these experiences under different contexts could create different realities. Similarly, Berger and Luckmann (1991) contend that the distinctiveness of one's knowledge is based on interpretation, which can differ from one person to the next according to the 'concrete vested interests' (p. 141). In other words, constructivism takes an anti-essentialist and subjective stance which places the participants in the study, including their experiences, interpretations, and interactions, at the heart of knowledge production.

Looking for different realities through actors' meanings fits well with Hall's concept of identity as a process. As Hall explains, identity 'undergo[es] constant transformation' (Hall, 2005, p. 225). These transformations mean that one's identity is always changing due to 'discursive practices' (Hall, 1996, p. 6) and that it cannot be understood as a kind of 'one true self' (Hall, 2005, p. 223). Rather, they produce different contingent selves with different meaning and realities. The concept of "Othering", and the "Muslim Other" could be considered as layers to the realities and meanings contributing to the construction of one's identity. Related to Hall's notion of identity, in Freire's (1970) notion of "problem-posing education", students are considered to be 'unfinished, uncompleted' because students (as well as "education" itself) are in a continuous process of 'becoming' (p. 84). Moreover, Apple (2004) argued that the epistemology of education is not fixed, due to different challenges. These challenges call for new educational ameliorations on several important layers, including 'the hopes, dreams, fears, and realities—the very lives—of millions of children, parents, and teachers' (p. xix-xx). Hence, both pedagogy and curriculum change and are not fixed, and the way they are perceived and interpreted can differ from one person to the next, and in different ways in different contexts.

I believe that, in light of what I have discussed here, it is important to acknowledge that as a researcher I cannot separate my own beliefs and experiences from this research project. I also

recognise that during the interviews and through my data analysis, I have co-constructed part of the knowledge in this study. Constructivism views research, too, as an interactional process: 'the "findings" are literally created as the investigation proceeds' (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 111). Thus, as a result of the interaction between the researcher and the participants, analysing the data is mainly an interpretation by the researcher of the participant's construction of knowledge and realities.

To sum up, for the purpose of this study, the paradigm of constructivism informs the ontological understanding of the nature of identity, pedagogy and curriculum. The three are perceived to be contingent and socially constructed, and they are considered to shift and change due to the discourse through which one's reality is being expressed. So, in order to "know" the meaning or the sense of these realities, we need to listen to how people explain them, engage with them and get them to share the sense they make of a situation. To achieve that, qualitative interviews will be used for this research, as will be explained in the next section.

5.2 Research Design

Qualitative Research is adopted in this research because the aim is to look for meanings within the lives and experiences of the participants, and to therefore draw insights from the way they describe their feelings, interpretations, and previous and current beliefs (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018a). This approach is considered to be the most adequate for seeking both 'breadth' and 'depth' (Patton, 2015, p. 470). According to Patton (2015), breadth can be achieved through looking at 'a narrow range of experiences for a larger number of people or a broader range of experiences for a smaller number of people' (p. 227). In this research I am doing the second of these two: a relatively small number of people, 12 families, is interviewed but they are asked to talk about a wide variety of experiences. In this way, there is quite literally a search for quality rather than quantity, since my aim is to construct knowledge about the experiences and meanings of a particular group of Syrian Muslim refugees in Scotland. Breadth, in this sense, does not mean universally valid insight into the experiences of all Syrian Muslim refugees in Scotland (though this does not mean that the insights gained during the process of co-construction of knowledge in the interaction between researcher and respondents cannot give any insight into the experiences of Syrian Muslim refugees in Scotland more generally). In terms of depth, qualitative research helps generate detailed and deep descriptions of a specific phenomenon. The value of that depth is that, besides giving the participant the chance to represent his or her personal experience, the meaning they give to those experiences and the way they construct their world, the reader will form an understanding about the experiences of the participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018a). This interpretation gives voice to both the participants and the researchers (Patton, 2015) – though a bit more can be said about this, which I will do below.

This study does not aim at assessing the pedagogy and the curriculum in participants' current or previous setting. Nor does it aim at judging the participants' identity negotiations. Rather, it aims at giving the participants a chance to present the details of their experiences and ideas during the interview. I also employed qualitative research in order to better understand the challenges facing

the families before and after resettlement, in particular their identity construction, and how some aspects of curriculum and pedagogy contribute to that construction.

A further reason for me to use qualitative research, already indicated above, is that it gives me the ability to interpret the families' experiences and the way they see their own world but without losing their voice. Moreover, qualitative research gives not only the participants, but also the researcher a voice, through his or her interpretation. Two of the challenges for the researcher's voice are reflexivity and subjectivity. Roulston (2010) defines researcher reflexivity in the following way: a 'researcher's ability to be able to self-consciously refer to him or herself in relation to the production of knowledge about research topics' (p. 116). The researcher in this sense has 'a self-reflection' (Hays & Singh, 2011, p. 144) in the research process. In other words, qualitative research explicitly embraces an element of subjectivity in the research process. Hays and Singh (2011) define subjectivity as the researcher' positions within the whole project and in the production of data. Subjectivity is a way to understand the phenomena without distancing the researcher's knowledge and previous experiences.

For this research, I will take the approach which offers a connection between the researcher and the participants. Since I myself am a Muslim student in the West, as well as a teacher, I believe that reflexivity and subjectivity are assets in my interaction with the participants and my way of approaching data analysis – as mentioned earlier in my discussion of the constructivist epistemological stance. Thus, as a researcher for this project, I am able to position myself as both student and teacher at the same time, which helped me to give detailed description of the experiences of the families along with my own interpretation as a researcher, previous student, and a teacher. Moreover, sharing a significant part of the religion and culture of the participants allowed me to understand what they are saying; not only because we speak the same language but also because we share a similar world. In some way, my PhD works as a kind of translation between the Scottish world and the world of the respondents, and I am the translator. I will explain more about my positionality next.

5.2.1 Researcher Positionality

Researcher positionality refers to the researchers' involvement with the participants and the research context (Ganga & Scott, 2006; Manohar et al., 2017; Reyes, 2020). This involvement can be affected by different factors, mainly the researcher's background and personal characteristics. These factors have a role in shaping the relationship between the researcher and the participants and shaping the research process itself. This section will explore insider and outsider positionality and a mixed positionality of both. According to Manohar et al.,

> … cultural outsiders refer to the outsider researcher who enters a local area to conduct research. They hold different views, values, beliefs, and knowledge from the community where they undertake the research. (Manohar et al., p. 9)

Having an insider positionality means that the researcher shares characteristics with the participants such as gender, race, or religion, which then creates a sense of familiarity between the researcher and the participants (Manohar et al., 2017; Ganga & Scott, 2006; Holmes, 2020). Reyes (2020) calls these characteristics 'visible tools' (p. 228), and adds that familiarity can also stem from 'invisible tools' (Reyes, 2020, p.229) such as the knowledge of the participants' values and cultural norms. Another invisible tool is sharing some stories from the researcher's life to relate to the participants' experiences and encourage them to share, which is further discussed later in this chapter. Speaking the language of the participants positioned me as an insider (Ganga & Scott, 2006; Holmes, 2020); not only in speaking but also in understanding cultural references (Ganga & Scott, 2006), and non-verbal cues (Holmes, 2020). In Merriam et al., (2001), the researchers conducted interviews in their native languages and presented the interview transcript in English for other researchers who did not speak any of these native languages. Thus, some cultural nuances were translated 'awkwardly' (Merriam et al., 2001, p. 451). To avoid this, I use word-for-word translation to translate idioms and other cultural expressions and then explain the meaning of them between brackets, as will be explored later in this chapter.

Both positionalities (insider and outsider) have advantages as well as disadvantages (Merriam et al., 2001; Holmes, 2020). One advantage is that the familiarity between the insider researcher and the participants allows the researcher to ask meaningful questions which might not come to an outsiders' mind due to their lack of knowledge to the participants' culture. The insider positionality also helps the participants' share 'honest answers' (Holmes, 2020, p. 6). For example, in this research the participants might have felt less comfortable criticising some of the values and cultural norms in Scotland if I had been Scottish. However, being an Arab Muslim, they knew that I could understand their stance about some Scottish norms which contradict their religious beliefs.

Being an insider also has its disadvantages. First, an insider researcher might not feel comfortable talking about taboo topics in the culture. In this research, sex education was one sensitive topic the participants shared with me after I asked them about any concerns they have regarding the curriculum in Scotland. Even though I knew this class might be an issue, I did not ask them directly about it in case they were uncomfortable talking about it. However, once they talked about it or maybe gave hints about this class, I managed to ask them questions, so they did share their feelings about it. Another disadvantage is that insiders might think 'they possess more or better insider knowledge than they do' (Holmes, 2020, p. 6). I chose semi-structed interviews to avoid falling in this mistake. That means I did not just ask the participants the pre-prepared questions (Appendix 1 and 3), but also I asked them follow-up questions for their answers. This way helped me dig more into the meanings they wish to convey and their experiences to avoid confusion and assumptions. Also, the participants might feel more comfortable sharing sensitive information with an outsider whom they might not meet and share direct or indirect contact with. The ethics forms I filled for this research and explaining the confidentiality of the research helped the participants feel more

comfortable with me. Also, the fact that I am not Syrian played a role in making me an outsider from the participants' social circles.

Holmes (2020) suggests that a researcher could have 'multiple positions as an insider or outsider' (p. 8). These positions can 'shift' (Merriam et al., p. 411). That means researcher positionality is not a dichotomy; either this or that. A researcher could be an insider and an outsider at the same time. In this research, participants considered me an insider because we share the same race and religion. The female participants also considered me an insider because we share the same gender. However, there are other positions which were more complicated such as age. Ganga & Scott (2006) and Manohar et al., (2017) argue that age plays a role in the researcher positionality. When the researcher is close to the age of the participants, it is easier to find links to share. Also, cultural identity plays the same role. Sharing a similar culture allows for more space to open up for the researcher. In this research, my age is close to the parents' age, which made it easier to start a conversation with them than with the children. Knowing age could be an obstacle to start a conversation with the children, I decided to create an activity to help them feel more comfortable talking to me as will be explained later in this chapter. Furthermore, participants' social stratification placed me as an outsider. I am not Syrian, which means I am not part of their social stratification, which is based, for example, on geographical region. I was an outsider in this sense. However, that actually seems to have created a sense of trust in some interviews. For example, one of the participants told me that she comes from a village and not a city and is thereby perceived as if she comes from a lower class. She continued to say that she is annoyed with the way other Syrians judge her. She feels sad that even in diaspora, some Syrians still try to carry these divisions with them. She shared this because she knows that I am not part of the Syrian community and not aware of these divisions.

Also, my gender placed me as both an insider and an outsider. For the families I interviewed at home, the parents felt more comfortable leaving me alone with their daughters. When I interviewed the sons, the parents were sitting with us. This could be because of culture and religion. I did not ask the parents to leave me alone with the children because that would have been considered culturally inappropriate.

My incorporation of my knowledge to the data investigation and interpretation can add a different perspective to data analysis. To explain what I mean, I will follow Witzel and Reiter's (2012) proposal that a researchers' knowledge includes his or her prior knowledge of everyday knowledge, contextual knowledge, and research knowledge. Everyday knowledge includes the researchers' values, thoughts, beliefs and emotions, which is important for situating the researcher within the whole project. My research can be considered sensitive for it tries to capture the experiences of refugees who have fled war and settled in Scotland. My own background as a refugee and as a war survivor, helped me show understanding and empathy. Contextual knowledge refers to having basic background knowledge about the interviewee to help communicate with him or her. My participants

were all Syrian refugees who spoke Arabic, and as a native Arabic speaker I was able to show my participants that we belong to the same context of the same language. Moreover, coming for a similar cultural and religious background created an atmosphere of familiarity. The third kind of knowledge is research knowledge. This knowledge is gathered by reading and understanding the available literature about the main ideas of the project, which I believe I provided in the previous chapters where I explained empirical studies and theoretical work related to my topic.

Ultimately, understanding people's experiences in terms of the meaning they ascribe to those experiences helps us understand their world in which they live in their terms. Through interviewing Muslims students' parents, rich descriptions of their lived experiences and interaction will be constructed with detailed illustrations and analyses of their experiences in order to understand how they negotiate their identities. From the literature review, it is evident that listening carefully to participants can give profound insight into their experiences and the sense they make of them (Bakali, 2016; Hopkins, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1995). This would not be possible with quantitative methods, such as surveys. Thus, I believe qualitative methods are the most appropriate methods for presenting my participants' voice as best as possible.

The question that now arises is: who are the participants in this project? The answer is explained next.

5.3 Sampling

I would like to mention that my initial project was designed such that I would go to three schools in Glasgow, where I would conduct interviews with teachers, students and parents. Moreover, my plan was to observe classrooms. Unfortunately, the Glasgow City Council rejected my application to go to schools. Therefore, I redesigned my project to have the parents and the students as my participants to avoid going to schools and risking having my Glasgow City Council application rejected again. Due to this rejection, I lost the chance to observe how teachers applied the curriculum and the teaching methods they used. On the other hand, focusing on parents and their children allowed for their views to be given more attention.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, parents have an important role in their children's education. Also, in Chapter 2, the New Scots project highlighted the importance of including of parents in their children's education. The report emphasised that students and their parents are often in need of support to clarify their rights and responsibilities (The Scottish Government, 2022a). Therefore, including the parents as part of the sample was as essential as including students.

To gather the sample for my new research, I first formulated a main criterion: the participants should be a family unit consisting of at least one parent, and a child or children who go to school in Scotland and have also gone to school in a different country before Scotland preferably in Syria, and who are of school age. They also needed to be Muslims. In order to recruit participants meeting these criteria, I used the snowballing method, where those who already agreed to participate provide names

of further possible participants. I also contacted several NGOs and visited several community organisations that work with refugees to ask for help recruiting participants. However, I could not recruit any one through the latter way because these organisations get a lot of requests from students and could not fulfil that request for all of them. Meanwhile, I asked some Arab friends for help in approaching Syrian families who have children at schools in Glasgow but who also had experience in schools elsewhere. Some Syrians approached me through phone and others were approached by me. I could not interview all those who approached me because their children had only ever gone to school in Scotland, or because their children were already going to university.

There was another prominent issue I faced while trying to recruit participants. Some of the families I approached felt suspicious about my motivation to ask them to participate. The main reason was that due to the political situation in Syria, they thought that I wanted to "trick" them into speaking about politics, so I had to reassure them that this project is only about school. I managed to recruit 12 Syrian refugee families (see Table 5.1 for participants' descriptions). After conducting the interviews, I was hoping I could recruit more. I was worried that when I started my data analysis, the families would sound similar, and my analysis would be repetitive. However, as will be explained in the analysis chapters, though the families had similarities, they also showed many differences. Therefore, I am satisfied with the number of participants I recruited. Here is a brief description for each family. Pseudonyms are used in the description and throughout the thesis.

Name	Description
Wafaa & Maysa	I interviewed the mother (Wafaa) and her daughter (Maysa) in person. The mother was 36 years old. She finished her bachelor's degree in Syria and continued her Master's degree in clinical psychology in Jordan. She has five children. Their ages were 20, 18, 13, 10, and 6 at the time of the interview. I interviewed her daughter (Maysa) aged 10. During the war, the family moved to Jordan. Maysa attended kindergarten and Grade 1 in Jordan. In 2017, the family left Jordan and they arrived in Scotland in that same year. By the time of the interview, the daughter had been in Scottish schools for two and a half years. Wafaa's children attend a non-denominational school.
Manal & Mohammed	I interviewed the mother (Manal) and her son (Mohammed) in person. The mother was 44 years old. She graduated high school. She has seven children who were between the age of 13 and 22 at the time of the interview. Mohammed was 17 years old. The family was displaced to Turkey before Scotland. They arrived in Scotland in 2013. While they were in Syria, Mohammed attended school until Grade 5. By the time of the interview, he had been in Scottish schools for around five and a half years. Mohammed goes to a Catholic school.

Sofyan & Adam	I interviewed the father (Sofyan) and his only son (Adam) on the phone. The mother in this family is dead. The father was 49 years old at the time of the interview. The father did not go to school, and he used to work as a broker in Kuwait and Lebanon. While he was working there, his son Adam was getting his schooling in Syria. Adam was 12 years old during the interview. He attended school in Syria until Grade 5. Then, the family arrived in Scotland in 2016. By the time of the interview, Adam had been in Scottish schools for two years. Sofyan does not know what kind of school his son goes to.
Fayza & Maram	I interviewed the mother (Fayza) and her daughter (Maram) in person. Fayza was 39 years old, and Maram was 15 by the time of the interview. The mother has two other children who were 17 and 12 years old at the time. The mother mentioned that even though she had only her high school certificate, that qualified her to work as a kindergarten teacher in Syria. Maram completed all her primary school years (Grade 1-6) in Syria. Then, they moved to Turkey because of the war, and she studied there for one year. By the time of the interview, Maram had been in Scottish schools for two and a half years. Maram goes to a Catholic school.
Halima & Majed	I interviewed the mother (Halima,) and the son (Majed) on the phone. Halima was 39 years old. Halima's Bachelor's degree was disrupted due to the war. She had been studying for three years but could not finish the fourth year; thus, she did not graduate. Other than Majed (14-years old), she has a daughter who was 18 years old. Before arriving in Scotland in 2014, the family lived in Turkey and Italy for a while after the war in Syria. Majed went to kindergarten in Syria as well as to Grade 1, then he studied briefly in Turkey at a temporary school for Syrians. In Italy, he studied Grade 2 and 3. By the time of the interview, he had been in Scottish schools for 5 years. Majed goes to a Catholic school.
Intesar & Bashar	Intesar, a 45-year-old mother, holds a Bachelor's degree. She has three children who were 21, 18, and 13 years old at the time of the interview. I interviewed her son (Bashar), who was 13 years old by the time of the interview, on the phone. Due to the war, the family first resettled in Saudi Arabia. Bashar finished Grade 2 in Syria. In Saudi Arabia, he continued his schooling and finished his Grade 6. The family arrived in Scotland in 2018, and Bashar had been in school there for two years at the time of the interview. Intesar's children attend a non-denominational school.
Samira &	The mother (Samira) and her daughter (Bisan) were interviewed by me on the phone. Samira went to college and graduated after two years. She is 35 years old and has two children. Bisan was 10 during the interview and her brother was 8

Bisan	at the time. After the war, the family lived in Egypt for a while where Bisan finished Grade 1. In 2016, they arrived in Scotland where Bisan had been in school for four years during the time of the interview. Bisan attends Catholic school.
Renad & Zaher	Renad and her son Zaher were interviewed in person. Renad was 31 years old. She studied for two years out of four in her Bachelor's degree, but the war interrupted her education. She worked in Egypt as a kindergarten teacher. She has three children who were 13, 11, and 3 years old at the time of the interview. Zaher was 13 when I interviewed him. He finished Grade 1 in Syria, and he finished Grade 2 and 3 in Egypt. In 2016, the family arrived in Scotland where Zaher had been at school for around 5 years by the time of the interview. Renad's children attend a non-denominational school.
Nadia & Rania	Nadia, a 44-year-old mother of four, and her daughter (Rania) were interviewed on phone. Nadia's children were between the age of 14-25 at the time of the interview. Rania was 16. The family arrived in Scotland in 2019 and by the time of the interview, Rania has been in Scottish schools for a year. Before that, her education was split between Syria (until Grade 2) and Egypt (until Grade 7). Nadia's children attend a non-denominational school.
Malak & Mo'men	The mother (Malak) was 41 years old. She did not finish high school. She finished Grade 10. She has 6 children. Their age range was between five and 20 at the time of the interview. Malak's son, Mo'men, was 17 years old. They were both interviewed in person. The family arrived in Scotland in 2013 where Mo'men had been at Scottish schools for around five years. Before that, he had all his education in Syria until Grade 5. Malak's children attend a non-denominational school.
Aseel & Shaimaa	The mother, Aseel, and daughter, Shaimaa, were interviewed on the phone. Aseel is 31 years old, and she graduated Grade 4. She has three children who were 12, 11, and 10 years old at the time of the interview. Shimaa, who was 11, studied Grade 1 and 2 in Syria. Then, in Lebanon, she studied Grade 3 and 4. In 2019, the family resettled in Scotland where Shimaa had been at a Scottish school for one year at that time. Aseel's children attend a non-denominational school.
Kawthar & Ashraf	Kawthar and son, Ashraf, were interviewed on the phone. Kawther is a mother of two children. She was 38 years old with a college diploma. Ashraf was 10 by the time of the interview. He studied until Grade 3 in Syria. The family arrived in Scotland in 2018, and he had been at school there for around a year and a half. The son goes to a Catholic school.

Sometimes the fathers and the mothers would contact me to share their interests in participating. When they contacted me, I gave them the choice to be interviewed or have their partner interviewed. In this way, they would choose based on what makes them more comfortable. Sofyan did not have a partner, and the rest of the participants felt more comfortable for me to interview the mother. This could relate to different reasons. One of them was that the fathers felt it was more appropriate for me to interview the mother because of my gender. Another reason was that the mothers were more involved with their children's education than the fathers. Based on the interviews, the mothers were responsible for following up with the homework and any educational concerns. Gender role could be brought up here since the mothers were the ones ending up helping the children in their education. Even in the case of Sofyan, he mentioned that his mother and his sisters were the ones taking care of Adam's education. This gendered aspect of education was also noticed in different studies which indicated that keeping up with the educational needs of the child was the mother's responsibility more than the father's (Lareau, 2003; Pomerantz et al., 2007; Allen, & White-Smith, 2018). Gender was also important for me when I was recruiting students. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the literature suggests that Muslim female students' experiences are different of the males. Therefore, I was trying to recruit participants from both genders to explore their experiences in school and society. Thus, I tried to find a balance in the gender of the students. Some families had more than one child who could participate, and I intended to choose the child based on how many males and females I gathered then. I managed to recruit seven male students and five female students. Even though there is an imbalance in the numbers, the interviews provided deep descriptions for the participants' experiences and perspectives.

5.4 Interviews

In-depth interviews, which I will use interchangeably with the term qualitative interviews, are considered an important source of knowledge in qualitative research (Kvale, 1996; Yin, 2003). This knowledge depends on the narratives of the interviewees about their lives and experiences. Interviews occur as a conversation between two people about a specific topic, thus, the knowledge is interrelational.

Important to emphasise is that an interview is more than a process of constructing knowledge. According to Hutchinson et al., (1994) qualitative interviews offer numerous other benefits. First, qualitative interviews can be cathartic for the participants, who are allowed to share their emotions and perspectives. Providing self-acknowledgment through making participants feel their thoughts have a worth is another possible merit. Through participating in qualitative interviews, participants' sense of purpose can be enhanced as their participation could mean they have contributed to making a change once the final report is published. Participants may also feel empowered because they are being heard. Moreover, qualitative interviews increase self-awareness as participant may learn about new ideas through the interview and, if a space of trust and non-judgement can be created, promote healing through giving them a chance to talk about their experiences.

The main challenges in conducting interviews is the chance of the participants uneasiness in opening up to the researcher because they are concerned about being judged negatively (Bögner et al., 2010) . As a way to address this issue, I shared personal stories with my participants to build trust, which can be considered 'a sense of presence or of being with the participant in the story' (Corbin & Morse, 2003, p. 342). This can also be called 'reciprocity' (Dickson-Swift et al., 2007, p. 334). Besides making the participants feel that they can trust the researcher, who has shown a willingness to open up and is not just there to extract stories from them, this reciprocity can also enhance the researcher's appreciation for what the participants shared. This can further contribute to the quality of the data and can create a sense of care for that data in the researcher when they analyse the data.

As said, while interviewing I tried to mention some of my own experiences which I thought could be similar to the participants' experiences, in order to make them feel that I understood what they were saying. Particular examples of this are the way I am perceived and treated because of my Hijab, and the profound lack of safety that was part of my life in Gaza. Moreover, I believe my background as Muslim, and as an Arab from Palestine (which borders Syria and has both a shared history and culture in many ways) helped build trust. Some of the parents felt that I understood the war in Syria because Palestinians endured many wars. One of the parents encouraged her son to talk freely to me as she explained to him that I am Palestinian, and that Palestinians have been living in conflict way longer than Syrians.

Sharing a language was another factor that helped build a space of trust and mutual understanding with the participants. The interviews were done in Arabic which was the native language for all participants. For some families, it was a relief to listen to my Palestinian dialect because they were worried, they would not understand me very well. Some of the mothers told their children before I started the interview not to worry because my dialect is easy to understand and similar to the Syrian dialect.

I started conducting the interviews in February 2020 and finished in March 2020. March is the first month when restrictions on travelling and meeting people from other households were declared because of Covid-19. Later in the same month, the first lockdown was announced. Therefore, when I first contacted the participants, I gave them the option to either do it face to face or on the phone. I asked them to choose because it was the beginning of the lockdown, and it was not clear how serious the virus was in Glasgow. Five of the interviews were at the participants' homes, and seven were done on the phone due to the lockdown restrictions. It was also best to let the participants decide the place and the time for the interview when discussing sensitive topics. Conducting sensitive research at an interviewee's own home can generate 'more profound information' (Hämäläinen & Rautio, 2013, p. 23). However, sometimes participants might feel more comfortable talking somewhere else than at home. Also, as Kavanaugh and Ayres (1998) argue, talking on the phone can be more comfortable for some participants than doing a face to face interview. Therefore, I let my interviewees choose the location of the interview. It was preferred by some participants to have the

interview taken at their house. All families I visited were welcoming and prepared food for me. That helped promote a friendly atmosphere. Interviewing at home was also good for the children so they wouldn't be asked to travel or go somewhere on their own. Some families were worried that their children would have to take public transport to reach the interview site, so they felt reassured when that turned out not to be necessary.

There was not much of a difference in the length of the interviews done at home or through the phone, though some of the interviews done through the phone were slightly longer. The median length for the interviews was one hour and a half. Even though the length of the interviews conducted face to face was of similar length for the ones on the phone, there are possible factors that could have affected data collection. Body language, facial expressions, and nonverbal cues were missing from the interviews conducted on the phone, which could have provided more data about the interviewee's thoughts and feelings. Also, I was not able to see where the participants were talking to me and who was around them. To tackle this, I asked the participants to call me in a time that is good for them. However, it is possible that the parents were more comfortable talking than the students because in most cases the parents were the ones who decided the times based on their availability and their children's availability. This could be a limitation, because not knowing who was around them might have affected what the participants shared with me. During some of the interviews I conducted face to face, other children were present which might also have affected what the participants shared with me. Two parents were present when I interviewed their teenage sons because it would be inappropriate in their culture and religion to leave me alone with him. However, the parents felt more comfortable to leave me alone with their daughter. Hämäläinen and Rautio (2013) argue that interviewing participants together can generate more data and discussion about their experiences, yet it can limit privacy and willingness to discuss certain topics. However, having a parent present seems to have raised no real problems of this kind, because most of the children were open to talk to me and even to oppose their parents whenever they disagreed. Sometimes, the child would be shy, and the parent would motivate them to talk, and sometimes they would remind their children about an incident that occurred and might be related to the research. Ultimately, therefore, I believe that having interviewed children together with one of their parents provided more advantages than disadvantages for the research process.

In the following sub-sections, I will first discuss semi-structured interviews, which is the kind of interview adopted in this project. Then I move to discuss my interviews with the parents. Interviews with the parents included vignettes which is a means of generating more data from the participants. Then interviewing the students is discussed.

5.4.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

As stated above, the aim of the interviews was to reach both depth and breadth (which are essentially what qualitative research is about, in my view). So far, I have called the interviews I did qualitative interviews, but I will now discuss them more specifically as semi-structured interviews.

To begin, an interesting distinction has been made by Kvale (1996), who argues that there are two kinds of interviewers: the miner and traveller. Witzel and Reiter (2012) explain the difference between the two as follows. The "miner" interviewer focuses on and tries to "mine" for specific information; unlike the "traveller" interviewer, who is a more open interviewer and who tries to "travel" through as wide a landscape of information as possible with the interviewee to use as a basis for constructing knowledge afterwards. Even though adapting either of these two modes of interviewing may help the interviewer to elicit knowledge from the interviewee, the miner interviewers will not be flexible when confronted with challenges in their assessments, while the traveller-interviewer might get too many details to the point of deviating from the main interest, ultimately resulting in wasting time. Thus, Witzel and Reiter (2012) suggest another kind of interviewer: the well-informed traveller. For them, this kind of interviewer would be at the middle point between the two extremes of miner-interviewer and traveller-interviewer.

When we reflect on these metaphors that refer to different kinds of interviews, the miner interviewer is represented in structured interviews, while the traveller interviewer is represented in unstructured interviews, and the well-informed travelled in semi-structured interviews. Roulston (2010) argues that the questions asked in semi-structured interviews are recommended to be open question allowing for following probes, whereas closed questions might result in short answers with not enough room to expand. Open-ended questions help the interviewee to express the way they construct their world, which aligns with the epistemology of this research. The probes further help in getting more information from the interviewees that deepen our understanding of their experiences and meanings. The open-ended questions followed by probes are techniques applied by the well-informed traveller interviewer as a way to construct knowledge together with the participants.

What I have discussed so far in terms of the advantages of semi-structured interviews could also apply to open interviews, where no questions are prepared in advance and interviewees are asked to talk about anything they like related to a certain topic. I specifically used semi-structured interviews when interviewing the families because I believe preparing some questions in advance for is helpful in eliciting more organised knowledge. In other words, preparing questions helps stay focused on the most important themes related to the research. In line with the constructivist view adopted in this project, there is co-construction of knowledge in some way by the interviewer. My questions were focused on the three elements of my research (which, to recall, are identity, pedagogy and curriculum). Most of my questions started with 'Can you tell/explain…'. That kind of open question allowed the participants to talk about anything they wanted related to the main point in the question. This further allowed me to ask follow-up questions. For example, one of the questions I asked the parents was: 'Can you tell me about the pedagogy in Scotland?'. One parent said that teachers in Scotland are nice. I then asked her, as a follow-up question, to give me an example of when the teacher was nice. Semi-structured interviews also give the researcher the space to use different wording to the question when needed according to the participants' needs (Leech, 2002).

Some of the students did not understand the Arabic word of curriculum 'منهج'. The reason is that they mainly use Arabic at home and this word is not frequently used at home. Therefore, I had to explain what I meant by this word. For example, I used 'the content of the books' and 'the materials the teachers teach'.

Interviews were audio-recorded with participants' permission. According to DeJonckheere and Vaughn (2019) recording the interview helps capture the clarity of the participants' voices in terms of speech and intonation. It also helps the interviewer focus on building rapport with what is being said (Edwards & Holland, 2013). After conducting each interview, I transcribed them. Transcription was in Arabic, and then I translated them in English – a process that will be explained in more depth later.

Thus far, I have discussed why I chose interviews as the method to conduct this project. In the next sub-sections, I will discuss literature around interviewing the students and the parents, and what I did during the interviews.

5.4.2 Interviews with Parents

Parents were interviewed to know more about the activities they undertake with their children, in order to understand better how they cultivate their children's identity. Interviewing the parents started with a very general question about their background and how they ended up in Scotland (See Appendix 1 for interview questions for parents). Even though it was important for me to ask them about their life before Scotland, I did not want my question to be specifically about their experiences in the war and their journey to Scotland, because of the sensitive nature of that topic. According to Jepson et al. (2015) participants consider a topic sensitive based on what they perceive as a 'personal question' (p. 5). Kavanaugh and Ayres (1998) said that sensitive research can lead to emotional arousal, and that it can include issues related to such as things as social exclusion and control or any kind of loss. Some distress signs can be pauses or hesitation (Jepson et al., 2015), and sometimes crying (Kavanaugh & Ayres, 1998). Kavanaugh and Ayres (1998) encourage the researcher to be prepared for any sign of distress since it is hard to predict the flow of the interview. I did not encounter any situation which provoked any kind of visible distress of this kind. I was prepared though and in case that would have happened I would have stopped the interview immediately until the interviewee regains composure. Also, I had a list of useful numbers and links for mental health resources in case any sign of distress appeared.

Most of the parents felt comfortable sharing their experiences during the war and the way they reached the United Kingdom. Some of them talked about how they were smuggled, but others did not want to share stories of that nature. Generally speaking, the flow of my interviews with the parents was very satisfying. The parent did not mind sharing their experiences with me. On the contrary, some of them gave me so many details that I felt they were drifting away from the topic. When that happened, I waited until they were done talking and then asked follow-up questions about a specific detail they mentioned related to my research. Also, as I will explain in what follows, I

prepared vignettes at the end of the interview to engage the parent participants more with the main points of this research (See Appendix 2 for the vignettes).

5.4.2.a Vignettes

Finch (1987) defines vignettes as 'short stories about hypothetical characters in specified circumstances, to whose situation the interviewee is invited to respond' (p. 105). According to Skilling and Stylianides (2020), the epistemological assumption behind vignettes is that meaning is constructed from the perspective of participants. This assumption aligns with the goal for using vignettes, as I asked each participant to address each vignette through 'encouraging discussions, and probing for understandings to gain insights to participants' beliefs, emotions, judgments, attitudes and values' (Skilling & Stylianides, 2020, p. 542).

According to Ashill and Yavas (2006) there are numerous advantages to using vignettes. Using vignettes in education research helps gain an understanding about participants' interpretations and concerns, as well as their behaviour (Di Stasio, 2014), in particular when used in conjunction with qualitative interviews (Skilling & Stylianides, 2020). Furthermore, according to Nosanchuk (1972), using vignettes can generate meaningful data for the study. They allow participants to explore the context of specific concepts rather than exploring abstract ideas, which may make it easier for them to express their thoughts and feelings about those concepts (Finch, 1987). Vignettes are also an acknowledgement of the constructivist belief that 'meanings are social and that morality may well be situationally specific' (Finch, 1987, p. 106). Moreover, a vignette has 'a multivalent character' which can help participants investigate 'interaction effects' (Steiner et al., 2016, p. 53) in the vignette. That means participants could look at different factors and elements within the vignette when expressing their views. According to Aguinis and Bradley (2014) vignettes are helpful to envisage sensitive issues because participants are asked to reflect on a story about the character in the vignette; this can help make questions feel less personally threatening because participants can distance themselves from the issue when they are speaking about it.

Weber (1992) has argued that there is no 'ideal' number for vignettes (p. 142). I chose to create four different vignettes. The vignettes together covered the three elements in my study; two vignettes were related to pedagogy, one to curriculum and the last one to identity. Each vignette described and contextualised an issue in order and the participants were asked to give their judgment about each of the four vignettes (Di Stasio, 2014). According to Steiner et al. (2016) vignettes are flexible because they could be in any format; written on visual. This flexibility was of good use in my research: for the families I met in person it was written on paper in Arabic and I asked them to read it. For those I phoned, I read them out loud to them.

According to Ganong and Coleman (2006) open-ended questions are the best tool to find out the participants' rationale for their perspectives about each vignette, and I followed their advice. First, I asked the participants to give their opinion about the characters in the vignette, and then I asked what they would do if they found themselves in the same circumstances. According to Skilling and

Stylianides (2020) vignettes can be short (50 words or less) or long (up to 200 words). Finch (1987), too, argues that vignettes can be short and simple or long and complex. In my own study, where I examined participants' perception of their identities and schools, I chose short and simple vignettes. I believe long and complex vignettes might have made it hard for the participants to stay focused. As used semi-structured interviews in conjunction with vignettes, it seemed too demanding to ask them to read a long vignette after asking them the questions I had prepared.

Using vignettes does not come without its potential problems, so it was important for me to read up on how others have addressed the problems they encountered in previous research. Weber (1992) argues that there are three dilemmas around vignettes. The first one is the extent to which the vignette are relevant to the participants' lives. The second is the lack of familiarity of the stories depicted in the vignette for the participants. An example for that would be if the vignette was about a phenomenon the participants never heard about. The last dilemma is the question whether 'generalisability' (Weber, 1992, p. 139) is possible with a vignette that is not based on a real-life situation. The author argues that this dilemma can be solved by choosing a realistic vignette on which the research can generate a sort of generalisability that approximates real life conditions. Moreover, according to Aguinis and Bradley (2014) vignettes are often criticised because of their lack of realism in which characters and stories are not believable. The vignettes I used are real. I heard these stories from families I met before my study. These are actual incidents that happened in real life to present for the participants a 'lifelike scenario' (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014, p. 362). Thus, my prediction was that they would resonate with my participants to provoke answers about their reflections, emotions and beliefs.

I used the vignettes only with the parents and not the children. I believe using the vignettes was really helpful for this project; in particular when the participants provided a lot of information that do not relate directly to the research questions. The vignettes, at the end of the interview, helped the participants to re-focus on the main elements in the vignette – whether identity, curriculum or pedagogy – and express their views about each particular element (see Appendix 2 for the vignettes).

5.4.3 Interviews with Participant Students

When doing interviews with children, I believe it is important to ask first about what we actually understand when we speak of "children". As explained above, one of the basic ontological assumptions of a constructivist paradigm is that different people have different perspectives of reality and that there is not one ultimate truth to give about what reality is "actually" like. It follows from this assumption that there is not one true answer to give about what a child "is". Moreover, the assumption that different people (but also different cultures) might answer this question in very different ways is of particular importance in a study which asks about different ways of educating children. In light of this, it is important for me to take a distance from a positivist understanding of "the child", which, according to Dockett and Perry (2007), is to assume a developmental path for all children which can be expected beforehand. Viewing children this way, for me, raises serious issues

in terms of reliability and validity. Instead, I follow Danby and Farrell in perceiving every child as an individual who constructs their world differently than others (Danby & Farrell, 2004). Therefore, we should learn about their experiences by listening and not on the basis of presumptions. In order to learn and listen to children, a researcher should be able to engage with the child in an effective conversation. In light of this, Lyon (2014) does not recommend close-ended questions for interviewing children. Closed-ended questions, he argues, do not give enough accurate details about the phenomenon and risk children guessing what the interviewer wants to hear rather than actually answering the question in their own way. Furthermore, analysing children's interviews where close-ended questions have been asked shows that the child's perspective is often in danger of being overshadowed by the direction the interviewer wants to go in, which can lead to issues in credibility. Instead, the Lyon (2014) suggests using open-ended questions to 'increase productivity and minimize suggestibility' (p. 78). For these reasons, as well as for the reasons already discussed above, I prepared open-ended questions for the children that started with: 'Can you tell me about…' (see Appendix 3 for interview questions for children).

Just like vignettes can be a way to induce different kinds of answers than simply asking questions, there are other tools the research can use to motivate the child to talk and express themselves. Examples of this are asking them to draw (Wesson & Salmon, 2001) or make poems (Rogers, 2005). Since there was a chance that the children might position me as an 'outsider' due to the age gap, I created an activity to help them relax and stay engaged through the colouring activity. I prepared an arts-based interviewing activity for the children to start the conversation. The child was given a paper where first there is a silhouette for a person. The child should draw the face and other features in the body. The child was then asked to cut the drawing and on the back of the paper was a jigsaw puzzle where I asked the child to write the things that mean a lot to them in school. I provided crayons and toy scissors to the children for safety (see Appendix 4 for the paper given to children). Younger children were more motivated to do the activity (the drawing and the puzzle) than the older ones. With them I felt their excitement in doing the colouring activity and using the scissors. For older children, I gave them the puzzle and I divided it into two parts; one for writing things they like and dislike about school and the other part for writing things they like and dislike generally. For some participants, the activity was not clear, so I had to explain to them what I expected from them by demonstrating the activity for them. For instance, I told them in this section about school, I would write friends because they are important to me. That clarified it for them. Since the activity was optional, not all of them did it (see Appendix 5 for a sample of the activity).

The puzzle part of the activity became a supplementary to questioning. For instance, when the child wrote 'teachers' in the puzzle (See Appendix 5), I asked her to explain more about it. In this case, I did not ask her 'How about the teachers and the way they teach?' from the pre-prepared questions for the children interview (See Appendix 3). When the child wrote words which could generate data about a particular theme relevant to this study, then the data was used and analysed. In

this way, the children talked about important aspects in their life without the need to ask them questions. After discussing the activity (in case the participant did it), I moved to asking them the questions I prepared. Beside the questions, I would ask the child to elaborate on a point or an incident the parent mentioned to get more details. As said, the children of this research were of different ages, and I note that having an effective conversation with older children was easier than the younger ones. This could be because older ones have more to say about their experiences. I can say that my interviews with the younger children was more challenging. However, here doing the interviews with the children and a parent together turned out to be very useful, because sometimes the parent helped me when the child was shy by reminding the child about some things they had experienced.

After conducting the interviews with the participants, the next stage was to deal with all the data I had gathered. The next section explains the steps I followed to work on the data, analyse it and give expression to the findings.

5.5 Thematic Analysis

This project adopts thematic analysis as the main means to analyse data. Before going into details in exploring this kind of analysis, I will start by defining the word "theme". A theme is understood as a part of the data that is related to the research questions and has a 'patterned response' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82) with other parts of the data. Through the use of themes, thematic analysis aims at 'identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). The aim of thematic analysis is to provide a rich description for the data. It also helps in organising and tidying the jumbled mass of data, in order to then allow becoming aware of similarities and differences between different parts of the data. It further helps discover and examine different perspectives of the participants, which allows the researcher to draw the similarities and differences between them (King, 2004; Madill et al., 2000; Nowell et al., 2017). Thematic analysis is constructivist in its epistemological approach. In other words, meanings and data interpretation are considered to be an outcome of the means the participants adopt to make sense of their own experiences based on their understanding of the social and contextual discourses.

Thematic analysis is characterised by a large amount of flexibility in allowing theoretical perspectives and insights from the data to be brought together, which enriches the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The way in which this flexibility shows in the approach to analysis taken in this research, in combining an inductive, bottom-up selection of themes with a theoretical, top down, thematic analysis.

Braun and Clarke (2006) distinguish six phases in thematic analysis, which I adapted to help me analyse my data. The first phase is becoming familiar with the data. This phase includes transcription of data to facilitate reading, re-reading, and taking notes in search of meanings and patterns. After conducting each interview, I used a transcription foot pedal to help me transcribe my data on my computer. Engaging with the data early helped me add notes and observations about the

setting. After transcribing, I translated each interview (see Appendix 6 for a translated interview extract). Thus, I had to re-read all my transcriptions which helped me become even more familiar with the data. I also used conventions in my transcription and translation, which are used in the extracts from the interviews in the analysis chapters, to help me record the following:

/ /: non-verbal expressions.

Bold: stress on words.

… : unfinished sentence.

(…) : parts of the sentences I deleted because they are not important.

[]: to explain something the participant said.

The second phase was coding the data into as many potential codes as presented in Table (5.1). Based on the research questions for this research, the questions I asked the interviewees revolved around the three elements in this research (identity, curriculum and pedagogy). Thus, those three elements were the initial themes for my analysis (Table 5.2). After that, I looked at the abstracts in each of the main themes and tried to generate subthemes (Figure 5.1). For these two stages I used the software package NVivo in which I uploaded all my English transcription of the interviews. NVivo helped me organise data analysis, because all interviews are uploaded into the software, which makes it easy to select a data extract and put it under a code. I went through all transcripts line by line and started coding.

Research codes

Hope	War	Resettlement	Violence	Culture	Religion
Curriculum	Teaching methods	Student-teacher relationship	rewards	Communication	Racism at school
Challenges	Beliefs	Parent-teacher relationship	Grades	Assessment	Validity
Sex education	gender	Religious education	Struggle	Curriculum load	Citizenship
School activities	Pupil's needs	Parents' needs	Tests	Adaptation	Support by peers
Identity	inclusion	Route education	heritage	Exclusion	Homework

Racism in public	Family dynamics	Resilience	tolerance	Previous knowledge	Support by school staff

Table 5.2: Research codes.

Themes	Codes	Evidence in interview data
Curriculum	sex education	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,12
	religion education	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11, 12
	inclusion in curriculum	1,2,8,5,11

Table 5.3: Summarising interview data patterns.

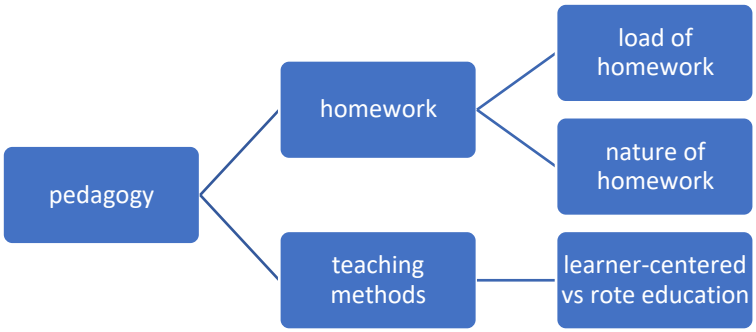


Figure 5.1: Example of initial themes and sub-themes.

The third phase entailed the refinement and renaming of these themes and subthemes. The process of refinement includes reading data extracts and considering whether they share a 'coherent pattern' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 91). If such a pattern cannot be found, it means that either the theme has to be reworked, or one of the extracts belongs to another theme or should not be in the dataset at all. When this process is finished, the end result is a thematic map. The second step in this phase is to:

> … consider the validity of individual themes in relation to the data set, but also whether your candidate thematic map 'accurately' reflects the meanings evident in the data set as a whole. (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 91)

It is important to reflect on this for a moment, since the constructivist outlook that underpins my approach to analysis would question the idea that there is any "true" meaning contained in the data which can be represented accurately. The authors, who have put the word accurately in inverted commas, and who discuss the matter further in their article, acknowledge this complication as well. Their answer to it is pragmatic: they suggest that the benchmark for assessing whether the thematic

map is an accurate representation of meaning is 'whether the themes 'work' in relation to the data set' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 91). They further propose that such a map would 'fit' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 91) the data set. This means that, when I was constructing codes which I believed would represent the data set, I knew that I was in the process of co-constructing meaning with my participants, and with the data itself. Concretely speaking, I took the following steps in this part of the process. When I went through the extracts under some codes, I found extracts that were too long. Therefore, I deleted unnecessary information for the study from these extracts. Once I finished refining the extracts in each code, I grouped the codes together to identify the overarching theme.

Preparing the themes up until this stage achieved the end result of the inductive thematic analysis: a thematic map. As I mentioned earlier, the bottom-up analysis is followed with top-down analysis. The theoretical thematic analysis was mostly in the last phase of writing the report in which the researcher should not only describe the data but also create an argument through the analysis of data that are connected to the research questions. Ultimately, this means that while emerged themes in inductive thematic analysis are 'data-driven' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 83) the emerged themes in theoretical thematic analysis are 'analyst-driven' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84). The theoretical constructs I used were the ones discussed in Chapter 3 (Othering, Orientalism, et cetera). The link between the themes and these constructs was made by the researcher. Sometime the link was very visible. For instance, when the families were talking about the way teachers in Syria were "controlling" all aspects of learning, this could be directly linked to Bernstein's concept of framing. Other links were indirect. An example for that would be the new strategies some of the families started to use to negotiate with their children. Some of these strategies were an indirect example for Hall's (1997) concept of identity as a point of suture (this is further discussed in next Chapters). Such an approach for analysis is a concrete example of how both the researcher and the participant co-construct knowledge.

It is essential to note that my data analysis was not a linear process, something also observed by (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Rather, it was a recursive process because reading data, extracting codes, and writing report were happening simultaneously (Cohen et al., 2017). This could be a frustrating process at times, in particular when I kept feeling unable to unpack meanings within some of the extracts that I considered to fit with the data. However, going back and forth in my data kept me organised and engaged with my data. I also managed to find connections between extracts that had not been noticeable to me at first. For instance, some extracts were obviously related to identity and how the participants see themselves. Later, I found that the same extract could also be related to identity in light of who the Scottish education wants them to be.

5.6 Ethical Issues

The importance of paying attention to ethical considerations in research has become recognised because of a rising acknowledgment of 'the intersection of power, oppression and privilege with issues of human suffering, equity, social justice, and radical democracy' (Cannella &

Lincoln, 2018, p. 171). According to the British Educational Research Association (2018), researchers should deal with participants with respect by treating them 'fairly, sensitively, and with dignity' (p. 4). Cannella and Lincoln (2018) argue that our interpretations in the research should try to 'learn' rather than 'speak for', also they should 'join with' rather than 'intervene with' (p. 176). In other words, the role of the researcher is not to be a judge but to be a collector and interpreter for data.

Researchers' ethical responsibilities include providing informed consents, providing information to the participants about the project and its outcomes, minimising any risks, and seeking access from gatekeepers before approaching participants (British Educational Research Association, 2018). In order to achieve all that, and as a pre-requisite to start my fieldwork, different applications were submitted.

First, I completed a University of Glasgow ethical form. In order to do this, I first had to prepare other documents, namely consent forms and Plain Language Statements, for all my participants. The ethical form is divided into different parts. The main parts are: details about the project and its steps; the importance of the project to society and its potential impact; and the confidentiality of participants. Overall, the different parts of the form helped me gain a clearer vision of my methods and the exact procedures I needed to follow in my fieldwork. Moreover, the form made me aware of the ways in which to store the data and to address participants' names in confidentially.

Consent forms made it clear that participation in the study was voluntarily and withdrawal could happen at any stage (see Appendix 7 for the consent form in Arabic and English). They also prevented potential participants from agreeing to participate without knowing exactly what they would be asked to do. For instance, there was a lady who wanted to participate, but when I told her I needed to interview her son as well, she did not want to participate anymore. Consent forms also give the participants the choice to opt out of any of the questions asked. Consent forms include all information about confidentiality and anonymity. The Plain Language Statement includes information about the topic of the research (see Appendix 8 for Plain Language Statement in Arabic and English).

Interviewing children brings more ethical considerations that need to be confronted than interviewing adults. I applied to the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme because my work included children who are considered a vulnerable group. After submitting my application, Disclosure Scotland checked my criminal records. Since I do not have any criminal record, I got the approval to join the PVG scheme. Furthermore, I had to prepare a different consent form (Appendix 9) and Plain Language Statement for children (Appendix 10). According to article 12 in the United Nations Convention in the Right of the Child, which is called 'the right to be heard' (United Nations, 1989, p. 5), children should be given the right to express their opinions. Thus, they have the right to approve or decline their participation in the project. As can be seen in Appendix 9 and 10, for the

children's forms, I tried to make them child-friendly by including pictures and short phrases to explain my research as well as their rights.

5.7 Validity

Validity is defined by Hays and Sing (2011) as those aspects of research design where the researcher 'might be wrong' (p. 9). According to the same authors, validity is also commonly referred to as trustworthiness, especially in qualitative research. In order to contribute to the validity of the research, attention should be given to both the research process and research product (Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001). In order to understand validity better, I will refer to three types of validity distinguished by Maxwell (1992). These three, he proposes, are directly involved in qualitative research which are descriptive validity, interpretive validity, and theoretical validity. Maxwell mentions two others, which are more applicable to quantitative research but are still indirectly involved with qualitative research as well: generalisability and evaluative validity. I will discuss these five terms in what follows.

The first type of validity Maxwell (1992) distinguishes – descriptive validity – is the first and central of all of his categories, as he states that 'all of the subsequent validity categories I will discuss are dependent on this primary aspect of validity' (p. 286). Descriptive validity refers to the factual accuracy of the account of the researcher: has what he or she describes really been said or taken place, in the way in which he or she describes it? It is important for Maxwell to emphasise that in matters of descriptive validity, it is not the terms that are used which are under dispute. He gives the example of a student throwing an eraser: when such an event is described by the researcher, the statement's meaning is clear for everybody; what can be questioned is the factuality of the student throwing the eraser. Were the researcher to state that the student assaulted another student, however, it becomes a matter of interpretation: one could dispute that what the student did was a case of assault. For descriptive validity, I described as accurately as I could what the participants said. Recording the interviews allowed me to listen multiple times to the interview and it helped me transcribe accurately. When the interview finished, I made sure that I wrote down anything I remembered having noticed.

The second type of validity discussed by Maxwell (1992) is interpretive validity, which is 'grounded in the language of the people studied' (p. 289). As an Arabic native speaker, all my interviews were conducted in Arabic, but some students were answering in English. However, that did not mean they did not understand my Arabic. It was easier for a few of them to use English instead of Arabic. The majority used Arabic though. I transcribed the interviews in Arabic and then I translated all of them into English. Translating was challenging because translating word-to-word might make the English version hard to understand. For example, one the parent used an expression in Arabic: 'he speaks English like a nightingale', which means 'he is very fluent in English'. Therefore, for my final report on the interviews, I would translate such expressions word-to-word and use square brackets to explain the meaning.

The third type of validity Maxwell (1992) observes is theoretical validity. This type has two components which are the concepts of the theory and the connection between them and the data. For that, I tried to create a consensus between my data and the theoretical concepts and terms. As mentioned earlier in the way I used the top-down analysis, some of the links were direct and others were indirect. As mentioned earlier in the top-down analysis, connecting the themes to the theoretical lenses was either direct or indirect. An example for the indirect link was when I connected the concept of Othering to the participants' experiences where they felt they were aliens because of their background. Since part of being Othered, as Fanon (1986) explained it, is feeling inferior and excluded, that helped me in connecting feeling like 'aliens' as being excluded and not fitting in the Scottish community.

As mentioned earlier, this study does not intend to make generalisations, but the research findings might have implications for other projects that share similar contexts and participants from a similar background. The last type of validity proposed by Maxwell (1992) is evaluative validity. This research does not aspire to judge what the participants did or said. It rather tries to report and analyse the data. Thus, statements such as "what the parent said is right or wrong" will never be used.

In this chapter, I discussed the methodological approaches which guided my research process. I outlined the ontology and epistemology of this research beside justifying my decision to ground my research within constructivism. I explored qualitative interviewing and why it is the best fit for my research. Then I moved to explain my data collection and analysis. I further presented the ethical considerations and procedures to avoid any issue related to the protection of participants' right. Lastly, I explained how I approached the question of validity of this research, as well as its limits. The next chapter discusses the analysis of data and research findings in relation to the first research question.

Chapter 6: Analysis of Pedagogy Through the Perceptions of the Participants, and as a Factor in their Identity Construction

As explored in the previous chapter, this project tries to look for different realities through participants' experiences and perspectives. It gives importance to the various ways in which people construct their own knowledge, and it also draws patterns across the variations. This project also considers how the participants' background, beliefs, insights and previous knowledge impact on how each builds his or her knowledge. Therefore, this chapter, as well as the following two analysis chapters, are not written with the aim of judging what are "good" or "bad" teaching practices, curriculum content or cultural or social practices. Neither does it try to portray one setting as better than the other. Rather, it tries to understand what each participant brings to the table in terms of their knowledge, the way they constructed this knowledge, and the way they interacted within different settings.

Chapter 6 and 7 analyse data in relation to RQ1. This chapter answers a part of RQ1. RQ1 is: How do the educational experiences of participant Syrian Muslim refugee families contribute to their identity construction? The part which this chapter tries to answer is in relation to the first aspect of education this project focuses on, which is pedagogy. This chapter answers the first sub-question of RQ1 which is: What are the differences and the similarities observed by the participants between pedagogy in Syria and Scotland? How have these differences affected the participants' identities? As mentioned in the previous chapter, this project adopts bottom-up and top-down analysis. That means, for this chapter and the other two analysis chapters, general themes are generated from the interviews (bottom-up) and then some theoretical lenses are used to have a deeper analysis and understanding of the participants' experiences. The theoretical lenses differ in those chapters, yet some lenses are used in more than one chapter. The major lens used in those three chapters is Hall's conceptualisation of identity.

This chapter tries to explore how differences or similarities within pedagogy contributed to the participants' identity construction, using Hall's (1991, 1996, 1997) framework on identity. Schweisfurth's (2013) discussion of pedagogy as continua to identify different dimensions of pedagogy is also used in this chapter (see Figures 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5). Other references of discussion include Freire's (1970, 2018) concept of banking education and Bernstein's concept of framing. Moreover, Anderson's concept of imagined communities is used to reflect on some of the participants' experiences. It will be observed that parents often generalise their experience on the basis of what they see in their children's school to the wider community as a whole. For example, they will observe what one or a few teachers do and then speak about "Scottish education" in a general sense. This is something which people are generally inclined to do and thus Anderson's (2006)

notion of imagined communities is relevant for this point. Thus, Anderson, Schweisfurth, Freire, and Bernstein help me to see the different aspects of pedagogy through the convergence of these theories into one lens. That lens helps me understand if, and if so, how, pedagogy has a role in the identity construction of the participants. Moreover, it is also about understanding their self-perception, that is, the image or idea they have of themselves within the various communities of which they are part – centrally the school and the home.

As mentioned earlier, this project adopts Alexander's (2005) definition on pedagogy, namely as 'the act of teaching together with the ideas, values and collective histories which inform, shape and explain that act (Alexander, 2005, p. 92). Thus, this chapter identifies and links these dimensions with three main aspects of pedagogy which the participants mentioned during interviews. In other words, these aspects arose from the analysis as being the ones most foregrounded by the participants; they were not chosen by the researcher beforehand. The first one of these aspects is the teaching methods used inside the classroom, the second one is homework and the third one is the teacher-student relationship. Within these sections, links to the theoretical lenses are made. After exploring these three aspects, another section is created to relate these three aspects of pedagogy to the process of identity construction. In other words, Hall's notion of identity is connected to pedagogy. Furthermore, to facilitate understanding the findings, (P) is used to refer for parents, (C) is used to refer to children.

6.1 How do Teachers Teach?

All the families I interviewed agreed that there is an obvious distinction between the teaching approaches in their previous and current setting. According to the families in this study, pedagogy in Syria seems to be placed on the less learner-centred end of Schweisfurth's (2013) continuum of pedagogy (Figure 4.1), and pedagogy in Scotland seems to be more placed on the other end. The families talked about the main differences of teaching techniques teachers used in their classroom. They also discussed how these techniques and knowledge affected the identity of their children.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, in Syria rote education is most often used inside classrooms to teach students (Integrity, 2019; UNESCO, 2011). To recall, Schweisfurth (2013) defines rote education as the chalk and talk mode of teaching which focuses on drilling, and depends on a fixed curriculum. In Scotland, on the other hand, teachers most often adopt a form of learner-centred education. There are four sub-themes for this section. The first sub-theme explores the main difference between the previous setting and Scotland as reported by the participants, which is the dependency on memorisation in their previous setting and the inclusion of active learning in Scotland. The second sub-theme is the inclusion of technology and the way it affected the learning process for the participants. The third sub-theme is related to an overall observation of the extent to which students are giving control on their learning. The last sub-theme summarises the critique of rote education some of the participants raised.

6.1.1 Memorisation vs Active Learning

There is a majority agreement between the participants in this study that, in their previous settings, students had to do a lot of memorisations, and that writing was an essential part of memorising. That means that students had to write a lot in order to memorise. In Scotland, on the other hand, the participants noticed less dependence on memorisation. While talking about memorisation, the participants often compared it to the inclusion of learning and fun activities inside and outside classrooms. There is also a general agreement that teachers in Scotland use more activities to teach students than in Syria which correlates with what was mentioned in Chapter 2, that CfE adopts active learning. The majority of the participants prefer less memorisation and the use of active learning in Scotland – the exceptions being Malak (P), who does not prefer it, and Renad (P) and Manal (P), who were critical of the huge amount of memorisation in Syria but also of the lack of memorisation in Scotland.

Malak (P) noted that students had to memorise a lot in Syria; they were even given whole reading passages to memorise before class next day. Thus, when the teachers delivered their lesson the next day, the students who were able to memorise the text had better chances to participate. However, by Malak's account, in reference to the Scottish classroom of her children, 'here you don't see that. They give the student information per day, so there is no preparation for the next lesson or for the next day'. Since the mother was used to help her children prepare for lessons and the memorisation practices, the way students are taught in Scotland in terms of this aspect seemed to make Malak perceive students in Syria as harder workers. Malak liked the way teachers taught in Syria where teachers teach fixed knowledge from the curriculum books, and repeatedly explain the lesson if needed. The mother also noted that this way of teaching, which depended on fewer activities, pushes students to make more effort in the learning process. She said the following:

> Teachers follow what's written in the book and then they explain the lesson. It was good, and I liked it to be honest. And sometimes they repeated the lesson more than once (…) there weren't that many activities, so the students should work harder there.

Other parents were critical of the amount of memorisation in both their previous and current setting. Renad (P), for example, criticised the big amount of memorisation her children were asked to do in Syria, and preferred how teachers teach in Scotland. She said: 'teachers depended on drilling or writing on the board. There were no activities (…) but here they depend more on activities'. Even though the mother liked the way teachers teach in Scotland since it does not pressure students as much, she did express a hope that the way maths is taught would be improved. Since in the previous setting students memorise timetables, depending on the calculator in Scotland seemed questionable to the mother. Renad's preference for the way maths was taught in the previous setting was shared by Manal, who also shared Renad's critique of the emphasis on memorisation and writing in Syria. Both mothers felt more memorisation is needed when teaching maths in Scotland.

On the other end of the spectrum, there are the parents who were very critical of the rote education in their previous setting. The main critique was the fixed knowledge students had to memorise and the amount of writing they had to do. Aseel (P) noted that teachers taught a 'dense amount of information' which was 'exhausting' for the students in their previous settings. Thus, she described the way students are taught in Scotland as 'better', for it depends on less dense information, resulting in making her children 'happy and comfortable'. Intesar (P) agreed with her, and further noted that the more manageable workload was also a comfort for her as a parent. She noted that in Scotland, as noted above, teachers include more activities in their classrooms than in their previous setting, and that this helps her children understand the information without the need for her to follow up with them at home to help them memorise the information. Here I noticed that Intesar seems to be constructing a kind of imagined community about Scotland and Scottish education on the basis of her observations in relation to her children's experiences at school. She compares this imagined community with the imagined community in her previous settings. About the previous educational setting, Intesar mentioned that having to help her children memorise all that information added pressure on her and that the way teachers teach in Scotland took that pressure away. She said: 'I feel that the child comes back home having already memorised everything. I mean that the teacher made him memorise by understanding everything'. The difference seems to be that in Syria, children are asked to memorise texts through drilling questions and answers, without necessarily understanding the meaning of the text. In Scotland, on the other hand, children are asked to engage with the subject material in order to understand it, which also leads to memorisation of the text but in a very different way. An observation I make here is that Intesar seems to equate learning with memorisation, which might be because memorisation was the main learning strategy in her children's school in Syria.

Some of the participant students made the same observation. By Ashraf's account (C), teachers in Syria depended mainly on books, which were 'the source for all information' for them. He also noted that students had to do a lot of memorisations. On the other hand, both Adam (C) and Maysa (C) mentioned how 'fun' learning is in Scotland because of the activities they do at school such as 'painting', 'playing sports', 'singing' and 'art'. Furthermore, Mo'men (C) noticed there was a difference between the amount of writing teachers required students to do in Syria and Scotland: 'In Syria, teachers wrote everything on the board. We should write in our notebook everything they wrote on the board. Here we don't have that much writing'. Mo'men continued to explain how teachers teach in Scotland. He focused on the activities and games assigned to them in the classroom. He gave an example from geography class: 'There will be five students on each table, and we are then asked to draw a map and divide it.' He finished his description by noting that these hands-on activities motivated him 'to do more'.

In this section, families talked about the ways teachers teach in the classroom in terms of the main techniques. Looking back at Schweisfurth's (2013) technique continuum (Figure 4.2), the majority of the parents as well as the student participants agreed that the teaching techniques used in

Syria could be placed on the more frontal transmitting of knowledge end because teachers depended on memorisation and writing. Yet, by the account of the participants that there are more activities, discussions, self-study, and hands-on projects in Scotland which places Scotland on the independent or group inquiry. The students and the parents both noted that they are less pressured in Scotland due to the lower amount of memorisation students do in Scotland.

Next, another technique of independent inquiry is discussed: inclusion of technology, which also places Scotland on the same end of the technique continuum.

6.1.2 Inclusion of Technology

According to Education Scotland (2015), technology-related experiences are 'at the heart of learning' since early years of school (p. 36). Some of the technology-related experiences are information and communication technology, computing science, engineering and design. One of the main goals for including technology is 'preparing learners for the future' (Education Scotland, 2015, p. 31) though building their confidence and developing their skills in using 'real-world, real-time technologies' (p. 36). Examples of the skills are: presentation, organisation, searching, communication, and innovation skills (Education Scotland, n.d.-d).

The inclusion of technology was another difference between the way teachers taught in the participant's current and previous setting. Several participant students highlighted the role of technology in helping them understand information better and gain new skills similar to the one highlighted in the previous paragraph. For instance, while Maram (C) was making a distinction between different ways in which students are facilitated in gaining knowledge, she noted, in reference to her Scottish classroom, that 'there are fewer students in the classroom and there is technology'. For Maram, fewer students means that teachers in Scotland are more capable of following up with their students, unlike in her previous setting where teachers were unable to provide explanations to individual students when they could not understand something. The other point Maram raised was that there is more inclusion of technology in her Scottish classroom. Mohammed (C), too, stressed on the importance of using technology in the classroom: 'here we have a projector, and it's really a good method of teaching. Technology is necessary when it comes to education'.

Parents, too, praised the inclusion of technology inside the classroom and how teachers use different technological means for explaining their lessons. The parents felt that this inclusion helps their children understand information with less effort. Manal (P) noted that involving technology and modern techniques in Scottish classrooms helps the teacher explain the lesson in a way which facilitates students' understanding.

Kawthar (P) elaborated on that. She mentioned that her children's teachers in Syria depended on what is in the curriculum books 'lesson by lesson' where there is limited use of activities and visuals. This could be due to limited resources in Syrian schools. 'Projectors' and 'interactive board' were some of the resources the mother mentioned that were used in her children's Scottish school

and not in their Syrian one. The availability and the use of these resources made the mother perceive teaching in Scotland as less theoretical. She stated: 'in Syria, to be honest, we depend more on theory than on practical activities'. In the way she formulated this – and this is an observation which has been made earlier about Intesar (P) – it seems that Kawthar (P) had formed an idea of two "imagined communities", namely that of Scotland and its schools, and that of Syria and its schools.

6.1.3 Control inside the Classroom

Participants expressed their view about the control given to students inside the classroom as a way of teaching. For example, Halima noted that, in Scotland, her children seem to have more control over the way they get knowledge than they had in their previous setting. Here, it is no longer only the teacher delivering information in the class which students need to memorise. Instead, students are motivated to self-learn through by being assigned tasks for which they need to do their own research to find information. Another point of relevance to control was mentioned by Manal (P). Manal noted the different level of control given to students inside the classroom in Syria and Scotland. In Scotland, she said, 'they give a space to the children to talk and express, and they give them more freedom. That is good for their character'. Her son noticed the same. Mohammed (C) compared the quantity of activities and group discussion in Scotland and Syria and how the students' role changed from being passive listeners sitting silently to active participants. He said in Scotland it was 'a lot' and in Syria 'we never had group discussion and activities. We just sat in the class the whole period, no questions'.

This seems to be a situation which can be connected to both Freire's theory of banking education, and Bernstein's notion of framing. Sitting down in the classroom and passively receiving knowledge versus being part of the discussion and constructing knowledge together with the teacher and other students resonates strongly with Freire's distinction between the banking concept of education and dialogic or problem-posing education. When students are passive recipients of knowledge, according to Freire, they are not asked to critically engage with the world of which they are a part, but rather to receive an abstract idea of the world that may be unrelated to what they actually experience. Bernstein would classify this situation as one with strong framing. To recall, for Bernstein (2000b), weak framing occurs when the students have some control over the transmission of knowledge. Therefore, according to what the participants mentioned thus far, it could be concluded that Scottish classrooms (at least the ones these participants went to) have weak framing where students are active participants in the knowledge production. Unlike in their previous settings, where there was strong framing as teachers had explicit control over knowledge transmission.

Here too, another continuum of Schweisfurth (2013) is relevant, namely "Classroom relationships as a continuum" (Figure 4.5). The degree of control given to students inside the classroom, according to the families, placed the control in their previous setting as more authoritarian compared to Scotland.

6.1.4 Critique of Rote Education

As mentioned earlier, parents' preferences of teaching methods varied. However, the majority seemed to be critical of the rote education in the previous setting, mainly Syria for different reasons. A summary for the critique of rote education is mentioned by Wafaa (P):

> There, education is built on rote education; just memorising. It all depends on filling students' brains and making them **memorise**, **memorise**, **memorise** and empty all the knowledge students gain in the test. After the test, students do not feel that they have that many outcomes unless the boy is smart like my son who managed to develop himself. Unlike the average student who feels a lot of pressure and just empties all information in the test and that's it (…) Here though they teach using interactive learning. There are experiments, student go out or they watch YouTube. Here, my daughter goes to school because she has self-motivation to learn unlike before.

Wafaa's extract contains different points other parents agreed with. The first point Wafaa raised was the extent to which students were able to understand or grasp the knowledge taught to them. Wafaa expressed the belief that drilling and rote education makes students gain less knowledge than interactive learning where students are part of the learning process. Renad (P) argued for the same as she mentioned that drilling and dictating helps students pass the tests and not gain actual knowledge, since students forget that knowledge after the test. She said:

> When children get the information through participation and activities with their classmates, they will remember this information much longer than when it is indoctrinated. The proof for this is that after the test, student forget everything there.

What the mothers described resonates with Freire's (1970, 2018) concept of banking education in which teachers consider students' brains as a vessel which has to be filled with information. To recall, in this form of pedagogy, teachers try to fill students' brains with information through memorisation without giving students the opportunity to absorb, think and question this information. According to Wafaa and Renad, their children's minds (the "vessel") would often get emptied immediately after the tests, so that their children did not gain knowledge which could help them improve their thinking, or to further process and understand the information they had received.

Furthermore, Wafaa argued that the mode of teaching she had observed in Syria did not give consideration to students' differences, and that students who were considered "good" were the ones who were capable to keep up with the teacher and the knowledge inside the classroom. Manal (P) noted the same, as when she was talking about the pressure teachers added on students in order to finish teaching all the knowledge in the curriculum book. She said that 'good students' would not face any problem keeping up with the teacher and all that amount of information; unlike 'not so good' students, who would be struggling. In relation to consideration for individual differences, Halima (P) noted that the teachers in Scotland understand these differences, so teachers give students the space to approach them to ask questions outside class, such as during the lunch break or during what she referred to as 'homework club'. Students go to school before the beginning of the classes for that

club and they ask the teachers for more explanation. As mentioned in the introduction, some parents, as Halima seems to be doing here, generalise what teachers do in their children's school to the whole of Scotland, which creates an image of what education or pedagogy is in Scotland as a whole. Participant students such as Maram (C), too, noted that teachers in Syria were unable to explain to every student the points they did not understand, because there were a lot of students in the class, which meant that time was very limited. This in turn resulted in difficulty for low-performance students to keep up with the teachers. Maram summarised the attitude of her Syrian teachers in the following way: 'That's the lesson for today; if you don't understand, that's your problem'. She further added, referring to her Scottish school: 'But here it's different'.

The last point Wafaa raised was students' motivation to learn. She opined that when the students are motivated to learn without pressure, 'the child opens up to discover new talents.' Fayza (P) mentioned something similar. She noted that less dependency on fixed knowledge within the curriculum books and less pressure on the students, made the learning atmosphere full of 'relaxation and simplicity', which made her children like going to schools in Scotland more than in Syria. This 'relaxed' way of teaching was also described by Manal (P), who also said that it made her children like the school in Scotland more than Syria, and who further reflected on their feelings towards the country as a whole. Manal said: 'Students do not have to memorise a lot. However, here they are more relaxed, so if I tell them let's go back to Syria, they will neither like nor accept it'.

Several of the parents perceive this relaxed or interactive atmosphere of learning as a factor in increasing their children's 'self-motivation' as Wafaa described it. In other words, they believed that creating such an atmosphere can play a positive role as an external factor affecting the students' motivation to learn. Those parents expressed that they were used to other external factors, such as 'pressure' and 'punishment' as tools for their children to get their work done in their previous setting. To the parents, such external factors seemed to be the motives for their children to do their schoolwork. Parents were also responsible for keeping up with that pressure to avoid having their children punished. However, the fun atmosphere did not put such pressure on parents since it enables their children to manage and enjoy their education without the need for interference from their parents. Thus, those parents considered their children intrinsically motivated to learn in their Scottish school, and not in their Syrian school. So, on Schweisfurth's (2013) "Learner motivation continuum" depicted in Figure 4.4, the former would be on the one side of the scale, and the latter on the other side. Combining this with the "Educational practices continuum" depicted in Figure 4.1, the different nature of motivation made the parents perceive their children's motivation to learn in Scotland as intrinsic, while also placing pedagogy in Scotland on the more learner-centred end of this latter continuum. The pedagogy in Syria, which they observe as providing a more extrinsic motivation, was placed by them on the less learner-centred end of the continuum.

Some of the parents were critical of the overall model of teaching in their previous setting, yet they showed appreciation for the 'good' teachers who had worked hard to educate their children. For instance, Fayza (P) noted that some teachers are 'really good' in Syria, and she focused on the experienced teachers who were very familiar with the curriculum, and who were well-prepared for the lesson delivery which allowed them to 'deliver the information simply even if it was hard'. The mother then compared those 'good' teachers with what she considered 'less good' in terms of the pace of the lesson delivery which was 'either very fast or very slow… you know, so the children will not understand that much from those teachers'. Nadia (P) mentioned how some teachers in Syria tried to create an atmosphere of participation even with the limited resources they had. Nadia said:

> In Syria, when the teacher delivers the lesson, the students participate with the teacher. The teacher would ask one student to come to the board to answer the question or ask another student to read. There was an atmosphere of participation in the classroom; even when I myself was at school we had the same system.

6.1.5 Summarising the Section on the Question: How Do Teachers Teach?

In a general sense, it has become clear that all parents observed several fundamental differences in terms of the teaching methods adopted in Scotland and Syria. The main differences mentioned by the participants are the dependency on memorisation, the inclusion of technology and the degree of students' control inside the classroom. We can see that there is a general picture painted by all of the participants about what "Syrian" education looked like and what "Scottish" education looks like. Their interpretation of these differences, however, differs greatly. I put these words in quotation marks to indicate the process of generalisation from particular observations to the construction of a general imagined community.

The next section focuses on the next pedagogical aspect, which is homework and how it can be understood to contribute to the identity production for both the parents and the students in this study.

6.2 Homework

Homework was the main aspect in pedagogy which participants in this study discussed in length. The way in which homework is discussed by the participants shows that it fits well within the kind of images of the Syrian and Scottish education constructed in the previous section. It also fits in with the theoretical analysis made there in terms of strong versus weak framing, banking education versus dialogic education, and less learner-centred versus more learner-centred. The more surprising observation in this homework section relates to the deep impact different homework practices has on the identity of the parents and on the family dynamics at home. This will be discussed at the end of the section.

Olympia et al., (1994) define homework as 'academic work assigned in school that is designed to extend the practice of academic skills into other environments during non-school hours' (p. 62). However, although homework may seem to be a fairly straightforward topic on the surface, a deeper

analysis of its meaning for the different families shows that it relates to a wide range of themes. Some general observations can be made before setting out on a more detailed analysis of the various themes.

First, the participants showed a tendency to talk about homework in Scotland by comparing it with their previous experiences. All of them reported substantial differences between homework practices in their previous settings and Scotland. This indicates that there are important cultural and pedagogical differences in the attitudes toward the role of homework. Second, the participants often thought about the practice of homework in terms of better or worse. They developed an understanding of the best way to handle homework at home by recalling what they thought was good or bad in their previous setting and comparing it to what they thought is good or bad here in Scotland. Or they mentioned different likes and dislikes for some aspects in homework. Third, homework was perceived differently by parents than by their children. For both groups, homework took on a different role and had a different meaning. For example, students tended to refer to homework in terms of how easy or difficult it is, while parents often referred to the role of homework in their involvement with their children. Having made these general observations, I will now discuss the various themes that arose during the thematic analysis of the interview transcripts.

6.2.1 Homework Load

The first theme is homework load. Most of the families agreed that in their previous setting there was more homework than in Scotland; except for one family in which the father, Sofyan (P), and the son, Adam (C), felt that there is more homework in Scotland. Even though the father did not know much about homework in Syria – because he was already not living in Syria even before the war started – he assumed that there is more homework in Scotland. Adam agreed on the same point as he said, 'here I take more homework than Syria'. The rest of the families observed the opposite of what Sofyan and Adam said. Aseel (P) described the huge amount of homework her daughter would bring home back in Syria. She said: 'Even the least amount of homework she would bring home would be 10 pages at least'. In Scotland, on the other hand, was described as 'light' by many parents such as Malak and Renad (P). Students, too, observed the same difference. Rania (C), for example, compared the different amount of homework in Scotland and her previous setting in the following way:

> For one lesson, there might be 100 questions so whenever we finished the lesson, they asked us to answer all these questions … but here I didn't take that much homework (…) I don't feel it's homework. It is very little compared to the homework I was taking. It will be 7 questions of multiple choices and two other questions.

Some of the families explicitly criticised the huge amount of homework given to students in Syria and stated that they preferred the homework load in Scotland. This was not just because of the pressure put on the children, but also on the parent. For instance, Halima (P) described homework in

the previous setting as ‘torture’. Wafaa (P) explained that in Scotland, there is less homework and thus ‘less burden’ on her to follow up with her children’s homework.

On the other hand, some parents did not seem in total favour of the small amount of homework in Scotland. For example, Fayza (P) hoped for more homework in Scotland. When I asked her about homework in Scotland she said ‘Ooooh I hope they take homework, but never here’. However, she also explained that she was against the huge amount of homework given to students in the previous setting:

> In Syria (…) I had a lot of things to do; to teach three children, to clarify everything for the three, and if there is anything they didn’t understand, that meant more time for me to explain (…) Sometimes, it was hard to finish all the homework and then help them to memorise.

From this excerpt, it can be noted that power is an important factor at play here. Teachers in Syria seem to have more power, which allows them to give a great amount of homework to their students, something parents in Scotland would probably refuse. Similar to Fayza, Renad (P) was critical of the big amount of homework in their previous setting, and she perceived the light homework load in Scotland as having negative consequences. She also felt she cannot be involved in her child’s education because she is incapable of helping him as she explained in the following extract:

> The thing I don’t like about schools here… the first thing is that there is little homework; I mean there should be practice at home… I don’t like it because I don’t know what my son is studying (…) if he is level three, I want to help him to become level four. I want to help him at home, but how can I help?

Here, Renad is showing a great desire to be as involved as she was in her children’s education through helping them in their homework. Following up with her children’s homework allowed her to have some control over the progress her child made at school in their previous setting. Even though she desires the same in Scotland, she has no control over the progress her child could make because she is incapable of helping him.

Some families felt the small amount of homework in Scotland affected their children’s identity as students. These families noticed that the change in pedagogy in terms of homework give their children more freedom when they go back to the house. Malak (P) liked it more when there is more homework because ‘it makes the students busy’. Her son added that when he noticed his younger siblings were less busy in Scotland and were not working on homework, he went to ask their teacher about that matter because he thought his siblings were ‘lazy’. Also, Manal (P) expressed the concern that having less homework in Scotland is making her children ‘spoiled’. In fact, Manal mentioned the word ‘spoiled’ two times. According to her, in Syria, her child would care more about doing the homework to the point where he would go to their neighbours to seek help. However, she stated that in Scotland there is less emphasis on this aspect of schooling. According to Manal, when children

are encouraged to prioritise doing their homework over playing, they acquire a sense of 'responsibility', as visible in the following extract:

> Their dad and I stay upset because of this situation, they come from school and that's it. They put the bag aside; they sit, eat, watch TV, in Syria we will only turn on the TV on Thursday and Friday which is the weekend in Syria. Here I feel they are a bit spoiled, **extra spoiled**. It shouldn't be without homework… because the child does not have responsibility. He should bring homework with him, he should be worried about the homework, he should come sit, solve and correct his homework.

Manal's (P) views on homework speaks to her cultural background on how children should be brought up. They also speak to her vision of how education should be. Being 'upset' for not seeing her children doing any homework and turning into 'spoiled' individuals are linked to the importance of education for her and its role in shaping her children's identities. For Manal, schools should teach students to be responsible and hard-working, but she does not seem to perceive the Scottish school fulfilling that role. Thus, Manal is an example of the few parents in this study who favoured the homework aspect of the Syrian school over that of the Scottish one.

The majority of the parents, however, praised the Scottish way of dealing with homework (as they saw it in their children's school) over the Syrian one. Renad (P) mentioned that the different homework load has affected the way her son feels towards school, something which was also observed by other parents. As an example of why homework made her child resent school in the previous setting, Renad mentioned that her son's hand would hurt due to the large amount of writing he had to do for his homework. She mentioned that her children like to go to school in Scotland because there is less homework.

6.2.2 Technology

Technology was another theme that occurred in several of the interviews while discussing homework. The families who talked about this all noticed that inclusion of technology is part of the educational process in Scotland much more than in Syria. Sofyan (P) said 'he does everything on the iPad; he solves the homework, and he translates Spanish sometimes'. Some families liked schools in Scotland because there is more dependency on technology when dealing with homework. Halima (P) stressed on the use of technology for homework. For example, she observed the following about the use of websites to help students with their homework:

> **They give a lot of websites**. You should visit that website and there will be exercises (…) Here it's nice that they give them less homework, but they help them with these websites. Through these websites, they can for example find another way to explain the lesson. Maybe on the website there are exercises. They use technology. For example, here they have like an application for the school to know what homework your child has, what homework he doesn't have, and what nice things he did at school.

On the other hand, Malak (P) criticised the dependency on technology when it comes to homework. She expressed the belief that doing more writing helps students develop their dictation

and handwriting when students use the pen and paper. In the way she sees it, in Scotland, students depend too much on their iPad, which, according to the mother, won't help improve those skills. She said:

> When he has homework, he holds the pen and the paper which teaches the child to have better handwriting and it improves his dictation skills. It will be very good; his writing is really good, and his reading good. You have writing, reading and dictation; these things are really important for you, and you need to keep holding the pen and write. However, now writing and answering are on iPad you know in the classroom there is no use for paper and pen for the child.

6.2.3 Nature of the Homework

This section explores the nature of homework in terms of how easy or difficult it was perceived to be by the participants. Most of the children compared the homework in their previous setting and Scotland in terms of easiness. For example, Maysa (C) said: 'I like the homework here; sometimes it is easy and sometimes it is challenging…I did not like the homework there, it was very hard'. Zaher (C) mentioned two reasons for why he finds homework easier in Scotland. The son highlighted that there is more understanding of student's individual capacities in finishing their homework in Scotland, and teachers explain the lessons and the required tasks better, unlike in his previous setting. Zaher said:

> They don't give a lot of homework and everything they ask for is based on our capacity. We only take homework here once or twice a week…I didn't like homework because it was hard, and a lot and teachers did not explain well… here it's different. Here they explain a lot.

Bisan (C) also compared the easiness of homework. She compared the homework she used to be assigned in the previous setting in Grade 1 with what her brother is assigned in Grade 1 in Scotland:

> Also, the homework they give us; hard things for a Grade 1. But here when I see what my brother in Grade 1 takes, I feel that it was really easy, like drawing. However, in Egypt I learned about adding and deduction… really hard things for a Grade 1 so when I came here in Grade 3, they gave me easy things. I mean Grade 3 here is easier than a Grade 1 there.

Another reason for the easiness of homework is that students in Scotland are given more time to turn in their homework. Bisan (C) mentioned that in her previous setting, she had to turn in the homework the next day regardless of its amount and difficulty. On the other hand, in Scotland she is given around five days to turn in the homework. Sometimes they are allowed to turn in late with no major consequences. Thus, the learner in given more control, which accords with weaker framing. Mohammed raised the same point:

> That was the first priority back home. They gave us homework every day…nearly. Here it's different, back home when we hand the homework, we had to do it the same day and give it the next day…Here is better.

Fear of punishment was the motivation for Mohammed (C) to do the homework and turn it in on time, as if it were a 'duty'; otherwise he would 'get into a lot of trouble'. Mo'men (C) raised a

similar point as he argued that lack of punishment in Scotland for not doing the homework made it seem easy. He said:

> Homework in Syria was hard. If I didn't do the homework, I had to write it ten times as a punishment. However, here if you don't do your homework the worst thing a teacher can do will ask you to do it in that class. We only write the answers. It's really easy here.

Even though some parents, like Sofyan and Halima, did not like it when their children are punished for not doing the homework, others like Manal did not have a problem with it. Manal seemed to agree with the strict teachers and the strong framing because it was more effective in pushing students to take homework more seriously. She said, 'there was no child who would dare to sleep without doing his homework because in the morning he would go to school, and he would be punished'.

Overall, homework in Scotland is perceived to be easier than in Syria and the other settings.

6.2.4 How Important is Homework for the Parents?

Homework plays an important role in constructing a relationship between parents and their children's schooling. The majority of parents reported that being involved with their children's homework allowed them to engage with their children's educational life and thus share a responsibility to work towards securing a better future for their children. Parents focused on their role of supervising with their children's homework. They expressed a high level of engagement and gave help whenever possible. In their previous setting, most families did not have a problem helping their children with their homework; this was a taken-for-granted aspect of every-day life, and it involved a shared understanding of how parents and school worked together in the children's education. However, these assumptions and role changed drastically after the families arrived in Scotland. One reason already given for this is the lowered amount of homework generally given to children in Scotland. A second fundamental reason is the language barrier that exists between many of the parents and what their children do at school, which changed the dynamics of parents' involvement from necessary to optional or even unwanted. Previous studies, such as Deng and Marlowe (2013) and Mcbrian (2005), discuss how the language barrier results in the 'role reversal' (McBrien, 2005, p.330) between the role of the parents and the children. The finding of this study suggests the role of the parents being 'faded', as Fayza (P) explained in the following excerpt:

> Even if they get homework, I cannot help. They used to ask me but now they don't ask me anymore because now they think that they understand more than me. They tell me: 'We know how to speak the language more than you!'

What McBrien (2005) refers to as a reversal in roles in when the children take the responsibility of translating to their parents and taking control over communication between their parents and the mainstream society. However, in this case, the children do not help their parents. The parents' role was to help their children in their homework, yet, that role seem to fade eventually and to not exist later on.

In addition, the language shift can have a negative effect on the self-perception of parents in their relationship with their children. Halima (P) expressed that she felt 'illiterate' because of her inability to follow her children's exercises at home. She continued, 'You know, to be honest I started to think of studying science just to keep up with him'. For this mother, keeping up with the science curriculum is the hardest part; therefore, pursuing education to gain more understanding about the terminology of science was a strategy she considered as a way to help her child. Halima also mentioned another reason for feeling illiterate and for not following up with her children's homework, namely the availability of books. This will be explained further in the next chapter, as it is part of the topic of curriculum. Other parents had other ways to stay involved. For example, Sofyan (P) would ask his son to sit beside him while the son was working on his homework as one way of being involved. Even though he could not help him with the homework as he had done before, this still allowed for them to have a sense of working together.

Malak (P) expressed a strong emotional connection to her role in following up on her children's homework, all her hard work in helping them do their homework, and her pride when they received compliments from the teacher. These compliments on her children's good work seemed to make her feel like a proud mother and a competent parent. She mentioned how sad she was when she lost all the homework notebooks of her children during the Syrian war:

> In Syria when the teacher would correct his homework, she would give him a star and she would write 'excellent doctor' *subhan Allah* [Islamic expression meaning Glory to God]. I left the notebooks of my children at our house in Syria, but then because of the war my house got burnt down. I told my father-in-law I felt really bad that I lost the photos and the notebooks of my children.

6.2.5 Summarising the Section on Homework

Based on this section's analysis, it can be concluded that these families encountered significant pedagogical differences in different aspects of homework that speak to cultural mindsets around what childhood and education should be. 11 out of the 12 families in this study agreed that students in Scotland are given less homework and more time to work on it, and that homework involves less drilling and memorisation. There was agreement among all but Sofyan (P) and Adam (C) that in all their previous settings, teachers had asked students to do much more homework with no consideration for students' time, capacity, ability, or the pressure the homework may have caused to the family. At the same time, homework also seems to have been a kind of "glue" factor in the type of relationship between parents and children in many of these families. By staying up to date with their children's homework, and by helping them with tackling the vast amounts of homework they were assigned every day, the parents felt that they were connected with their children – both in the present moment, and through assuring a good preparation for their future. Also, in a way, the parents had some control over their children's homework. However, that control vanished upon their arrival to Scotland which led a feeling of isolation similar to what parents in Blakely (1983) felt. Theoretically speaking, two factors have come to stand out for me most explicitly in the analysis of homework as discussed in many of the interviews.

The first is that teachers in the previous Syrian settings exerted explicit control over all aspects of homework. This control can be understood in Bernstein's terminology as strong framing (F+). This strong framing is clearly visible in the kind of pedagogy practiced by the teachers, as they had control over the sequencing, the criteria of knowledge, the pacing, and the social base for knowledge transmission. In Scotland, parents noticed that students are given more choice and more time to work on their homework, and thus can exert some control over aspects of their own homework. Some parents expressed their preference for strong framing when dealing with homework inside the classroom because it made the students consider the possible consequences for not doing the homework. Other parents preferred the weak framing because there is less pressure on them and their children.

The second factor is the banking concept of education. Families compared the nature of homework between their previous setting and Scotland in terms of the kind of exercises the children and young people were given. The majority of the families did not like the huge amount of homework students had to do. Reiterating a theme that often came back during the interviews, parent participants stated that their children would spend a lot of time doing exercises and then memorising the questions. Fayza (P) mentioned a similar point, namely that memorisation was part of the homework, and that her children would sit, and she would help them memorise the lesson as if the homework is no more than a list of phrases to be deposited in the students' brain. The main reason students were memorising can be concluded in what Rania (C) said: 'so that the information would get stuck in my mind'. This is an interesting use of language because it seems to refer directly to Freire's banking concept of education. Freire (1970, 2018) was very critical of this kind of learning where information is poured into students' brains without giving students the chance to think, contemplate, or argue about the knowledge transmitted to them.

6.3 Student-Teacher Relationship

Various studies, as reviewed in Chapter 4, have concluded that a good student-teacher relationship can nurture a sense of belonging for students and that it can lead to holistic learning outcomes (Cornelius-White, 2007; Hamre and Pianta, 2001; Stebleton et al., 2014). Teachers' qualities such as warmth and empathy have further been found to correlate with students' success and satisfaction (Cornelius-White, 2007). The literature has also revealed that a positive teacher-student relationship is important for students' adjustment, especially their emotional and social adjustment (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Chamizo-Nieto et al., 2021; Murray & Greenberg, 2000).

Teaching diverse classes poses numerous challenges, in particular when students are from a different religion or cultural background, as in the case of Muslim Syrian students in Scotland. As will be explained later, most participants in this study expressed a preference for the teacher-student relationships in Scotland, which suggests that ethnic differences were not a problem. This contradicts the findings in Saft and Pianta (2001), who concluded in their study that the relationship between teachers and students was rated as more positive when they shared similar ethnicities.

Malak (P) commented that there was a difference between the relationships between the teacher and students in Syria and in Scotland. This mother described teachers in Scotland as 'friendly', whereas she explained that in Syria, 'students fear teachers (…) even when they see the teacher in the street (…) they do not necessarily fear the teacher because of beating; the teacher had respect'. The children in this study made similar comments, stating that their previous relationships with their teachers had been built on fear. For example, Mo'men (C) explained:

> The teacher [in Syria] had a strong presence and the teacher's word was final. Teachers might use a stick or just give us a look, but here they gave us a punishment card; what would that do? It doesn't scare us!

For Mo'men and other participants the difference in the nature of punishment made the punishment in Scotland seem 'light' compared to the corporal punishment they experienced in their previous setting. Other parents, like Sofyan (P), described the majority of Syrian teachers as 'violent'. Sofyan also mentioned that teachers in Syria might 'scream', 'insult', or 'hit' children, which might 'affect the psychology of the student'. Sofyan continued to describe teachers in Scotland, saying, 'here they respect and take care of the student'. This friendly behaviour from teachers made students feel their teachers were approachable. Mohammed (C) noted that when he is dealing with a nice teacher, he will feel comfortable enough to go and talk to them; 'however, the teachers back home, they never smile. Sometimes, here, we do something funny, and the teacher would smile. That was surprising'. Moreover, good teacher-student relationships contributed to students' motivation to learn. Maysa (C) liked going to school and attending classes in her schools in Scotland because teachers there are 'nice'. Also, Manal (P) believed that the way they deal with the students in Scotland made her children like learning more:

> There, if he didn't memorise something on time, the student would be punished. Here, they deal with it with warmth as they give more space and chances for the student (…) my children here found it something of a luxury. The teachers give them what they wanted. There are no punishments here, and they are not tough on the children.

In their previous setting, the participants indicated that there were typically significant power differences between the roles of students and teachers. The nature of the relationship between the teacher and the students – including the amount of framing – plays a role in determining the 'hierarchical relations' inside the classroom (Bernstein, 2000, p. 13).

Typically, in the participants' previous settings, teachers cultivated a strict hierarchy over students in strongly framed pedagogies. By contrast, in Scotland there is typically weaker framing in the teacher-student relationships, which are less hierarchical and strict, and not entirely controlled by the teachers. In Scotland, students have the space to approach the teachers in a dialogic relationship (again evoking Freire's concept of dialogic education). Building on Schweisfurth's (2013) "Classroom relationships continuum" (Figure 4.5), the relationship between participant students and their teachers in their previous setting could be described as "authoritarian" placing the pedagogy in their previous setting on the less earner-centred end of the continuum. On the other hand, it places

the pedagogy in Scotland on the more learner-centred end making the relationship between the teacher and the students "democratic".

That difference in framing in the relationship between the teacher and the students made a difference to the students' relationship with the whole school. Parents noticed their children liked school more in Scotland and were more encouraged to attend. Students also felt this difference in framing allowed them to approach teachers in Scotland more easily than in their previous setting.

6.4 Identity and Pedagogy

Now I want to ask how these three aspects of pedagogy (teaching style, homework, and teacher-student relationship) could contribute to the process of identity construction. To answer this question, I am recalling two of Hall's premises around the construction of identities. The first one is that history plays a role in constructing 'what we have become' (Hall, 2005, p. 445) due to the different changes and transformation one experiences throughout history. The second one is that identity is not an 'essence' (S. Hall, 2005, p. 226) but rather a positioning. In other words, the changes one experiences places him or her in a different position.

The differences in teaching methods might have influenced children's identity as some of the parents noticed changes in their children's identities as students. These changes address some of the attributes of the four capacities within CfE (Figure 2.1). Those who became, as the parents described them, 'more motivated' learners accomplished one of the attributes of being *successful learner,* or 'braver', as will be explained in the next example, addressed becoming *confident individuals*. From a more particular aspect on how ways of teaching could construct students' personality, Kawthar (P) noted that the teaching strategies teachers adopt in Scotland have influenced the development of her son Ashraf's personality in a positive way. The mother discussed in particular how making presentations made her child 'more confident and braver'. Kawthar noted that Ashraf is shy but presenting in front of his classmates made him 'talk more'. According to the mother, teachers in Syria do not usually ask students to make presentations: 'in Syria, we do not have that culture (…) but here they try to enhance this confidence in all students to be able to speak in front of people'. The mother also praised the way her son is taught how to prepare the materials for any presentation all by himself. She said:

> He would open his laptop, create video and PowerPoint, and he would search on Google for information about earthquakes for example or anything (…) He would present and explain to his classmates. You know, now he has confidence to stand and speak in front of people. When he presents to us at home, his dad and I would be standing listening to him feeling astonished. I'm sure if he was in Syria, he wouldn't have these skills or the knowledge about these things [she refers to creating videos and using PowerPoint].

From this extract, it is noticeable that, according to his mother, Ashraf became more confident and outspoken in front of people. According to her, he used to be a shy boy with few things to say. However, teachers who gave him tasks such as making his own presentation, doing his own research

and creating his own visuals, helped him become 'braver' as his mother described him. In line with Hall's (2014) definition of identity, Ashrafs' personality and other students' personality is not fixed. Rather, they went through 'constant transformation' which helped them become less shy, active learners and more motivated to learn (Hall, 2014, p. 225). Perhaps we can say that Ashraf's cultural identity is changing under the influence of a specific set of ideas about the purposes of education – the "four capacities" discussed in Figure 2.1 – in which students are educated to become Scottish citizens, which includes being a confident individual. In this way, Ashraf is not just personally becoming more confident – he is also becoming confident within the context of an educational system that is part of a movement of nation-building, of a Scottish community, and thereby becoming more "Scottish".

In terms of homework, it turns out that there is a tremendous impact different ideas and practices of homework can have on the identity, not only of the children, but also of their parents. Since identity, in Hall's (1997) terms, is a point of suture, this transition from a strongly framed pedagogy to a weakly framed pedagogy affected the way these parents perceived their identity as competent parents and their children's as competent students. For some of these parents, stronger framing encouraged their children to be more 'responsible', while weak framing risked making them 'spoiled'. In Scotland, most of these parents felt they had less of a role in teaching and supporting their children, which is different to their previous level of involvement in their children's education. Because of differences in homework practices and the language barrier in Scotland, parents perceived their involvement as minimal, and their help as increasingly unnecessary. Something that may seem relatively trivial at first sight, homework, can thus be understood as being embedded within long held traditions and belief-systems. Perhaps homework functioned as a suturing factor (using Hall's (1997) terminology) in the identity formation in relation to the kind of cultural beliefs and practices both their parents and the wider society hoped to induce them into. When a radical shift in the role of homework took place, and the parents could no longer take on the guiding role they used to have in their previous life, this may have been like a ripping open of the sutures that had previously tied their identity to that of their children. An important question that might have to be asked is whether it would be possible to pay more attention to the potential role played by parents in homework-making of their children, though there is no place nor time to delve further into this question here in this thesis.

Moreover, and similarly to what was observed in the previous paragraph, some other parents observed that having less homework made their children more enthusiastic and more motivated to learn, which coincides with one of the four capacities, namely "successful learners". This capacity occurs too in the families' discussion of the student-teacher relationship. As the difference in framing affected the identity of the students as they became students who were more motivated to learn, go to school, and interact with teachers.

On the other hand, some parents felt that the lower homework load in Scotland was making their children 'less responsible, 'less hard-workers' and 'lazy'. However, in the "four capacities for the Curriculum of Excellence", one of the four capacities stated is "responsible citizens". This seems to contradict the parents' observation. Another of the four capacities is being "effective contributors", which includes the attribute of "self-reliance". This seems to be directly visible in the way in which the students respond to their parents' attempts to help them in their homework, when they reject that help by stating that they want to do it by themselves. There is a strong emphasis on individuality and independence from others contained in the framework of excellence, which clashes with the parents' wish for community with their children. There were some parents who appreciated the lower homework load, because there was too much pressure on them when they had to help their children for hours every day. But generally, the parents' lifeworld was disturbed by the absence of their role in supporting their children with their homework. Malak's emotional connection with her children's homework, which shows in her sadness in losing her children's homework notebooks, shows the extent of involvement in her children's homework. Now, not only the notebooks, but the involvement too is gone.

To summarise, the process of *becoming* is apparent in these connections between themes and theoretical lenses. In a way, the children are becoming more "Scottish", and the parents are "less involved" and with "less control" in their children's education. That led some parents to perceive their *position* in Scotland as unnecessary and useless in terms of following up with their children's education. It also led the children to position their parents in the same way (that is, as unnecessary and useless in relation to their schooling) and to position themselves as individuals with more control over their learning process compared to the control they had in their previous setting where parents had some control. The parents do not have the control over their children's schooling in Scotland as they did in their previous settings, affecting the way the parents and children perceive their own and each other's positions.

6.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the main differences and similarities between pedagogies in the participants' current and previous settings. Based on the way they compare the two settings, it seems that there are more differences than similarities to be observed. Some of the similarities they did note included that some teachers in the previous setting try to interact with students in the classrooms in a way similar to how teachers do it in Scotland. There is also some sort of punishment in both settings, and students are assigned homework in both settings. The differences, on the other hand, include different aspects within the teaching methods inside the classroom. There was much more implementation of memorisation and writing in the children's previous settings, and more implementation of interactive learning in Scotland. Another difference was the load and nature of homework given to students. Homework in their previous settings was much higher in quantity, and it was more difficult to deal with for both the students and parents. Teachers in Scotland showed a

higher degree of flexibility in their relationship with the students and the way they handled homework. Also, to the participants, teachers in Scotland seem to treat the children at school in a better way and give students space for communication. Some parents noticed that these differences in pedagogy affected their children's identity as students. Others perceived their children in Scotland to be 'less hard-worker', 'spoiled' and 'irresponsible'. On the positive side, some parents noticed their children are becoming 'less shy', 'more creative' and 'motivated-learners'. Throughout the three themes within pedagogy mentioned in this chapter there is clear evidence that pedagogy can contribute to the process of constructing identities in certain ways.

Pedagogy is not the only focus of this project, but also curriculum. The next chapter aims at finding similarities and differences between the curricula in the participants' previous and currents settings. It will also explore the connection between curriculum and identity construction from the perspective of the participants.

Chapter 7: Analysis of Curriculum Through the Perceptions of the Participants, and as a Factor in Identity Construction

As mentioned earlier, Chapter 6 and 7 analyse data in relation to RQ1. This chapter answers the second sub-question of RQ1, which is: What are the differences and the similarities observed by the participants between curriculum in Syria and Scotland? How have these differences affected the participants' identities? Thus, curriculum is the main point of focus in this chapter. Before setting out on the chapter there is an important note I want to make. My plan was originally to focus on analysing the different curricula in Syria and Scotland as experienced by the participants. However, when asking the parents about curriculum, they often expressed a sense of dissatisfaction with their lack of insight into the curriculum their children are offered at schools in Scotland. They referred to two main barriers: language, and the availability of curriculum books. Although this theme might be seen to technically fall outside of the theme of "curriculum", it is important that the parents' repeated attention to these barriers showed that their view of the curriculum includes their own engagement in, and knowledge about, their children's curriculum. Another important point is that the parents' knowledge about the curriculum varied mainly based on how much their children share with them. In other words, knowing what their children learn at school, and the possibility for them to be involved in the learning process, is a central aspect of the curriculum for them. This is why I will start the chapter with the theme of the two barriers, to then continue with an analysis of the different curricula as perceived by the participants. Most of the families' experiences with curriculum before coming to Scotland revolved around a rigid content-based curriculum in their previous setting in which the knowledge to be transmitted in schools is centrally dictated and there is no autonomy for teachers to choose what they teach the children in their classrooms.

Having discussed pedagogy as one of the main two aspects of education, I now turn to the second aspect: curriculum. Curriculum can be defined in a variety of different ways (Kelly, 2009). In order to stay consistent with what I am most interested in in this study – the experience of the participants in the shift they made from a Syrian educational context to a Scottish one – I will follow the definition of curriculum proposed by Kelly (2009), namely as 'the totality of the experiences the pupil has as a result of the provision made' (Kelly, 2009, p. 8). Adopting this definition means that curriculum is always understood as an experience that is the result of something planned and organised by others for pupils and includes all experiences within all the different dimensions of curriculum. This chapter tries to approach curriculum through analysing the participant families' perceptions of the curriculum in Syria and Scotland. Through the analysis, Aoki (2004) notions of the planned and lived curriculum, as well as Kelly (2009) seven dimensions of curriculum, will be connected to the different kinds of curriculum the families report on having experienced in Syria and in Scotland. One necessary limitation on this study is that the participants talked more about the lived

curriculum and less about the planned curriculum. This chapter also explores other layers of curriculum within these experiences, including hegemony (Apple, 2004), and Doherty's (2018) argument of the principle of connectedness in curricular nationalism and nationalism in curriculum as theorised by Anderson (2006). Connections to Hall's theorisation of identity are made throughout the different sections. In this Chapter and the previous one, I refer to Hall's concept of identity as a process of becoming. For some, this idea of "becoming" is a truism, but the parents in this study seem to perceive their children's identity as a static pattern. They want their children to adhere to their pattern of who they expect them to be.

I will give an overall glimpse of what is coming in the next sub-sections. The first part of this chapter discusses the barriers in the parents' involvement in their children's curriculum. Then, the quantity of knowledge taught in the curriculum is discussed based on the participants' experiences. As explained in the previous chapter, education in Scotland is more learner-centred. Figure (4.3) shows that the nature of knowledge in learner-centred education tends to be more fluid. Lastly, this chapter focuses on families' observations and concerns about some school subjects within the Scottish curriculum.

7.1 Barriers of Parents' Involvement with the Curriculum

The quantity of information students learn in Scotland is considerably less than that in their previous setting, which made the curriculum in Scotland seem easier for most of these families. Even though the easiness means the parents do not need to follow up with everything as they used to do, some parents seemed unsatisfied with their inability to be as involved. These parents wanted to feel they still have a role in their children's education. Parents in the study shared a feeling of exclusion similar to that raised by parents in Sime et al. (2018). Parents in Sime et al. (2018) felt that schools in Scotland did not include them in their children's education in the way they were used to in their own country and expected the same involvement in the host country.

Again, similar to parents' desire to be as involved as they used to be in their children's homework follow up, being involved with their children's curriculum present another taken-for-granted aspect of how their children's education should be. There is a difference between what the parents mean by being involved in the curriculum and helping their children in their homework. The former means that the parents want to know what their children learn at school, in order to enable them to teach their children about other things related to what their children learn in school. It also means they want to support their children with difficulties they face in their engagement with the curriculum. In this way, they take on part of the role of teacher. The latter means that the parents help with the homework the teachers send home. In both cases, not being able to be as involved as expected in their education due to these barriers affects parents' confidence in their ability to help and their self-perception.

There are two barriers for the parents to be less capable to follow up with the Scottish curriculum. The first is the language barrier. As explained earlier, my participants are Arabic native speakers, and English is their second language. Even though some of the parents learned English before, they demonstrated an inability to spontaneously communicate in English as well as reading and understanding texts, which resulted in great difficulty to fully grasp the content of the curriculum. The second obstacle was that, unlike what they used to do back in their home country, the students do not take their books back to the house. This resulted in parents' inability to stay apprised of what their children learn on a daily basis. While only few of the parents were happy about this certain aspect, the rest showed clear signs of dissatisfaction as explained in later sections in details.

7.1.1 Language

As said, and similar to the findings of (Atwell et al., 2009; Blakely, 1983; Deng & Marlowe, 2013; Epstein, 1987; Tadesse, 2014), one of the primary challenges the families experienced in relation to the curriculum was language. The participating families often elaborated on this and saw it as one of the main differences between the curriculum in their former setting and in Scotland. Since the curriculum was in their native language in their previous settings, it was easy for parents to understand the content of the curriculum there and to form judgements about it, unlike in Scotland. Here, the parents are unable to take a full grasp of the curriculum content in Scotland because of their lack of proficiency in English, even though most of them expressed a great desire to be as involved with their children's education as they used to be in their previous setting.

For instance, Halima (P) said: 'Language is an obstacle even though I study ESOL level 5 (…) but I cannot follow up with my son (…) I don't know how to help him (…)'. This inability to help was obvious to the children as well, leading them to feel that they do not need their parents as much as they needed them in their previous settings. Fayza (P) mentioned that 'they don't ask me anymore because they think that they understand more than me in terms of language'. As observed in relation to homework, the parents' identity seems to have changed quite radically because of this change. From perceiving themselves as a valuable or even indispensable source of knowledge and aid, they have now become an unqualified helper. The new geographical and educational circumstances changed the parents' perception of their identity as helpers and the children's perception of their parents as being able to help them. In that sense, to the parents and the children, the parents' identity is not fixed, rather it has changed and produced a new identity (Hall, 1996). As Hall (1997) argues looking at identity as an essence is problematic, rather identity is positioning. The parents' new positioning as unqualified helpers resulted in frustration from the parents' side and disconnection between the parents and their children.

The children seem to accept the new positioning of their parents since they are capable to deal with their homework without their parents, however, the parents do not seem to accept it. This could be because of the cultural family dynamics the parents have in mind about their relationship with their children where parents have the power and control. Coming to Scotland though flipped that

power as the parents are positioned now in a less controlling and less powerful position. This experience of the participants is similar to the experience of parents in Isik-Ercan (2012) who felt disconnection with their children. The reason for this disconnection in Isik-Ercan (2012) was the lack of sharing form the children's part. In this study, there is also lack of sharing in terms of what the children learn at school leading to disconnection. The frustration some of the parents expressed could also relate to the 'imbalance' created at home due to resettlement (Deng & Marlowe, 2013, p. 419). Similar to the parents in Deng and Marlowe (2013), some parents in this study told me that their inability to help their children created a feeling of insecurity, due to their ideas of how the relationship between them and their children should be when it comes to their education. Atwell et al. (2009) also observe that learning the language of the host country was a major obstacle for parents' involvement in their children's schooling, leading them to conclude that language is a tool of 'power' (p. 678). The findings of this project resonate with their conclusion. English for the participants was a tool of power, so not having this power placed them in a powerless position to understand the educational curriculum in Scotland.

Moskal (2016) found that refugee students who arrived in their host country at an older age were more affected by the language barrier. For students in this study, language was a problem, especially for those who came in at an older age. This finding was echoed by some of my participants. For instance, Majed (C) said: 'I find physics a bit hard because there are some English words that are hard to understand.' Rania (C) also felt the same. She believed that the curriculum in Scotland is not hard but sometimes she faces difficulty because of the language barrier.

For some participants, the barrier of language did not only affect the students' understanding of course materials, but also affected their future chances. Malak (P) expressed her sorrow for her oldest son, who came to Scotland and attended only the last two years of high school there. The mother mentioned that because of language, he had not been able to get the grades which would have qualified him to study medicine.

> He only studied two years, you know, and by the time he started to learn the language, he moved to college. He wanted to study medicine. In Syria, he was an excellent student and a fast learner, but poor him the language affected him. Sometimes I fight with his father. I tell him you are the one to blame, why you didn't tell me when you arrived in the UK [the father arrived in the UK first and then his family followed him] to find an English tutor for him to teach him at home in Syria.

In this excerpt, it seems that Malak blamed her husband for her son's lack of English skills. She also compared her son's identity as a student between Scotland and Syria. In Syria, he was 'excellent' and a 'fast learner'. However, the mother felt that due to the language barrier in Scotland, her son's academic performance deteriorated. In relation to this, Hall (2005) proposes that history, as an element of identity construction, raises the question of 'what we have become'. According to Malak, her oldest son's identity as a student became different than how it used to be. In contrast to what Malak said – that due to language, her son did not get high enough grades for him to get

admission to study medicine – Manal (P) noticed that in Scotland students are given the chance to re-take tests in order to get the grade the student is aiming for. She said: 'here they keep studying, re-taking test until their performance becomes better and they get acceptance from college'. It is possible that Malak does not have enough background information about the educational system in Scotland to know her son could re-take his tests until he gets admission.

On the other hand, for the younger participants language was not an issue. Parents praised the role the Scottish school has made in teaching their children English. They also observed that their children – their younger children in particular – are acquiring the language with a Scottish accent. Sofyan (P) describes his son's English fluency as 'a nightingale' which is an Arabic expression to describe one's perfect fluency. Renad (P) also said 'Mashallah [Arabic religious expression meaning it is as God wills] my children speak in a Scottish accent.'. To have acquired the regional accent means that their children might be recognised more quickly as belonging to the Scottish identity.

Other than language, curriculum books are another barrier, as explored next.

7.1.2 Availability of Curriculum Books

Unlike what they used to do back in their home country, the students do not take their books back to the house in Scotland. This resulted in parents' inability to stay apprised of what their children learn on a daily basis resulting in their frustration. However, a few of the parents were happy about this certain aspect. Some families discussed during the interviews their inability to access curriculum related textbooks. Those families told me that the children were not allowed to take books home from school. Not bringing books home affected their involvement in the curriculum. The students in their former setting used to take their books home with them when they left school. Having schoolbooks at home allowed parents to follow up with the curriculum content and help their children with any difficulty they were facing in the curriculum content. They were able to have knowledge about what their children studied lesson by lesson. However, after arriving in Scotland, all of the student participants keep their books at school. For example, when I asked Renad (P) if her child is allowed to bring the books home, she asked him, and he said no. The majority of parents seem to prefer bringing books home, except for Aseel, who thinks it is 'more comfortable for the child (…) they study at school from 9:00 to 3:00. Why should the student bring the books home?'.

Not bringing books home made some parents feel left out. For instance, Fayza (P) wished that her children would bring books home to be able to know what they are learning at school. She said: 'There are no books, there is no rigid curriculum (…) I don't know what they take at school'. Similarly, Renad (P) felt that not having books was hindering her from helping her children: 'I cannot help him because I don't know what he is studying'. That feeling of being left out led parents such as Kawthar (P) to feel that school is like a 'secret' where all materials for learning are kept at school which made her feel excluded from her child's education:

> This upset me to be honest (…) I don't know what the curriculum here is about. I have no idea. You don't see a notebook or a book, not even a paper, no indicators, nothing. The bag only has the lunch box (…) at least I want to be in the picture about the things he learned. What is his curriculum! (…) They don't include you (…) I feel the school is like a secret (…).

As with language, not being able to follow up with the curriculum of her children, affected some parent's perception of their identity. For instance, Halima (P) expressed that she felt 'illiterate'. Whenever she tries to understand the exercises her children bring home with them from school, she feels lost because she cannot find a reference book that explains the exercises. She said:

> I look at the exercises (…) I don't know what's this and what's that, where it came from and what's the curriculum (…) there are no books. They do not follow a specific book to look at (…) there are no books, and that makes one lost and unable to follow up with their children. One becomes like an illiterate… I felt like if I were illiterate; could not read, write, follow up with my son or do anything with my son.

The mother seemed emotional talking about this. She repeatedly described her inability to help her child. For instance, she used the word 'lost' and 'illiterate' multiple times to describe her feelings when she could not help her child as she used to. As a consequence, she felt hopeless to the point where she feels she needs to find a strategy that could help her fix that issue which to her was getting a degree in science.

Samira (P) and Intesar (P) also expressed feeling 'upset' for the same reason. They both mentioned that they only know about the curriculum through what their children tell them. Intesar said: 'I don't know what he took except for what he tells me. It's all oral'. Similar to Halima (P), Intesar (P) tried to think of another strategy to fill the gap of her lack of knowledge about the curriculum. She started to look for other ways to get her hands on the curriculum books.

> I tried to find books. They told me to buy them from Amazon, but I didn't know how to do it (…) I really want to have books. There should be books.

Then Intesar suggested that Scotland should follow the way books are handled in their former setting. In the former setting, students are given books and these books should be returned at the end of the academic year.

In this section, I have discussed the main two barriers discussed by the participant parents to being involved in their children's school curriculum. The first barrier was language, which resulted in a power shift between the parents and their children. Since some of the parents were very involved with their children's education in their previous setting, not being able to understand everything in the curriculum due to language affected their self-perception and their children's perception of their parents as incapable of helping. The other barrier stems from the observation that parents were used to follow their children's education closely by going through their schoolbooks to check what lesson they had learned. Having books between their hands made it easier for them to know and understand exactly what the particular content of their children's education was. However, in Scotland this

particularity of knowledge is not provided for them. Within these barriers, it could be observed that the parents do not have enough knowledge about the education system in Scotland. Also, there is a lack of communication between school and home. None of the parents who complained about either barrier mentioned that they had a chance to communicate their struggle with keeping up with the curriculum with the school. This is a recurring issue in the literature as well. Different studies observe that there is not enough communication between refugee families and school, which causes more confusion and struggle to the parents in particular (Bhattacharya, 2000; Isik-Ercan, 2012; Lan, 2018; Tadesse, 2014). Similar to what those studies suggest, the findings of this project indicate the importance of having better communication between school and home.

Even though the parents do not have detailed knowledge about the students' curriculum, they are rather aware of the knowledge their children learn at school in a general sense from what their children tell them and what the teachers tell them during Parents' Day, as will be further explained in the next section.

7.2 The Quantity of Knowledge Taught in the Curriculum

The parents in this section explained that another main difference between curriculum in Syria and Scotland is the quantity of knowledge taught in the curriculum, and how easy it is to learn. The families talked about how each class has its books and how these books have to be taught during the academic year. The content of this book is fixed, and the teachers have to follow what is in the book to teach students. In her argument about the kind of knowledge within the educational continuum, Schweisfurth (2013) placed two kinds of knowledge on both ends of that continuum (Figure 4.3): fixed knowledge and fluid knowledge. According to the participants' experiences, the curriculum in their previous setting seems to tend strongly toward a fixed content-based curriculum, and in Scotland more toward the fluid end of the continuum.

Most of the families indicated that in their previous settings rote learning was adopted at the school. As discussed extensively in the analysis chapter on pedagogy, the families talked about the huge quantity of information students needed to study and memorise. What the families explained, as was also discussed there, can be related to the banking concept where teachers deposit the knowledge into the students (Freire, 1970). In line with Freire's critique on this type of education, all families seemed critical of the big amount of planned curriculum students are required to learn at school (Aoki, 2004; Kelly, 2009).

Halima gave the following description of the curriculum in her former setting: 'The curriculum was huge, difficult and illogical'. Also, the enormous amount of content in the planned curriculum added pressure on students to learn, memorise and do other school tasks all in one time; making the total curriculum 'exhausting' as Aseel (P) described it. The families seemed to be critical of the focus given to the planned curriculum, and the less focus given to the perceived curriculum in their previous settings. To recall, the planned curriculum is what is in the syllabuses and the perceived curriculum

is the students' knowledge and experiences inside the classroom. In other words, the focus was on finishing the fixed content-based curriculum regardless of the students' learning experience. Manal (P) explained this in the following way: 'They have to learn everything in the book by putting pressure or whatever it takes because it has to be finished by the end of the year'.

That huge quantity of planned curriculum resulted in perceiving the curriculum as difficult by the majority of the students. Bashar (C), for example, said: 'We had a lot of information to learn. That was very hard, but here it is easier'. As a student, Bashar reflected on his experience participating in the Syrian and the Scottish curricula. To him, having less content in the curriculum, that is, less subjects and less to do for each subject, correlated with the perception of the curriculum as easy. Parents too seemed to have the same perception. Halima (P), for example, noted that the Syrian curriculum is more difficult because students need to study all school subjects throughout the years, even the classes they do not need. For her, students who want to do science in the future do not need to study geography in middle school. On the other hand, she noted that in Scotland, students in Grade 3 choose the classes they want to take and the classes that can be useful to them makes the curriculum in Scotland seem easy. Halima said:

> Maybe the student wants to study maths or physics, so he or she wouldn't care about that [by that she means classes such as history and geography]. There, in Syria, students must study everything regardless of what they want to do in the future and their abilities.

With all that quantity, students were under pressure to gain knowledge about a lot of topics and to memorise a lot, which led to complaints from the students to their parents about the school in their previous setting. Most families noted that their children do not seem to complain about the volume of fixed curriculum in Scotland. The lack of complaints also made parents perceive the curriculum in Scotland as easier. For instance, Fayza (P) said: 'Here it is easy (…) there was a lot of information in Syria (…) which is unbeneficial. Here, they understand everything, and they did not complain about any issue'.

Kelly (2009) argues that more focus should be given to the received curriculum rather than the planned to eliminate the gap between theory and practice. Similarly, parents felt the inclusion of technology and learning experiments increases the extent of their children's ability to receive information by expanding the learning to both theory and practice, and not just theory as in Syria. Halima (P), for example, said:

> In Syria, the maths, biology, and science curriculum are very huge and long, and that is not good because there is no justification for cramming all this huge curriculum into a child without a convenient way of delivery; but here, using technology helps students.

Similarly, Wafaa (P) noted that including practice and experiments in these classes helps students learn faster and with no pressure. As she likes focusing on the 'practical' methods to learn science, she did not seem to favour learning science theoretically.

There is another reason why the curriculum in Scotland seemed easier for the families. Families felt that the knowledge their children had learned in their previous settings helped them in Scotland. Both parents and the children felt that the huge amount of curriculum content in their previous setting was beneficial in terms of following up with the curriculum in Scotland. For some, the curriculum in Scotland was a repetition or a revision of some of the knowledge they learned before. Mo'men (C) shared a similar thought from one of his previous science classes, 'The other day they started teaching us about blood in Scotland (…) I learned these things a long time ago in Syria'. That made some of the students, such as Bisan, Maram and Shimaa, excel in their classes, as the three of them noted how teachers were surprised by their performance and knowledge of different areas within the curriculum. This made them 'special' students as Maram described it: 'Sometimes I feel this thing is easy because I learned it before, so I become a special student here'.

Similarly, some parents observed that what their children learn at Scottish school is a repetition of what they already learned in early grades in their previous setting. Manal (P) said: 'There are things they learned in maths in the primary school in Syria that they now take in high school'. Intesar (P) raised a similar point:

> I was teaching him chemistry. It was the same chemistry he learned in Grade 4, and now he is S2. **Imagine**! (…) He took everything before, so it is all like repeating.

Intesar (P) seemed to be in disbelief; notice the stress on 'imagine'. This disbelief could be stemming from the huge difference between the kind of knowledge students in S2 in their previous setting would take compared to Scotland. It could also be because of the parent's expectation of the level of knowledge her children would be taking at such level. Even though their previous knowledge helped the student, Renad (P) noted that the huge amount of knowledge within the curriculum in the previous setting was unsuitable for the child's age: 'the student in Grade 1 was learning things that are difficult for his age capacity'. In a way, the curriculum in Syria as perceived by Renad seems to have an implicit view of the students' identity in terms of their capacities: one fixed curriculum for all students, where the students' capacities and limits are homogenised.

Intesar (P) criticised that her son is not 'studying much' in Scotland due to the lower amount of study material. That, too, could be because of what the parent is used to experience in terms of studying for test. Apparently, there is a difference between the amount of time and effort her son spends studying for the tests; in Scotland it is less than their previous setting.

Despite the families' criticism of the huge load of curriculum and the wide range of classes students had to go to in their previous setting, making the curriculum seem difficult, some felt there are advantages for that. Aseel (P) thought that the amount of knowledge the students acquired from that huge curriculum made them 'have a university-level brain'. That means students graduate from each grade with a brain full of knowledge. Some parents who held this view focused specifically on the knowledge students gain from the math and science curriculum. Furthermore, as explained earlier,

the families were critical of the huge amount of memorisation the students need to do in the overall curriculum, yet they seemed to like it when their children memorise timetables. Manal (P), Renad (P) and Fayza (P) seemed to like the huge amount of knowledge students had to do for maths, such as memorising the timetable at an early age. Students' knowledge about maths and timetables seemed important for the families. Fayza (P) said:

> In Syria, the child will memorise all the timetables by heart by Grade 3 or 4. He will never forget them because now it's engraved in his memory. This thing helped them a lot here, especially when studying maths because even with mathematical problems, they all learned it in Syria in detail. So, when they learned it here, they found it very easy.

This excerpt shows how some parents felt that their students' previous knowledge placed their children as good students in their Scottish classrooms, since they were ahead in the course material because of they had already learned in their previous settings. Some students too felt that their performance is good at school, despite their recent arrival in Scotland, because of their previous knowledge.

7.3 National History in the Curriculum

Even though the families could not fully grasp the content of curriculum in detail because of the language and unavailability of books, they were able to give general impressions of some school subjects, having formed an image of these subjects on the basis of oral expressions from their children, friends, and teachers during parent day. For instance, as mentioned earlier, the families noted that science and maths were more difficult in their previous settings than in Scotland.

Moreover, the families talked about the differences in history curriculum. In each country, the history of that country was taught. Manal (P) said: 'They study a history that is not our history'. The mother here refers to the history taught to her children at Scottish schools. Some students noticed the same, too, as when Mo'men (C) gave a further distinction: 'In history, they teach us about the history of their country. In Syria, we would learn about civilisations that settled in Syria such as Romans, Greeks and everything about Islamic history'. The main dilemma here is that Manal and Mo'men, like other participants, identified themselves as Syrian nationals and still do not seem to have a sense of belonging to the Scottish community. Notice how Manal said: 'Not our history' and Mo'men said: 'History of **their** country'. Chapter 3 contained a discussion of Doherty's (2018) argument that curriculum should create a sense of 'connectedness' where students can relate to the knowledge they gain at school (p. 200). Manal and Mo'men both seem to not relate to this knowledge. Doherty (2018) also argues that schools in the West should help students who come from different worlds 'recognise themselves in the worldview constructed and legitimated in official curricular knowledge' (p. 202). In this case, and based on what the participants reported, the Scottish curriculum does not seem to include their history within the curriculum. From the image constructed by the participants about the countries' curricula, it seems that each country tries to promote a sense of nationalism in the

curriculum through teaching the historical narrative which it considers to be the official history of that nation (Anderson, 2006).

As explained earlier, one of the roles of curriculum in society is to promote the concept of the nation and the citizen. Thus, when refugees go to school, refugee parents are torn between educating their children as citizens of Scotland or citizens of Syria which are very contradictory with their culture, history and religion. Thus, in this situation, the participants are subjected to the decisions of the dominant agents who try to promote their own nationalistic benefits. This role of the state in setting the curriculum also recalls the issue of hegemony in curriculum (Apple, 2004). Apple (2004) contends that teaching such narratives within the curriculum answers the question: 'What knowledge is of most worth?' (p. xix). In this case, it is the knowledge in relation to the history of the dominant group which results in the constitution of "us" and "them" binary. Manal's (P) use of "our" and Mo'men's use of "their" shows that they (as a minority) are the ones who are drawing the line between "us" and "them". That again recalls the extent to which the sense of "connectedness" discussed in the previous paragraph is fragile.

Other than history, the parents seemed to focus on expressing their thoughts about two topics within curriculum which are religious curriculum and sex education. These will be discussed in the following two sections.

7.4 Religious Education (RE)

The parent participants also highlighted differences between religious education in their previous settings and the religious content offered in the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence subject, 'Religious and moral education' designed for preschool age through to Secondary Year 3. In their previous settings, students were learning only about Islam at school. However, Christian students in Syria are excused from this class and offered another one where they learn about Christianity. In Scotland, students learn about several of the world religions, with special recognition of Christianity, because it most significantly contributed to the Scottish history and culture. This contributes to shaping Scotland's identity within curriculum (The Scottish Government, n.d.-b). The minimum amount of time per week designated for religious education is two and a half hours for primary school and two hours for secondary school (The Scottish Government, 2011). However, in Syria, students in Grade 1 and 2 take the religion class once weekly, then twice weekly starting from Grade 3 (Syrian Ministry of Education, 2020, n.d.).

In this section, I start by giving an overview of the RE class in Scotland. Then I discuss the families' attitudes towards it. Lastly, the challenges the parents faced because of the class are explored.

7.4.1 What is RE?

Religious Education (RE) in Scotland has two different forms. The first one is taught at Catholic Schools, and it is called Religious Education for Roman Catholic Schools (RERC). In non-

denominational schools, it is called Religious and Moral Education (RME) (The Scottish Government, n.d.-c). According to The Scottish Government (2011) religious education – in both non-denominational and denominational schools – contributes to the four aims of Curriculum for Excellence (successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens). Religious curriculum has two overarching goals (Education Scotland, 2014). The first one is developing students' attitudes and perspectives towards 'the complexities of human existence and co-existence' (Education Scotland, 2014, p. 6). The second one is ensuring students' achievements have positive impacts on their opportunities. There are other aims, such as developing students' capacity to reflect on their own experiences and the reasons for their existence (The Scottish Government, 2011).

Throughout all curriculum levels in Catholic school, students develop knowledge about the following aspects of Christianity: Mystery of God, In the Image of God, Revealed Truth of God, Son of God, Signs of God, Word of God, Hours of God, and Reign of God (The Scottish Government, n.d.-d). Also, students learn about Islam and Judaism in all curriculum levels (Education Scotland, 2017d; The Scottish Government, n.d, n.d.-d). During the first level of the curriculum, students recognise Islam and Judaism and their general beliefs and other details such as places of worship and books (Education Scotland, 2017d; The Scottish Government, n.d). For the second level, students start to identify the principles, customs and artefacts in Islam and Judaism. During the third level, students develop knowledge about the significance of the beliefs in both religions and can relate them to their own religion. In the fourth level, students research these beliefs and place them in Scotland and the world.

In non-denominational schools students develop knowledge about Christianity and other world religions in terms of various aspects (Education Scotland, 2017c). The first aspect is "beliefs", where students, for example, start to learn about Jesus and God, and the role of Christianity in shaping the history of Scotland (Education Scotland, 2017c). About world religion beliefs, students learn stories and arts from other world religions, identify some of the key beliefs of world religions, and explore the lives of communities from world religions (The Scottish Government, n.d.-c). The second aspect is "values and issues", where students start to recognise the importance of different values such as fairness through different resources such as biblical stories (Education Scotland, 2017c). For the world religions, students learn about the core values in world religions, and how these values impact the communities of these world religions (The Scottish Government, n.d.-c). The third aspect is practice and tradition where students learn about festivals in Christianity and different religions and the difference ways of celebrating (Education Scotland, 2017c), and the significance of these traditions and their place in the contemporary world (The Scottish Government, n.d.-c).

When I asked the participants about the reason for choosing this school for their children, they all mentioned that it was because of the postcode; their school choices were therefore limited to schools in the area. This is important to mention because many of the parents did not consciously

chose to send their children to either a Catholic or non-denominational school, it was rather the case that their children went to whichever school was available in their area.

7.4.2 Families' Attitude towards the Class

Some of the families thought that schools should focus on teaching Islam, and other felt the opposite. Manal (P) and Sofyan (P) believed that schools in Scotland do not have to teach about Islam at school. Rather, it is their own responsibility to teach children about it at home or by sending them to the mosque. On the other hand, Intesar (P) wished that there were more classes that could offer more knowledge about Islam, and classes that teach Arabic to help her children with the Quran readings. Whether inside or outside the school, the parents seem keen on boosting their children' identities as Muslims and their connection to the language of the Quran.

With all the aspects of knowledge about religions in all curriculum levels aforementioned, students should be expected to have a good overview about Islam. Furthermore, according to The Scottish Government (n.d.-b), teachers have the responsibility to discuss religions deeply and with sensitivity to all students by considering students' beliefs, age, and knowledge. However, some of the families raised points that counter that expectation. One of the points raised was that Islam is not discussed enough or in as much detail as the families would expect. Some families indicated that students should learn more about Islam at schools and not only learn general details about it. For example, Halima (P) said: 'They learn specifically about Christianity, but they only say some things about Islam, like the times of prayer (…) pilgrimage and fasting'. Bashar (C) said: 'They were talking about Ramadan and that's it; why we fast, when we fast, and that's it'. Mo'men (C) elaborated:

> They don't explain a lot of details about Islam (…) they teach about our Prophet and that Mecca is a holy place. They don't say a lot of details, you know. Students don't take the class seriously as no one focuses. It's like fun. I think the teacher of the RE is not strict.

Halima (P) believes it is better to explain to all students the reasons behind Islamic principles such as fasting instead of just mentioning it without discussions. Her argument was that since Christianity has the idea of fasting, it will make the two religions seem similar. Such a discussion about similarities between the two religions can help 'make the Muslim students feel that they did not come from a different planet.' Halima also mentioned that since 'they fear us', schools should teach more about Islam than Judaism. Halima seems to be aware of the reality of Islamophobia and the need to correct the misconceptions about Islam. The idea of Muslim students' awareness of being feared and perceived from another planet resonates with Said (1978) concept of the Muslim Other. The Muslim Other also appeared in a different story, narrated by Wafaa (P), who was told the story by her oldest daughter.

> They talk about Islam in a weird way. For example, when they talked about Prophet Mohammed, they did not show the same amount of respect like other prophets (…) My daughter told me when they talk about Islam, they do not show

> the true picture of Islam, and they do not discuss it enough. There is always one way to discuss it, not two ways. There are no arguments where people can support or be against it. Maybe this is because of Islamophobia in Western media and social media. They discuss Islam in a superficial way, they mention that Mohammed had too many wives, but where is the discussion about the values of Islam? In social study class, they discussed once about retarded and developed communities. They talked about how in Yemen women do not go to school, and in KSA they get married to 5 wives. My daughter was the only Arab. She told the teacher excuse me it is 4 not 5. The teacher told her that is still a lot /laughing/. These things exist, and you cannot deny them but is all Latin America developed? Why did they not talk about it? (…) Do not make the Middle East, Arabs, Muslims your standard example, why do they not you give examples from China, India, Latin America?

Wafaa highlighted several points in this extract. First, she described the way Islam is taught as 'weird' and 'superficial', that it does not show 'the true picture of Islam', and that it is discussed in 'one way' where there is no chance to support or oppose what it has been taught. Wafaa then gave examples. To her, focusing on what the core principles or values of Islam is of more importance to teach in the class than the number of wives Prophet Mohammed got married to. The mother could be aware of the illegality of polygamy in the UK, which is legal in Syria, and thus thought that this might induce some sort of negativity around Islam. Wafaa then attributed the reason for this superficiality in discussing Islam to Islamophobia. The use of the word 'Islamophobia' by the mother indicates her awareness about this phenomenon and how such teachings about Islam could negatively affect the perception of Islam for the non-Muslim students.

Deeper knowledge about faiths can promote more understanding of the religious diversity and presence around the world which can result in less stereotypes and more regards for religious freedom (The Scottish Government, 2011). Yet, Wafaa's comments about the way Islam is taught shows the extent to which she dislikes the focus on what seems negative in Islamic countries while not indicating that similar negatives exist in other non-Islamic communities. She believes that if there were more deep discussions, students might have a better vision about 'the true picture' of Islam which should be more positive than the picture presented in the classroom. Therefore, the curriculum on religious education can help spread more understanding about Islam. Halima (P), who expressed a view similar to Wafaa's, said: 'They always hear the negative things so they will not accept anything. They should make it clear that in any religion there are good and bad people'. Such a negative picture of Islam can be considered a part of the hidden curriculum. Therefore, a well-intended curriculum, which has as an aim to teach understanding about Islam, can ironically help spread an Orientalist understanding and essentialised misunderstandings about Islam.

Islam and other world religions are taught in denominational and non-denominational schools. The lack of discussion the parent participants complained about also poses a challenge to the production of their children's national citizenship. Even though their children develop knowledge about other religions and thus develop awareness of other beliefs, they do not seem to be included enough in terms of the knowledge taught about their own religion at schools. If Muslim students feel

they are excluded from at school, that could lead to issues in relation to how much they identify or disidentify with the mainstream community and even their own background (Ghaffar-Kucher, 2009; Moulin-Stożek & Schirr, 2017). Perhaps an exclusory message is entailed in the very presentation of Christianity as the main Scottish religion. While Christianity has played a key role in most of Scottish history, if "being Christian" is viewed as more in line with "being Scottish" today than "being Muslim" is, then that would implicitly send off a message to Muslim students (as well as others who are part of minority religions) that they cannot be fully Scottish.

As mentioned earlier, in Syria Christian students leave the classroom and go to a different room to learn about Christianity. However, none of the families mentioned their children's ability to leave the classroom during RE in Scotland and go to a different one to study exclusively about Islam. According to The Scottish Government (2011), parents have the right to withdraw their children from the class, and the school should arrange an alternative activity for the students. However, by enrolling children in a denominational school, it may be hard to detach them from all school experiences which are permeated with religious faith (The Scottish Government, 2011). One of the experiences the families talked about was school visits to church. Some families noted that their children should go to church visits. Other families mentioned that their children are given a choice in attending such visits. Sofyan (P) said: 'They take him to the church but most of the time he doesn't go. He excuses himself'. Malak (P) said the same: 'The principal knows that my children are Muslims, so they won't participate in these activities'. On the other hand, Halima (P) narrated a different incident regarding her daughter:

> In the first year she stayed at one school for six months and then she moved to another school. I remember that at the school the head teacher (…) forced my daughter to do their prayer, and my daughter is a Muslim who is wearing that Hijab so it's like she put her under pressure (…).

Samira (P) also noted that the school told her that it is 'compulsory' her child must go to these church visits because they are part of the curriculum. The mother talked about her reaction:

> I immediately said **no**. Maybe my reaction was a bit tough, so I apologised to the teacher (…) I don't want my children to go to church. I asked her if they can be absent that day or maybe I can send them after the students come back from the church (…) She made me feel comfortable not to worry about the children (…) and no one will affect their ideas.

Despite what the teacher told the mother, the child seemed to be affected by these church visits as the mother explained later. Such effects present the way the informal curriculum – that is, activities conducted during breaks and after schools such as trips and clubs (Kelly, 2009) – can serve the hegemony in curriculum. Samira continued:

> At the beginning when they went to church, I remember that when my son came back, he did some gestures similar to the Christians gestures of praying. I was shocked (…) he was four years old (…) he didn't understand very well what's going on around him, so he was trying to imitate his friends. I sat with

> him, and I told him that you cannot do this thing. They are from a different religion (…) **over time** he started to understand.

When I narrated the fourth vignette to the parents about participating in extra-curricular Christmas parties (See Appendix 2), the families had different attitudes towards participation in such activities within the informal curriculum. Some accepted, but within limits. These limits were mainly based on understanding that celebrating such parties does not mean believing in the religious ideas behind this celebration. Others did not accept at all. Those who accepted perceived that participation as a sign to integrate and be part of the school community. Yet, they showed careful guidelines to their children in explaining the goal of participation, which to them did not stem from believing in the religious beliefs expressed in the celebration but from the value of integrating into the wider social community. Renad (P), for example, agrees on her children's participation in school Christmas parties. She believes that her children's participation is a sign of respect to the country in which they found refuge. She encourages her children to participate; for example by buying them gifts to give for their friends during Christmas. She thinks it helps her children integrate in society. However, she tries to explain to her children that their participation is not coming from the religious belief she wants them to have in the following way:

> I told them that this is not for us. This is their religion, and we celebrate with them because we live with them in this country. The same way we want them to celebrate with us during our Eid, they will also be happy when they see that we integrate with them (…) we cannot make out children feel there is a difference between them and their classmates because they live in the same country; they will grow and work together, so there should be integration.

Similarly, Manal (P) and Kawthar (P) mentioned that when their children participate in such religious activities or parties, they tell their children that 'this is not our Eid'. Wafaa (P) pointed that when her children participated in Christmas party, it was a sign of 'Islam as a religion of acceptance'. Samira (P) also saw her children's participation as a sign of integration. She said:

> I tell my children this is not our Eid but as respect for your friends you should go and celebrate with them (…) I cannot isolate my children so that their friends will not like my children. If they dislike my children, this is a problem because my children will be living in a difficult situation. How can they adapt from the beginning if their friends dislike them? You know… that might cause hatred that you did not come to our Eid [the official festival celebrated in Islam].

From the previous extracts, the mothers seem to be concerned about 'isolating' their children as Halima (P) noted. The mother felt that not attending such an important event for the mainstream community in her children's school might risk negatively affecting the extent to which her children are 'liked' by their peers, and the way their children might be perceived as incapable of integrating and not accepting other's differences. Other than attending the event itself, parents made extra efforts to feel their children are participating and seem included, such as buying gifts for children's peers, as Renad (P) mentioned, and Halima (P) allows her children to wear a Christmas sweater.

Even though wearing a Christmas sweater was acceptable for Halima, it was not for Malak (P). On the other end of spectrum, Malak and her daughter gave different opinions about participating in Christmas. While the mother was talking about the topic, her daughter, who was sitting with us, interfered and commented: 'I laughed at a girl who wore a hijab and a Santa Claus hat'. The mother then continued talking about it:

> My children tell me that there are girls and boys, who are Muslim Syrians, Iraqis or from any Arab nationality, wearing a Christmas hat, celebrating with them and then they do decorations and everything, but my children do not come close to these things (…). My son told me there was a girl wearing the Hijab and wearing Santa Claus hat or she's wearing a sweater with Christmas deer. Why is she wearing a Hijab and this sweater at the same time?

Even though both Malak and her daughter seem to be policing other Muslims and their practices, their point is clear. They are trying to separate themselves from Christianity. It could be because the way Malak perceives participation in such an event is not merely a matter of celebration but rather a matter of believing and not believing in the core beliefs expressed in this celebration. Based on their questioning of wearing the Hijab, an Islamic symbol, and Christian symbols at the same time, they seem to believe this as a contradiction. As a Muslim, Malak and her children distance themselves from celebrating because, to them, it opposes Islam.

7.4.3 Challenges Facing Parents because of RE

The first vignette narrated to the parents was a story about a Muslim student at a Catholic school who started singing songs about Jesus at home, which led his mother to move him to a non-Catholic school (See Appendix 2 for vignettes). Wafaa (P) and Sofyan (P) think that enrolling a young child in a Catholic school is a red flag to the religious identity which they want their child to adapt. The mother described the child at that age as a 'sponge' that will soak up all ideas. Even though Wafaa (P) thinks these songs are beautifully written and sung, they 'oppose Islamic beliefs'. Malak (P) and Sofyan (P) supported the mother in the vignette for moving her child to another school. However, Fayza (P) said that singing songs about Jesus does not change the religious identity for her child, because it is 'just a song. He listens to it, and he has curiosity to repeat it, and then he will forget it'. She also did not support moving the child to a non-Catholic school, because, as she explained it, there is more discipline in Catholic schools, and they are conservative. Samira (P) was also advised to enrol her children at Catholic schools, though for another reason, namely that non-Catholic schools teach atheism.

Other than the challenges implied in the vignettes, some of parents expressed other challenges they faced regarding the focus on Christianity at schools. There are different beliefs between Islam and Christianity that pose a challenge to the religious identity the parents' wish for their children. Wafaa (P) said, referring to her daughter:

> We had an issue when we discussed the Trinity. In Christianity they believe that Jesus is the God, and this is considered blasphemy in our religion. We discussed it openly (…). She loves Christmas because she sees that there is no problem

> between religions if no one is harming the other. Of course, this is a problem (…). Muslim and Christian at the same time is stupid (…). Families should have the courage to give facts, not only to state what is Halal [allowed in Islam] and what is Haram [prohibited in Islam]. My children do not accept this way of arguing. I had to explain it to her and then I gave her resources (…).

Similarly, Renad (P) told me the following:

> When they told them that Jesus is the son of God (…) I told them the real story and I told them that in our religion Jesus is a Prophet from God, and God does not have children. He created us and he's the only God (…) it's our duty to teach him what's wrong and what's right.

Both Wafaa and Renad's extracts show frustration over their children's confusion in relation to religious ideas in Islam and Christianity. These concepts are fundamental in both religions. Clarifying to their children this confusion meant telling them the 'real story', as Renad described it, not to fall in confusion which Wafaa described as 'stupid'. Both mothers had their vision of the 'wrong' and 'right' in shaping their children's religious identities. Renad and Wafaa try to steer their children's religious identity toward being Muslims which also applies to all the families in their project.

According to The Scottish Government (2011) students have the right to be taught RE with depth and progression through meeting people from other faiths and learning from them, and by 'investigating religious beliefs, values, issues, traditions and practices through a range of primary and secondary sources' (Education Scotland, 2014, p. 14). However, Halima (P) noted 'they should not bring people from their side to speak about Islam. They should bring people who know what they are talking about'. Based on what Halima mentioned, what the policy document stated about learning from people of different faiths is not applied, at least at the schools where all my participants go to since none of them mentioned such a thing. Also, Halima seems to have her own imagined community about Scottish schools and their vision of Islam. When she said, 'from their side', it seems that she created an image where Islam from her side is not the same from 'their side'. That is why she felt there is a need to show Islam from the side of 'Muslims', which is not the same as the side of the 'Scottish'. Even though being Muslim and being Scottish are not mutually exclusive, in Halima's imagined communities, these seem to be two contradicting categories.

7.4.4 Summarising the Section on Religious Education

From the previous extracts, it could be noted that the parents took the role of 'teaching' or 'feeding' their children about Islam. This was not a responsibility for them in their previous setting, since the school and the society in general taught the children about 'their religion'. Halima (P) said: 'I should feed him with correct ideas (…) the school has its own religion but for us this is not our religion'. It could be noted from the parents' view that they have a particular vision of what their children's religious identity should and should not be. Some parents seemed to be more lenient in terms of allowing their children to participate in non-Islamic religious activities and lessons within the planned and informal curriculum. Those who were less lenient seem to be cautious about how

curriculum can influence their children's religious beliefs in a way that contradicts what the parents' want their children to believe. Again, those parents automatically assume that their religious identity must be the same as their children's religious identity, and that part of their role as parents is to make sure that they learn to agree with them on this matter. From their perspective, then, the curriculum aims at making the children believe in the dominant group's religious principles which contributes to hegemony within curriculum. Even though Scottish schools do teach about Islam, the participants raised concerns about how the lack of deep discussion about their religion could present Islam in a negative and inaccurate way. Some of the parents were aware of Islamophobia and hoped for a more comprehensive focus on Islam so that their children would be learning in an environment where they do not feel like 'aliens'. Similar to what was observed earlier about learning about the history of Scotland, the parents here too created an imagined community about the religion of school and 'our religion' – and, in line with this, about "Scotland" and "Islam", and thus between their host society and themselves. They also created an image about the Scottish community where they considered themselves at possible risks of being perceived as 'aliens'.

The families here are the ones who created the binary between 'us' and 'them'. Such imagination could possibly stem from the effect of Islamophobia where Muslims feel excluded and not part of the community. On the other hand, it could also stem from their fear of the culture and traditions in Scottish society, which contradict with their own culture and religion. This speaks directly to the theme of belonging. Anthias (2008) argues that belonging emphasises the 'social fabric' in which we feel included or excluded, which is 'manifested in practices, experiences and emotions' (p. 8). The families felt excluded in the RE class, so they tried to exclude themselves from the teachings of this class in different ways. They *practiced* different strategies to teach their children about 'their' religion, which created a new *experience* of confusion for the students and of new responsibilities for the parents, leading to feeling a new *emotion* of exclusion in the Scottish schools and society as well.

These observations here are very clearly contradicting a homogenised image of what it means to be a (Syrian) Muslim. Though all these parents are Muslims, they perceive their religion in different ways and also educate their children very differently about their religion. In turn, this makes them relate differently to the curriculum. For example, there are two approaches for dealing with participation within the informal curriculum: the one where parents allow their children to participate because they want them to integrate, while still imploring them not to actually take on the other beliefs; and the parents who forbid their children to participate because they are afraid they might lose their grip on their children's identity.

The potential for identity re-negotiations and reproduction within religious education are clear. The default focus on Christianity at school produced confusion in religious identity for students, particularly young ones. The parents explained the effects of such confusion on their children's behaviour, for instance, performing Christian prayer gestures. Another example is

believing in the Holy Trinity, as Wafaa (P) expressed her frustration with her daughter believing in the Trinity. Such negotiations mean the curriculum serves the interests and identity of the dominant group, indicating that there is hegemony in curriculum in Scotland. Minority groups, in this sense, are required to take on more responsibilities, which would not have emerged if they had stayed in their previous settings. This aligns with Hall's (1997) understanding of the 'self' as composed of the different positionalities or identities that one is willing to 'subject' himself or herself to, to be 'subjected' (Hall, p. 33) to. In other words, the parents now are positioning themselves as religious educators and protectors, as they took on the responsibility to teach their children about their religion and help them read the Quran, which had been the responsibility of the school in their original setting. The parents desire for their children to subject to a particular positionality, similar to the one they themselves have subjected to, so they can share a positionality with their children. The clash between what students are taught at school and what parents seek to reinforce at home is evident, and it can put pressure on both the parent and the child.

Parents' attitudes towards RE are possibly not merely creating a clash between children's religious identity as a Muslim and the religious identity of the school as Christian. It is also more deeply between different understandings of religious identity as something which a parent should "feed" their child and something the child should make up for themselves. I suspect the second view would be the mainstream view in Scottish society, due to the rise of the non-religious population in Scotland as mentioned in Chapter 1. Getting these two very different messages might be very confusing for the children. It would mean a confusing process of identity formation where they might be possibly trying to "suture" together views that cannot be sutured because they clash, contradict each other as explored with the case where children prayed the Christian prayers or in their change of belief about some concept such as Trinity.

Such negotiations, experiences, and practices in regard to RE are also linked to nationalism. Anderson (2006) argues that the planned curriculum is a tool for governments to produce official narratives about the nation. CfE tries to do the same by stressing on the role of Christianity in shaping the Scottish nation. That in turn affects the principle of connectedness in curriculum where some students do not relate to the knowledge they learn at school (Doherty, 2008). Muslim students in this sense are disconnected and disconnect themselves from the knowledge they learn about the Scotland as a nation. That could possibly be one of the reasons why the families correlated being Scottish to being Christian, even though the majority of Scottish people do not identify to any religion according to the Scottish census (2011).

The parent interviewees also raised another aspect within the Scottish curriculum where they felt they were encountering changes that could impact their children's identities: the sex education curriculum, as discussed in the next section.

7.5 Sex Education

Sex education is a controversial part of the curriculum among Muslims in the United Kingdom as discussed in Chapter 4 (Ferguson, 2019; Mahendru, 2019) which is also the case for the participants in this study. As explained on Chapter 5, some of the themes were very visible in the data analysis because they were repeated and discussed by the participants. This topic was clearly very prominent for the parents, because the majority of them were prompted to speak passionately about sex education when I asked them about their concerns around Scottish curriculum because this topic is illustrative of a cultural difference. The rationale for teaching this class in CfE is that it develops students' understanding of sex and sexuality which, in turn, leads to positive mental, emotional and physical wellbeing and better decisions in their sexual life (The Scottish Government, 2004).

According to The Scottish Government. (n.d.-b) the class which deals with matters of sexuality is called Health and Wellbeing. The class is divided into different topics, which are: 1) Relationships, sexual health and parenthood; 2) Substance misuse; 3) Food and health; 4) Physical activity and health. The parents seemed to focus only on the sexual health and relationship aspects. Some parents said that their children learned about sexual relationships in P5, others in P6, others in P7. According to Education Scotland (n.d.-a), P5-7 is the second level in curriculum level. In the first level of the curriculum the focus is on the recognition of the uniqueness of the human body. Starting from second level, students start to learn about puberty, how babies are born and about different kinds of relationships. In the third and fourth level, students learn about commitment and their rights in relationships.

Another point that should be clarified, is that the parents used the Arabic equivalent word for 'things' to refer to anything related to the word 'sex', as will be shown in the interview extracts, because it is a culturally sensitive topic. Some of these parts needed to be clarified in the interview, yet as a researcher who shares a similar culture and religion with the participants, I know asking for more details about these 'things' is totally inappropriate. Families in this study expressed their attitudes towards the topic, reasons to refuse this class, and their strategies to prevent any conflict between their religious and cultural beliefs and curriculum.

7.5.1 Attitudes towards Sex Education

Similar to the findings in Blakely (1983), McBrien (2011), and Weedon et al. (2013), most of the parents in this study opposed teaching sex education for religious and cultural reasons. However, one parent did not oppose it, and another parent agreed on some parts and disagreed on other parts in the content of sex education. Based on my knowledge with the families' cultural and religious background, it was surprising to me to find one parent, Wafaa, not opposing the content of this class. Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) observe that the more involved parents are in their children's education, the more they develop an awareness about the culture of the host country. In line with this observation, Wafaa (P) showed great involvement with her children's education, and she manifested

understanding of the content of sex education curriculum, the way it is taught and the way it is negotiated at home.

Wafaa (P) told me her reaction to this class when her second daughter, who was the first of her children to take this class, was about to learn it. Her daughter was very concerned about having to take the sex education class. According to Wafaa, this is because her daughter is shy. The mother herself, however, felt the opposite, and she believed that taking the class would be valuable for her daughter. Before giving any judgment, the mother asked her child about the content of the sex curriculum. After that, she found 'it is all logical and not too bad; there was stuff about maturity and sexual relationships and so and so…'. Other than the content of the class, the mother commented on the intentions behind teaching students that class in the following way: 'I'm sure the teacher didn't teach it in a way to incite students to have sex (…). The school wants to manage it before it gets out of control'.

Halima (P) was the second parent who was not against students following sex education generally. She agreed on some parts of the content of sex education and disagreed on others. The mother described her feelings toward this class by saying: 'Unfortunately… I am very scared from this class.' She is even worried that her nephews, nieces, and her future grandchildren will take this class. The mother stated that 'there is no need for this class.' However, later the mother explained that all her opposition was not related to all parts of the class, but specifically to the part of sex education where children learn about homosexuality. On the other hand, she was fine with other parts of the content. The mother expressed her belief that learning about relationships and how to manage them is natural because her children are exposed to the idea of relationships everywhere.

> I think they should learn these things. The role of parents should be present every time. It takes a lot of effort from us because of the environment around us. They see you know like in the TV … they see in the social media, on their phones, YouTube … They see these things, so we cannot say: Oh no don't give them this class. I'm with this class, but I'm against the class about gays.

On the other end of the spectrum, there are the other families who fully disagreed with this class and who did not want their children to attend at all. For instance, Intesar (P) said: 'I do not like it when my child learns about it'. Manal (P) described this class as 'scary'. Malak (P) said, 'I think it is wrong to teach this class'. Sofyan (P) said: 'We don't want our children to take this class'.

As becomes clear from these quotes, the sex curriculum was a highly controversial topic for almost all of the parents. Although one of them was fine with the class, and another was more open to some of its aspects than others, the majority agreed that their children were being taught things about sexuality that strongly opposed what they themselves wanted their children to learn. In order to understand the importance of this issue, it is relevant to connect the parents' responses to the topic of hegemony in relation to the curriculum as discussed by (Apple, 2004). He argues that to understand hegemony in curriculum, two questions should be posed. The first one is 'What knowledge is of most worth?', and the second one is: 'Whose knowledge is of most worth?' (Apple, 2004, p. xix). This

relates also to Bernstein (1971) definition of the curriculum as that what counts as valid knowledge. Importantly, what counts as valid knowledge is exactly what is in dispute in the power struggle in which one hegemonic worldview dominates others. As Doherty (2018) puts it, with a strong imposition of one hegemonic view over others, there is a risk of only hearing the voice of a 'homogeneously imagined nation state' (p. 206).

7.5.2 Reasons for Opposing this Class

The families mentioned different reasons for not accepting this class. Shyness of their children was one of the reasons they gave for opposing this class. Even though Wafaa (P) agreed on the class, yet she explained that her daughter did not want to learn that class because she is shy. Intesar (P) opposed the class because she, too, said: 'my child is too shy'. Since he is shy, she does not know if he took the class or not because he does not talk to her about such things. It seems that the children are aware that such topics are considered taboos and not allowed to be discussed in their family. Thus, he did not mention it to his parents.

Another reason for the parents to oppose sex education in school was age. Most of those families felt that primary school is too early for this topic to be taught. For instance, Samira (P) said: 'We are against this thing; to make our children understand these things in such age. Of course, I am against this thing'. Parents such as Nadia, Intesar, and Kawthar echoed a similar point as they all felt that it is 'too early' for students to learn 'these things'. Moreover, Renad (P), said that her son is 'too young' to learn such content. The mother then compared that to her experience in Syria as she learned about similar content when she was in Grade 10 (high school). To her, that is suitable because she was old enough to process all that. Here, Renad is projecting her idea about the suitable age to learn such material based on her experience. Since Syrians learn the same curriculum, it could be concluded that those parents who justified their refusal to the class to age, have similar idea to Renad's. That is, they believe high school is a better stage to teach students about physical relationships.

Similar to the parents in Weedon et al. (2013), some parents in this study also considered sex education culturally and religiously sensitive. Manal (P) focused on her role in teaching her children that having sex before marriage is not allowed in their religion and culture. While talking about the class, the mother said that 'I feel inshallah [Arabic expression meaning 'if God is willing'] I have the situation under control (…). It is our home, and we do not have a mess because I do not show carelessness to that situation.' It seems that the mother considers accepting this class as a sign of being a careless parent. Likewise, Fayza (P) does not accept this class for religious and cultural reasons. The mother referred to the times when her children attended this class as times when there is no understanding of her children's background. She said: 'For Muslims or our traditions, it is unacceptable and unallowed to watch these things on screens'. Also, she noted that in Scotland 'they consider it natural that children know these things.' The mother also showed opposition that in the classroom there will be males and females learning about physical relationships together.

There is a dispute with different voices about the different topics taught in sex curriculum; such as physical relationships before marriage and homosexuality, are not simply factual knowledge. As stated above, according to The Scottish Government (2004), one of the goals for including sex education in the curriculum is to 'assist with making safer decisions about their sexual and emotional health' (p. 1). Yet for most of the families, opening their children's eyes on such a matter is too soon, and not suitable for their children's culture, religion, and shyness. Some of the families noted that their child was shy as an individual and others noted that there is shyness about these topics because they have been raised in a home where they are not openly discussed. This conflict exists also in what is planned and what is received or lived inside the classroom. What the teachers prepare for this class can result in complaints from the parents and the students as well. What is prepared can be perceived by the parents and the students as inappropriate, and they might argue that it has to be taught in a different way – as some families mentioned, in 'the Islamic way' – that is, in a different setting, for instance, not having males and females in the same classroom. However, this might create a conflict with other parents, for instance White Scottish parents, who might think this class is important to raise awareness about physical relationships and ways of protection. Creating a space for both views to be negotiated with the school seems to be the initial answer to avoid such conflict from each part.

7.5.3 Strategies to Deal with this Class

Parents showed different strategies in dealing with their concerns about their children attending the class. Some accepted that their children attend the class and talked to their children about their own values in this regard. Others approached the school to ask if their children could be exempted the class. As mentioned earlier, Wafaa (P) said that her daughter is shy. However, the mother tries to help her daughter to overcome this shyness by talking to her. The mother stressed the fact that she tries to be open with her children because she believes that being open is the key for not being a 'failing family'. For the mother, the success and coherence of her family depends mainly on being frank and receptive with each other. She said:

> You should know these things, but you should know under what cover they are done; is it done according to Sharia or not [in Islamic law, one has to get married first before having sex]; you need to decide.

By 'these things' she meant anything related to sex. The mother connected learning about sex to religion. The mother believes the whole idea of sex education is about raising awareness to protect students, yet she focused on the application of the content of this class. She feels it is essential for the children to understand that according to the principles of Islam, sex is allowed only after marriage.

Some of these parents, such as Samira and Renad, followed a similar strategy to Wafaa's, as they tried to be open to their children about this topic. The difference is that Wafaa talked to her daughter to convince her to attend the class, whereas Samira and Renad talked to their children to warn them about the class. Renad narrated how she handled the homosexuality part in the curriculum in the following way:

> I showed them a cartoon on YouTube about our Prophet Lot (…). I explained what their punishment will be (…). My son asked me: if this is wrong, why do they allow it in this country? I told him that this is country is based on freedom. They allow us Muslims to go to the mosque (…) we only mind our own business. Everyone is responsible for his action on judgment day (…). My oldest son, he's very assertive (…). The school did a special day for them, and they drew their flag (…). He was a bit tough in his reaction, and the school complained to me (…). I told him we don't want to love them or be friends with them or get close to them, but at the end this is a lesson, and you need to do it, it's homework. You have to do it, and you're not supposed to be convinced.

Renad's son seems to be confused between what the school teaches him to be acceptable and what is not acceptable at home. Homosexuality is not acceptable at home and the son needs to deal with it neutrally and from a distance at school as the mother advised him. Whatever activity he has to do in class in relation to homosexuality, he needs to see it as a homework that he needs to finish without trying to accept it. The mother noted that Scotland is a country of freedom where different people exist and practice their tradition and religious duties. Therefore, she tries to explain to her son that they are different in this country and allowed to practice their different religion. Other different people also exist, and they are allowed to do or be whatever they wish.

Demanding from the school not to teach that class to their children was another strategy which some of the parents applied. Some of the families believed that the school would listen to their demands, others were not too sure. Halima (P) expressed her thoughts in the following way: 'I expect they will not accept my request not to let my children attend it [by 'they' she means the school]'. Therefore, she felt that all families opposing this class should gather and 'create a reaction'. This is what she meant by reaction:

> They should make their children aware about these ideas before these ideas are put in their heads by others (…). They cannot change anything. This is happening, but at the same time they need to explain it to their children.

A similar reaction was expressed by another participant parent. Sofyan referred to it as 'this thing… let us say they teach them about married life, how it's done, let us say that.' Sofyan does not agree with the existence of this class. Thus, he and other Muslim Arab parents gathered to discuss the issue and came up with an idea to sign a petition and give it to school about not to make their children attend this class. The father mentioned that his son told him that he would not attend this class if he was asked to. Kawthar (P) mentioned that she stayed worried for two days when she received a paper which notifies her that her child is taking this class. Malak showed a similar reaction:

> I asked them not to teach him because I will teach him. We are Muslims, and we do these things after marriage (…). I will teach him my way, the Islamic way, will teach him.

Nadia (P) said that once she is notified about this class, she will contact the school to ask 'if it is compulsory or not. It is not compulsory; I will not allow them to attend it'. Renad (P) said that she went to her children's school to ask the teacher if it is possible that her child does not attend this class. The teacher said: 'he has to attend. This is curriculum, and he must learn these things with his

classmates'. The mother then continued to tell me a story to explain that her son is too young to process all that content. The story ended by her laughing at it as if it were a joke. She said:

> They learned how a female gets pregnant, so he [her second son] became very shocked. He told his classmates: 'No, we Muslims don't do this ['this' refers to sex]. So, they asked him how Muslims give birth to children. He told them: 'we pray to God, and that's it' / laugh/. He was shocked, so I felt that this is too much for him. He's too young… when he came and told me, I was shocked, I didn't know what to say at the beginning. However, later I told him about it in a scientific way. I told him that Muslims do the same, but the only difference is that we need to be married so that that thing happens. I told him you cannot be unmarried and do it or have babies.

Clearly, the mother took on the role of a guide toward her child, showing him which paths he should or should not tread. She explained to him that there is a role in religion in this aspect of his life. Her second son seemed to be open about himself to his mother because later she told me another story about him. That son told her that he has a girlfriend. Since the concept of girlfriend is not religiously acceptable for her, the mother tried to find a middle point not to scare her son who seems to be very affected by the Scottish culture, according to the mother. The mother's solution was to be accepting toward the idea of girlfriend; however, she made her son promise not to do anything 'that's bad'. What is 'bad' includes getting physical and to 'tell her things that only adults say [she means anything sexual]'.

7.5.4 Summarising the Section on Sex Education

Clearly, there is significant tension between the religious beliefs of many of the parents regarding the sexual education of their children, and the way sexual education is taught in Scottish schools. An important question is to ask about the views by the Scottish government regarding the possibility for dialogue with parents about their children's education. The answer to this question is that on paper, dialogue is explicitly stated as being a goal which should be pursued in Scottish schools. The Scottish Government (2004) states that to teach the sex curriculum to students, there should be a 'collaborative partnership between them and school' (p. 12). 'Them' in that quote refers to parents and carers. Later, the document states that 'It is good practice for schools to regularly seek the views of parents and carers about key aspects of the curriculum' (p. 12). Yet it seems that this guideline is not followed in the experience of the families I talked to. As was explained earlier, some of families who did not want their children to attend the class complained to the school. According to the families, some schools listened to their demands and others did not. In the case where the school accepted the families' demands, there seems to be mutual worth ascribed to the beliefs of the school and the parents. However, in the case when the school overlooked the parents' request, there are dominant perspectives which were forced on those families. Recognising this conflict is crucial in a democratic society, because otherwise a hegemonic worldview is imposed on a minority group with dissenting views. Cancelling this class would create another dilemma for other parents from other backgrounds. Yet, as mentioned earlier there could be other alternatives where schools give parents the space to

discuss their concerns and find a middle point by, for instance, teaching this class for Muslim students in an environment and through a source that is acceptable for the parents and the school.

This conflict within curriculum presents a central example of the challenges refugee Muslim families face. Learning about sex and sexuality at school is part of the Scottish identity which CfE tries to instil in Scottish students. Treating sex and sexuality as positive parts of life, and being inclusive toward different sexual orientations, is part of the contemporary Scottish mindset. The Scottish curriculum aims to legitimate and reinforce this mindset. On the other hand, for some of these families, learning about sex at school does not fit into their families' religious and cultural identity. As stated above, the sex education curriculum was a sensitive topic for most of the parents. Although some were more open to some of its aspects than others, the majority agreed that their children were being taught things about sexuality which strongly clashed with what they themselves wanted their children to learn. Similar to religious education, tensions within sex education too raises questions around nationalism in curriculum. This class is part of the Scottish identity and represents values and traditions that, when compared to Syrian values and traditions, are Scottish. It should be noted that they overlap with broader Western liberal ideas. However, it does not represent who the participants are and therefore they try to disconnect themselves from this curriculum. Doherty (2008) argues that the legitimated knowledge in curriculum should allow students to recognise themselves. Even though CfE allowed students, such as homosexual students, to be recognised, does it recognise the needs of Muslim students to be taught this particular class in a particular way in a suitable age? According to the parents in this study, it does not.

Sex education opens up processes of identity formation and negotiation for both the children and the parents. It has been argued that families' identities are increasingly fluid and contingent in a more fluid world (Hall, 1991b, 1996). The fluidity was resisted by some parents however, indicated by their concern about possible chances of the children's growing in a direction that is not in line with the parents' religious and cultural identities. This would occur if their children accepted the practices legitimated in the sex curriculum. For some parents, the class in which this topic is taught was considered a threat to the identity of the whole family. In other words, while they ultimately had to accept this curriculum and its risqué content, they are careful and attentive to manage that risk and counter the effects of the more permissive curriculum in at home. It seems that these parents consider their own identity to overlap with the general identity of being "Muslim". Furthermore, they perceive it as their role as parent to make sure their children also adapt the same identity. When they cannot do this, this has enormous consequences for them. First, they perceive themselves as failing in their role as parents. Second, they lose connection with their children, because the relationship with their children is for an important part built on the identity they share with them. For some parents, therefore, this class is considered to be a threat to the identity and cohesion of the whole family. For example, Manal (P) felt that accepting this class and its content would mean she is a careless mother.

The children fall between two different views: between home, where talking about sexual relationships is taboo, and school, where it exists and is discussed openly in the curriculum. In this way, this curriculum is a point of 'suture' (Hall, 2005, p. 446) for the identity formation of the child. The child is in the middle between two different views: who they are allowed to be or what they can talk about is different at school and at home. Other examples influencing children's potential identity negotiation that raise similar sensitivities can also occur when the school gives a child a choice in selecting their gender. Kawthar (P) showed concern when she received a letter from the school asking her to give her son the freedom in choosing the gender he preferred. These practices would not be options presented to the children in their previous school settings. For the children, changes in identity might occurs by giving them a choice in selecting their gender, and the gender of their partner, which would not be an option for the child in any of their previous setting. This is an option which the parents are totally against.

Even though some aspects within religious education and sex education might question the extent to which the participant students are included in the curriculum, the families in this study mentioned other aspects where they felt their children are included and where they are allowed to develop themselves as part of the Scottish community, as will be discussed in the next section.

7.6 Inclusion in the Curriculum

As explored thus far, the families realised that most classes do not relate to the previous background of the children. However, in other classes students were given a chance to talk about their background. For example, Mohammed (C), similar to Zaher (C), participated in talking about Syria in a class called modern studies. Mohammed said: 'I volunteered to talk to the class. I talked to the class about how and why the war started'. Some of the parents commented on the way their children are included in extracurricular activities, with particular focus on activities related to Scottish identity. Wafaa (P) liked how her children are included at school. She said: 'They try to make my children feel that they are Scottish. For example, on Burns Day, they give my children parts in a play to read one of his poems, and they ask them to wear the tartan'. Renad (P) noted the same:

> On Burns Day (…) my son participated. They gave him the role of a Scottish person wearing Scottish traditional clothes. They dealt with him in the same way as his Scottish classmates.

Renad also mentioned that during Eid, the school sometimes give her children cards to congratulate them with Eid. Different parents, such as Renad, also talked about the way schools allow their children to be absent during Eid.

There is no doubt that the Scottish schools which my participants talked about try to support refugee and Muslim students and to give them a part in school activities. However, the space in which those students are allowed to represent the culture and traditions is often confined to the realms of traditional stereotypes. For instance, most of the student participants mentioned that the time where they were given a chance to talk about where they came from was to talk about war. Zaher (C)

mentioned that once he wrote an essay for his English class about his story, and one of the comments the teacher gave him was ‘to write more about the war’. War was definitely a huge part of the participants’ lives, but it was not the only part. Such an emphasis on war could enhance the idea of the ‘uncivilised’ third-world countries where war is normalised. Such a view is also implied in the collective shock in Europe when seeing a war in a ‘civilised’ country such as Ukraine, as mentioned in the introduction of this thesis. *Difference* (Hall, 1996) and *language* (Hall, 1991a) are both elements in identity construction that also contribute to *representation*. When the students are asked to talk about their experience in war in a class where the majority has not experienced it, it could place them in a different position and lead to a negative representation of their background.

Even though the participants expressed positive feelings about the way their difference was articulated in cultural terms at school, this articulation could still indicate a lack of recognition of the complex aspects of representations or accounts of refugee students. Even though teachers tried to make students feel they are part of the Scottish community by participating in Scottish festivals, the way the culture and background of participants is presented at school seems oversimplifying in light of the multifaceted aspects of their identity. Going back to what the parents mentioned about how Islam is presented – in a ‘superficial’ and ‘general’ way – it could be argued that the participants’ background is underrepresented because it is done only in traditional and unthreatening ways such as cards, food, and short talks. As Apple (2004) describes it, such activities are ‘the safest’ (p. 179) and are not enough to tackle the dominant power within curriculum. The schools adopted a particular vision of the students’ background, framing the participants’ identity in static and fixed ways (Hall, 1996). Thus, schools in Scotland should explore further ways to promote integration and social gains for minority groups, while avoiding oversimplifying these groups’ cultural identity to just ‘spaghetti and dance’ (McConnochie et al., 1988, p. 185).

7.7 Chapter Summary

One of the main findings of the previous section was that the quantity of knowledge the student participants learn in Scotland is considerably less than that in their previous setting, and that this made the curriculum in Scotland seem easier for the families. However, this means that parents do not need to follow up with their children’s schoolwork like they used to do. Therefore, some parents seemed frustrated because of their inability to be as involved. These parents wanted to feel they still have a role in their children’s education. Again, similar to parents’ desire to be as involved as they used to be in their children’s homework follow up, being involved with their children’s curriculum presents another taken-for-granted aspect of how their children’s education should be. Therefore, not being able to be as involved as expected in their education due to these barriers affects parents’ confidence in their ability to help and their self-perception.

Even though the families talked about the barriers they encountered while they were trying to follow up with their children’s school curriculum, they still perceived it as more flexible and less challenging than curriculum in their previous setting. Families had various attitudes towards the

curriculum in Scotland which suggests that dealing with refugees in an essentialised way, as if they were a homogenous group, can lead to difficulty in addressing their needs (Al Ajlan, 2019). Being in Scotland poses new challenges in curriculum which they would not experience if they had been able to stay in Syria. The main challenges are demonstrated in two classes within the Scottish curriculum, which are religion education and sex education.

Scottish schools are becoming more diverse. Thus, creating specific a curriculum and classes for each religion that exists within the school would add more challenges for the school staff and policymakers. It also creates a clash with the aim of introducing Christianity to the students, which is part of Scottish history and identity. However, since these families are now also Scottish, Islam is also a part of Scottish history. Possibly, finding balance in teaching about different religions is the key. This might pose a challenge for teachers; however, it is feasible if parents are involved somehow.

As mentioned earlier, some of the families praised how Scottish schools try to integrate their children by given them roles in Scottish play and giving them a chance to present their culture and background to their classmates. A point that this project tries to entail is a critique of the approach taken by schools in selecting particular superficial aspects of various cultures when students are taught about those cultures. Another point this project tries to address is the limited vision of school when, for instance, asking refugee students about their history is limited only to asking about their experiences with war.

The previous and this Chapter are related to RQ1: How do the educational experiences of participant Syrian Muslim refugee families contribute to their identity construction? Throughout the interview, I noticed that the participants recognise the importance of education for their children. They see education as a tool of future opportunity, and a place for identity construction. Some of the participants saw education as a means to participate in their current society and as a source of power which could help them in making change in their life and participate in the community. Parents showed support for their children to continue their education. This support was through motivation and reiterating the importance of having a university degree. The parents also were incapable of tutoring their children due to the language barrier, yet they were ready to support their children's education through hiring tutors for their children if needed.

Within these two chapters, different educational experiences in relation to curriculum and pedagogy were mentioned by the participants and had clear influence on who the participants are becoming. The main conclusion in these two chapters is that different elements within pedagogy and curriculum are directly connected to the process of identity construction for both the participant students and parents.

The next chapter goes further into other aspects the participants raised which, to them, constructed who they are. These aspects are related to the participants' social life which occur at school or in society.

Chapter 8: The Role of Participants' Social Experiences in their Identity Construction

In the previous two chapters, data in relation to educational experiences (RQ1) was discussed. This chapter discusses participants' experiences within their social interactions to answer RQ2: What are the social experiences that contribute to the identity construction of participant Syrian Muslim refugee families? This chapter contributes to the understanding of how the participants make sense of their positions in society; that is, how they position themselves and how they think they are positioned by the wider society. Furthermore, this chapter gives insights into how the participants construct and negotiate relationships inside and outside their homes. There are three main themes which the participants discussed in terms of those relationships, which are gender, children's peers, and racism. Experiences in relation to gender were generated from the participants while they were expressing their views about their children's education and schooling. However, the majority of the data generated for peers and racism came from asking the parents about two questions. The first one is 'What concerns do you have when it comes to your child's schooling?' The second one is 'Would you like to add anything else you would like us to know about your child's education in Scotland or about you or your family?' A further recurrent sub-theme that arose within discussions of these three themes were the participants' reports of the social instruction of themselves as the Other, which affected their sense of belonging in their current setting. Also, data in this chapter shows how a fixation on ethnic and Islamic signifiers can lead to a feeling of social and emotional exclusion. Using Hall's (1991) concept of identity and Anthias' (2002) concept of translocational positionality will help contextualise the participants' negotiations of their identities through focusing on the new social contexts in which they find themselves. Fanon's and Said's understandings of the concept of Othering will help explore how the participants were placed as the Other in their interaction with the Scottish community.

This chapter is organised into three sections. The first section discusses the role gender plays in the participants' lives in terms of shaping who they are, inside and outside their homes. The second section explores the concerns the parents have in regard to their children's interactions with their peers, and the challenges the participant children have experienced in their encounters with their peers. The last section shows the everyday racism the participants experience at the individual level in the process of being subjected to religious and ethnic constructions as Others; the Muslim Other and the Brown Other.

8.1 Gender

Gender was one aspect that resulted in new challenges and identity negotiations for the participants. Across Arab and Islamic cultures, it is often the case that Arab Muslim men experience

less restrictions on their cultural and religious attitudes and behaviours than women (Janet, 2007). Ajrouch (2004) has argued that there is pressure on Arab Muslim women in the West to maintain the honour of their families, and that they are under 'antiassimilation pressure' to keep their 'Arabness' (p. 383) by, for example, not dating and by wearing the Hijab. This is not to say that all Arabs and Muslims men require the women in the family to wear the Hijab or not date. It is rather to say that there is more pressure on women in some families to represent their background through their attire, attitudes, and cultural behaviours. Such pressure would not have existed if those families stayed in their countries where the majority of people share the same culture, traditions, and religious values. Yet, their differences from the host countries add more responsibilities on females to maintain their families' tradition and not follow the traditions of the host country which could contradict their values. In other words, Arab women's social practices are supposed to meet the cultural expectations of their Arab community (Amer et al., 2015). To understand the role of gender in relation to the social background of my respondents, it is important to begin with a discussion of the expectations put upon Arab Muslim females in maintaining an image of purity. Understanding this important gendered aspect of a significant number of Arab Muslim females living in the West, will in turn allow for a deeper understanding of both the role of the mothers and of the daughters who I interviewed (as well as of the boys). It is important to note that religion is part and parcel of those cultural expectations. Thus, maintaining their Arabness and cultural expectations is informed by religion and culture (Ajrouch, 2004; Amer et al., 2015).

As an Arab Muslim female living in the United Kingdom for over three years, I have felt that pressure of meeting particular expectations as well. Even when my family is not around me to guide me through what they consider to be acceptable and not acceptable, I feel pressure from the Muslim and Arabs friends around me to behave and talk in a particular way not to distort the image of "Arab Muslim female" in their minds. I know that I am over 30 and that I am supposed "not to care"; however, it is more complicated than this. I cannot ignore these expectations because of an internalised norm about having to fit in the "Arab Muslim female" image. I have seen how privileged some Arab Muslim men can be in terms of not following religious and cultural expectations and not having to care about "distorting" their image because they know they are entitled not to be judged – unlike me, and the many other Arab Muslim females who have to be very careful of what we do, say or share. Similarly, some participants in this study perceived the greater amount of pressure on their daughters than on their sons as normal. The families presented different relocation dynamics which some parents considered to be challenges in raising their daughters, while it was a relief for other parents. Two of the families also discussed another important aspect in terms of gender: the Hijab.

Gender is a complex social construct in any context, and even more so in the context of migration between countries with very different cultures and gender expectations. This complexity became visible in the different ways in which the families positioned themselves in their beliefs about gender and the expectations put upon the behaviour of the children. In order to try and get a better

grip on the different ways in which the families related to the notion of gender; the two aspects noted above will be discussed in relation to Hall's notion of identity. This will help analyse how the new social discourses the families experienced in Scotland under specific modalities of power, mainly gender, changed their treatment of issues related to gender and eventually shaped who they are. Furthermore, I will build on Anthias' (2002. 2011) concept of translocational positionality in order to further deepen the discussion of identity. This concept is of relevance because it allows for an analysis of both someone's social location and their positionality. Translocational positionality describes one's vision of how they are positioned by society and how one negotiates themselves in relation to other members of society. For Anthias, translocational positionality entails notions of time, place and context, and sees these as major elements for identity construction. In light of this, I paid attention to how the parents engaged with their daughters in terms of restrictions and wearing the Hijab, which means both gender and religion contributed to this engagement. Also, the place where the participants found themselves in – namely the social setting of the Scottish society, which, for the participants, is a different country, with a different culture, traditions, values, and religion of – was also a factor for this engagement.

8.1.1 Difference in Restrictions Imposed on Females in Two Different Settings

The families noticed that there are differences in the number of restrictions imposed on females and the amount of freedom and rights given to girls in their previous and current setting. The parents agreed that females are given more freedom and choices in Scotland than in their previous settings. For some parents, such as Wafaa, the freedom was perceived to allow their daughters to develop their own identity instead of being imposed one kind of identity. For others, the freedom is dangerous because they perceive the restrictions imposed as a means of protection. I will discuss these two groups of parents in turn in what follows. In that discussion it will become clear that both groups have a very different understanding of danger in relation to being female. This allows for a very clear insight into what it means to say that realities are constructed, since both perceive a danger, yet their understanding of that word is related to an entirely different framework of meaning.

Wafaa mentioned that the relocation to Scotland benefited her daughter because there are fewer restrictions and more freedom offered to girls. While talking about Maysa, she talked about the way her daughter would have suffered if she had stayed in Syria. She said:

> She would be in trouble all the time… In our society, she can be easily oppressed by the society, husband, mother-in-law and everyone… I am sure 100% if she stayed in Syrian or Jordan she would have been harassed.

According to the mother, her daughter's chances of being oppressed or harassed are higher in Syria. As a result, the mother noted that if they had stayed in Syria, that would have led for the need for her and the father to be always around their daughter in order to 'protect her'. The mother believed that Scotland is a better place for her daughter because females are aware of their rights and the society itself respects females more. She said:

> The society is nice… Here I do not worry about her that much because now she has awareness about privacy and the school teaches her how to protect herself.

Nadia (P) also made a comparison between the female role in Syria and Scotland. The mother noted that in Syria females are mainly seen as housewives, regardless of what they achieve or of their career paths. By the mother's account, having a husband who can provide for his family was enough.

> In Syria no matter what the girl studies, her future is her husband's house. And we have that tradition that her husband will be enough for her, so if she got married to someone who's good why should she work? So, she sits at home.

The mother continued to say that it is not the same case in Scotland where there is more motivation for girls to pursue their education and career. Furthermore, on behalf of her daughter, Halima mentioned that despite the racist incident she and her daughter experienced, as will be discussed later in this chapter, her daughter 'feels more comfortable here' because of the fewer restrictions in Scotland compared to all the restrictions imposed on females in their previous setting.

These mothers (Wafaa, Nadia, and Halima) mentioned that Scotland is a better place for their daughters for different reasons. These three mothers believed that their daughters would have had been prescribed one specific identity in Syria. The change in location made the mothers feel that their daughter's identity will be constructed differently. Each mother had her individual explanation for how her daughter is positioned in society by others in both Syria and Scotland. Relocation to Scotland has provided the daughters with a different positioning in society. This different position, according to the mothers, will greatly affect their daughters' identity construction. As said, according to the mothers, society in Syria perceives the role of females in a fixed way where they are expected to be good wives who follow the dictates of society.

Wafaa in the above extract also talked about harassment, and that women are harassed often without speaking up against harassment. In line with this, I know many stories from females in the Middle East, including my own stories, about the times when we were harassed. I know we did not speak up against it because we were not taught how to do it. Some, for sure, did speak up regardless. Yet, it seems to me that more should be done to make speaking up against it the norm instead of feeling shame and staying silent. Wafaa expressed a similar belief when she raised the role schools in Scotland have in teaching students how recognise harassment, how to speak up against it, and how to fight it. Notice from that how social location made a difference and how identity is not static but evolving. If Maysa had been raised in Syria, she would have been seen as a target of oppression and harassment, and in need of constant protection by her parents. On the other hand, in Scotland Maysa is taught about harassment and how to protect herself from it and how to avoid or stop it. According to Nadia (P), too, her daughter would have been expected to be a wife in Syria, regardless of what she had wished to be or what she had wanted to achieve. Now, in Scotland, the daughter is enjoying more freedom and she is enabled to pursue her potentials and future chances.

Chapter 8: Analysis of Social Experiences

Having discussed the first group of parents, I now turn to the second. Where the first group saw the greater freedom in Scotland as a positive influence on their daughters' identity construction, other parents, such as Samira and Malak, expressed concern about the greater freedom girls are given in Scotland than in Syria. This concern was directed more at their daughters adopting a Scottish lifestyle or attitudes than at their sons. The central belief underlying this concern seems to be reflected in this sentence, which was repeated twice by Samira (P): 'there is more safety' for girls in Syria. Where the first group of parents saw the Syrian context as more dangerous, because of the restrictions placed on their daughters and the heightened chance of harassment without being enabled to defend against it, Samira instead believes that, were it not for the war, Syria would have been a safer place for her daughter. The reason is that, because the control parents have over their children is more restricted in Scotland, where, moreover, young people are allowed to do things she considers problematic, the mother fears that she will not be able to protect her daughter from destructive behaviour toward herself. The mother is also worried about the fact that her daughter can complain about her parents to the police and leave home at a certain age if she decides that her mother is too strict.

> Maybe she would tell me 'I want to depend on myself, or I have my own opinion and I don't want to listen to anyone'. This thing concerns me in this country.

It seems that the sense of safety the mother mentioned does not relate to a harm practiced against her children by others; rather, it is the freedom given to children which might make them less disciplined in terms of listening to their parents. In Sleijpen et al. (2016), the authors concluded that one of the resettlement issues refugees might encounter is caused due to intergenerational clashes where the children are adopting attitudes and behaviour which are accepted in their host country and not accepted in the culture of the parents. For Samira (P), it seems that her daughter is safe when she listens to the mother's advice and guidance. According to the mother, when her daughter listens to her mother, and in a way avoid such intergenerational clashes, that places her within the safety zone where the daughter does not disobey her family. In other words, for Samira, the danger lies in her daughter's freedom for independence and increased capability to disobey her parents.

Similarly, Malak is worried about the possibility that her daughter might be influenced by her peers who 'do sleepovers and do not allow anyone to interfere in their life'. Beside Malak's opposition to sleepover and sense of privacy, she was also against her daughter attending birthday parties. Both mothers had their own imagined community about what their family should look like and in particular how each member, especially the daughters, should behave. They also had their own perspective on the kind of 'danger' their daughters could encounter and how to 'protect' their daughters from it. The mothers seemed to adopt the view that girls should behave in the same way in their current setting as they did in their previous setting. They have their own understanding of what is allowed and not allowed – again, for their daughters in particular, with no mention to such restriction on their sons. The parents seem to have some religious and patriarchal ideas that became more pronounced because of having to come and adjust to another culture. Such religious ideas might

have been the norms of their own country which their children learn from society and their families. Those parents have to stress on these ideas because their children learn things from the society they currently live in that go against their assumed notions of "right and wrong".

In their previous setting, boys also had restrictions imposed on them, in particular in relations to communicating with girls. This was only brought up by Renad (P). The mother enforced that restriction in the previous setting, but she does not enforce it now. However, Renad told me some trouble that occurred at school in Scotland because her son did not like to talk to or befriend girls. The mother noted how in her previous setting there are separate schools for girls and for boys, and even if the school has both girls and boys 'boys cannot come close to any girl; sit beside her or talk to her'. In other words, it was inappropriate for a boy to talk to girls or have any kind of contact with them. Upon their arrival to Scotland, her son rejected the idea of being friends with girls. The mother mentioned that her son was somehow too assertive and too conservative in his interaction with his female classmates. Thus, he was referred to a psychologist, with whom he did five or six sessions, and who helped him accept having female friends.

> The psychologist would tell him: 'This is your female classmate; you should do this and that with her'. He would refuse and tell them: 'I don't like girls and I don't want to get married', even though he was little / laugh/.

From this extract, we can conclude that relocation affected the identity formation for both Renad and her son, who both perceived the interaction between girls and boys as inappropriate. However, the mother seemed to better understand the dynamics of the Scottish culture and thus became more accepting of that interaction. The son on the other hand needed external help to have more acceptance towards his female classmates. Structure, defined by Anthias (2001) as 'a set of determinancies [sic] outside individuals' (p. 634), is also a factor in shaping the positionality of a person. In this way, the external help the boy received can be considered structure which positioned him in a different space where he became more accepting to having female friends. Similar to girls, the less social restriction existing in Scotland contributed to a different identity formation for boys, though specifically in the way in which they are taught to relate to girls.

8.1.2 Hijab

A Hijab (also called a headscarf) is a scarf that covers females' head, so their hair remains hidden. Do Muslim women have to wear the Hijab? This question is very controversial. Some argue that they have to wear one because the Quran mentions it in verse 59 in Surat Al-Ahzab. There are different translations for this verse. In one translation, the verse reads: 'O prophet! Tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks (veils) all over their bodies'. In another translation, the last part is translated to: 'draw over themselves some of their outer garments [when in public]'. Notice the difference in the translation of the second part of the verse where the first one is translated to cover all the body and the second one is asking females to have 'some of their garments' over their bodies. The Quran is written in old Classic Arabic which sometimes uses Arabic words no longer in use today, which therefore need to be reconstructed. This

is the case in this verse, where the word 'Jalabebehen' can be translated, among other things, as a cover for the whole body or a garment for some parts.

As a Hijabi (that is, a female who wears a Hijab) myself, I am aware that my reasoning for wearing it have changed throughout time. At first, it stemmed from religious belief, then it became more cultural, and now it is emotional to me. Others can have similar or yet different reasons for choosing to wear a Hijab. This means that wearing the Hijab does not represent a homogeneous group consisting of individuals who all wear it for the same reason and belief. For me, wearing the Hijab is my own choice. However, it is not a choice for other women. Several studies explored the role of Hijab in the lives of Muslim women in the West. In Janet (2007), participants mentioned that their husbands forced them to do it. Other participants in the same study wore it to represent their religious identity. Similarly, participants in Siraj (2011) provide similar reasons for wearing it. One participant in that study said: 'The Hijab was a personal choice' (Siraj, 2011, p. 723), that she was able to 'see the meaning of it' (p. 724), and that she thinks females wear it to 'guard their reputation' (p. 724). Others, in a study by Ali and Syed (2018), wore it out of pride in their 'Islamic identity' (p. 689). Having the Hijab as a symbol for the 'Islamic identity' of their children, was also found in the findings of this research. The way the participants in this study guided their daughters to present their Islamic identity through Hijab was different as will be explained next. It is, however, important to re-note that such difference refutes the supposed homogeneity of the participants in particular, and Muslim (Syrian) refugees in general.

Religiously speaking, from the moment a female gets her first period, she becomes required to wear the Hijab. However, culturally and traditionally it is different. There are places where females start wearing it as early as 6 years old or much later, at 60 years old. Again, this all depends on the family, environment, cultural and religious beliefs.

In short, there are different reasons and motivation for why Muslim females wear the Hijab. All the mothers I interviewed wore the Hijab, however, not all their daughters did. The interviews showed various different meanings attached to the Hijab by the participants, which will now be shown by reference to excerpts from the interviews. In this section, I narrate how and when Wafaa and Malak's daughters wore the Hijab. Malak's daughter was present when I interviewed her mother. Thus, I heard from Malak and her daughter about the circumstances of wearing the Hijab, however, I only heard from Wafaa as her daughter was not present during the interview. These two daughters were not initially part of the interview, but they became part of it. To ease the understanding of the narrative discussed later, I will give pseudonyms for both of them; Wafaa's daughter (Fadwa), Malak's daughter (Kenda).

8.1.2.a Wafaa and Fadwa

Wafaa mentioned that her middle daughter (Fadwa) wanted to begin wearing the Hijab when she was in primary school. However, the mother refused because she felt her daughter wanted to wear it out of a desire to imitate her mother and her oldest sister. She said: 'She wanted to be like us.

I told her: If you want to do this for that reason you will not be rewarded by God'. The mother believed that if her daughter wore the Hijab out of imitation without true conviction, she would have easily removed it. In her interview, Wafaa showed that her own perspective on raising her children is based on being open and discussing any issue, even if it is uncomfortable. Her refusal to agree with her daughter's request to allow her to wear the Hijab presents the importance of it for the mother. The mother wanted her child to be convinced by the idea of it, to show commitment to wear it, instead of risking allowing her to wear it for a while and then just removing it after she got tired of it. Then, the mother asked the daughter to read about it so that she could make up her own mind about it. Later she told her mother that she wanted to wear it more at this time because she read about it. The mother is trying to build her child's religious identity based on understanding and acceptance as the mother seems to have a clear idea of the kind of religious identity she wishes for her daughter. However, it is important to her that this identity is not taken on just because of convention, but rather because the daughter herself chooses to ascribe to the values underlying the identity.

Another reason for Wafaa's approval for Fadwa to wear the Hijab was age. It was also a reason for the daughter to wear it as she wanted to go to her new school with a Hijab. The mother said: 'That was my plan as well'. Both the mother and the daughter felt it would be more convenient if she wore it to the new school (high school). In that way, her new classmates would get to know her from the beginning wearing the Hijab. Wafaa said: 'If she goes to the new school without a Hijab and then wears it, that will be a challenge for her. They have already seen her without a Hijab so they will feel that she is strange once she begins to wear it'. The mother also mentioned that her youngest daughters will follow the same 'system' in wearing the Hijab right before moving to their new high school, 'because they will have reached maturity in culture and religion'. Even though the mother seemed to give her daughter the option to not wear the Hijab the first time, the mother had expressed that all her daughters are expected to wear it once they move to high school. The mother's idea about the appropriate time to wear the Hijab is connected to the age of her daughters and her view of the process of maturation. According to Wafaa, that age is when they move to high school. Age positioned the daughter as someone who is ready to wear the Hijab and present her religious identity to the public. Reaching a certain age works as a strong force which prescribes the subject position a girl should take up when she reaches that age.

Beside Wafaa and Fadwa's given reasons to wear the Hijab, there seem to be other less explicit reasons for wearing the Hijab at the age of enrolling to high school. Both Wafaa and Fadwa perceived high school in Scotland as a different community of primary school. They both created an *imagined community* for high school where Fadwa needs to present herself with Hijab from the beginning to be accepted in this community. Both of them had a reading about this community as a community which might not accept Fadwa if she changed her Islamic identity from a non-Hijabi to a Hijabi. The mothers' will for her daughter to wear the Hijab is obvious throughout this narrative, yet it was a matter of when. Both Wafaa and Fadwa seemed to reach an agreement of when it is best to wear the

Hijab, though I wonder what would have happened if the daughter had not wanted to wear the Hijab in primary or in high school. Would there be an inter-generational clash between them? I did not ask this question during the interview because it is possible that the mother would have felt that I am challenging her, leading to a sense of discomfort in the interview.

Another factor in wearing the Hijab is the power of the mother in deciding when is best. The mother here contributes to the 'suturing' and 'de-suturing' process of Fadwa's identity process. When the daughter tried to 'suture' her Islamic identity in her primary school as a Muslim who wears the Hijab, the mother de-sutured it by refusing. Furthermore, the mother contributed to Fadwa's suturing of her Islamic identity through convincing her that wearing the Hijab at that point was too soon, and also accepting Fadwa's desire to wear it when she moved to high school, which coincided with the mother's idea of when it is best to wear it.

8.1.2.b Malak and Kenda

In contrast to Fadwa, who wanted to wear the Hijab and met with opposition from her mother, Kenda did not want to wear it, but she had to. While interviewing Malak, her daughter interrupted the interview once her mother talked about the Hijab. She shared her story about the first time she wore the Hijab.

> I wore it before Grade 1. When I arrived in Scotland, I didn't wear it for two weeks, and then my father woke me up and told me that I had to wear it... I cried when I wore the Hijab, I didn't like it. In my first picture wearing it, my eyes were red because of crying.

The mother then commented that she tried to convince her husband that their daughter was too young, but he did not listen. She said: 'I told him she's too young, but her father said that it is different here than in our country… In our country we would let her wear the Hijab around P5 maybe P6'. Living in a different county with a different culture and religion made the father believe in the necessity for his daughter to wear the Hijab earlier than she would have if they had stayed in Syria. A main aspect of translocational positionality is how social locations influence the way people position themselves (Anthias, 2008). In other words, the way people perceive themselves and their position within the social world is not static, rather it is always changing, both temporally and spatially. Translocational positionality provides an understanding of how certain social categories, in particular social setting, can contribute to identity construction. Gender was one of these social categories which made the father feel that his daughter should position herself as a Muslim since her first day at school in Scotland. According to the mother, this kind of positionality would have come in an older age if they had stayed in Syria. The father had the hierarchical power to make his daughter wear the Hijab in Syria and in Scotland. Yet, he chose to practice this power earlier in Scotland, possibly to distance his daughter from the Scottish community and emphasise her identity as Muslim who has different values and more conservatism than the Scottish peers at school. The father also seems to adopt a static idea about his daughter's identity which he imposed to maybe create a sense of sameness in his family. In other words, he tried to hold on extra strongly to a particular identity of

his daughter which presents, in his view, the same identity she would have had if she stayed in Syria as a response to the different culture and religion of Scotland. Here, too, this is interference from the parents in the suturing process of their children's identity construction; however, a forced interference.

8.1.2.c Reflection on the Role Played by the Hijab in Both Families

Looking at these two stories, we can notice large differences between the two families discussed. Before going into the detail, I would like to add that Wafaa mentioned that she wears the Hijab, and she also dresses in Western clothes, such as trousers or jeans, yet the top she is wearing should cover her back. Malak wears the Niqab, which covers the face expect for the eyes, and a Jelbab, which is an Islamic outer garment that is loose-fit and does not define any body part. This might tell us about the extent of religious conservativism in each family; Malak's family seems to be more conservative in their Islamic attire. This could also be the reason why Malak's husband insisted on showing his daughter's conservatism since a younger age.

Other differences also emerge between the two families. Wafaa, and not her husband, seemed to be responsible for deciding the time when her daughter should wear the Hijab. However, the father in the second story was the one making the decision, even when Malak expressed disagreement. The difference shows the different forms of patriarchal control that could exists within the different participant families. Different strategies also exist in the way families try to construct their children's identities. Wafaa adopted discussion and 'logic' to present her vision to her daughter's decision to wear the Hijab. Yet the father in Malak's story seemed to be authoritative and make the decision even when his daughter and the mother did not agree. The strategy used also affected the way the daughter felt about the Hijab; Fadwa is satisfied unlike Kenda. In her definition of positionality, Anthias (2001) argues that agency can be 'thought of as related to human volition' (p. 634) and that it plays an important role in shaping one's positionality. The strong pressure from the father denied the daughter's agency since her volition was taken out of the picture in making the decision as to if, and when, she would wear the Hijab. This in turn made her feel resistant toward wearing the Hijab. On the other hand, Wafaa gave her daughter a lot of agency (more than that even: she demanded that the daughter take agency instead of copying her) which in turn made the daughter feel strongly convinced about her choice. One similarity between the two is that they both consider the Hijab a representation of a preconstructed female religious identity. The similarities or differences that could exist in relation to any aspect, such as wearing the Hijab, in the refugee Arab Muslim lives refute the assumed homogeneity of this group.

8.1.3 Summarising the Section on Gender

The parents seem to be more concerned about raising their daughter than about their sons in Scotland. While the parents seem lenient in the interaction their sons make with females, they are more cautious in guiding their daughter to stick to their culture and tradition in terms of engaging

with males. The reason could be the cultural norm of raising daughters who fit into the 'good Muslim girls' picture to maintain the honour of the family.

The parents seemed to have particular views on how their daughters should behave and present themselves in society. In terms of Hijab, families believed that the Hijab is part of the religious identity for their daughters and should be worn from a certain age onward. The difference between the families was that the parents in each family have their own understanding of when and why their daughters should wear it. Moreover, the difference in restrictions imposed on girls made some of the parents feel more comfortable with their daughters' future in terms of safety and chances. However, safety was another issue raised by other parents who felt the larger amount of freedom given to girls in Scotland might threaten the image the parents have of who their daughter should be. Also, the different restrictions imposed on boys in their previous setting, in relation to interacting with girls, affected their identity formation. There are different meanings and practices between families which highlight the importance of the shift from one country to another and how both the parents and the children try to navigate the changes in position.

In relation to translocational positionality, the data showed that there are aspects of agency and exclusion which made the families position themselves in a different space than other groups in society. The main reason for exclusion was the imagined community the participant created which affected how they tried to present themselves to the school community and the Scottish community. The data also showed that identity as a process is not static but changing and transforming. The interference of parents in the children's process of suturing and de-suturing was apparent in this section. Some of that interference was enforced and some of it was encouraged.

8.2. Peers

The influence of peers can play a significant role in the identity negotiations of refugee students, and on whether they achieve a sense of belonging (Bartlett et al., 2017; Poppitt & Frey, 2007). More specifically, peers' construction of 'us' and 'them' narratives can lead to less or more connection to the mainstream community. The narrative of 'us' and 'them' can also be constructed in the imagination of refugee students themselves. Bigelow (2010) investigated how schooling experiences frame the identity of Muslim refugees. The study concluded that some of the students she interviewed were victims of the imagined communities constructed either by themselves or by their peers (or both). Other literature suggests that some refugee students tend to find friends with whom they share the same language and culture to support them at school (Naidoo, 2009; Oikonomidoy, 2009; Sleijpen et al., 2016). Moreover, resettled Muslim parents in Scotland raised concerns about the influence friends can have on their children in terms of the different religion and lifestyles (Weedon et al., 2013). Therefore, this section discusses the participant children's peers.

As reported by the participant children and their parents, the first part will entail a discussion of who the participant children's friends are, as well as possible challenges the participant's faced

while making friends. In this part, some participants talked about their preferences in their friendship choices and some other factors contributing to those preferences. The second part explores peers from the perspective of parents and their concerns around peers at school. Throughout this part, the parents present their cultural mindset around their 'should be' in regard to their children's peers. Within these two parts, these preferences, challenges and perspective are analysed using Hall (1996) concept of identity as a process of becoming.

It is relevant to note that while the participants were talking about friends, they referred to the non-Muslim White majority as "Scottish". They excluded peers of different ethnicity, culture, or religion in their denotation when using the word "Scottish" even if it was possible that they were United Kingdom nationals living in Scotland. To understand why, Anderson's concept of imagined communities will once more help analyse the reason for that and for other points discussed later. This concept is directly connected to nationalism, and it can be connected to other personal and social aspects of nationalism such as belonging and a personal sense of national identity. The parents as well as the students in this study seemed to form their own imagined community about Scotland and who is Scottish and who is not. For instance, excluding those of Pakistani descent from their definition to "Scottish" could mean that they think Pakistanis are not Scottish either because of their colour, religion, or both. This is further elaborated in the next sections.

8.2.1 Who are the Students' Friends?

While interviewing the students, I tried to investigate if they have friends from different cultures and religions to find out if my participants' preference in their friendship choices are similar to the findings in other existing literature around this topic where participants preferred peers from the same culture (Naidoo, 2009; Oikonomidoy, 2009; Sleijpen et al., 2016). First, I asked them whether or not they have friends at school. If they did, I would ask them about the cultural background of those friends. The participant students in this study had various attitudes about who they want to become friends with. Some of them did not have any issue having friends from a different culture, religion and language, yet for others it was not easy, as explained next.

Some of the students shared that they have "Scottish" friends. For instance, Malak's daughter (Kenda) and Zaher (C) both talked about having Scottish friends who they considered to be good friends. An important indicator of this for them was that their friends defended them when they encountered racism by other students. Other children, such as Mo'men and Ashraf, mentioned that they have friends from various backgrounds: Muslim, non-Muslim, Scottish and not Scottish. Majed (C) added that in his first year, it was difficult for him to make friends, in particular Scottish friends, but he eventually managed to make friends with both Muslims and non-Muslims. However, he preferred to hang out with his Muslim friends because they 'have the same atmosphere' unlike the non-Muslims who 'do things that we don't'.

On the other hand, there are Mohammed (C) and Maram (C) who only had friends with whom they either shared the same culture or religion. Mohammed talked about how important his friends

are for him, even when he was in Syria, in the following way: 'My friends were very important to me, they helped me a lot in Syria… Also, here, I always need help from friends at school'. Mohammed then added 'I'm all right sticking with Pakistani friends. The son also explained that his Pakistani friends help him, for example in shops, as they taught him more about Halal food. Mohammed also mentioned that he felt his colour excluded him from the White Scottish community and hence White Scottish peers. When I asked Mohammed if anyone gave him any comments about his colour, he said no, and it was just a feeling. It is possible that Mohammed has his own imagined community about the Scottish, and colour was one element for that community. Thus, he excluded himself because he does not fit into his imagined community about Scotland.

Maram (C) said that she has one friend who is Syrian, like her. Even though the daughter said that she can have more friends, she prefers to have a friend who speaks Arabic and has a similar background. The daughter also mentioned another reason for her not having a lot of friends. Due to the war, she left her friends in Syria. Then, after settling in Turkey for a while, she had to leave her friends there to reach their final destination, which is the United Kingdom. She said: 'I left my friends in Turkey, so I got sad. I left my friends in Syria, so I got sad. Now, I don't want anyone'. Relocation is one experience that all refugees share. The impact of this relocation appears to affect Maram in terms of her desire to make friends. This process seems to be in line with Hall's notion of identity, which is not about a way of being that was pre-established in the past, but rather about becoming. In light of this, we could say that Maram's identity had come to include a way to defend herself against the pain of losing yet more people. She had become someone who has one friend and who does not want anyone after being someone who had multiple friends in Syria and Turkey.

Both Mohammed (C) and Maram (C) felt that if they had been born in Scotland, they would have had Scottish friends. They both felt that the age at which they arrived in Scotland is also a factor. They both are the oldest of the children I interviewed. According to both of them, being raised in Scotland since a younger age would have allowed them to adapt to the culture and make it easier for them to be friends with Scottish children. Mohammed said: 'I would have gotten used to Scottish people and they would have gotten used to me, they would have wanted me to be their friend'. In other words, in Mohammed's view, familiarity of the Scottish culture, and familiarity of the Syrian culture to the Scottish would have contributed to making Scottish friends.

8.2.2 Parents' Concerns about their Children's Peers

The parents also talked about their children's peers. There are different influences peers could have on their children. Some of these influences made the parents happy; those influences mainly came from Muslim peers. For instance, Samira (P) talked about how her son's friends encouraged him to go to Arabic school with them. Samira added that the first time she visited her children's school, she felt 'comfortable' once she saw that there were Muslim students. It is possible that the sense of comfort she felt stemmed from her own imagined community. Seeing Muslims at school

added familiarity to the school environment, and possibly made the mother feel that there is a community at school which her children belong to.

Some parents raised concerns about the influence of Scottish friends. Sofyan believed that he had 'to be there the whole time for him. I am worried about his Scottish friends.' Because of his child's friends, the father felt that he had to always be involved with his child to guide him and not 'make him integrate with them'. The father continued to say that he feels more comfortable when his child goes out to play with his friends from the mosque, who might not share the same nationality or ethnicity of his child but share the same religion. Peers from the mosque seemed to fit in the father's imagined community where his son belongs to and should have friends from.

Similar to Sofyan (P), Aseel (P) expressed concern about the influence Scottish peers can have on her children's identity. Even though she liked that her children are integrating and making friends as a sign to start their life in Scotland, she believed that there is limit for their integration. She said: 'It's nice that they have friends here to have a life, but not to the point of total integration… I don't want them to follow their traditions'. According to the mother, adopting Scottish peers' traditions is off limits and not acceptable. Changing traditions poses a threat to the cultural and religious identity she wants her children to share with her. She has a vision on what identity her children 'should' have and adapting these traditions could distort the image she has for her children's identity.

On the other hand, Kawthar criticised integration at her son's school and she felt that more should be done to integrate her son. The reason was that her son did not have a 'best friend' at school, and that her son only had two friends who were female Muslims. The mother preferred if her son has a male Scottish friend, even though she thought that the 'Scottish boys can be a bit arrogant'. The mother perceived not having a Scottish friend as a negative sign, as it meant there is not enough integration. On the other hand, the son said something different when I asked him about the names of his friends in Scotland at school and he said 'Michael, Laurent and Charlie' which are three non-Islamic names. This contradiction could be because the mother does not know as much about her son's life as she thinks she knows. Even though the mother mentioned that her child has friends at school, it did not make her satisfied because she wanted his friends to be 'Scottish boys'. The mother had a preference in the gender of her son's friends. Also, she preferred 'Scottish' to 'Pakistanis'. It is possible that those Pakistani girls were United Kingdom nationals living in Scotland, yet the mother did not see them as Scottish. The reason could be the mother's imagined community about Scotland in terms of colour and religion. Those "Pakistani" girls did not fit the role of "Scottish" in her imagined community.

Samira (P) also talked about gender while discussing her daughter's peers. She is very concerned about the influence of Scottish friends on her daughter, more than her son, especially after some people warned her about the influence Scottish peers can have on her daughter. The mother also specified her daughter's friends as 'females'. The mother said:

> I mean unfortunately in my area there are not that many Syrians … My daughter is alone, she does not have sisters, so I can't prevent her from having female friends… I mean why the world keeps making me worried from such things.

The mother found it unfortunate that the school and the neighbourhood did not have Syrians of the same age as her daughter. Therefore, since the only friends her daughter can have are Scottish, the mother then elaborated that she changed her strategies in raising her daughter to minimise the influence of peers on her daughter. Unlike the way the mother was raised, she tried to be more open with her child so the child would listen to her and not to her peers. She said: 'I just want her to listen to me, I don't want her to listen from her friends I don't want her to get the wrong information you know'. Without going into detail, the mother mentioned briefly an incident where a friend of her daughter was in trouble for doing 'something wrong'. The mother was relieved that she talked with her daughter about that 'thing' before the consequences that happened to her friend. She said:

> I told myself Alhamdallah that I told her about that because I don't want her to listen to the wrong information or to be scared of me … I like to give her some background information about these things and that's it **I, her mother,** want to be the one to plant information in her head.

The mother's identity has "become" more open with her daughter about 'things' she would not have talked about if she stayed in Syria. Similar to what was discussed earlier in sex education, the parents used the word 'things' to refer to anything sexual. Thus, the chances that the mother here was referring to a sexual matter were high. Her daughter's identity as a woman comes with specific prescriptions about what she is allowed and not allowed to do. In Syria these 'things' did not need to be discussed explicitly. Because of the possible influence of the daughter's peers on her behaviour in Scotland, the mother has adapted by making these 'things' explicit, in order to prevent her daughter from behaving in ways that contradict the mother's vision of her daughter's identity. The mother also seemed to take the responsibility to 'plant' what is correct and incorrect in her daughter's mind. Samira (P), like Aseel (P), has a clear image of what her children's identity "should" be in terms of beliefs and behaviours, as well as of what her own role in shaping that identity must be.

The imagined communities which parents had about their children's peers varied. Other than preferring Muslims specifically from Syria over Scottish children, some parents preferred Muslims more generally. Even the parents who wanted their children to befriend Scottish children, agreed there was a limit on behaving in ways similar to the friends that contradict the religion and culture of the parents. The main concerns the parents had about the peers were related to influences on their children's religious and cultural identity. The parents seem keen to guide their children in maintaining their cultural attitude and religious practices. Thus, religion and culture were the main elements for their imagined community about the peers.

In line with Hall's concept of identity as a process of becoming, the parents seemed aware of the effect peers can have on one's identity and the possible chances of their children 'becoming' less willing to abide with their parents' religion and cultural traditions. They had a clear idea about the

identity they want their children to have. At the same time, they show that they know that the identity of their children will be influenced, and not become entirely like they want. The parents seemed to focus more on their children's religious identity and their concerns rise from the possible cultural and religious clash between their religion and the Scottish culture where many practices go against the participants' religious convictions.

This also seems related to what was discussed earlier, the danger these parents see in the non-religious lifestyle and what their daughters might do if they adapt that lifestyle. Control of parents over children to have a particular identity (and loss of control, or concern of loss of control) is also a very often recurrent in the data in this section. That was one of the reasons the process of identity as becoming was de-sutured (in terms of being, not becoming) beside participants' own imagined community of which they do consider themselves to be a part, or because they feel excluded.

8.2.3 Summarising the Section on Peers

To summarise this section, there are different points in regard to peers that should be mentioned. While interviewing the children, they talked about their friends after I asked them about this topic. Some of them had non-Muslim friends, and others did not. Those who preferred Muslim friends told me that they did so either because of their age, background or previous experiences. Coming to Scotland at a relatively old age while already identifying strongly with a different culture, affected both Mohammed and Maram's (C) desire and their perceived ability to make "Scottish" friends. Mohammed added that his skin colour also played a role in this. In terms of parents, some of them showed that they had a clear image of who their children's friends "should" be. The majority of the parents preferred Muslims peers to non-Muslim to minimise the risk of adopting non-Islamic attitudes, behaviours, or ideas.

Hall (1996) concept of identity as a process of "becoming" and Anderson (2006) concept on "imagined communities" are relevant to understand the participants' experiences in terms of peers. Some of the children's imagined communities about Scotland led them to exclude themselves from their Scottish classmates. They "became" excluded from the mainstream community. Furthermore, some of the parents' imagined community about who their children "should" be, and their imagined community about Scotland, led them to trying to take a role in their children's identity formation by monitoring their children's interaction with their Scottish peers and adopting new strategies in raising their children. The parents "became" more open and alert to the threat to their children's religious identity. It seems that some parents allow some level of becoming, but only because they realise that it is the only way for the things they really find important to stay as they are. For instance, one would not have talked with her daughter about sex back in Syria. But what is really important to her is that her daughter does not have sex before marriage. Therefore, she decided to change the less important value (not talking about sex) in order to entrench the more important value (not having sex). So, I do not think it is just about becoming, it is also an active effort to maintain an already existing cultural and religious identity.

8.3 Islamophobia

This section deals with the families' experiences within society at large, including their children's social experiences at school. It contributes to the understanding of how the refugee families participating in this study negotiate their positions in society, and how relationships are constructed in everyday social interactions. Recurrent themes in the families' reports of their everyday social interactions were: receiving themselves as the Other; their feeling of (non-)belonging; and racism. By giving insights into the social constructions of the Other, I show how Islamophobia can lead to social and emotional exclusions due to ethnic and religious signifiers. Moreover, I investigate how identity contingency, as conceptualised by Hall, can create a sense of belonging or non-belonging. These identity negotiations are analysed using Hall's concept of identity, Said's work on Orientalism and Fanon's work on Othering.

Hall's notion of identity gives importance to difference as a vital aspect in the process of becoming. One's understanding and valuing of their own identities in terms of cultural heritage, background or tradition is realised by comparing it to other different identities. Islamophobia is a product of this process of realisation; it is a way to discriminate against those who are different in a way which is considered inferior. Said's (1978) work on Orientalism explores the negative perceptions coupled with the colonisation of Arabs and Muslims, and how these perceptions could constitute Islamophobia. Said also explored how Arabs and Muslims were constructed as an essentialised Other by the West, and in terms of deficit in relation to the positive image of the West. Fanon's work on Othering shows the effects of Othering on the Othered in terms of negative self-perception and a sense of exclusion which mostly occurs when the Other starts to see himself/herself through the lens of coloniser or, in the case of this project, through the lens of the mainstream community.

This research considers any prejudice or marginalisation Muslim minorities in the West experience as a form of racism. As said, this research is also informed by Said's concept of Orientalism and Fanon's work on Othering. The first explores the depiction of Muslims and Arabs as inferior and Other. The latter gives insight into the effects of Othering on one's self-image. All these theories are layers to Hall's concept of identity where one's identity is contingent. The majority of the participants in this study reported that they faced racist incidents. This aligns with S. Harris (2018) conclusion that the myth that Scotland has no racism is not valid, and it also aligns with a study done by Hopkins (2021), in which the majority of their respondents also reported Islamophobic incidents in Scotland. It is important to note that for this section, I will narrate some of the incidents my participants have experienced. I believe this adds personalisation and presents more of the participants' voice.

Some of the participants felt comfortable enough to tell detailed stories about their lived experiences regarding racism and Islamophobia, and others gave me a glimpse of what they have experienced. To avoid discomfort, I did not try to ask follow-up questions about the racist incidents

the participants shared. This section narrates detailed stories from the families. All these incidents were considered as 'racist' by the participants. Even though some of these incidents might not seem racist for the reader, I gathered all of these incidents in this section because the participants who lived these experiences have a different angle to perceive them than the reader.

In Chapter 1, it was mentioned that there are four aspects for Islamophobia which are discrimination, exclusion, violence and prejudice. The next sub-sections are narratives which represent each of these aspects (Runnymede Trust, 1997). Even though these aspects are separated, they still intertwine within these sections.

8.3.1 Discrimination

> I was leaving ASDA and Mohammed was with me, then a very big man wanted to attack us while we were pushing the shopping trolley. He started saying bad words. I did not understand him, but my son told me 'Mama, he is talking to us. He is saying really bad insults'. I told him to ignore that man. Anyway, I could not escape him, so I left the trolley and looked at him, and I insulted him in Arabic. I told him what brought us here is bitterness and pain; that what made us come here. It turned out that he is crazy and drunk. When I said the word police, he backed off…Then he tried to shake hands with Mohammed, I pulled my son and told him to ignore him… I freaked out that moment seeing a big guy yelling at us.

This incident is a demonstration of blunt racism Muslims endure. It shows that daily practices, such as grocery shopping, might not be as easy as expected. By looking at this extract, it will be noticed that Mohammed (C) was the one who caught what the man was saying. However, Mohammed did not engage with him, rather he informed his mother, Manal (P). The mother used different strategies to deal with the situation. First, she chose ignoring to avoid the man. Then when she felt the man was persistent on harassing them, she chose to face him using the only language she could use even though she knew he would not understand a word. The mother later explained the important role of language to deal with these situations in the following way: 'When the language is not good, you are weak. If the language is strong, your position is stronger, and your heart becomes stronger when you reply back'. What the mother said about the role of language resonates with Atwell et al. (2009) findings that learning the language of the host country is a tool for power. In Manal's case it was the power to answer back to the verbal abuse. However, the lack of verbal skills made her feel 'weak'; meaning it affected her confidence. This is in turn similar to the parents' experiences whose confidence was affected because of language in Deng and Marlowe (2013). Even though the study refers to the parents' confidence in dealing with their children's education and managing daily tasks, it is still relevant to this incident.

Anderson (2006) also argues that language is one of the mechanisms for imagined nationalism, which is possibly one factor for why Manal, as will be mentioned later, expressed her feeling of unbelonging to Scotland. Her inability to communicate the language of the host country and using her native language was an example of her recognition that she is not Scottish. The language the

drunk man used reflects his 'fixed truth' about Muslims which is presented in the bad words he said to Manal and Mohammed. By having a homogenised negative truth of Muslims, the drunk man presented that truth in the real world by insulting the participants. There is also an element of power which allowed that drunk man to use such words to people who were minding their own business.

The last strategy the mother used to deal with the situation was pulling her son from shaking hand with the man. That could show the degree of panic, anger and unsafety she felt. The man seemed to only back off when he heard the word 'police' which is the same word Syrians used in the Syrian Arabic dialect. Threatening him to call the police could indicate that the mother was aware of the danger around her and of her rights. Manal later reported the incident to a social worker who then advised her to do her shopping during the day instead of in the evening. The mother commented on that by saying: 'OK…we should not leave at night' twice. In the second time, the mother's voice tone seemed to carry dissatisfaction. Due to this incident, new restrictions were imposed on the family to stay safe and out of trouble. This dynamic has been referred to by Hopkins (2021) as 'social withdrawal' (p. 43) which is basically staying at home and not leaving the house as usual or not going out at all. The family, in particular the mother, now avoids leaving the house late in the day and the grocery shopping becomes connected to particular times to avoid encounters with drunk and harmful people who seem to be more visible at night, as recommended by the social worker. Even though this recommendation might lessen the chances of being attacked verbally or physically, it does not address the reality of racism. It also does not address the deeply felt social exclusion that is the result of experiencing racism. It is clear that this sense of exclusion was worsened when Manal reluctantly agreed that she should not go out at night, because she has become literally excluded from participation in a major part of the time shared by those who belong to the Scottish identity.

When Manal told the man that only war brought us here, then ending her story by wishing to go back to Syria, this indicates that the mother does not have a sense of belonging to her current setting. Yet, she then connected Scotland to granting her children a brighter future because in Scotland 'education is recognised internationally'. From this quotation, it is noticeable that the mother connected a better future with education as a sign of the importance of education for the family. Thus, she was in a dilemma where she wanted to go back to Syria where she has a sense of belonging, yet she also wanted to stay in Scotland where her children's future belongs. She said:

> I hope Allah will solve everything, and we go back. However, you know my children's future is here. They study here, and they want to finish what they started. When they get a degree from here, it is different… Education level in our country is not recognised internationally no matter how strong it is.

In her theorisation to belonging, Anthias (2008) argued that it refers to the 'practices, experiences and emotions' which decide how much we feel we are part of a specific 'social fabric' (p. 8). Observing this incident, it is noticeable that the discriminatory practice against Manal and her son, and the whole experience which result in fear and social withdrawal, led her to feel she does not belong to the social fabric in Scotland.

Similar language was used also against Intesar (P) who narrated three blunt racist incidents. The first incident occurred in the bus when an old man yelled at her for wearing the Hijab. The other one was at the bus stop where another old man yelled and pointed his walking stick at her. The last incident, which according to the mother was the worst one because her daughter witnessed it with her, happened in a store where an employee refused to sell products to them and performed a 'bad gesture because we wear the Hijab'. Even though they filed a complaint to the store and the store apologised to them, the incident seemed to have affected the daughter greatly. Intesar told me: 'My daughter cried…because she's a teenager. She stayed upset you know… It hurt her'. Then the mother continued:

> I will not go and fight with them because they don't know anything about our culture, but you know I am old and mature I don't get upset… I was scared of course, so I avoided him… But you know I'm old and I don't feel sad. I understand the situation.

Intesar seemed to have come to accept discrimination as an ordinary fact of life, as she mentioned she did not get 'upset' because she is 'old', and that her daughter was affected because she was 'young'. Moreover, she thought the reason for these incidents was the lack of understanding of her culture and religion. In his discussion of Othering, Fanon (1986) argued that the Othered are ready to be rejected due to their perception of how one looks at others and how others look at one. Intesar's (P) idea that the racist people did not know her culture, and they perceived her as different because of their ignorance rather than out of malice, made her 'understand the situation'.

Some participants in a study by Hussain and Miller (2006) felt that having more Muslims in Scotland can diminish the Scottish identity. The drunk/old White Scottish men (as Manal and Intesar noted) yelling could be explained as a sign of the perception of the Hijab as a threat to their Scottish identity. It can also indicate what Hopkins (2021) calls 'gendered Islamophobia' which means that Muslims females are more threatened because of their Hijab or Niqab (p. 19), which makes them more visible as a Muslim. In other words, those men have an imagined community about what Scotland should look like, and they perceived Manal (P) and Intesar (P) as a threat to their imagined nation and thus their own sense of belonging to that nation.

8.3.2 Exclusion

Wafaa (P) narrated a story about one of her daughters, not the one I interviewed but the one mentioned earlier in this chapter (Fadwa). This story was one of several events or incidents that Wafaa experienced in relation to Islamophobia. All the incidents that the mother narrated which she felt were racist occurred in the first village in Scotland she lived in. Wafaa explained that after these incidents occurred, they were relocated to another village; a better one.

In the first incident (or rather, an event that lasted for the whole period of their stay in the village), Wafaa's daughter was bullied at school by her classmates who would not play with her and would throw her stuff on the floor. She described the mental state of her daughter after being treated

badly by her classmates. The effects of Othering are clear as the mother explained in the next extract that both her daughter's self-perception and her attitude with her siblings changed in a negative way.

> My daughter started to play with her younger sister's friends…. This is a horrible indicator because it means her character was not developing and her confidence was shaking… She was crying at home and seeing herself as ugly in the mirror… She started to be strict with everyone, even her siblings.

Fanon argued that when one is Othered, this often leads to a sense of inferiority. The daughter started to perceive herself as inferior in terms of how she looks. That could be because looking different than her classmates made them exclude her and perceive her as the Other. Her awareness of how her colour and looks affected the way she was excluded by her peers affected how she herself started to perceive the way she looks as different. The mother seemed frustrated by the teachers and the head teachers, because when the daughter and the mother complained to them about the classmates, they did not act on their complaint and were passive about it. The mother was particularly frustrated by the head teacher who 'made me wait outside while she was free'. While there is a chance the mother might be wrong or right about her interpretation of this incident as being racist, what is confirmed is that even after the mother's complaint, the school staff did not try to change the situation.

When the mother saw that her complaint was not taken seriously, she interpreted it as the head teacher perceived her as 'ignorant coming from a refugee camp. They think that if you are a refugee, it means you come from a refugee camp'. The mother seemed to be self-anxious about her position in society as a refugee and all the stigmas around it. On multiple occasions, the mother felt that because she is a refugee she was excluded from the Scottish community and thus perceived as a 'floor cloth', 'stupid', and a 'second citizen' by Scottish people. This too is a clear manifestation of how feeling of being Othered could lead to more self-consciousness of one's position in the society. Hall considers representation as an element for identity negotiation, which he identifies as 'how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves' (Hall, 1996, p. 4). Wafaa seemed to be following the political discourse and media representation around refugees and Islamophobia. As a response, Wafaa tries to challenge the way Muslim refugees are represented by taking action, especially after their social worker confirmed that refugees are perceived as 'inferiors' by some.

After this, Wafaa complained to a higher authority called Education Scotland. Education Scotland investigated her daughter's case and found that there was racism against the daughter. The school then created a club to introduce the daughter to her classmates to bridge the gap between them and include her in the classroom. Clearly, the school only took action when a higher authority interfered. Taking action demonstrates Wafaa's resilience for the sake of improving her daughter's environment at school. Her complaint is also a demonstration of the way she was trying to challenge the perception of Muslim refugees as ignorant and weak.

Wafaa continued to narrate other consequences after she raised the complaint about her daughter's treatment at school to a higher authority. For one, she noticed that her neighbours, who knew about what had happened, stopped greeting her. The mother explained that the racism she faced in that small village was because everyone there was related. Though the complaint was not made public, since everyone knew each other there, the news spread quickly about the school incident. In the way she interpreted the events, she was confronted with a choice: either stay silent about the way her daughter was treated at school or submit a formal complaint to a national organisation. Since she chose the latter, she felt that the community turned against her, and she felt excluded from the village. She believed that not all of the people were 'bad but racism is like a contagious disease'. Wafaa and Malak, as will be mentioned in her next narrative, explained part of why they faced racism as being due to the low socio-economic area where they lived. Similarly, Hopkins (2021) reports that around 49% of Muslims in Scotland lived in poor area between 2014-2019.

Wafaa further correlated knowing her rights to being educated herself: 'I am educated, and I know my duties and my rights'. The mother continued to talk about how her different interaction with the threats she received made her more confident. She seemed to have developed various strategies to deal with the issues she faced. She reported on having developed the following belief:

> Being nice all the time makes insulting you easy… If one wants to be nice, there is limit… You can be friendly to reflect a good image about you, your country and refugees, but honestly not to the point to hurt me…I told them if you want to complain, I will do the same. If you want to hire a lawyer, I will do the same. When this started to be my logic, people started to be careful when they talk to me.

The mother did not deny that there were Scottish people helping her, yet she kept talking about the way she thought she was perceived and her feeling of being excluded and not fitting in Scotland. For instance, she preferred to do her weekly grocery shopping when one of her Scottish friends offered to take her by car. She did not to like to take the bus because she would be carrying a lot of things. Since she wears the Hijab and looks young, she would feel 'embarrassed' because she felt she would be judged for having a lot of children and buying a lot of groceries. She said:

> They think having such a big family is a sign of being retarded … On the other hand, I saw Scottish families with 5 children, but they are not judged. This judgment is only for us.

Wafaa was also aware about the negative perception associated with Muslims. She felt that if a Muslim does something similar to a White person, for instance having a big family, the Muslim will be judged negatively or perceived 'retarded' and that 'judgment is only for us'. In her interview, Wafaa mentioned 'Islamophobia' and the negative depiction and perception of Muslims in the West. Wafaa's remarks resonate with Said's theory about the construction of Muslims as the inferior Other, which is built on the existence of a repertoire of representations in the imagination of the White community. Even though nothing in particular happened while she was shopping, it seems she has a general sense of feeling excluded from the society. Her daughter's exclusion at school led to feeling

that the whole family was excluded by the neighbours, and eventually it seems that this feeling of exclusion extended to the whole Scottish community.

8.3.3 Violence

Malak, similar to Wafaa, talked about the area where she lives. She told me: ‘there were three murders here… there is no safety’. Before she started talking about several incidents she had experienced, which I will discuss below, the mother mentioned that (as related above) she wears the Niqab which is a full-face cover that leaves only the eyes uncovered. Pointing to her Islamic attire before narrating the racist incidents she faced could mean that she thought her visibility as Muslim was the reason for these incidents to happen. According to Hall, identity is a process of becoming under the effect of context. In the context of Syrian culture, wearing the Niqab is acceptable and not a reason to be attacked. However, pointing to her Niqab in the Scottish context could refer to the mother’s awareness of her Niqab as a reason for exclusion and discrimination.

Malak narrated three racist incidents done by the same man. In the first incident, the man spat on one of her children while he was going to school. The second time, the man was passing near her children’s school. When he saw her son playing in the playground with his classmates, he made a gesture he would slaughter him and told him ‘I will kill all your family’. The children told the principal, and she went with him after school so he would not go alone because she was worried about him. The last incident, the man tried to attack the mother with a knife while she was going to school to pick up her children. If it was not for a Scottish lady who rushed to protect the mother, the man would have attacked her. That woman went with Malak to the police and testified to them what she had witnessed. In relation to that, Malak commented: ‘I didn’t expect that she would be a witness for me against someone from her country’. The mother assumed that there is a shared nationalistic common feeling between her attacker and saviour which would have made the lady stand by the attacker. Notice in her statement she used ‘her country’ meaning that she does not identify herself as Scottish and thus she has a feeling of non-belonging to her current setting. Malak’s statement expresses her imagined national community. As Anderson (2006) argued, nationalism has a sense of comradeship. Therefore, the mother was surprised that the lady did not stand with the attacker. In a way, she generalised all Scottish people, thinking that they all feel the same about their nationality and that they all think in the same way about foreigners. In that sense she is doing the same as she feels they are doing to her by essentialising her as a Muslim and/or refugee.

After this incident, the mother asked the head teacher to keep her children in the middle of the students when they leave school because it is safer. Eventually the mother started picking her children up from school again, even though they had been going to school by themselves for quite a while now. The mother also highlighted the role of the translator in helping her with the police, stating that ‘the translator was really good. She told the police: “She doesn't have to stay at home and wait them on the window” ’. Again, social withdrawal was suggested by the police to the participants as a

solution for the problem. However, the translator argued with them that this does not solve the problem.

8.3.4 Prejudice

Compared to the previous section called Violence, the incident in this section could be considered 'less harmful'. The main observation about these incidents is that the majority of them were said as a 'joke'. These incidents thus resonate with what Muslim participants experienced in a study by Moulin-Stożek and Schirr (2017), in which the authors argue that such jokes and questions are a discriminatory mask. These discriminatory masks represent Said (1978) concept of essentialising Muslims as one group; for instance a group which kills and bombs others. Most of the incidents that Halima (P) talked about happened at school with her children. She first talked about how her son's friend sometimes make fun of him because of his background. Even though the mother explained that her son was not affected by these 'jokes', she believed that 'he shouldn't make fun of him. He should inquire about the meaning of our beliefs and values'. Halima also continued to talk about what her daughter experienced at schools. She mentioned that some of her classmates asked her: 'Why do you say Allah Akbar when you kill someone?' and 'Do you know Osama bin Laden?'.

Unlike Intesar (P), Mo'men (C) thought that older people might be more offended if they were called names. He said: 'Someone would call me Brown … I didn't care. I was young. Maybe if we were older, it would be different'. Similar to Mo'men, Zaher (C) was called 'Brown' and also misrecognised as 'Pakistani'. Renad, Zaher's mother, commented:

> My son would tell them that I'm not Pakistani. I'm Syrian. He was upset a lot even though his face is not Pakistani but that's because he is not White and blonde like them, they considered him Pakistani.

On the other hand, Intesar's son 'is blonde and looks Scottish' that is why she was not worried about him being bullied. Yet, she was worried about her daughter who is visibly Muslim because of her Hijab. In other words, Zaher (C) and Mo'men's (C) different colour made them visibly different. Moreover, as discussed above, having a brown skin made Mohammed feel excluded by his classmates. When I probed him, he said that most of his friends are Pakistanis and Arabs and that he 'feels' his Scottish [he is referring to White Scottish] classmates do not prefer to befriend him because he looks different. Another sign of visibility was the Hijab. Different mothers referred to being attacked verbally or physically due to their Islamic attire. These incidents align with Edgeworth (2015) observation, namely that when Whiteness is normalised, any visibly different feature, such as colour or dress, could easily lead someone being denied from belonging to the community. The way the classmates in the previous examples established boundaries of who belongs to us and who does not exemplify this. Also, being visibly Muslim affected the relationship between children and their parents. For instance, Halima (P) narrated a story about her friend [a mother] whose son did not like to talk to her in public because of her Hijab. This echoes with the finding of Moulin-Stożek & Schirr (2017) where some participants in the study tried disassociating themselves from Islam, which shows the effects of Islamophobic discourse on those participants.

Zaher (C) also narrated different incidents done from the same boy in his class. First, that boy said: 'Zaher will bomb us' as a joke while the teacher was giving a class about terrorism. Another time, he told Zaher 'I'm not terrorist. I don't bomb the world like you'. Then while learning about Islam, the teacher showed pictures of how Muslims pray, after which 'that boy started drawing bad pictures of a Muslim praying and another person behind him doing bad things'. It is clear that his classmate associated Islam with terrorism. Similarly, students in several other studies (Brown et al., 2017; Revell, 2010), associated Muslims with violence and war. Zaher then replied back to that student and the teacher expelled both of them from the class. On the bright side, Zaher's Scottish friends [White Scottish] defended him and supported him during these incidents as reported by Zaher and his mother.

8.3.5 Summarising the Section on Islamophobia

This section has discussed the incidents in which the participants felt there was racism against them. It is clear that these incidents occurred in different social settings, including a bus station, a school, a street, shops, and neighbourhoods. Some of these incidents might not seem to be about racism, such as when Wafaa said that the head teacher made her wait on purpose even she was free. However, I believe it is best if we give the participants the voice to judge the position they were put in. The participants did not deny that Scottish people are often 'friendly' and 'nice', yet they also did not deny that they also suffered because some Scottish people were not very open to accept them and perceived them as the inferior other. As mentioned before the participants were referring to 'White Scottish' as 'Scottish'.

One thing I am explicitly not saying in this section is that all, or even most Scottish people are racist. Some of the incidents mentioned above shows that 'Scottish' people were helping the participants in different ways. More on that, Malak's daughter interfered in the interview with her mother and said that once a boy told her to 'go back to her country', and her Scottish friends defended her. Aseel (P) has a lot of Scottish friends, and she likes how people smile at her in the street even when she wears the Hijab.

I would like to mention one-of-a-kind incident which shows how Scottish people can be welcoming to refugees. In May 2021, immigration officers from the Home Office tried to deport two immigrants from their flat in Glasgow. After a short time, hundreds of protesters gathered and blocked the immigration raid and succeeded in preventing those two men from being deported. On the other hand, similar to the finding in Bakali (2016), Muslim students suffer from physical and verbal attacks from their classmates. Some students narrated racist incidents from their White Scottish classmates. Rania (C), for example, was pushed by a girl who also 'did bad gestures… It's a gesture that all people do here'.

According to Hall difference is one of the factors for identity construction. Through difference one can also distinguish the Other. Being a minority in a mainstream White community made, for example, Mohammed aware of his colour, leading him to construct himself as the Other. Moreover,

Fanon explained that being Othered often affects one's mental health and self-perception, resulting in feeling less confident and less valued. This decrease in confidence influenced participants in different ways. Some of them feel excluded and foreign in a country in which they are repeatedly told, implicitly or explicitly, they do not belong. Some try to fight back in their own way against this, which can sometimes lead to a strengthened sense of confidence. Others seem to just accept it the way it is.

8.4 Chapter Summary

This Chapter has explored a number of key elements in the identity negotiations of Syrian Arab refugees in Glasgow within the wider society: gender, children's peers, and racism. Gender dynamics reflected on female participants more than males. For some participants, gender has placed them in a different positionality than the one they would have had if they had stayed in Syria. Peers was another social factor which the parents were worried about. Some of the parents called for more or less integration of their children. In both cases, the parents tried to draw a line between their cultures and values and the existing Scottish culture and values. The verbal, physical, emotional abuse the participants talked about highlighted the perpetuation of 'us' and 'them' binary relationship between the White Christian majority and Arab Muslim minority in public and at school and in society. The participants used different strategies to deal with these incidents and with the aftermath in terms of emotional and psychological effects.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

For Muslim refugees living in some Western countries, Islamophobia imposes a lot of challenges because they need to endure racism and exclusion from society. Schools can be one of the social sites where difference, power and discursive practices can be either reproduced or disrupted. Muslim families can learn about others and themselves at schools in various ways, they can position themselves or be positioned through institutional mechanisms of power, including the ways in which two central aspects of education, pedagogy and curriculum, are given shape within a certain context. I believe gaining more insight into this issue in the Scottish context is essential.

This dissertation has outlined some of the educational and social factors contributing to identity construction of Muslim Syrian refugees (parents and students) in Glasgow, Scotland. The Scottish and Syrian educational and social contexts are different on different levels. In terms of educational factors, this project has focused on curriculum and pedagogy as the main educational themes of discussion with the participants. The review of literature in Chapter 4 showed that that there is not yet enough research available on how these aspects of education contribute to the identity construction of refugee families.

9.2 Findings

Generally, this project was conducted during a time of intense social and educational debate over the place of Muslim refugees in the United Kingdom. Getting more insight into the process of identity construction is vital for these debates, in particular in relation to curriculum and pedagogy, which play such a central role in the process of identity construction for young refugees. This research was not simply about comparing the different educational and social contexts of the participants. Neither was its intention to favour either context over the other. Rather, the aim of the research was to engage with the participants to gain a deeper understanding of their concerns, challenges, hopes, obstacles and experiences. This deeper understanding might, hopefully, contribute to the creation of new educational and social policies which will help refugees, Muslims and/or Arabs in their resettlement and ease the transitions they experience in their host country. This project has two research questions. The first part of this section discusses the findings in relation to the first research question. The second part discusses the findings in relation to the second research question.

Overall, the findings of this project very clearly contradict a homogenised image of what it means to be a (Syrian) Muslim refugee. Though all these participants come from the same county and share the same religion, they have different attitudes and strategies to face any challenges. For instance, the parents perceive their religion in different ways and educate their children very differently about it. In turn, this makes them relate differently to the curriculum in their children's schools.

9.2.1 Findings Summary

The first research question of this research project is: How do the educational experiences of participant Syrian Muslim refugee families contribute to their identity construction? The question is divided into two sub-questions. The first sub-question focuses on pedagogy and the second sub-question on curriculum.

There are three main themes in relation to the findings of pedagogy. The first main theme is the different ways of teaching the participants experienced in their different settings. The families' preferences varied in relation the different ways of teaching. Some preferred the way teachers teach in Syria, yet the majority seemed to like how their children are taught in Scotland and were critical of teaching methods in Syria and their other settings. One primary reason they gave for this was that in Syria, both the parents and the children were pressured to memorise and do a lot of drilling. Also, according to the participants, the inclusion of technology in Scotland facilitates the students' understanding of the knowledge they learn at school. Participants also preferred the way students are given control in the learning process and that they are not passive recipients of the knowledge in Scotland, unlike in Syria, where students were not active in constructing knowledge inside the classrooms.

The second theme that arose often in the interviews is homework. Most of the families agreed that there was more homework in their previous setting than in Scotland, and the huge amount of homework in Syria and their previous setting added pressure on the students and the parents. In their previous setting, most families did not have a problem helping their children with their homework; this was a taken-for-granted aspect of everyday life, and it involved a shared cultural understanding of how parents and school worked together in the children's education. The parents felt that assigning homework was a sign of good schooling, yet they found it difficult to help their children with the large amount of homework they were assigned by their teachers. Some parents showed a great extent of engagement in following up with their children's homework in their previous setting, yet they felt unable to provide the same amount of support in engaging with their children's homework in Scotland. This was for linguistic reasons, but also for academic reasons, as the parents felt that they did not possess adequate background knowledge to relate to the curriculum content of their children's schooling. Parents in this regard felt excluded and left out of their children's education; it made school seem like 'a secret' to them, as Kawthar described it.

The third theme as indicated by the data is a significant difference between the relationship between teachers and students in the different settings. The majority of participants preferred the teacher-student relationship in Scotland because it made the teachers seem approachable to the students, and students were more motivated to learn and attend classes.

To summarise the findings on pedagogy in relation to the theoretical framework used in this chapter, the following theoretical constructs are related briefly to the data. According to the families in this study, pedagogy in Syria (at least in the case of this study's participants) seems to be placed

on the less learner-centred end of Schweisfurth's (2013) continuum titled "Educational practice as a continuum" (Figure 4.1), and pedagogy in their Scottish schools seems to be placed more toward the learner-centred end. Teachers in the previous Syrian settings exerted explicit control over all aspects of homework. This control can be understood in Bernstein's terminology as strong framing (F+). In Scotland, on the other hand, they reported weak framing (F-). Furthermore, pedagogy in the participants' previous setting seems to depend mainly on what Freire (1970, 2018) calls the banking concept of education, which refers to the kind of pedagogy where information is poured in students' minds without a chance for reflection or connection to their own lifeworld. Lastly, there are strong indications that the differences in teaching methods have influenced the students' identities, as some of the parents noticed changes in their children's identities as students. For instance, both Manal (P) and Malak (P) felt that their children are becoming 'spoiled' students who do not work hard enough. These changes address some of the attributes of the four capacities within the Scottish curriculum. Also, these differences positioned the parents in a less-involved with less-control position in relation to their children's education.

In relation to curriculum, the participants observed differences between the curriculum in Scotland and their previous setting. There was a general agreement between the participants that the curriculum in Scotland is lower in quantity and that it is easier. The participants perceived it as easier because it does not pressure the students; some curriculum materials in Scotland were a repetition of what the students learned in their previous settings, and there is inclusion for technology in conducting experiments and in delivering the curriculum. However, some families were critical of the Scottish curriculum as they felt it does not challenge their children in the same way the curriculum did in their previous settings.

As with homework, the parents showed frustration due to their inability to be involved with their children's education in terms of following up with what their children learn at school. Here, too, language was one of the barriers which made it hard for the parents whose English was not good enough to understand the curriculum content. Parents also complained that their children do not bring home the curriculum books they learn from at school, which makes it hard for the parents to find references to the knowledge their children learn.

One of the roles of curriculum in society is to promote the concept of the nation and the citizen. Thus, when refugee students go to school, their parents are torn between educating their children as Scottish or Syrians. It was noted that in learning history, religious education and sex education, there were clear clashes between who the parents try to raise their children to be and who the children are becoming because of the curriculum they learn at school. Therefore, the families tried to disconnect their children from their knowledge through taking the role of being their religious guides by guiding them in what they believe is acceptable and not acceptable in their religion and culture. Within the sex education and religious education, some parents' views on the matter are not represented and

sometimes schools did not listen to the parents in their desire to withdraw their children from these classes.

Based on Schweisfurth's (2013) theorisation of the nature of knowledge as a continuum (Figure 4.3), and on the basis of what the respondents in this study have told me, as well as on other available sources, the way knowledge is understood within the curriculum can generally be understood as more toward the "fixed" end of the continuum in Syria, and more toward the "fluid" end in Scotland. On another note, throughout the discussion of the curriculum materials students learn at school, there was clearly a lack of 'connectedness' (Doherty, 2018, p. 10) between the families and the taught material, leading the participants to feel excluded from the Scottish educational system and in some cases even the Scottish society as a whole. The families could not relate to the Scottish nationalistic and cultural values within some of the curriculum subjects. Therefore, they drew a clear line between "us" and "them". Yet, the question that arises here is whether that line would be drawn if the families felt they are heard and if their own values, some of which oppose the mainstream Scottish values, were taken into consideration? Such negotiations within the families also speaks to their identity construction process. The main observation in relation to Hall's (1997) concept of suturing is concerned with what the student experiences between home and school. The students fall between two different views: between home, where for example talking about sexual relationships is taboo, and school, where it exists and is discussed openly in the curriculum. In this way, this curriculum is a 'point of suture' (Hall, 1997, p. 33) for the identity formation of the child. Another example is the way children try to suture their religious identity by performing Christian prayers or believing in Trinity. The role the parents assign themselves in these cases is to "de-suture", causing a confusing process of identity formation for the students, where they might be trying to "suture" together views that cannot be sutured because they clash.

The main findings in relation to the second research question, which focuses on social experiences that contribute to the identity construction of participant Syrian Muslim refugee families, are related to three main themes, which are gender, peers and racism. In their discussion about gender, the families seem to have more restrictions on their daughters than on their sons. Culturally speaking, girls are required to maintain the honour of the family's image within the wider community. Therefore, raising daughters in Scotland is more challenging than raising sons due to the difference in culture and tradition in Scotland. In relation to gender, Hijab was another point of discussion. Hijab is an important element in the religious identity of the daughters. As discussed in Chapter 8, the negotiations the families went through in deciding when, why and how their daughters should wear the Hijab, show the different dynamics which could exist in Muslim refugee families.

The second theme in Chapter 8 was peers. Students have different preference of whom they want their friends to be. Older students felt their age affected their friendships with White Scottish peers and felt that arriving at a younger age would have helped them to have more White Scottish friends. Parents showed concerns about their children's friends. There was a general concern among

parents about the 'negative' influence their children could be experiencing due to their peers, in particular their White Scottish peers. The negative influence was in relation to adopting new cultural behaviours such as being independent and the possibility of leaving home at a certain age which is generally considered normal in the Scottish culture.

Islamophobia was another challenge the participants experienced in their interaction with the Scottish community at school and in general. Even though the participants noted that 'not all Scottish are racist' and that they have Scottish friends (that refers to White Scottish), it important to note the unfortunate encounters some of the participants experienced, and the impacts these incidents had on the participants' lives, wellbeing, and sense of belonging. The incidents described in that section are a demonstration of the four aspects of Islamophobia mentioned by (The Runnymede Trust, 1997).

Throughout the data analysis in this chapter, there were different findings which indicated the way parents try to guide and sometime control who their children are and what they want them to become. Losing that control made some parents concerned about their children's identity if they do not follow their parents' vision of who they "should" be and how they "should" behave. In their previous settings, parents used to have a clear role in the process of becoming their children were going through, whereas their role has become less clear in Scotland. Parents also tried to position their children in different positionalities than the positionality their children would have had if they had stayed in Syria. Some parents also changed their positionalities through adopting different strategies to reach a point of understanding with their children and avoid clashes. Moreover, the participants' imagined community about Scotland and their imagined community about themselves led some of them to exclude themselves and feel excluded. That imagined community was a possible reason why some participants want to live at a distance from the wider Scottish community.

9.2.2 Significance of Findings

Having summarised the findings on pedagogy and curriculum, it now becomes possible to give a succinct answer to the first research question. The aim of the question is to get insight into the complex network of experiential factors that come together in the fluctuating identity construction of the refugee families interviewed for this research. It is clear that the radical change in education environment the families have experienced had, and still has, a strong impact on the identity of students, their parents, and on the families as a whole. Across the three themes within pedagogy that consistently arose in the interviews, one thing always stood out: the difference in perspectives between the twelve interviewed families. Generally, and based on the image of the parents have created for themselves, most parents seem to prefer Scottish pedagogy over Syrian pedagogy, while there are also parents who prefer the Syrian pedagogy over the Scottish pedagogy. In relation to teaching methods, most parents preferred the learner-centred approach over memorisation and drilling, the inclusion of technology to facilitate the students' understanding, and the autonomy students are given in their own knowledge construction. In relation to homework, the parents were more divided. The most central observation to make in relation to homework, however, is that they

were all – with the exception of Sofyan – deeply involved in their children's homework in Syria. This was no longer possible in Scotland, which strongly affected their identity, their self-perception, and the perception their children had of them.

Discussing pedagogy and curriculum together is a gap in the literature this project addresses – especially in relation to identity construction. Teachers teach in certain ways, and the way in which they teach and the knowledge they teach influences who their students will become. As the interviews show, this can create clashes with those parents who might have a different image of who they want their children to become. Discussing only pedagogy by itself would not have given the multi-angled picture this study gives about the relationship between the classroom and families. When looking at the analysis of pedagogy, it is intriguing to see that most of the parents indicate a general openness toward change, both in their own identity, and in the identity they want for their children. In relation to curriculum, too, the parents expressed clear preferences in relation to the themes discussed across the interviews. However, there were stronger limits in this regard, for all the parents – especially in relation to two aspects of curriculum: religious education and sex education.

The second gap in the existing education literature addressed in this study is that studies do not usually focus on both the parents and the students – and, thus, on families as a whole. The previous shows clearly why it is important to have more research that takes a family approach. The experiences of the students and of the parents are connected. If teachers working with Muslim refugee children want to understand the complex dynamics of those children's lives, then they cannot attend only to the children, they have to attend to the parents as well. In relation to this, one crucial theme that has arisen from a deep analysis of this thesis' interviews is that of the intertwinement between control and care the parents practice to help their children form a particular kind of identity. It is the case that some parents attempt to retain strong control over their children. However, it must be noted that this seems to stem from a deep sense of care they feel for their children. In their view, if their children do not learn to follow certain traditions, this will result in various possible forms of harm, either to the children themselves, or to the family and even community as a whole, or both.

The majority of the parents also experienced identity changes presented in adopting new strategies when dealing with the different challenges they faced. The main change many parents went through was that they became more communicative with their children and less restrictive. This is to build a sense of trust. The parents noticed how the teachers teach here, that they try to make the students more expressive. At home, they want to keep that tendency going in their own relationship with their children.

9.3 Implications

From the aforementioned findings in this research, several implications which I believe follow from these findings will now be discussed. First, theoretical implications in relation to identity construction due to different social and educational setting are discussed. Then, implications for

methodology are explored. Lastly, this study offers some potential implications for educational practice in the Scottish educational system and Muslim refugee education in a general sense.

9.3.1 Implication for Theory

This project synthesised different theoretical concepts to address the complex themes discussed in this thesis. This includes the development of self-perception of both students and parents in relation to educational and social factors. A gap in the literature is that this complexity is not addressed adequately, because they focus only on one aspect of the lives of their participants. My study confronts the complexity by creating a framework in which some of the central elements at play in the complexity are addressed relationally. None of the studies reviewed in Chapter 4 have tried to operationalise pedagogy, curriculum and identity theories in relation to the resettlement of refugee families as a unit rather than either the children or the parents separately.

As discussed earlier, this project has deployed identity as one of the major elements in the lives of refugee families. Many studies have explored identity construction in regard to particular settings, whether societal or educational. In this research project I have developed a distinctive theoretical paradigm which enables exploring identity construction – understood, with Hall, as an ever-ongoing, suturing, process of becoming – not only within one specific social or educational setting of the participants, but also in regard to the life-changing shift in pedagogy and curriculum they experienced as a necessary result of having to flee from a war-torn country to another country with profoundly different values, beliefs, and practices.

When designing the theoretical framework, I felt I needed to understand how the participants' (parents and students) identities might change and be recognised. Therefore, Hall's theory of identity as fluid and changing seemed relevant to be the overarching concept for the experiences of the participants in their resettlement country and new educational setting. In response to the way the participants' described how their identity is perceived in their new setting, theories in relation to Othering (Said, Fanon), positionalities (Anthias) and imaginations (Anderson), were used to capture how the participants' religious and ethnical differences formed their identities. Moreover, Hall conceptualised identity as a process of 'suturing'. Some of the findings are connected to this concept. Analysing the processes of suturing the participants in this study go through, it also became apparent that they are going through a related, but opposite process as well, namely a process for which I use the term *de-suturing.* This is a process where parents try to modify the sutures their children are trying to make to build who they "should" be. Due to the differences in the educational settings of the participants, the pedagogical framework needed for this project has to capture the different pedagogies in the participants' previous and current settings (Schweisfurth, Freire, Bernstein). This framework of pedagogy then provided a very detailed theoretical framework for understanding how different pedagogies can be an element in the participants' process of becoming.

Since this project also focuses on curriculum, I needed a theoretical framework through which the nature of knowledge the students learn in their resettlement country could also contribute to their

identity constructions. I further needed this theoretical framework to have a focus on the needs of minorities in curriculum. For that I wove together Apple's concept of hegemony, Anderson's concept of imagination and theories in relation to nationalism in curriculum (Anderson, Doherty). Combining these theories provided a nuanced theoretical framework for understanding how curriculum could change the way the participant students position themselves in the classroom or the way they are positioned, as well as how the participant parents explore how the different curriculum in Scotland contributes to the construction of different identities of their children than the ones they would have constructed if they had stayed in Syria.

By applying this analytical framework, this study contributes to a weaving nexus between theory, research and 12 actual refugee families' experiences inside and outside school. It enriches the knowledge of refugee Muslim Syrian's perception of who they are and becoming, and who they are for the society they moved to. It also contributes to the understanding of how refugee Muslim Syrian parents and children might perceive pedagogy and curriculum, and how these central aspects of education contribute to who they are becoming as students and citizens. Hence, these interwoven theories provide a framework that imagines how to practically deal with refugee students and parents by the school staff and the Scottish society as a whole.

9.3.2 Implication for Methodology

The research design cycled through analytic moves that connected both the theoretical framework and previous empirical studies to speak directly to aspects of identity in society at large and in schools in particular. By applying a qualitative study based on a constructivist paradigm, the study has been able to achieve a detailed and deep understanding of multiple levels in the participants' experiences, at school and in society. Through exploring the experiences of the different families and paying attention by asking follow-up questions about particular aspects of their narratives, this study contributes to the understanding of similarities and differences between the participants' educational and social settings. Also, understanding how these differences contributed to the process of producing "new identities" has been achieved. Using vignettes along with an art-based activity helped generate more data in relation to the research questions.

There are some questions that need further investigation and which could not be answered during the interviews. For instance, in the previous chapter, I raised a question whether an intergenerational clash would have occurred between Wafaa and her daughter Fadwa if they had not reached an agreement about wearing the Hijab. This point was not discussed in the interview to avoid discomfort. My experience during this project shows that using vignettes to investigate such a sensitive issue, and other issues, can be of great help in asking questions without making the participants feel they are challenged by the researcher. Using vignettes to examine sensitive issues can help future researchers explore more about the participants' experiences and views.

9.3.3 Implication for Practice: Recommendations

Educational practices operationalised at school level varies, so recommendations would be enacted differently depending on the school ethos and how they work with CfE. However, this study has potential implications for practice in relation to educational social experiences for Muslim refugees in Scotland.

First, this study brings attention to the need for establishing a better connection between school and home for Muslim refugee families. The majority of the parents in the study were confused about different aspects within pedagogy, curriculum and the school system in general. More communication with the refugee parents, in particular those who have not been in their host country for a long time, is necessary to support the parents' trust in school and awareness about the knowledge their children learn. Also, this research project demonstrates the need for teachers in Scottish schools to interrogate their pedagogical decisions when teaching sensitive cultural and religious topics. Furthermore, the practice of cultural diversity inside at least some classrooms in Scotland seems to either essentialise those who flee war by making war the main aspect of the students' lives and identity, or to focus on cultural celebrations which exclude minority students.

One way to make the families less concerned about their children is by conducting a session for the parents at schools to explain in detail, for example, the content of the curriculum of their concern such as sex curriculum. This session could be part of the parent day or a separate session that focuses on the content of the curriculum. It is obvious, as noted from the extracts in the discussion about sex education, that the parents are afraid of the class. This fear has different reasons. The main reason is that talking about sex is perceived to be culturally inappropriate for them. As discussed, the parents repeatedly used phrases such as 'these things' to indicate anything related to sex. The purpose of this session is to explain to the parents the clear differences between their previous and current setting in terms of culture and tradition, and why there is a need for this class to be taught in schools. I believe that some of the parents assumed the purpose of this class to be different than what it really is. Therefore, such detailed clarification might help the parents understand the intensions of school for teaching this class.

Professional development for teachers is key to address the previous points. Teachers in Scotland should have enough training to enhance their understanding of cultural diversity through communicating not only with the minority students but also with their families. Issues in regard to refugee or minority education has been under discussion for decades. Thus, while giving pre-service teachers theoretical and practical training is important, it is not enough. There should be an embracement of dialogues between pre-service teachers and also between them and the training leaders while these training sessions are held. Also, such dialogues should be embraced between school and home. What I mean by embracement of dialogues is instead of pre-existing assumptions and prejudice against minorities, teachers should be encouraged to have an open mind, that is, to learn about and respect the differences that exist between students (not only students of different

cultural backgrounds, but also different students with the same cultural background). In this way, homogenisation will be avoided. Since CfE gives teachers flexibility in preparing the learning materials, teachers can take this opportunity to incorporate content within the curriculum which could reflect refugees' educational and social experiences. For example, teachers could discuss some of the challenges of forced migration and its consequences. Another practical recommendation is engaging future teachers, during their teaching training programme and while practicing, with refugees and Muslims. It could be a one-day visit to some centres which try to accommodate the needs of refugees. It will also be an opportunity to work with diverse cultures to learn more about supporting Muslim refugee students in the classroom. During their teaching training programme, teachers should have the chance to be in a diverse classroom to understand its dynamic and work with the students directly. Incorporating using students' native language in the classroom could encourage refugee students to feel part of the school despite their 'differences'. Learning about diversity is learning process which never really ends. If teachers want to be inclusive toward all their students, they are advised to benefit from the students and their families to learn to improve their cultural differences. These recommendations apply to all teacher education programmes,not just those where CfE is adopted.

Furthermore, there should be coordination between policies at school which try to address the needs of minority students and their parents and the way they are applied at schools. Even though there are policies in CfE which seem to be fluid and fulfil the different needs of the different groups inside the classrooms, according to some of the participants these policies are not applied. Finally, in relation to religious education, parents could be invited to the classroom to give a small talk about one aspect of their religion to the students. In relation to sex education, instead of enforcing a curriculum that is far removed from these parents' own views and beliefs, a more balanced approach should be taken. The main balance should be in relation to what the parents want their children to know about, and what the school has to teach. More and better communication between home and school could create a space where both parties listen to each other. The ultimate aim is to find a middle point where the knowledge the children learn in this class fits both the parents' expectations and the school policy. As mentioned in Chapter 2, most teachers in Scotland are White, therefore, schools should try to hire teachers from different backgrounds to diversify the school staff and help the families feel they are represented in the educators who teach their children. It will also help the children develop a sense of belonging to the school. Bringing a new perspective within the staff could lead to more empathy and inclusion.

9.4 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This research project has various limitations. First, the number of participants was limited and consisted of refugees from only one city in Scotland, Glasgow. Even though some cautious generalisation about the Scottish educational system and social construction could result, further research with a larger sample size could help confirm the findings of this study. Second, the study

takes into consideration the participants' view at one particular point in the timeline of their life, which means that possible changes in their perception over time are not part of this project. Future longitudinal studies could provide more insight into the shifting perceptions of Muslim refugee families. Although the sample of this research is small, the participants provided many deep insights into different issues and the strategies they used to deal with them around refugee education. Despite the aforementioned limitations, then, the study has resulted in the development of a number of conclusions in relation to the participants' various experiences through which the research questions of this research are explored.

Even though I used Anthias' work, the majority of the theorists used in this study are men. More work written from a feminist lens could have helped broaden critical perspectives of the women's experiences in this study. Feminist theories are important to this kind of research because they challenge traditional roles of women in the society whether at home or at school. As noted earlier, the teaching profession in Scotland is feminised. Furthermore, teaching at home is also feminised for the families in this study, since most of the mothers in this research were responsible for teaching their children. Thus, gender is a major element in this research. Therefore, exploring gender role critically can lead to comprehensive understanding of the power dynamics in families and societies, and can uncover gender bias.

As mentioned in Chapter 5, the initial project was supposed to be conducted at a Scottish school. Due to rejection from the Glasgow Council, and to avoid future rejections of this kind, I decided to focus on families' experiences instead. Conducting the initial project would have added more to the experiences of students inside the classroom through classroom observations. It would have added the perspective of the teachers in teaching Syrian Muslim refugee students and their contact with the parents. Longitudinal studies could follow the same families to look at the exact factors and perspectives which could result in different experiences and interaction within the school system and the Scottish society. Furthermore, it might be interesting to do a similar comparative study with Christian Syrian refugee to investigate the similarities of experiences between the two groups and to explore the extent to which religion plays a role in shaping their viewpoints in regard to school system and life in Scotland in general. Also, a similar study could be conducted with Afghani refugees who are the most recent refugees to be resettled under the resettlement schemes in Scotland.

The demographic data collected in this research aimed at presenting the participants for the reader. In the process of analysing data, I realised that there are some aspects of the participants' background that are worth taking into consideration to understand participants' stances and experiences. Being the only participant in favour of teaching her children sex education at school, Wafaa was different from all the participants. Looking at the demographic data, Wafaa has the highest degree among the participants. Thus, it is worth investigating the relationship between parent's education and their attitudes towards cultural and educational differences in their

resettlement countries. It would be interesting to do more quantitative research on this to note the differences in demographics.

It is worth noting that throughout the findings chapters, the parents' perspective is more prominent than the children's. There are different possible reasons for that. In my view, the main reason is age. The parents felt more comfortable sharing with me because they expected me to understand their experiences due to the small age gap between me and them. However, it is possible that the children did not share much with me because I am older or because their parents were around. Another possible reason is that the children were shy talking to me because I am a stranger. I was more capable of connecting to the parents because I introduced myself to them more before interviewing them and the children. Moreover, some parts of the analysis chapters such as sex education, peers, and social experiences at school and in the society could be too personal for the children to share about themselves. Therefore, parents tried to tell me more about those experiences. Therefore, longitudinal studies with different phases with children could help generate more data. The first phase could be introductory phase for the children and the researchers to get to know each other. The next phase could focus on creating activities which the children could enjoy and express themselves. The last phase is the interview stage when trust and familiarity is built between researchers and children.

This study explored the Scottish national identity and how the participants relate to it. Building on Hall's concept of identity, Scottish identity is not fixed. While this research might result in drawing a picture of what the Scottish identity looks like, that does not mean this image is static. There are different changes in the politics, the society, and the demographics in Scotland. Fluidity in the Scottish identity defies exclusive definition of who is Scottish and who is not, and allows people to have multiple identities which promotes more inclusion through encouraging people to embrace their differences and others' differences. In this way, the hope is the Scottish society becomes more diverse and more tolerant. Future research could benefit from this fact and try exploring refugees' experiences in different times and possible different places other than Glasgow.

9.5 Some Final Personal Notes

This project has developed different aspects in my personal and educational skills. Conducting the interviews was the best experience along this journey. Meeting and talking with the participants has made me angry at the world with all its injustices and double standards, and especially at those who are behind the never-ending reality of war. After some of my interviews, I remember going back home mad and sad about all the difficult experiences the participants endured, thinking no one deserves to live such crimes. Some of these experiences reminded me of what I lived in Gaza, which made it worse. After transcribing the interviews, I noticed how strong those participants are by surviving all that and still having the will to fight. While doing the interviews, it was at times hard not to be carried away by the sad stories, making it difficult to listen to what was said between the lines. Transcribing helped me read between those lines. At times, I was losing passion working on

my PhD, yet knowing that this project could possibly help in some sort of future change was the main motivation that kept me going.

I remember when I started this journey how difficult everything was for me. Some of the skills I needed to write my thesis were challenging for me such as “writing with details” and “thinking critically”. I tend to express my ideas and views in short sentences. I was not able to understand my supervisors’ comments in relation to how I jump from one idea to the other because the first idea is not fully finished. In my mind, the idea was clear, and the short version of my explanation was enough. It took me time to start seeing what I was doing differently and to learn how to improve on the clarity and depth of my writing. Also, coming from a different educational system, learning to “think critically” was challenging. Learning through memorisation and being taught how to question what I was memorising was the main reason I found it challenging. I know I made progress in this regard, but it is still slow, I think.

Reading my first drafts, I noticed how angry my voice was and how difficult it was for me to distance my own self from every word I was writing, whether it was in the literature review, the theoretical framework, or the methodology. Reading my most recent work in this PhD, I see also a change in how angry I was expressing my ideas; I am less angry in writing, though I still feel angry about some of the ideas I write about.

I cannot say this journey was easy. It was difficult and full of moments where I wanted to give up. However, now I see how rewarding this journey has been and how far I have come as a person and a researcher.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview Questions for Parents

Parent Interview questions

- Tell us about your family. How did you arrive in Scotland?
- Tell us about your child – (their interests, their experiences, their activities, their happiness at school …)
- What schools have your child attended?
- How did you choose these schools? Is there any reason behind choosing each school?
- What's different about these schools?
- What does your child like/dislike about each school?
- What do you like/dislike about each school?
- How does the school in Scotland accommodate your child's needs, interests, identity?
- How do you communicate with the teacher?
- How do you feel about the school curriculum in each school?
- What is taught in … (maths , science, religion, history)
- How do you feel about the pedagogy, the way they teach in each school?
- What differences/similarities between schools… (Behaviour, homework, memorization ….)
- What hopes do you have when it comes to your child's schooling?
- What concerns do you have when it comes to your child's schooling?
- Would you like to add anything else you would like us to know it could be about your child's education in Scotland or about you or your family?
- Lastly, I'd like you to read three four narratives (see vignettes).
  - What do you think?
  - Would you do if you were …?
  - What else would you take into consideration?
  - Have you had any similar experiences? ... tell me about it.

Appendix 2: Vignettes

These vignettes are based on events narrated to the researcher. Each parent will be given each vignette on a card during the interview. The parent will be asked about their reactions, opinions and perspectives regarding each situation. Then the parent will be asked about his/her reaction if she/he were in one of the characters' shoes. Vignette 1 touches on Curriculum ; Vignette 2,3 touches on Pedagogy, and Vignette 4 touches on students' identities.

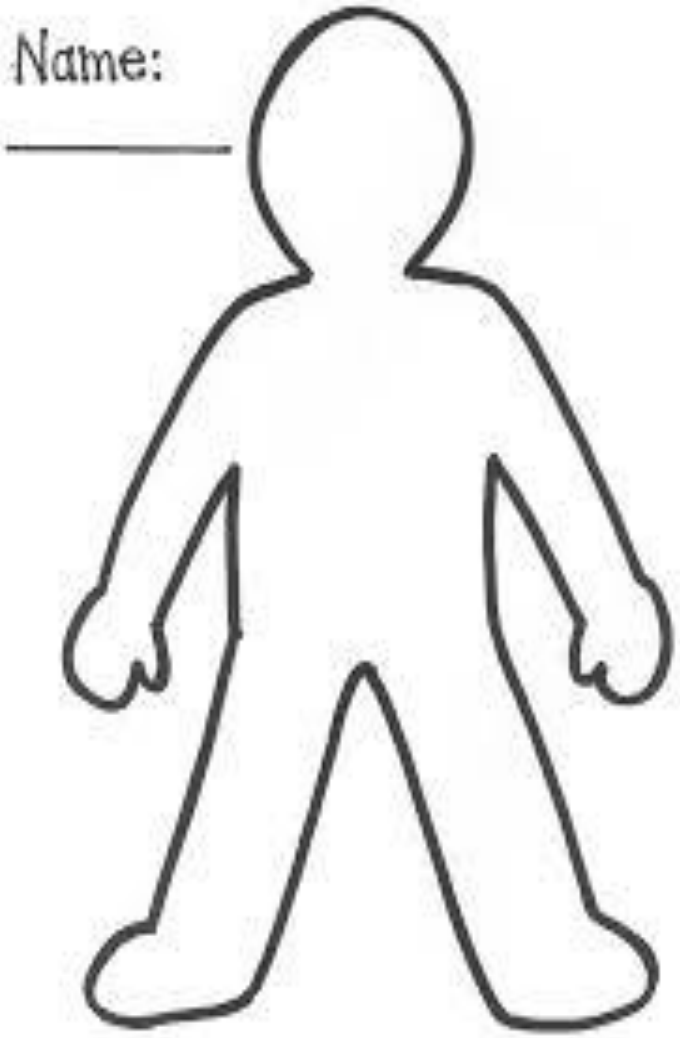
1. A Syrian mother placed her 5-year-old child in a Catholic school for his first year of school. She became worried about how much her child was being taught about Jesus. When her child started singing songs about Jesus at home, she decided to move her child to a new school.
2. A Syrian child attended school in Glasgow. For their first year in Glasgow, the class teacher would often do things like guiding the child through the different types of lunch food to explain which food was Halal and which was not. This teacher also made classroom activities during Eid to explain that Muslims celebrate this time of the year. When the child moved to the next grade, the new teacher did not do any of that.
3. A parent comes to school to pick up her child earlier than usual. As the parent walks to the classroom, she hears noise coming from the classroom. When the parent opens the door of the classroom, she is surprised to find that students are drawing and chatting while playing with science equipment. The teacher is just sitting with a small group talking to them. The mothers get confused because she thinks students should sit quietly at their desks and listen to the teacher to get the knowledge they need; in exactly the same way the mother was taught at school. She worries that her child won't learn anything in this class.
4. Two Syrian students attending the same school and the same class had an argument about Christmas. Child A who was born in Scotland thought that Christmas and Eid are equal and that they should both be celebrated. Child B who has been in Scotland for only one year was surprised by what Child A said. Child B commented: 'You cannot love Christmas; God will punish you for that!' The family of Child A did not mind that their child celebrates Christmas at school. The family of Child B did not allow their child to go to school the week of Christmas.

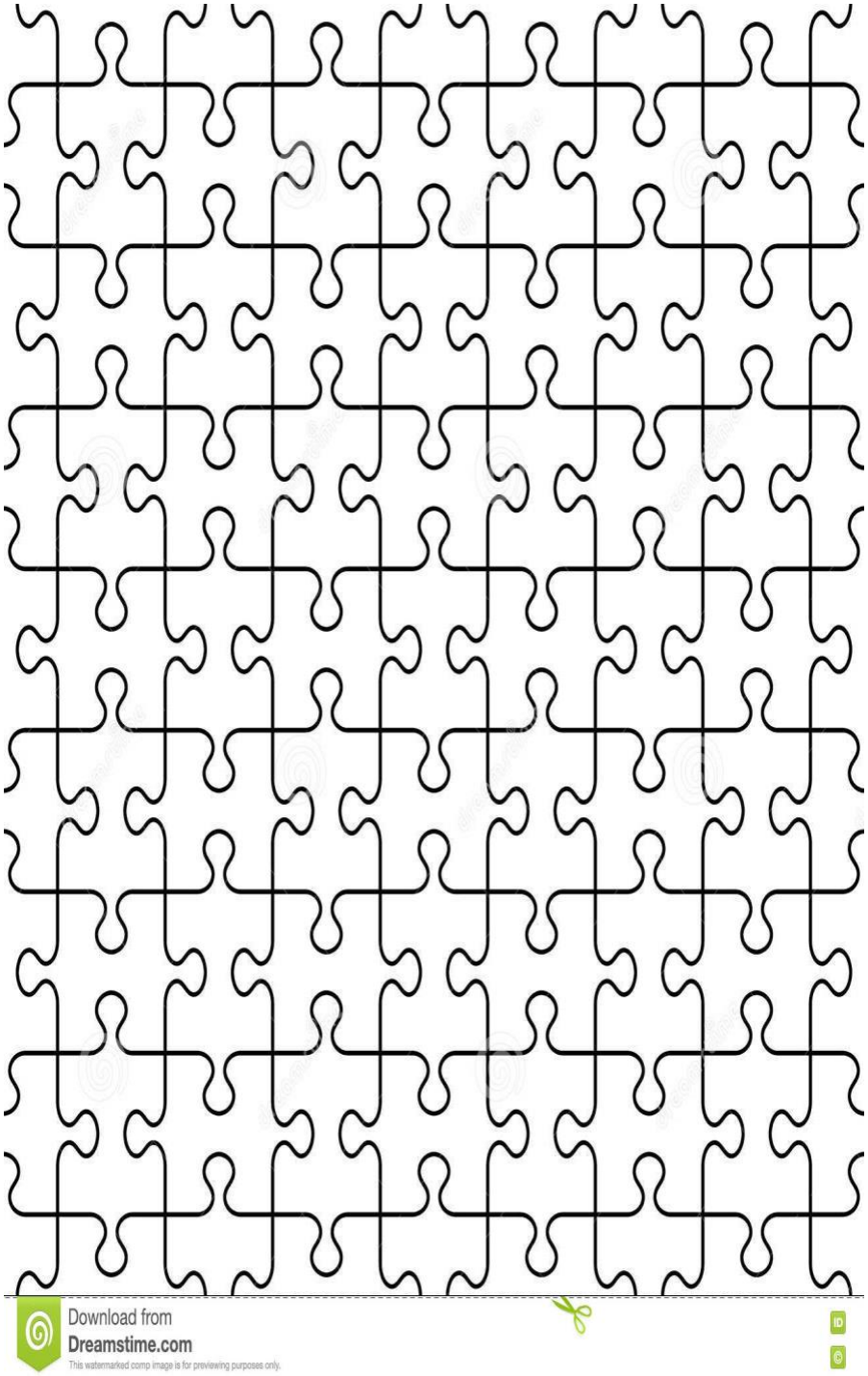
Appendix 3: Children Interview Questions

If the children are young, I will do the drawing activity with them. If they are older, I will ask them these questions.

- Tell me about yourself – if you had to write an introduction to yourself, what would you say about yourself?
- Tell me about the schools you attended, (How long in each school, what grades etc.
- Things you liked/disliked about each
- What is your opinion about what they teach you in each school?
- How about the teachers and the way they teach?
- What kind of a student are you? ((strengths, behaviour, friendships, interests …)
- How did you do in each school?
- What is different/similar about school in Scotland and school in Syria/other?
- Where did you see your future after school?

Appendix 4: Activity



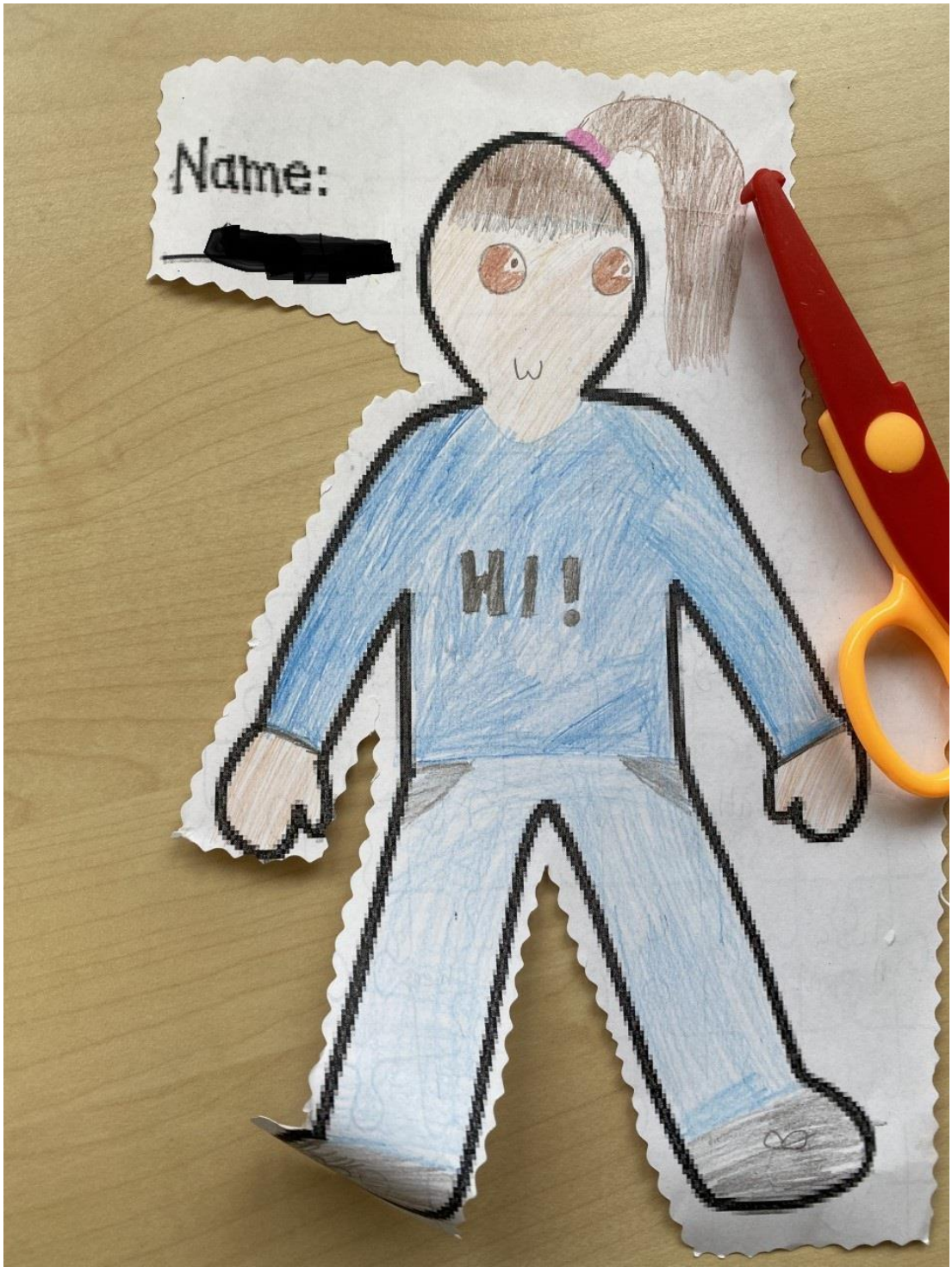


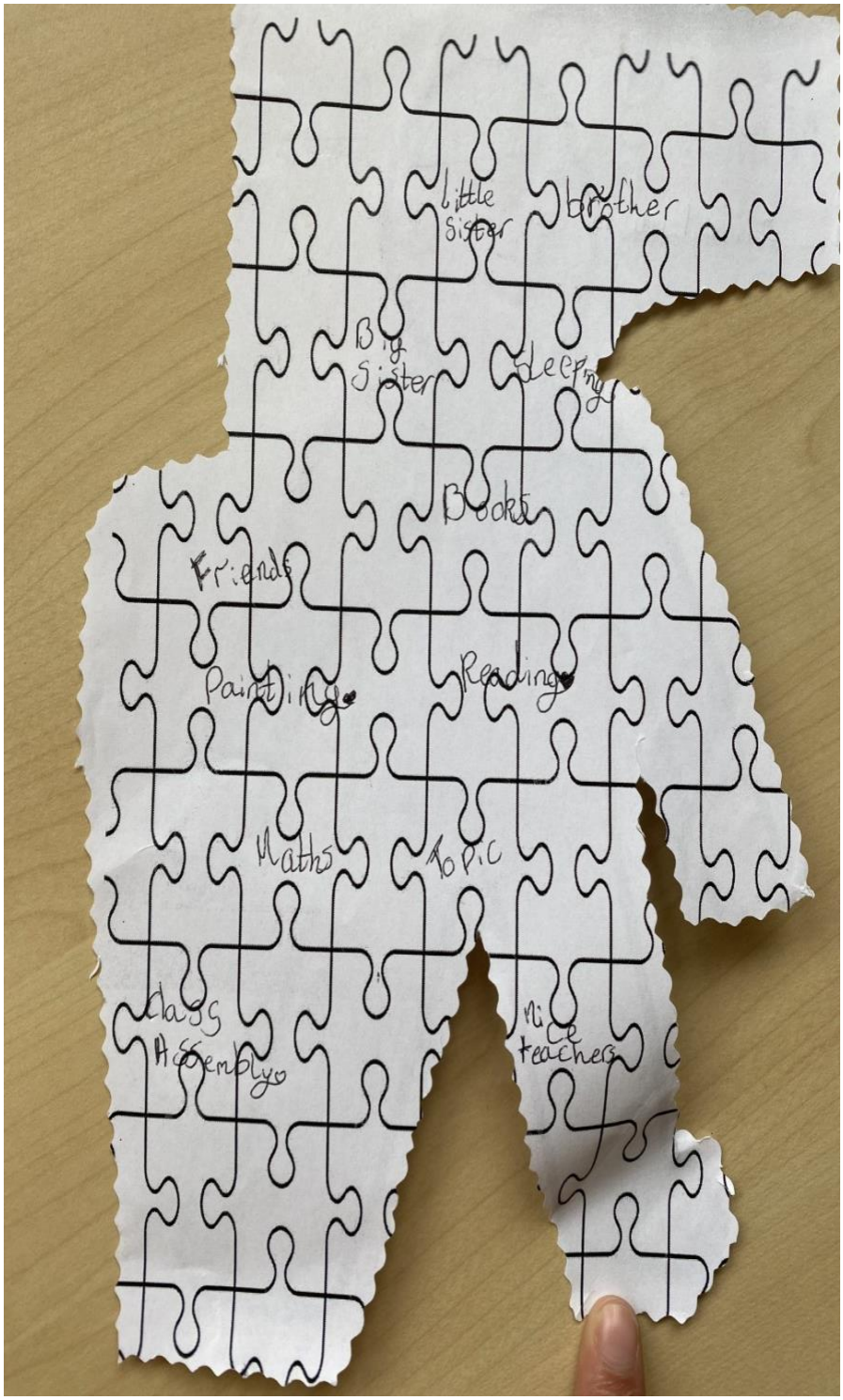
Pictures link:

http://www.urlspark.com/post_printable-cut-out-person_464710/

https://www.dreamstime.com/stock-illustration-seamless-jigsaw-puzzle-pattern-transparent-background-you-see-tiles-vector-mode-black-guidelines-image73332620

Appendix 5: Sample Activity




little Sister
brother
Big Sister
Sleeping
Books
Friends
Painting
Reading
Maths
Topic
Nice teachers

Appendix 6: Translated Extract from Interview (Family #2)

Researcher: Could you tell me about your family and how you arrived in Scotland?

Mother: we were in Syria, in our house, and our country. The bombing started heavily. It was very heavy. It did not stop. All people left. The next day we said there's no solution, so we left the house only with our clothes. We didn't carry anything else, and we kept walking for more than 2 km. People heard about us, so they came to help us move our stuff by the car. We were groups; not alone as there were other people. They took us to another village, further village from the bombing. They took us and let us sleep at their house until the next day. We had to find a new place because we knew we cannot go back home as there was a lot of bombing and a lot of people died. We had to find a house. People recommended we go to a different village. When we reached that village, we stayed at school. Some of the village people came to us and told us to come and live in their house. We went to the house, we cleaned it, we sat, we knew that we are settled here now. We stayed like this for months. As we were sitting there, winter came, and we managed our life. We got some aids and other stuff to eat and clothes. We stayed there for eight months and during the eight months my husband stayed only for one month and he smuggled outside. People told him that he had to leave. His sister was in the UK, and she told him the war will last for a long time and won't not be solved. She told him to Smuggle like the rest of the people and then bring the children and so on. I was with my siblings and my family; they were protecting me and my children because I only had children with me so I cannot stay by myself. After eight months they told us go to Turkey because our papers are ready, but we needed to issue our passports. It was really really really a dangerous way to get our passports. We went and got our passports from the immigration office and then we left for Istanbul, Turkey. My brother was with us of course. The first interview wasn't good, and they rejected our application because they said that we had to leave from Lebanon or Jordan and that we cannot leave from Turkey. Anyway, later they managed it. They rejected the first interview but in the second interview they accepted us meanwhile we stayed for five months in Turkey. The children did not go to school, and they were just sitting then we came here.

Researcher: Could you tell me about your son?

Mother: He likes to help people even there he would collect woods and bring it to us, so we make fire to bake bread or to keep us warm. Aha... he really likes to play games on the PlayStation and these things. In his study he likes biology and computer and science classes

Researcher: What about his school in Syria?

Mother: He went to one school which was near our house. Aha....he was....The teacher loved him so much and they said he was good, polite and quiet.

Researcher: Why did you choose this school?

Mother: The first reason, it was the only school that was near our house, so it was easy for the children to reach the school. Also, we didn't have a lot of choices to choose. That school was close to our house, so they have to study in it

Researcher: What about his school in Scotland?

Mother: When we first arrived here, he went to a school and stayed there for two years. Then he moved to secondary school which is close to our house. The school is really good, and people said good things about it. Teaching there is good. We chose it based on the postcode of our house.

Researcher: What did he like about his school in Syria

Mother: he liked English a lot. He was a friend with his English teacher. He was happy in that class.

Researcher: and here?

Mother: here is he also good in the language; in the language and writing.

Researcher: Are there things he didn't like at schools in Syria and Scotland?

Mother: maybe maths. He was annoyed by it maybe. When I was teaching him, I knew that in Syria, but here the way they teach and the way the deal is better. They make the student like learning.

Researcher: how do they teach?

Mother: for example, there, if he didn't memorize in time, he would be punished. Here they deal with warmth. For example, they give more space for the students, and they give them more chances. If the student doesn't like… OK, there is a possibility to do it tomorrow. If the student doesn't like this class, she or he can move to something else for example. There, if you didn't do good or didn't like it; that's it, you have no future and cannot continue.

Appendix 7: Consent Form (Parents) in English and Arabic

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

Title of Project: The effect of pedagogy and curriculum on Syrian newcomer students' identities

Name of Researcher: Nihaya Jaber

Your signature below indicates that the information about this study has been discussed with you and that you have been given a copy of this letter. Your signature indicates that you acknowledge the following:

I understand that my participation is voluntary. I may withdraw my permission at any time without any consequences. If I withdraw, all data collected from me, or my child will be deleted from the researchers' files.

I understand that no one will be judging my choices and beliefs.

All names and other material likely to identify individuals will be anonymised.

The material will be treated as confidential and kept in secure storage at all times.

Any personal data will be destroyed once the project is complete.

The anonymised material may be used in future publications, both print and online.

As parent/guardian of _____, I hereby grant the researcher, Nihaya Jaber, a PhD student from the University of Glasgow, the following permissions:

☐ I agree to my child taking part in this research study.

☐ I do not agree to my child taking part in this research study.

☐ I give permission for my child to participate in these data collection methods:

Audio recording of interview.

Drawing pictures and discussing them.

☐ I am willing to participate in an audio-recorded interview with the researcher.

To make arrangements for the interview, I can be contacted by phone or email:

_____

_____ _____ _____

Name of Person Giving Consent Date Signature

(Parent/Carer)

_____

Name of Child

_____ _____

_____

Name of Researcher Date Signature

University of Glasgow | School of Education

نموذج الموافقة (الآباء)

عنوان المشروع: أثر التربية والمناهج الدراسية على هويات الطلاب السوريين الجدد

اسم الباحث: نهاية جابر

يشير توقيعك أدناه إلى أن المعلومات حول هذه الدراسة قد تمت مناقشتها معك وأنك قد حصلت على نسخة من هذه الرسالة.
يشير توقيعك إلى أنك تقر بما يلي:

• أفهم أن مشاركتي طوعية. قد أسحب إذني في أي وقت دون أي عواقب إذا سحبت ، فسيتم حذف جميع البيانات التي تم جمعها مني أو طفلي من ملفات الباحثين.

• أفهم أنه لن يتم الحكم على خياراتي ومعتقداتي.

• سيتم إخفاء هويتك و جميع الأسماء والمواد الأخرى التي من المحتمل أن تحدد هوية الأفراد.

• سيتم التعامل مع المواد على أنها سرية وسيتم تخزينها في مكان آمن في جميع الأوقات.

• سيتم إتلاف أي بيانات شخصية بمجرد اكتمال المشروع.

• يمكن استخدام المواد في المنشورات المستقبلية ، سواء المطبوعة أو عبر الإنترنت.

بصفتي الوالد / الوصي على _____ ، أمنح للباحثة ، نهاية جابر ، طالبة دكتوراه من جامعة غلاسكو ، الأذونات التالية:

☐أوافق على مشاركة طفلي في هذه الدراسة البحثية.

☐لا أوافق على مشاركة طفلي في هذه الدراسة البحثية

أعطي الإذن لطفلي للمشاركة في طرق جمع البيانات التالية:

☐ تسجيل صوتي للمقابلة.

☐ رسم الصور ومناقشتها.

☐ أرغب في المشاركة في مقابلة مسجلة مع الباحث.

¬ لاتخاذ الترتيبات اللازمة للمقابلة ، يمكن الاتصال بي عن طريق الهاتف أو البريد الإلكتروني:

_____

تاريخ التوقيع ---------- ----- ----------اسم الوالد

اسم الطفل

تاريخ ------- ----------اسم الباحث

التوقيع

Appendix 8: Participant Information Sheet (Parents) in English and Arabic

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

Study title: The Effect of Pedagogy and Curriculum on Newcomer Syrian Students' Identities

Researcher details:

Nihaya Jaber Email: n.jaber.1@research.gla.ac.uk

PhD Candidate in Education

College of Social Sciences, University of Glasgow, St. Andrew's Building, 11 Eldon Street, GLASGOW. G3 6NH.

Invitation

You and your child are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide 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 us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of this research?

This project is interested in whether and how Syrian students' identities are represented and supported in the pedagogy and curriculum of Scottish schools. This is a timely and significant project in light of the recent flow of refugees. The design involves interviews with parents and the children.

I would like to interview some Syrian parents about your child's experience in school. This would take about 40-60 minutes at a time and public place convenient for you.

The child will be given a choice of either doing a drawing activity and being interviewed while doing it, or just doing the interview without the activity. Interviews with the children will take about 30 minutes.

The interviews will be audio-recorded. I hope to interview between 15-20 parents and between 15-20 children. Interviews can be conducted in Arabic or English, whichever you prefer.

Why do I get this Participant Information Sheet?

If you are happy to give permission, please sign the Consent Form and ask your children to sign their consent form if willing to participate. Taking part in this study is not compulsory. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are also free to withdraw at any stage before the reports are finalised. The name of any people, places or schools will be replaced by pseudonyms in any stored data and research publications.

Keeping information confidential

Confidentiality will be respected subject to legal constraints. Confidentiality of given information will be ensured by allocation of ID numbers or being referred to by pseudonym in any publications arising from the research. Data will be stored securely in password-protected computer files. Papers containing the interview transcriptions will be stored in a locked cabinet at the University of Glasgow. I will delete all personal data not required to be retained by the University of Glasgow upon completing the PhD study. Electronic files will be deleted using secure removal software. Papers containing personal data in observation field notes and interview transcripts will be shredded. The research data will be used for future publications. Please note that assurances on confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered. In such cases the University may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies.

What will happen to the results of the research?

Once I have collected the information in this study, I will write what I have learned from this information in my doctoral thesis. The result may also be published in academic journals or media. If you are interested, I will prepare a summary of the research findings for you and the other participants.

Who has reviewed the study?

The project has been reviewed and approved by the College of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee.

In conducting this research, I am under the supervision of

Professor Catherine Doherty

Telephone: 0141 330 3427

Email: Catherine.Doherty@glasgow.ac.uk

Dr Srabani Maitra

Telephone: 0141 330 3446

Email : Srabani.Maitra@glasgow.ac.uk

Contact for Further Information

If you wish to have further information about this study, you may contact me by email at n.jaber.1@research.gla.ac.uk

Should you have any concerns regarding the conduct of the research project you can contact the School of Education Ethics Officer by contacting Dr Muir Houston: Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND CONSIDERATION

University of Glasgow | School of Education

ورقة معلومات المشارك (الآباء)

عنوان الدراسة: تأثير التربية والمناهج الدراسية على هويات الطلاب السوريين الجدد

Nihaya Jaber

Email: n.jaber.1@research.gla.ac.uk

مرشحة دكتوراه في التربية

كلية العلوم الاجتماعية ، جامعة غلاسكو ، مبنى سانت أندروز ، 11 شارع إلدون ، جلاسجو.

G3 6NH.

رسالة دعوة

تتم دعوتك أنت وطفلك للمشاركة في دراسة بحثية. قبل أن تقرر أنه من المهم أن تفهم سبب إجراء البحث وما الذي سيتضمنه. يرجى قضاء بعض الوقت لقراءة المعلومات التالية بعناية ومناقشتها مع الآخرين إذا كنت ترغب في ذلك. اسألنا إذا كان هناك أي شيء غير واضح أو إذا كنت ترغب في مزيد من المعلومات. يستغرق بعض الوقت لتقرر ما إذا كنت ترغب في المشاركة أم لا. .شكرا لقراءتك

ما هو الغرض من هذا البحث؟

يهتم هذا المشروع بما إذا كان يتم تمثيل هويات الطلاب السوريين ودعمها في المناهج الدراسية والمناهج في المدارس .الاسكتلندية. هذا مشروع مهم في هذا الوقت. يتضمن البحث مقابلات مع أولياء الأمور والأطفال

أود مقابلة بعض أولياء الأمور السوريين حول تجربة طفلك في المدرسة. هذا سيستغرق حوالي 40-60 دقيقة في وقت .ومكان مناسب لك

سيتم منح الطفل خيار إما القيام بنشاط رسم وإجراء مقابلة معه أثناء القيام بذلك ، أو القيام بالمقابلة فقط دون نشاط. تستغرق .المقابلات مع الأطفال حوالي 30 دقيقة

المقابلات سوف تكون مسجلة. أتمنى إجراء مقابلة بين 15-20 من الآباء وبين 15-20 من الأطفال. يمكن إجراء المقابلات .بالعربية أو الإنجليزية

لماذا أحصل على ورقة معلومات المشاركين؟

إذا كنت سعيدًا بمنح الإذن ، فيرجى التوقيع على نموذج الموافقة واطلب من أطفالك التوقيع على نموذج موافقتهم إذا كانوا على استعداد للمشاركة. المشاركة في هذه الدراسة ليست إلزامية. مشاركتكم طوعية تماما. أنت أيضًا حر في الانسحاب في أي مرحلة قبل الانتهاء من إعداد التقارير. سيتم استبدال اسم أي أشخاص أو أماكن أو مدارس بأسماء مستعارة في أي بيانات مخزنة .ومنشورات بحثية

الحفاظ على سرية المعلومات

سيتم احترام السرية الخاضعة لقيود قانونية. سيتم ضمان سرية المعلومات المقدمة من خلال تخصيص أرقام الهوية أو الإشارة إليها باسم مستعار في أي منشورات ناشئة عن البحث. سيتم تخزين البيانات بشكل آمن في ملفات الكمبيوتر المحمية بكلمة مرور. سيتم تخزين الأوراق التي تحتوي على نسخ المقابلة في خزانة مقفلة في جامعة غلاسكو. سوف أحذف جميع البيانات الشخصية غير المطلوبة ليتم الاحتفاظ بها من قبل جامعة غلاسكو عند الانتهاء من دراسة الدكتوراه. سيتم حذف الملفات الإلكترونية باستخدام برنامج إزالة آمن. سيتم تمزيق الأوراق التي تحتوي على بيانات شخصية في ملاحظات حقل الملاحظة ونصوص المقابلة. سيتم استخدام بيانات البحث في المنشورات المستقبلية. يرجى ملاحظة أنه سيتم التقيد الصارم بضمانات السرية ، ما لم يتم الكشف عن أي

دليل على ارتكاب أي مخالفات أو ضرر محتمل. في مثل هذه الحالات ، قد تكون الجامعة ملزمة بالاتصال بالهيئات / الهيئات القانونية ذات الصلة.

ماذا سيحدث لنتائج البحث؟

بمجرد جمع المعلومات في هذه الدراسة ، سأكتب ما تعلمته من هذه المعلومات في رسالة الدكتوراه. يمكن أيضًا نشر النتيجة في المجلات الأكاديمية أو وسائل الإعلام. إذا كنت مهتمًا ، سأعد ملخصًا لنتائج البحث لك وللمشاركين الآخرين.

من قيم هذه الدراسة؟

تمت مراجعة المشروع والموافقة عليه من قبل لجنة أخلاقيات بحوث كلية العلوم الاجتماعية.

في إجراء هذا البحث ، أنا تحت إشراف

Srabani.Maitra@glasgow.ac.uk

Catherine.Doherty@glasgow.ac.uk

الهاتف: 0141 330 3446 الهاتف: 0141 330 3427

إذا كنت ترغب في الحصول على مزيد من المعلومات حول هذه الدراسة ، يمكنك الاتصال بي عن طريق البريد الإلكتروني على n.jaber.1@research.gla.ac.uk

إذا كانت لديك أية مخاوف بشأن إجراء المشروع البحثي ، فيمكنك الاتصال بمسؤول أخلاقيات كلية التربية من خلال الاتصال بالدكتور موير هيوستن: Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk

شكرا لك على وقتك واحترامك

Appendix 9: Consent Form (Students) in English and Arabic

University of Glasgow | School of Education

Consent Form (Students)

I'm Nihaya, and I would like to hear what you think about yourself, your friends and what you learn at school.

Please remember:

You do not have to answer any questions you do not like.

You can stop talking to me at any time.

Would you like to participate in an interview with me?

Please put a circle around your answer.

Yes, Please No, Thank you

May I record our discussions to help my memory later? Please put a circle around your answer.

Yes, Please No, Thank you

May I use your words, pictures and ideas in the big essay I am going to write for my research? I will NOT mention your real name.

Please put a circle around your answer.

Yes, Please No, Thank you

Please write your name in the box below.

Thank you!

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نموذج الموافقة (الطلاب)

أنا نهاية ، وأود أن أسمع رأيك حول نفسك وأصدقائك وما تتعلمه في المدرسة.

أرجوك تذكر:

• ليس لديك للإجابة على أي أسئلة لا تحبها.

• يمكنك التوقف عن التحدث معي في أي وقت.

هل ترغب في المشاركة في مقابلة معي؟

يرجى وضع دائرة حول إجابتك.

لا ، شكرا لك نعم ، من فضلك

هل يمكنني تسجيل مناقشاتنا لمساعدة ذاكرتي في وقت لاحق؟ يرجى وضع دائرة حول إجابتك.

لا ، شكرا لك نعم ، من فضلك

هل يمكنني استخدام الكلمات والصور والأفكار الخاصة بك في المقال الكبير الذي سأكتبه للبحث الذي أجريته؟ لن أذكر اسمك الحقيقي.

يرجى وضع دائرة حول إجابتك.

لا ، شكرا لك نعم ، من فضلك

يرجى كتابة اسمك في المربع أدناه.

شكرا لكم!

Appendix 10: Information Sheet (Students) in English and Arabic

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

Invitation to Take Part in a Project

Hello! My name is Nihaya Jaber. I am a researcher at the University of Glasgow, Scotland. I'd like to talk with you about the schools you've attended. My research topic is 'The effect of pedagogy and curriculum on Syrian students' identity'. I'm really interested in the way you think about yourself, your friends, your teachers and what you learn at school!

If you are happy to talk with me, I will ask you to draw and colour a picture of yourself, then make a jigsaw of the picture. I will also check with your parents if they think it's okay. I'd like to keep the drawings and jigsaw you make if that's okay with you.

If you are not interested in doing the drawing activity, then we will just talk.

With your permission, I'd like to record our discussion, so I can remember what we all say and do.

Don't worry, if you do not want to, you do not have to participate. Your choice will not affect you.

If you have any questions, please talk about this to your parents, or let me know.

Thank you!

Nihaya Jaber

Email:

Pictures: https://www.canva.com/

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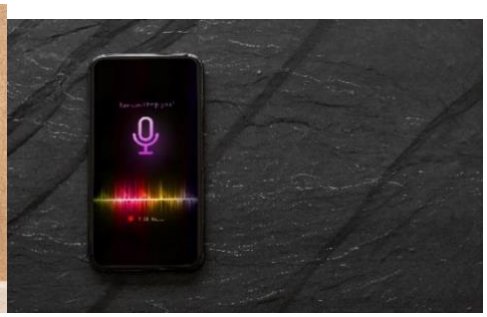
دعوة للمشاركة في المشروع

مرحبا! اسمي نهاية جابر. أنا باحثة في جامعة غلاسكو ، اسكتلندا. أرغب في التحدث معك حول المدارس التي التحقت بها. موضوع بحثي هو "تأثير علم المناهج والمناهج الدراسية على هوية الطلاب السوريين". أنا مهتمة حقًا بالطريقة التي تفكر بها في نفسك وأصدقائك ومعلميك وما تتعلمه في المدرسة!

إذا كنت سعيدًا بالتحدث معي ، فسأطلب منك رسم صورة لنفسك وتلوينها. سوف أتحقق أيضًا من والديك إذا كانوا يعتقدون أنه يمكنك المشاركة. أرغب في الاحتفاظ بالرسومات التي تقوم بها إذا لا تمانع.

إذا لم تكن مهتمًا بالقيام بنشاط الرسم ، فسنتحدث فقط.



بعد إذنكم ، أرغب في تسجيل مناقشتنا ، حتى أتمكن من تذكر ما نقوله ونفعله جميعًا.

لا تقلق ، إذا كنت لا ترغب في ذلك ، فلا يتعين عليك المشاركة. اختيارك لن يؤثر عليك.

إذا كانت لديك أي أسئلة ، فيرجى التحدث مع والديك حول هذا الأمر ، أو إخبارنا بذلك .

شكرا لكم !

نهاية جابر

Email

Pictures: https://www.canva.com/

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