



EXPLORING THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF
YOUNG PEOPLE WITH REFUGEE BACKGROUNDS:
FINDING VOICE THROUGH NARRATIVE INQUIRY

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Statement of Original Authorship

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

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Keywords

career development, career counselling, vocational psychology, narrative career counselling, narrative inquiry, refugees, asylum seekers, young people with refugee backgrounds, youth, career planning, career decision making, career construction, social constructionism, constructivism, culture, storytelling, interpersonal process recall, future career autobiography, migration, displacement, integration, resettlement, employment.

Abstract

The number of forcibly displaced people in recent years has been the greatest since comprehensive statistics on global forced displacement have been collected. As of 2017, approximately 66 million people were forcibly displaced. Of these, nearly 1.2 million, primarily children and young people are estimated to be in urgent need of resettlement in other countries. However, the office of the United Nations' High Commissioner for Refugees' Resettlement Program is the only available resettlement program and the limited number of countries that participate in this program complicates and delays the process of resettlement. Resettlement is not the end of challenges that these young people might face throughout their protracted migration journey. Highly disrupted schooling and educational experiences as well as many other contextual challenges faced throughout the migration journey exacerbate the impact of post-resettlement barriers and hinder integration in their final country of resettlement.

Successful integration of young people is linked with many factors; educational pathways and meaningful employment are two of the key factors, both of which are central to career development. Addressing the career development of youth with refugee backgrounds is essential for improving outcomes related to these two factors and preventing negative social outcomes such as marginalisation and disengagement that exacerbate mental health issues. Assisting young people with refugee backgrounds with their career development – which is the focus of this research – is important due to the changing nature of the world of work in resettlement countries that presents new challenges for all citizens, especially young people with refugee backgrounds.

Career counselling is a specialised form of career development support. Therefore, career counsellors have an important role in assisting these young people with their career development. However, as there are many different approaches to career counselling, it is important to find a

relevant approach to career counselling of young people with refugee backgrounds. As career development of young people with refugee backgrounds after resettlement is a largely neglected area of research, little is known about the nature of these young people's career development and the relevance of certain career counselling approaches to assist them. For instance, narrative career counselling that relies on a client's ability to tell career stories, has been proposed for career counselling of these young people after resettlement. However, whether young people with refugee backgrounds can access and tell career stories after resettlement has not been researched. This current thesis fills existing research gaps by investigating the career stories of young people who have been through a protracted migration journey. A better understanding about the career development of young people with refugee backgrounds through the exploration of their life-career stories, could provide useful information to career counsellors that may help them to enhance the relevance of their practice.

The first aim of this research by publication was to enhance understandings of the career development of young people with refugee backgrounds through culturally and contextually sensitive exploration of their life-career stories. Engaging young people with refugee backgrounds in narrative research, corresponds with recent calls to be aware of the boundary between narrative research and narrative interventions. Qualitative researchers must remain sensitive, responsive and responsible about the implications of conducting research with vulnerable participants because of the ethics of caring. Therefore, exploring the implications of engaging these young participants in the reflective and collaborative space of qualitative research using narrative inquiry was the second aim of this research that could further clarify the potential overlaps that might exist between narrative research and narrative interventions.

Exploring career development with an awareness of the influential cultural and contextual factors, corresponds with a contextualist view of career development. This contextualist view is better explained through a constructivist and social constructionist lens that is the epistemological assumption of this research. Aligned with the constructivist and social constructionist epistemological assumption of this research, qualitative research using narrative inquiry was used. A sensitive exploration of young people with refugee backgrounds' career development involved engaging five participants in two semi-structured narrative inquiry interviews, followed by two reflective sessions based on Interpersonal Process Recall. All five participants wrote two Future Career Autobiography (FCA) paragraphs, one before the first narrative inquiry interview and reflective session and one after the second interview and its accompanying reflective session.

To explore the first aim of this research, data from the interviews were analysed using Voice Centred Relational Analysis. The findings revealed stories of transition, hope, resilience and perseverance in diverse contexts of the pre-, within- and post-migration. These stories portrayed the young participants' sense of self in transition through various relational, cultural and contextual influences of the migration journey and their relational resourcefulness in times of tension. Additional findings clarified the power of storytelling through narrative inquiry as a practice of reflexivity over the relational, social, cultural and contextual dimensions of participants' career development. Through storytelling, participants re-contextualised their skills and career plans in the post-resettlement context and gained voice that could potentially contribute to an enhanced sense of agency for them.

To explore the second aim of the research, a comparison of the initial and subsequent FCA paragraphs was conducted through narrative analysis that was guided by the themes and

subthemes identified through a thematic analysis of the narrative inquiry interviews. The findings revealed the transformative power of storytelling in the narrative inquiry interviews as a degree of narrative change was found across the participants' FCA paragraphs. Therefore, the potential influence of career storytelling on their future career planning was further established. Furthermore, emerging narrative changes in future career plans of participants followed by participating in narrative research, revealed its potential to stimulate change, similar to narrative interventions.

The findings of this research, result in a number of implications for career practice, theory, research and policy. Confirming the possibility of engaging young people with refugee backgrounds in narrative storytelling, suggests the potential relevance and usefulness of narrative approaches to career counselling that aim to facilitate self-reflection and enhancements of cultural and contextual self-understanding. Several considerations were proposed for career counsellors who work with this population. Preparatory strategies were suggested for qualitative researchers who work with vulnerable participants and are planning to step into the overlapping boundaries between narrative research and intervention practices. Potential contributions of the research, limitations and potential directions for future research were outlined.

List of Publications Relevant to the Thesis

Journal Articles:

Paper 1

Abkhezr, P., McMahon, M., & Rossouw, P. (2015). Youth with refugee backgrounds in Australia: Contextual and practical considerations for career counsellors. *Australian Journal of Career Development, 24*(2), 71-80. doi: 10.1177/1038416215584406

Paper 2

Abkhezr, P., & McMahon, M. (2017). Narrative career counselling for people with refugee backgrounds. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling, 39*(2), 99-111. doi: 10.1007/s10447-017-9285-z

Paper 3

Abkhezr, P., McMahon, M., Glasheen, K., & Campbell, M. (2017). Finding voice through narrative storytelling: An exploration of the career development of young African females with refugee backgrounds. *Journal of Vocational Behavior. doi: 10.1016/j.jvb.2017.09.007*

Peer Reviewed Conference Papers/Abstracts:

Conference Paper (Appendix A):

Abkhezr, P., & McMahon, M. (2016, November). People with refugee backgrounds: A case for narrative career counselling. In *Conference of the International Association of Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG)*, Madrid, Spain.

Conference Abstract (Appendix B):

Abkhezr, P., & McMahon, M., & Glasheen, K., & Campbell, M. (2017, July). Finding voice through narrative career interviews: Exploring the career development of young African females with refugee backgrounds. In *The 15th European Congress of Psychology (ECP)*, Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Notes

The publications listed were produced during the candidate's PhD program of research and relate to the present research. The papers are the result of distinct stages during the period 2014 to 2017.

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List of abbreviations

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

DIAC: Department of Immigration and Citizenship

DIBP: Department of Immigration and Border Protection

TAFE: Technical and Further Education

IPR: Interpersonal Process Recall

FCA: Future Career Autobiography

VCRA: Voice Centred Relational Analysis

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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This introductory chapter of the thesis invites you to engage with the world of displaced people who are assessed as refugees or asylum seekers. It begins by explaining relevant terminologies, providing an overview of the status of displaced people worldwide and the limited existing resettlement programs globally. Possible phases following resettlement and an overview of statistics related to people with refugee backgrounds in Australia are then presented. Finally, by telling my own stories of relating to this population, with whom I have had the honour of crossing paths through my work as a mental health practitioner and counsellor, I intend to provide transparency for this research. The chapter concludes with the presentation of the research rationale, the aims of the study, and the contributions of this research.

1.1 Refugees and asylum seekers in today's world

War, persecution, conflict, terrorism, human rights violations and social and economic instability have led to a dramatic increase in forced displacement of people throughout the world and above all to an increase in the number of asylum seekers, refugees and others who are in immediate need for resettlement. In a broader sense, “forcibly displaced individuals” (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2014, p. 6) are divided into three main groups: refugees, internally displaced persons and asylum seekers. In the 1967 UN General Assembly Protocol, a refugee was defined as:

Someone who owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is

outside the country of his [sic] nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country (UNHCR, 2012, p. 2).

An “asylum seeker” (UNHCR, 2012, p. 8) is:

Someone who has made a claim that he or she is a refugee, and is waiting for that claim to be accepted or rejected. The term contains no presumption either way - it simply describes the fact that someone has lodged the claim. Some asylum-seekers will be judged to be refugees and others not.

Finally, an “internally displaced person” (IDP; UNHCR, 2012, p. 8) is:

Someone who has been forced to move from his or her home because of conflict, persecution (i.e., refugee-like reasons) or because of a natural disaster or some other unusual circumstance of this type. Unlike refugees, however, IDPs remain inside their own country.

It is important to note that all three groups experience issues related to homelessness, unemployment and lack of education that make their lives unstable and challenging. Currently, the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR] is the most active agency in relation to people affected by wars, conflicts, persecution and natural disasters and its resettlement program assists people who are facing problems or continued threats to their safety in their home countries or their current countries of asylum (UNHCR, 2012). As of 2017, 20 people are forcibly displaced every minute (UNHCR, 2017a). Since 2014, a steady global trend of approximately ten million people become displaced each year (UNHCR, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017b). According to UNHCR, the number of people displaced has reached a population of over 65 million people which is the highest on record since comprehensive statistics on global forced displacement have been collected (UNHCR, 2017b). Most of the displaced population are hosted

in Middle-Eastern and African countries. The countries of Turkey, Pakistan, Lebanon, Iran and Uganda are the top five host countries of displaced people (UNHCR, 2017a). The increased number of displaced people as the result of tensions in Syria, South Sudan and certain regions of Iraq, have led to a dramatic increase in the number of displaced people moving towards some new destinations in Europe such as Germany (UNHCR, 2017a). In 2016, a staggering number of 722,000 asylum claims were lodged by newly displaced people who sought asylum in Germany (UNHCR, 2017a). The scale of this number of claims for Germany is better reflected by comparing it to previous years. In 2013 – before ISIS expanded its operations in Syria – approximately 109,600 (UNHCR, 2014) new asylum claims were lodged in Germany (UNHCR, 2011) compared with fewer than 2000 in 2010. Globally, over 2 million asylum claims were lodged in 2016 (UNHCR, 2017b). These asylum claims are evaluated by UNHCR, asylum seekers are interviewed extensively, and gradually they are assisted by UNHCR and the host countries in different ways for resettlement. However, not all asylum seekers are resettled in other countries. Some claims are rejected and the applicants are asked to return to their home countries. Some of the displaced people may return to their home countries and cancel their applications for resettlement if the conditions improve in their home countries. The remaining applicants whose cases are approved and are then assessed as refugees by UNHCR will either be relocated temporarily (maybe for years) into refugee camps or be given permission to remain temporarily in the country in which they lodged their asylum claims (here referred to as ‘transitory countries’). After spending years in these transitory countries or refugee camps, refugees might become permanent residents of these countries depending on the political, social, economic situations and immigration policies of the host country. Otherwise, refugees can lodge new applications to UNHCR offices to be resettled elsewhere. Obviously, the processing of these

cases for resettlement is very slow and refugees could spend over ten years in transitory and temporary life conditions. For instance, as of 2017, approximately 150,000 refugees were registered with UNHCR in Malaysia (UNHCR, 2017a). Malaysia is not a member of the 1951 Refugee Convention and therefore does not recognise refugees as legal residents. Therefore, this population is always at risk of not receiving the social and educational support that they deserve. In countries such as Malaysia, in which refugees do not have a chance of finding a stable home, all refugees are awaiting to be resettled elsewhere, mostly by UNHCR. On the other hand, the governments of many other countries that are members of the 1951 Refugee Convention, have very different approaches to the treatment of asylum seekers and refugees. Some countries have many refugee camps and try to encourage asylum seekers to remain and live in those camps (e.g., Kenya) and some countries allow asylum seekers to live and move freely in their territory as long as they are registered with their immigration department (e.g., Iran). However, these differences and rules in different countries are not always clear and refugees and asylum seekers are always living in unstable and challenging conditions until they are resettled permanently and have the confidence that they are legally treated as the citizens of a country.

The UNHCR resettlement program is the only available resettlement program globally. In 2017, UNHCR reported that approximately 1.2 million individuals were in need of urgent resettlement. As of 2016, only 30 countries, including Australia, participated in the UNHCR resettlement program (UNHCR, 2017b). However, the processing time for the resettlement program is extremely slow. In 2016, UNHCR introduced more than 162,500 persons for urgent resettlement into those 30 countries. Precisely 125,835 of them were successfully resettled into these 30 countries. Those who were not accepted for resettlement will have to wait further in their transitory situations. Out of the resettled population, more than 92% were resettled into five

countries (The United States of America, Canada, Australia, The United Kingdom and Norway) which is indicative of the limited participation in the UNHCR resettlement program from the other 25 countries (UNHCR, 2017b). The UNHCR is currently making efforts to broaden and diversify its resettlement program and it is estimated that by 2018, approximately 37 countries will participate in the program. It is not clear however, whether there will be an actual increase in the number of people who will be resettled through this program.

The transition period subsequent to displacement and prior to resettlement as well as the resettlement processing by UNHCR often takes a long time, sometimes years, and some refugees spend their lives in transitory locations. During this time, they live under difficult circumstances with very limited food, health care, housing, education and employment (Centre for Multicultural Youth, 2014). Some young refugees have lived either their whole life or spent most of their life, in camps or in a state of uncertainty and confusion about their final destination in transition countries (Gifford, Correa-Velez, & Sampson, 2009). Many of these young people therefore, face issues related to statelessness and placelessness (Albarazi & Waas, 2016) before resettling in a final host country such as Australia.

1.2 The initial phases of settlement and adjustment

After final resettlement, a new era of development and adjustment with its own challenges and obstacles begins, though initially in a more positive manner compared to the temporary settlement arrangements (Gifford et al., 2009; Van Meeteren, 2012). Depending on individual circumstances, many of those being resettled experience either prior to, while en-route or immediately after arrival, a temporary phase that is considered a “honeymoon” phase (Sachs,

Rosenfeld, Lhewa, Rasmussen, & Keller, 2008). However, different phases of adjustment are possible after arrival in a new country of final resettlement (see Figure 1.1).

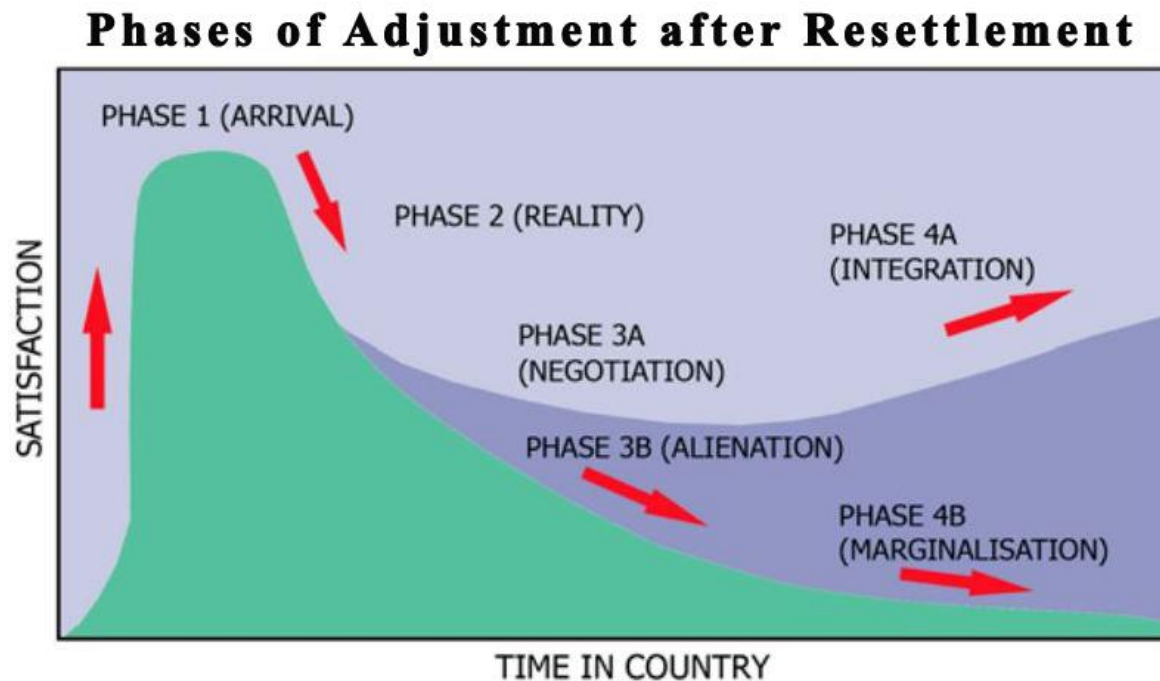


Figure 1.1 Phases of adjustment after resettlement

Adapted from: Centre for Multicultural Youth (2006, p. 3) and The Centre for Victims of Torture (2004, p. 25)

The first phase of resettlement, arrival, is characterised by a sense of relief along with high expectations, feelings of being disoriented or confused, and a mixture of other positive-negative emotional experiences (Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues, 2006). When an overwhelming awareness about the challenges of meeting some of those high expectations surrounds young people and their families, the second phase of adjustment, reality, follows. In this second phase of adjustment, a realisation occurs for young people and their families that

quick adjustments may seem not possible and achieving some of those high expectations will take a longer time, sometimes accompanied with more challenging obstacles (Shrestha, 2011). From this point, whether the next phases are negotiation and integration (3A-4A) or alienation and marginalisation (3B-4B) largely depends on building on strengths, effectively negotiating systems and developing a sense of personal identity that is compatible with the integration process. Such factors determine whether young people experience a growing sense of mastery and comfort after resettlement that they can integrate into the society or a sense of alienation and marginalisation (Centre for Multicultural Youth, 2006; Ferrer-Wreder et al., 2002). Successful integration is conceptualised around four central themes:

Achievement and access across the sectors of employment, housing, education and health; assumptions and practice regarding citizenship and rights; processes of social connection within and between groups within the community; and structural barriers to such connection related to language, culture and the local environment (Ager & Strang, 2008, p. 166).

The experiences of people after resettlement around the world suggests that when integration does not occur successfully, identity confusion, combined with negative experiences along the way, can potentially fuel negative outcomes such as alienation, marginalisation and their indices such as violence and crime (Christie, Wagner, & Winter, 2001; Moghaddam & Marsella, 2004; Powell & Lever, 2017; Taylor & Louis, 2004; Wessells, 2004).

1.3 Terminology: “Young people with refugee backgrounds” and “life-career stories”

In this research, the terms “young people with refugee backgrounds”, “youth with refugee backgrounds” or “people with refugee backgrounds” are used rather than “young refugees” or

“refugees” when referring to people who are living in their final country of resettlement. The use of this term is intended to avoid the stigma and negative attributes sometimes associated with being called a refugee. Additionally, I assume that by using the phrase “young people with refugee backgrounds”, I clarify my perspective that I see them primarily as young people rather than as refugees.

The term ‘life-career stories’ is often used throughout this research. Life-career stories reflect the inseparability of careers and life (Hartung, 2013). Such terminology was intentionally chosen to be sensitive to aspects of the life stories of young people with refugee backgrounds that affect their career development, and thus their career stories, throughout and after their migration journey.

1.4 People with refugee backgrounds in Australia

Over the past two decades Australia has granted permanent residency under both ‘Offshore and Onshore Humanitarian Visa Streams’ to a minimum of 13000 people each year (Department of Immigration and Border Protection [DIBP], 2016). In recent years, however, the numbers have grown. In 2016 over 17,500 people were granted permanent residency under the Australian humanitarian program (DIBP, 2017). The Australian government has announced that extra places will be made available for those referred by UNHCR through the resettlement program that will result in more people being granted permanent residency in 2018 and 2019 (DIBP, 2017). The Australian humanitarian program consists of two categories: the offshore and onshore applications. Most people (more than 75%) who are granted permanent residency under the humanitarian program, were referred to Australia through the UNHCR resettlement program and therefore are considered as offshore applications. This reflects how the majority of people

with refugee backgrounds in Australia are those who have been through protracted displacement and have spent years in transitory situations before they arrive in Australia. For instance, during 2015-2016 round of the Australian government humanitarian program, 15552 people were resettled into the country. The countries which most of the people came from were Iraq (4358 people) and Syria (4261 people), followed by Myanmar (1951 people) and Afghanistan (1741 people). The remainder were from countries such as Congo, Bhutan & Somalia (Australian Government Department of Social Services, 2018).

However, the UNHCR resettlement program is emphasised as a complementary program and is not intended as a substitute for the provision of protection to people who seek asylum under the 1951 Refugee Convention. This means that the countries who are part of the 1951 Refugee Convention are responsible to protect the rights of people who seek asylum and treat them in dignified ways. Despite this, the Australian government – as the only government worldwide – detained thousands of asylum-seeking people who arrived by boat on its shores since 2013 and is still keeping them detained, violating their basic human rights (Karlsen, 2016).

As statistics reveal the growing number of people with refugee backgrounds in Australia, it is noteworthy that young people represent the majority of those being granted permanent residency in Australia under the humanitarian program. Since 2008, each year over 60% of people who were granted permanent residency in Australia under the humanitarian program were below the age of 29 (DIBP, 2016) and are considered as young people with refugee backgrounds in this research. More specifically, about 65% of all of these recently resettled young people are below the age of 18 (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2013).

For better integration of young people after resettlement, participation, self-sufficiency and social inclusion are important resettlement factors (Olliff & Mohamed, 2007). The

Australian government's approach to settlement aims to achieve full social, economic and civic participation among newly-arrived communities (Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, 2003). However, in achieving this aim for young people after resettlement, there are multiple barriers including limited vocational and educational options, unemployment or underemployment. The inability of educational and employment service providers as well as inefficiency of policies to meet the needs of this group are the main issues contributing to such barriers (Beadle, 2014; Correa-Velez, Gifford, & Barnett, 2010; Correa-Velez, Gifford, McMichael & Sampson, 2017; O'Sullivan & Olliff, 2006).

The Australian government offers programs to improve people with refugee backgrounds' chances of integration and social inclusion. These programs include the 'Humanitarian Settlement Program' (HSP) as well as its complimentary 'Specialised and Intensive Services' that are only approved and provided on a case by case basis (Australian Government Department of Social Services, 2018). The HSP program covers a wide range of areas related to employment, education and training, housing, physical and mental health, community participation and justice and includes programs such as the 'Adult Migrant English Program' (AMEP) or 'Skills for Education and Employment' (SEE) and the 'Job-Active' network. The AMEP program offers up to 510 hours of free English language tuition to eligible entrants while the SEE program offers language, literacy and numeracy training that could be useful in finding and securing employment. The Job-Active network connects job seekers with employers and assists them in developing their resume and searching for a job. However, the outcomes of such programs and initiatives for better integration and social inclusion of people with refugee backgrounds is not as expected. For instance, in 2015-2016 only 48% of Job-Active clients across all streams were placed in work and more than half of these jobs were laboring and

sales worker jobs in casual or very short term contracts (Kooy & Randrianarisoa, 2017). Such jobs are classified as “survival jobs” which do not reflect people with refugee backgrounds’ desires to find meaningful long-term employment that allows them to use their skills and prior experiences (Burhani & Sayad, 2017, p. 2). Therefore, such programs’ efficacy in responding to long term career development needs of people with refugee backgrounds is challenged.

Finally, it is important to once again acknowledge the diversity of people with refugee backgrounds who resettle in Australia. Despite general characteristics of the majority of these young people (e.g., collectivist cultural backgrounds, protracted migration journey, disrupted schooling experiences and being from families with lower educational and professional backgrounds), it is important to acknowledge their strong potential for labour force participation (Hugo, 2013). However, this potential is not being fully realised and significant impediments stand in the way of the career development of young people with refugee backgrounds in Australia.

1.5 Career development of young people with refugee backgrounds

To address and eliminate the multiple barriers to the integration of young people with refugee backgrounds after resettlement, it is important to acknowledge a diverse range of factors linked to their vocational and educational options that influence their career development such as issues challenging their employment after arrival (Abdelkerim & Grace, 2012). At this point, it is important to consider this definition of career development that depicts the holistic nature of career development and is the definition informing this research:

Career development involves one’s whole life, not just occupation. As such, it concerns the whole person ... More than that, it concerns him or her in the ever-changing contexts

of his or her life. The environmental pressures and constraints, the bonds that tie him or her to significant others, responsibilities to children and aging parents, the total structure of one's circumstances are also factors that must be understood and reckoned with. In these terms, career development and personal development converge. Self and circumstances evolving, changing, unfolding in mutual interaction – constitute the focus and the drama of career development (Wolfe & Kolb, 1980, pp. 1-2).

Responding effectively to issues related to the career development of youth is central to the field of career development that aims to advance “knowledge about vocational behavior” by improving career interventions or informing “social policy about work issues” (Savickas & Baker, 2005, p. 15). Additionally, being sensitive to the career needs of those who have been disadvantaged has been a priority in the field of career development since its inception (Parsons, 1909). As a result, it is important to consider the challenges that surround the employment and career development of people with refugee backgrounds once they resettle in countries such as Australia. Recent research has started to investigate challenges related to employment outcomes of recently resettled people with refugee backgrounds in countries such as Australia or Canada (Abdelkerim & Grace, 2012; Codell, Hill, Woltz & Gore, 2011; Fleay, Hartley & Kenny, 2013; Wilkinson & Bhattacharyya, 2016). This body of research highlights the importance of developing various services such as relevant career counselling services and appropriate policies. However, the applicability of career interventions and career counselling services developed over the past few decades for working with different populations are questioned when it comes to working with people with refugee backgrounds. Career counselling is one such interventions and is defined as services for the amelioration and prevention of vocational problems of the full gamut of working people (Blustein, 2011; Brown & Lent, 2013).

Career counselling could be considered as a form of psychosocial assistance (Beadle, 2014; Schultheiss & Davis, 2015; Stebleton, 2012) that could enrich the career development of young people with refugee backgrounds and enhance their employability. However, most of the traditional approaches to career counselling have been developed in western contexts (McMahon, 2014) and their application has not been explored for working with populations such as young people with refugee backgrounds. The field of career development is yet to respond effectively to the range of work-related problems faced by a whole gamut of people other than those of a middle class western background (Blustein, 2006, 2011; Richardson, 2012). Therefore, career counselling that could effectively and sensitively respond to the educational and vocational needs of different populations, especially those who might have been disadvantaged, marginalised and oppressed, at best could only be considered as work in progress. To improve effectiveness and efficiency, these developing career counselling approaches need to consider and acknowledge contextual and cultural differences of various populations (Leong & Flores, 2015; Patton & McMahon, 2014; Richardson, 2012) and work in precautionary and exploratory ways to stay in tune with the current postmodern advances in the field of career development.

A number of shortcomings in responding effectively to educational and vocational needs of young people with refugee backgrounds after resettlement, such as a lack of relevant educational and vocational services and inefficient policies, signify the importance of research within the fields of career development and career counselling that can enhance understandings of their needs and potential ways of assisting and supporting them. However, understanding the needs of this population after resettlement must be considered in the context of the often-protracted migration journey they have been through. The experiences of young people with refugee backgrounds before they begin their migration journey and later in refugee camps or

transitory countries are all important experiences that makes the career development of young people with refugee background who are a very heterogeneous population, different from other young people who have not been through such experiences. Therefore, such experiences throughout their very diverse migration journeys need to be explored in order to develop effective strategies for their integration. It was the crossing of my path with this population in transitory countries and seeing glimpses of their lived experiences within the migration journey that made me curious and interested in pursuing this research. The next section is about the background stories and contexts that have influenced and motivated me to undertake research related to the career development of young people with refugee backgrounds after resettlement.

1.6 Researcher's story and context

For the purposes of transparency in this qualitative research, it is important to clarify what has influenced my intentions to undertake this research concerning the career development of young people with refugee backgrounds after their resettlement in Australia. Throughout this research, I hold a position of concern for the career development of all people and particularly those who, as a result of experiencing forced displacement, have lost touch with the original contexts in which they could have flourished and developed their own careers. My concerns relate to matters of “poverty reduction” and the “promotion of decent and [dignified] work” which can eventually reroute “what is” to “what might be” (Prilleltensky & Stead, 2013, p. 32) for career development of young people with refugee backgrounds after resettlement. The outcomes of such rerouting might potentially reduce integration barriers such as unemployment or underemployment.

In working with clients on their career development and career decisions, identifying as a career counsellor who holds a critical perspective towards dominant trends of practice in career counselling, I strive to challenge the status-quo in the field for not being inclusive of all people. Why my position was situated at the forefront of my research, is best reflected through different aspects of my story.

1.6.1 How it began?

My interest in this topic emanated from my work and personal life experiences. Moving from Iran to Cyprus, and subsequently to Malaysia and Australia, and living, studying and working in these three countries for the past sixteen years made me curious about the very different types of contemporary human movement across the globe and its causes as well as the implications for the lives of people from different backgrounds. I consider the stories described here, a collective turning point for my curiosities and fascinations that resulted in a strong commitment to pursue studies that could somehow benefit forcibly displaced people in particular, because they perhaps experience the most challenging type of human migration. This research was an acknowledgment of my migration privileges and taking an ethical stance based on my moral obligations.

Prior to my doctoral studies in Australia, I was working in two parallel roles as a career counsellor and as a mental health counsellor in Malaysia, while simultaneously familiarising myself with narrative ideas in practice and research. I will now briefly explain these stories that became influential in shaping my worldviews and intentions to conduct this type of research.

In my career counselling role, I encountered upper middle-class Malaysian students who were enrolled in a private institution. I mostly assisted them with making decisions about their field of study which was aligned with their interests, personality and aptitudes. We were

instructed by our supervisor to use a battery of tests followed by a one-hour counselling session that mostly involved a clarification of test results. However, on many occasions students expressed career concerns that went beyond the test results. Sometimes, I succeeded in arranging further sessions and in those sessions, an exploration of their life-career stories seemed inevitable. It was my understanding that for many students, these further sessions provided more clarity about making career decisions.

In my role as a mental health counsellor in Malaysia, I was dealing with a different population in a different setting: young asylum seekers in disadvantaged school settings. Thousands of asylum seekers live in Malaysia for long periods of time, often years while awaiting the UNHCR and the government of resettlement countries' decisions on granting them humanitarian visas. Most of these young asylum seekers were not allowed to enrol in mainstream schools and their schooling was limited to such underprivileged schools, usually providing highly interrupted schooling experiences.

After about a year of encounters with some of these young asylum-seeking students, a series of ideas and questions sparked my mind. I observed that generally when our mental health counselling sessions made an unexpected turn into an exploration and thickening of future anticipated career plans, students' overall interest in attending the sessions and making use of them in their lives increased. They became more actively engaged in the process of our encounters. Naturally, I became curious about the nature of such shifts in my sessions with asylum-seeking students and I was lost among many questions. Was there any relationship between their mental health struggles which were the primary cause of their referrals to me by school staff and their anticipated career plans? What would happen to their anticipated career plans once they resettle in countries such as Australia? How do they navigate through these

anticipations and develop careers? Questions such as these became fundamental pre-occupations for shaping my research scholarship. As I was aware that most of the young people with asylum seeking backgrounds whom I was dealing with in Malaysia would resettle in Australia, I anticipated that it might be challenging for some of them to adjust, integrate and continue towards their career goals and aspirations after resettlement. Being their therapist and meeting them for sometimes more than ten sessions, I became familiar with their feelings and plans about the future. Having migrated twice myself, I assumed that pursuing some of those plans in a country such as Australia could be really challenging for these young people who didn't have the privilege of a continuous and stable education. I wondered if feelings of confusion, uncertainty, helplessness and hopelessness could intensify after resettlement and threaten their well-being, mental health, academic performance and subsequently career development.

While working in those roles, I gradually became curious about career theories and career counselling approaches that could be useful in working with young people with refugee backgrounds. I learned that effective career counselling stretches beyond 'testing and telling' (Savickas, 1993) and through a more holistic attention to people's lives, the process becomes more engaging with more enduring implications. I also learned that most traditional approaches to career counselling do not respond to career needs of young people with refugee backgrounds (Brown, 2015) and therefore a different culturally and contextually relevant approach to career counselling that provides a flexible space for working with diverse populations after resettlement seemed essential. Following such theoretical explorations, certain aspects of narrative ideas and practices appeared to be most relevant in working with the population of young people with refugee backgrounds. I was encouraged to explore their narratives and life-career stories to enhance understandings of the career development of this group and as a result clarify the

potential relevance and implications of narrative career practice and career research with this population. However, this qualitative exploration required me to position myself as the curious inquirer who wanted to learn about young people with refugee backgrounds' career journey and their subjective ways of meaning making about their anticipated career plans.

I decided to make the journey to Australia, explore the career development of young people with refugee backgrounds after resettlement, and discover whether my research could somehow be useful for practitioners who work with and want to assist these young people. I was hoping that by learning more about their life-career stories and their subjective ways of perceiving and planning for a future career, a broader perspective on their career development would emerge. This new and broader perspective could potentially provide further insight and knowledge for career practitioners who work with this population, so the process of supporting young people with refugee backgrounds with their anticipated career plans could be enhanced and improved. By conducting this research my hope was to contribute to the fields of career development and career counselling by providing insight and knowledge about: 1) the career development of a group who has been traditionally neglected in career research, theory and practice as well as 2) the implications of employing narrative ways of research and practice in working with young people with refugee backgrounds.

Telling my stories of engagement with young people with refugee backgrounds and a consideration of the context of their migration journey and their status after resettlement paved the way for the rationale of this research. The remainder of this chapter describes the rationale, presents the research aim, as well as its potential contributions.

1.7 Rationale for the Research

Given the large and growing number of young people with refugee backgrounds in Australia on the verge of entering the world of work, assisting them in different ways such as their physiological and psychological well-being as well as the provision of relevant educational and employment opportunities could significantly improve integration (Beadle, 2014; Olliff, 2010; Wimelius, Eriksson, Isaksson, & Ghazinour, 2016). Career counsellors in Australia could have a key role to play in the integration of young people with refugee backgrounds after resettlement through improving their future employability (Abkhezr & McMahon, 2017; Abkhezr, McMahon, & Rossouw, 2015; Stebleton, 2012; Yakushko, Backhaus, Watson, Ngaruiya, & Gonzalez, 2008).

Looking at the history of career counselling, we are reminded that assisting young immigrants and displaced people was a significant part of the foundation of career counselling when, more than a century ago, Parsons' work (1909) "left a legacy of social justice" for career practitioners (Arthur, 2013, p. 49). However, in the past century, the pervasive trends in career counselling seem to have drifted away from this social justice agenda (Arthur, Collins, McMahon, & Marshall 2009) and resulted in critiques about career counselling efficacy and relevance for working with populations of diverse cultural and contextual backgrounds (Brown, 2015; Reid & West, 2016; Watson, 2006) such as young people with refugee backgrounds. Contextual and environmental forces that adversely impact career development of those who are socially or economically disadvantaged have been largely neglected in recent career practice, research and theory (Arthur, 2005) which largely focus on individualist, reductionist, and positivist approaches. The dominance of such trends has resulted in a failure to address inequities

in societies and therefore the need for new approaches to career counselling has been highlighted (McMahon, 2014; Stead & Perry, 2012).

Among such new approaches, narrative career counselling has been considered as a suitable approach which resonates well with the diverse cultural, contextual and relational factors that surround young people with refugee backgrounds (Kennedy & Chen, 2012, McMahon & Watson, 2013; Pierce & Gibbons, 2012; Timm, 2014; Watson, 2013). A definition of narrative career counselling is provided by McIlveen and Patton (2007, p. 228):

Narrative career counselling emphasises subjectivity and meaning. It aims to facilitate self-reflection and elaboration of self-concepts toward an enhanced self-understanding that is subjectively and contextually truthful. It entails a collaborative process in which the client is supported in creating an open ended personal story that holistically accounts for his or her life and career, and enables the person to make meaningfully informed career decisions and actions.

Narrative career counselling's emphasis on life and career as reflected in this definition refers to the inseparability of career stories from life stories, makes it relevant for working with diverse range of people who have lived and moved through various contexts and cultures and have different migration and transition stories to tell. However, despite the potential usefulness of narrative approaches to career counselling that could assist young people with refugee backgrounds' career development and employability, there is little known about how narrative career counselling could work with this population. The dearth of research and shortcomings in knowledge on the nature and the cultural, contextual and relational aspects of young people with refugee backgrounds' career development before and after resettlement (Abkhezr, McMahon & Rossouw, 2015; Cohen, Arnold, & O'Neill, 2011; Marfleet & Blustein, 2011; Schultheiss &

Davis, 2015), as well as a scarcity of research that evaluates the application of new approaches to career counselling with this population (Abkhezr & McMahon, 2017; McNair & Bimrose, 2011; Stebleton, 2007; Watson, McMahon, Mkhize, Schweitzer, & Mpofu, 2011), leave little to guide career practitioners. While narrative career counselling has been advocated as potentially useful, little is known about whether people with refugee backgrounds can access their life-career stories or whether they can tell these stories in the context of a face-to-face interaction (either research or intervention) with someone from different contextual and cultural backgrounds. Overall, there is little known about life-career stories of young people with refugee backgrounds and therefore an exploration of their life-career stories could provide insight about the contextual, environmental and cultural forces that impact their career development in different ways. Since narrative career counselling deals with people's life-career stories to assist their career development, exploration of young people with refugee backgrounds' life-career stories could provide some preliminary insight about what narrative career counselling might need to deal with.

Explorations of the career development of marginalised and disadvantaged groups and those who might have difficulties securing decent work relying on qualitative approaches and research methods is scarce (Bimrose & Hearne, 2012). Among such groups, the career development of young people with refugee backgrounds has not been researched extensively, existing research is sporadic (Marfleet & Blustein, 2011; Schultheiss & Davis, 2015) and has not expanded understandings of the particularities of cultural and contextual influences on the career development of people with refugee backgrounds after resettlement.

Furthermore, many young people with refugee backgrounds have rarely told their stories of skills and strengths in their previous interview experiences that aimed only at ascertaining

their refugee status (Abkhezr & McMahon, 2017). Previous research highlights the power of storytelling for people with refugee backgrounds (Mollica, 2008). Through the telling of life stories, many survivors of torture and trauma or those who have been through silencing and marginalising experiences have improved their capacities for healing their wounds and dealing with current life challenges. Engaging in such a reflective process over their different narratives for the first time and re-storying their hopes and anticipations, might provoke a new state of agency over their narratives. Finally, by exploring the career development of young people with refugee backgrounds after resettlement, various people who work with this population and have a shared goal of assisting them to integrate, could gain a better understanding of the very diverse ways through which these young people perceive their career development and plan for it.

1.8 Research Aims

This research was guided by two aims, specifically:

1. To enhance understandings of the career development of young people with refugee backgrounds through culturally and contextually sensitive exploration of their life-career stories.
2. To explore the implications of participating in qualitative research using narrative inquiry for young people with refugee backgrounds.

1.9 Contributions of the research

This research will contribute to the fields of career development and career counselling by exploring the career development of a group of people to whom little attention has been paid within the dominant theoretical frameworks of these fields as well as in career research and

practice. Exploration of the career development of young people with refugee backgrounds will contribute new knowledge about this population's life-career stories and relevant cultural, contextual and relational factors. A contribution of this research to the fields of career development and career counselling is to provide them with more relevant knowledge about the particularities of the career development of young people with refugee backgrounds and the potential implications of engaging them in narrative storytelling (either in the context of research or practice) after resettlement. Also by empathically attending to the career needs and plans of a disadvantaged group of young people who have experienced protracted displacement and gone through a long and individually unique migration journey, this research will provide useful insights for future services that can ameliorate work behaviours of young people with refugee backgrounds after resettlement in such ways that their long-term career empowerment is considered. Long term career empowerment refers to services and activities that have elements of empowering and supporting people in such a way that they can find and maintain fulfilling and meaningful future long-term career trajectories. This means that people could plan for their future, work on their plans, fulfil them and enjoy a certain degree of long term career security. Following the exploration of the career development of young people with refugee backgrounds after resettlement, suggestions will be provided for career counsellors who engage with this population.

Another potential contribution of this research is to the qualitative narrative research community and those who engage their participants in acts of narrative storytelling. By exploring the implications of engaging participants with refugee backgrounds in qualitative research that explores their life-career stories, this research provides further insight about the blurred boundaries between qualitative narrative research and narrative practice. Finally, the findings

may inform policy makers about the uniqueness of young people with refugee backgrounds' career development and make suggestions about assisting them to achieve higher levels of integration.

1.10 Summary

In this chapter, the current global status of people with refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds was briefly described. An overview of young people with refugee backgrounds in Australia and how they might adjust after resettlement was also presented. Then, how the researcher's background has shaped the research design was explained. The research aim and potential contributions were then outlined.

1.11 Overview of the thesis by publication

This thesis comprises seven chapters. After this introductory chapter, chapter 2 outlines the context, shortcomings and challenges of the career development of youth with refugee backgrounds after resettlement in Australia. The role of career counsellors in assisting this population is highlighted and some cultural and contextual considerations for working with young people with refugee backgrounds are presented. This chapter concludes by proposing narrative career counselling as a culturally and contextually relevant approach.

Chapter 3 extends the relevance of narrative career counselling and overviews its core constructs in the context of working with young people with refugee backgrounds. The paper explores the potential relevance of narrative career counselling in light of the population's often-protracted migration journey. Finally, based on available research and literature, this paper

provides further cultural considerations for narrative career counsellors who work with this population.

Chapter 4 outlines the research design and the methodology used in this research. Starting with an overview of qualitative research, the rationale for employing it is provided and five assumptions pertaining to qualitative research are clarified. Finally, the method, including the procedures of recruitment, data collection, analysis, steps for the enhancement of research rigour and ethical considerations are outlined.

Chapter 5 reports the research findings related to qualitative interviews informed by narrative inquiry and corresponds with the first aim of this research. The findings revealed the operations of various voices, relationships, social structures and dominant narratives, influential in shaping life-career stories and future career plans of participants.

Chapter 6 corresponds with the second aim of this research and explores the potential implications of engaging young people with refugee backgrounds in qualitative narrative research. The findings of this chapter clarify the blurred boundaries between qualitative narrative research and narrative practice.

Chapter 7 concludes the thesis, summarises the findings and presents implications for research and practice, outlines research limitations and finally, makes recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2: CAREER DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT OF YOUNG PEOPLE WITH REFUGEE BACKGROUNDS IN AUSTRALIA

Paper 1: Abkhezr, P., McMahon, M., & Rossouw, P. (2015). Youth with refugee backgrounds in Australia: Contextual and practical considerations for career counsellors. *Australian Journal of Career Development*, 24(2), 71-80. doi: 10.1177/1038416215584406

Relevance to thesis

Before delving into an exploration of the career development of young people with refugee backgrounds after resettlement, an awareness about the context in which their career development unfolds after resettlement is crucial. The post-resettlement context of Australia with certain shortcomings and barriers to successful integration, poses its own educational and vocational challenges for these young people. This chapter that is a published paper in the *Australian Journal of Career Development*, first explores the context of youth with refugee backgrounds after resettlement in Australia. Despite existing challenges, career practitioners could have an important role in assisting youth with refugee backgrounds' career development. However, as career development of youth with refugee backgrounds is heavily influenced by various cultural and contextual influences, career counselling needs to be sensitive on these influences. Three potential models that accommodate issues of culture and context into the work of career counsellors who work with these young people are proposed.

Why this journal was chosen

The *Australian Journal of Career Development* was chosen for publishing this paper due to the relevance of the content to the Australian context and its readership. This journal is the only Australian journal that specifically focuses on issues of career development and career counselling. The journal's readership are Australian career practitioners and researchers whose work might be related to young people with refugee backgrounds.

Statement of Contribution of Co-Authors for Thesis by Publication

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I have sighted email or other correspondence from all Co-authors confirming their certifying authorship.
 (If the Co-authors are not able to sign the form please forward their email or other correspondence confirming the certifying authorship to the RSC).

QUT Verified Signature

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4/11/2017

Youth with refugee backgrounds in Australia: Contextual and practical considerations for career counsellors

Peyman Abkhezr, Mary McMahon and Pieter Rossouw

Abstract

Youth with refugee backgrounds face challenges in their journey towards successful integration in Australia. Some challenges relate to macro-level changes occurring in the world of work and some to their transition from an agrarian or industrial society to a post-industrial Western country. Addressing the future career development of youth with refugee backgrounds may lead to improved integration outcomes. As career counselling has its roots in social justice, assisting those from refugee backgrounds to integrate into Australian society is an important task for career counsellors. However, career counsellors need to respond with caution and sensitivity as many models and theories have been criticised for not responding to multicultural and contextual issues concerning diverse populations. This article outlines some of the challenges faced by youth with refugee backgrounds in Australia, considers possible relevant approaches for career counselling and proposes suggestions for career counsellors.

Keywords

Youth with refugee backgrounds, integration, employment, career counselling, culture

2.1 Introduction

In this competitive and complex labour market which is influenced by classism, sexism, racism and other forms of oppression (Arthur, 2013; Blustein, 2006; Blustein, Coutinho, Murphy, Backus, & Catraio, 2011), access to work is no longer a given and many jobs are being eliminated (Blustein, 2006). As a result, having a stable career is a blurry concept for many individuals, particularly for those with a migration background (Khoo, 2010) such as youth with refugee backgrounds in Australia. Currently, youth with refugee backgrounds in Australia are a non-homogenous population influenced by complex educational, vocational, cultural, psychological and socio-political issues (Beadle, 2014; Correa-Velez, Gifford, & Barnett, 2010; Earnest, 2006; Olliff, 2010a). With changes in the world of work in developed countries which position people as human capital for which the corporate world competes in an “age of talent”, terminologies such as “war on talent, the talent gap, talent shortage, talent deficit, etc.” (Arthur, 2013, p. 52) are used. However, not everyone has the same opportunities in this age of talent (Arthur, 2013). Those from diverse cultural backgrounds such as youth with refugee backgrounds face difficulties adjusting to this complex world of work which may be different from that in their previous locations (Beadle, 2014).

Addressing the career development of youth with refugee backgrounds with frameworks of social justice and empowerment (Arthur, 2013) may be useful in responding to issues of mental health (Beadle, 2014), prevention of negative social outcomes in the form of crime and engagement in the justice system (Beadle, 2014; Olliff & Mohamed, 2007) as well as marginalisation and disengagement (Francis & Cornfoot, 2007; Yakushko, Backhaus, Watson, Ngaruiya, & Gonzalez, 2008). Indeed, assisting youth immigrants is a part of the foundation of career counselling when, more than a century ago, Parsons’ work (1909) “left a legacy of social

justice in vocational guidance” (Arthur, 2013, p. 49). Developing creative and innovative career counselling models may also respond to the needs of youth with refugee backgrounds in Australia at the present time and assist them in exploring opportunities.

This article outlines some of the challenges faced by youth with refugee backgrounds in their process of integration in Australia in terms of their education and career development and then considers relevant and useful career counselling approaches. First, issues related to the successful integration of youth with refugee backgrounds in Australia and challenges related to their transition into the world of work of a developed country will be explored. Second, career counselling with non-career populations is discussed. Third, narrative career counselling, culture-infused counselling and the cultural preparedness approach will be considered and finally, some suggestions proposed for career counsellors.

2.2 Adolescents with refugee backgrounds in Australia

Between 2008 and 2014, more than 80,000 refugees departed their temporary settlements in other countries under Australia’s Offshore and Onshore Humanitarian Program (Department of Immigration and Citizenship [DIAC], 2013) and moved to Australia after their cases were processed and referred by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2014) through its resettlement programmes. Approximately two-thirds of these entrants were below the age of 29 and approximately 20% were between the ages of 15 and 19 (DIAC, 2013).

In the long journey leading to final resettlement in Australia, some refugees and asylum seekers have experienced multiple losses, torture and trauma (Chegwidden & Thompson, 2008; O’Sullivan & Olliff, 2006), statelessness (Blitz, 2009), demeaning treatment in camps or detention centres (Amnesty International Australia, 2013; Uptin, Wright, & Harwood, 2014) and

stresses related to the immigration and resettlement procedures (Banks & MacDonald, 2003). However, many refugees and asylum seekers reject the prevalent “refugee trauma discourse” and believe that it permeates their whole social fabric and may not be helpful for successful transition (Hutchinson & Dorsett, 2012, p. 63). The complexity of challenges before and after resettlement in Australia leaves the identity of these youth in a form of “statelessness, placelessness, and functionlessness” (Bauman, 2004, p. 76) which can interfere with their sense of agency, hindering their personal development as well as their educational and vocational outcomes.

The most common issues facing youth with refugee backgrounds after resettlement in Australia are related to their education, employment and consequently, the achievement of the future careers and identities (Atwell, Gifford, & McDonald-Wilmsen, 2009; Beadle, 2014; Gifford, Correa-Velez, & Sampson, 2009; Olliff, 2010b; Yakushko et al., 2008) that they envisioned prior to arrival in Australia (Centre for Multicultural Youth, 2014; Chegwiddden & Thompson, 2008; Correa-Velez et al., 2010). Not receiving quality education if any, prior to arrival and not finding meaningful employment after arrival (Beadle, 2014; Olliff, 2010b; Uptin et al., 2014) are among the most important issues facing youth with refugee backgrounds, and if addressed properly (for instance by responding with appropriate and relevant career counselling), may be helpful in reducing the impact of other challenges.

2.3 Educational issues and limited vocational options

Among refugees under the protection of UNHCR (while in temporary forms of settlement such as camps, detention centres or temporary settlement countries), many children and adolescents have not attended school (Cassity & Gow, 2006; Refugee Education Partnership Project, 2007) and those who have report high rates of interruptions and low quality education

with limited facilities (Beadle, 2014; Uptin et al., 2014). After resettlement in Australia, when they enter schools or other educational facilities, they must adjust, perhaps for the first time, to a systematic form of schooling (Beadle, 2014; Olliff, 2010a). However, this adjustment process is not without challenges. The Australian primary and secondary education system which leads to either tertiary education, technical and vocational options (TAFE) or entry to the workforce relies heavily on an uninterrupted linear progression (Sidhu & Taylor, 2007) which is not the experience of adolescents with refugee backgrounds (Cassity & Gow, 2006; Centre for Multicultural Youth, 2014). Most newly arrived youth with refugee backgrounds in Australia spend approximately a year in English Language Schools or Centres, where they are assisted with their language skills and prepared for mainstream schools (Beadle, 2014) and later guided to mainstream schools if their age is still appropriate. However, due to additional complex learning needs which are not adequately met, they still struggle for positive outcomes of their education which are largely left to chance (Gifford et al., 2009; Olliff, 2010a; Refugee Education Partnership Project, 2007; Sidhu & Taylor, 2007).

Some youth with refugee backgrounds and their families have high expectations of jobs to define a successful future (Atwell et al., 2009; Banks & MacDonald, 2003; Francis & Cornfoot, 2007) and some culturally reject “lower class/caste” jobs (Beadle, 2014, p. 18) which could be perceived as a form of failure in life; therefore, many families greatly value tertiary education as the only pathway leading to future success (Victorian Settlement Planning Committee, 2008). For instance, research investigating the educational socialisation of a group of refugee background high school students in Australia compared their career aspirations with mainstream Australian students (Hatoss, O’Neill, & Eacersall, 2012) and found that 80% of the refugee background students had plans to attend university or TAFE compared to 49.3% of the

mainstream Australian students (Hatoss et al., 2012, p. 20). However, placing youth with refugee backgrounds in school grades based on chronological age, rather than knowledge of course material and/or being directed to other educational pathways because they are too old to attend high school limits their chances of participating in tertiary education (Cassity & Gow, 2006; Sidhu & Taylor, 2007). The career and vocational options of youth with refugee backgrounds are narrowed in many ways which hinder successful integration and may lead to disengagement (Olliff, 2010b).

2.4 Integration, successful resettlement and the nature of transition

Integration has been emphasised as an important aspect of successful transition (Beadle, 2014; UNHCR, 2002, 2013, 2014) and is defined in the International Handbook to Guide Reception and Integration as:

...A mutual, dynamic, multifaceted and ongoing process. From a refugee perspective, integration requires a preparedness to adapt to the lifestyle of the host society without having to lose one's own cultural identity. From the point of view of the host society, it requires a willingness for communities to be welcoming and responsive to refugees and for public institutions to meet the needs of a diverse population. (UNHCR, 2002, p. 12)

Integration relies heavily on how well refugees are received and supported to become full participants in their new communities after final resettlement (UNHCR, 2013). For this transition to happen positively, multiple domains need to be addressed such as education and language, employment, acculturation, special physiological and psychological assistance, policy making, promotion of counter-racism within society, and workplaces and social and community inclusion

interventions (Beadle, 2014; Francis, Cornfoot, & Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues, 2007; UNHCR, 2002). Considering the vulnerabilities of youth with refugee backgrounds stemming from educational challenges and consequently other contextual factors related to integration, the focus in this article is on issues of transition to employment and career development.

Successful transition from education to employment for youth with refugee backgrounds is hindered by (at least) four key factors: lack of critical networks such as family and friends in employment; limited vocational skills relevant to the Australian labour market; limited work experience prior to arrival and lack of familiarity with the overall Australian system (Victorian Settlement Planning Committee, 2008). In the context of this range of vulnerabilities and a system that is increasingly becoming less responsive in meeting their complex needs, many young people with refugee backgrounds are disengaging from education and employment pathways (Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, 2013). For those who do not engage, integration is far from occurring and many experience significant mental health issues, family conflict, suicide, substance abuse and other indicators of social alienation (Beadle, 2014; Centre for Multicultural Youth, 2014). Almost two decades ago, Rifkin (1995) warned that if societies do not deal effectively with ongoing issues related to changes in the world of work, demographics and diminished opportunities for certain populations, “societies will observe dramatic rises in crime, violence, drug abuse and other indices of social alienation” (Blustein, 2006, p. 40).

Finding and holding stable, adequately paid, fulfilling and meaningful employment is a significant contributing factor towards successful integration and resettlement (Olliff, 2010b); developing adequate support and relevant intervention programs easing the transition to employment may lead to less disengagement (Beadle, 2014; Chegwiddden & Thompson, 2008;

Correa-Velez et al., 2010; Refugee Education Partnership Project, 2007). Thus, career counselling may potentially assist the process of integration of youth with refugee backgrounds by focusing on their career development. However, to understand the nature of their journey into the world of work in Australia, other contextual factors affecting the process of integration need to be understood by career counsellors who seek to assist youth with refugee backgrounds. Factors such as transition into a post-industrial western society which is happening simultaneously with other macro-level changes occurring to the world of work are among the most influential and noteworthy of these contextual factors.

2.5 The context of youth with refugee backgrounds in a post-industrial Western world of work

Similar to other developed nations of the world, Australia has restructured from an industrial to a post-industrial economy during the final years of the 20th century (Chesters, 2014). Australia's world of work has faced dramatic shifts with rapid developments in technology, the forces of a global economy and the mobility of people within it as well as incoming immigrants from other parts of the world (Coutinho, Dam, & Blustein, 2008). Since 1990, the number of international migrants in Australia has increased by approximately four million (a 60% increase) (United Nations, 2013).

The majority of those with refugee backgrounds in Australia originate from locations where the economy is still either in an industrial or even pre-industrial agrarian phase (DIAC, 2013). The nature of the transition to a post-industrial, developed Western world of work for those with refugee backgrounds could be regarded as a 'fast forwarding experience' through the history of the world of work. For most youth with refugee backgrounds, the transition is

accompanied by “mismatches in their perceptions” of education, work and the support systems, stemming from differences between their experiences in the previous locations and those in this new context (Victorian Settlement Planning Committee, 2008, p. 2).

Migration may be accompanied by a sense of aimlessness for individuals who have had to bear “massive dislocations from their previous relationships”, family roles, communities and their sense of identity (Blustein, 2006, p. 36). As one of the impacts of forced migration, individuals might experience a sudden reduction in access to resources and position in social status that are consequently limiting in many ways (Ingleby, 2005). Throughout history, those without access to enough resources or possibilities and without volition in choosing careers have been considered as “non-career populations”; those who are “underclass, underprivileged, disadvantaged or disaffected” (Watson, 2006, p. 49). Young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in Australia are variously disadvantaged and those from refugee backgrounds are even more disadvantaged (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007; Kyle, Macdonald, Doughney, & Pyke, 2004). For instance, data from a longitudinal study in Australia revealed that those with refugee backgrounds “had the lowest participation rate (32%) and the highest unemployment (43%) rate of all of the migration categories” (Beadle, 2014, p. 7). Such factors place youth with refugee backgrounds among the “non-career population” (Watson, 2006, p. 49).

Work has always served many different purposes for people such as “a mean for survival and power, a mean for social connection and a mean for self-determination” (Blustein, 2006, p. 22). For the majority of non-career populations, work often has served mainly as a means for survival (Blustein, 2006). However, fulfilling work can be extremely empowering for those struggling in a new country after migration. It decreases isolation, expands individuals’ networks

and friendships as well as facilitating the development of language skills (Yakushko, 2006). Thus, work can ease the process of adjustment by bringing continuity and meaning in the lives of those with refugee backgrounds and provides social connection and self-determination along with a sense of purpose (Blustein, 2006). The development of a career in their new country by providing a sense of continuity and meaning operates as a helpful solution to individuals who have experienced some sense of loss through migration (Blustein, 2006; Lippmann, 1914; Sennett, 1998) such as youth with refugee backgrounds.

For non-career populations, work transitions often involve adjustments to work options and conditions that are not under their control and are even more challenging when the nature of work is also going through a transition (Blustein, 2006). Therefore, youth with refugee backgrounds in Australia face the challenges of adjusting personally and culturally to a dynamic and complex world of work in a short period of time as well as acquiring relevant education and skills to construct a career in this new context. This process becomes even more challenging when youth with refugee backgrounds are “construed in simplified terms such as ‘victim’, ‘traumatised’ or affected by ‘disrupted schooling’” (Miller, Mitchell, & Brown, 2005; Sidhu & Taylor, 2007; Uptin et al., 2014, p. 2). Such perspectives have a propensity to lead to overgeneralisations and a focus on pre-migration issues rather than on current issues such as employment and education (Beadle, 2014) and overlook broader inequality and disadvantage (Rutter, 2006) such as racism, discrimination, poverty, isolation, unemployment and/or underemployment (Berman, 2008; Block, Gibbs, Lusher, Riggs, & Warr, 2011; Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007).

2.6 Assisting youth with refugee backgrounds through career counselling

In general, those with refugee backgrounds are underemployed or have great difficulty finding employment in fields where they are skilled or prefer to work due to a range of labour market barriers (AMES, 2009; Berman, 2008; Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007; Kyle et al., 2004; Olliff, 2010b). Despite various complications, challenges and difficulties, many youth with refugee backgrounds exhibit a strong sense of agency in different domains of life such as finding ways to negotiate their adverse circumstances, searching for better education, supporting their families and trying to pursue and define a successful career path to expand their vocational options (Banks & MacDonald, 2003; Beadle, 2014; Centre for Multicultural Youth, 2014; Correa-Velez et al., 2010; Francis & Cornfoot, 2007; Kovacev & Shute, 2004; Olliff, 2010a; Uptin et al., 2014; Victorian Settlement Planning Committee, 2008; Yakushko et al., 2008). Such resiliency and sense of agency may provide a foundation for designing relevant career counselling.

Assisting youth with refugee and migration backgrounds was the basis of vocational guidance through the work of many such as Parsons (1909) more than a century ago and set an agenda and a legacy of social justice for the fields of vocational guidance and counselling (Blustein, 2006; Savickas & Baker, 2009). Existing challenges for populations such as youth with refugee backgrounds suggest that social justice needs to be reconsidered as a priority value for career counselling with non-career populations (Arthur, 2013). Social justice concerns addressing basic human needs by providing opportunities for fulfilment and development (Young, 1990) and provides a foundation from which to consider the roles and responsibilities of career counsellors (Arthur, Collins, McMahon, & Marshall, 2009). Career counsellors need to “position social justice as a value to anchor their career guidance practices” (Arthur, 2013, p. 49)

and move beyond “predetermining educational or employment opportunities and insisting that individuals react and respond accordingly” (Arthur, 2013, p. 51). To assist non-career populations in their career development, reducing career barriers through social justice frameworks may provide a new emphasis in career counselling (McMahon, Arthur, & Collins, 2008). However, career counselling seems to have drifted away from its roots in social justice (Arthur et al., 2009) which has resulted in critiques about its efficacy and relevance in working with non-career populations such as youth with refugee backgrounds.

2.7 Career counselling with non-career populations

Career counselling has been referred to as “services offered to ameliorate or prevent problems with work behaviour regardless of the prestige or level of education associated with a given work option” (Brown & Lent, 2013, p. 10). Career counselling is widely considered to focus on three main domains: helping clients make and then implement career choices and career-related decisions, helping clients negotiate and manage career transitions and finally, helping clients adjust to work and manage their career through creating a life-work balance (Brown & Lent, 2013).

Considering the above description of career counselling and its domains of application, career counselling is yet to respond effectively to the range of work-related problems faced by a whole gamut of people and not just those of a middle class Western background. Since career counselling is extensively “derived from principles of career theory and counselling theory” (Patton & McMahon, 2006, p. 153), it is the subject of criticism for not being sensitive to the different and complex needs of minorities, marginalised and oppressed client groups and those with non-Western cultural backgrounds (Blustein, 2006; Watson, 2006). For example, Blustein

advocates a more “inclusive psychology of working” where all individuals’ work concerns are addressed through practices such as career counselling (Blustein, 2006, p. 66). However, career counselling has generally followed career theories formed in Western countries during the past century and has focused primarily on “decontextualisation and modernist [Western] values of independent decision making and individualism” (Arulmani, 2014, p. 89; Hartung, Fouad, Leong, & Hardin, 2010; Watson, 2006) neglecting the role of family and community. However, as the majority of those with refugee backgrounds in Australia are from collectivist cultures (DIAC, 2013), it is more likely for them to make decisions at the family/community level rather than at the individual level (Arulmani, 2014).

Such considerations are not addressed within most career counselling approaches and the strong ties of the individual with community/family which plays a powerful role in this orientation to work are largely neglected (Arulmani, 2013, 2014; Blustein, 2006).

Career counselling has generally not attended enough to non-career populations and disadvantaged groups (Blustein, 2006) such as those with refugee backgrounds. In cases where career counselling has been involved with such groups, due to the nature of their immediate needs, it has usually focused only on short-term, action-based approaches rather than approaches encouraging development of long-term empowerment (Watson, 2006). Career counselling with both short-term and long-term outcome expectations are appropriate, applicable and needed for adolescents and emerging adults with refugee backgrounds (Beadle, 2014; Olliff, 2010b; Yakushko et al., 2008).

Contextual and environmental forces that adversely impact career development of those who are socially or economically disadvantaged have been largely neglected in career counselling (Arthur, 2005). The insensitivity of career counselling models to contextual and

cultural issues, particularly at this time of great migration around the globe, threatens the relevance of career counselling to diverse populations (Watson, 2006). Therefore, career counselling needs to consider multicultural and social justice frameworks and prioritise contextual issues affecting youth with refugee backgrounds.

2.8 Career counselling of youth with refugee backgrounds: Possible approaches

A key question therefore is which counselling models or career theories are more relevant as a possible foundation for effective career counselling of youth with refugee backgrounds in order to flexibly accommodate their socio-cultural backgrounds and current contextual factors and also provide a better vantage point in responding to the challenges that they face. This section will overview possible approaches that career counsellors working with youth with refugee backgrounds may consider to make career counselling more relevant and applicable and to adhere to the guidelines of successful integration (UNHCR, 2002, 2013) of youth with refugee backgrounds. Culture infused counselling (Collins & Arthur, 2010b), the cultural preparedness approach (Arulmani, 2014) and narrative career counselling are considered.

2.8.1 Culture-infused counselling model

Culture-infused counselling (Collins & Arthur, 2010b) focuses on cultural, contextual, personal and subjective factors related to clients and emphasises that considering such factors is no longer an “optional endeavour but a foundation for effective and ethical professional practice” (Collins & Arthur, 2010b, p. 217). Inclusion of cross cultural issues in career counselling of youth from diverse cultural backgrounds is no longer a ‘peripheral’ or ‘exotic’ goal when populations and economies are constantly shifting and moving around as the result of globalisation (Arthur, 2002). Collins and Arthur introduced a comprehensive and operational

“culture-infused counselling competencies” framework for counsellors responding to clients of diverse cultural backgrounds (Collins & Arthur, 2010a, 2010b, p. 221).

The importance of considering a social justice framework for career counselling is also emphasised in culture-infused counselling. In working with clients, a social justice framework includes “understanding and acting to change the conditions that limit their career options, while also supporting clients to develop their human capital and talent potential” (Arthur, 2013, p. 56). The acknowledgement of the role of social justice by career counsellors as an anchoring value in their work allows them to facilitate a more in-depth exploration of the world of work and possibilities (Arthur, 2013).

2.8.2 Cultural preparedness approach

As career counselling is also positioned as a “cultural enterprise” (Stead & Perry, 2012, p. 59), Arulmani’s (2011, 2014) cultural preparedness approach that “contextualises career interventions for local contexts” (McMahon, 2014, p. 23) is another potential framework for career counselling of youth with refugee backgrounds. It emphasises the role of culture which, through a complex and enduring process, prepares individuals to engage with and perceive ‘work’ in a certain manner (Arulmani, 2014). In this regard, ‘acculturation’ of youth with refugee backgrounds can be considered an important element of their career development. As they are positioned to engage with life in Australia in a manner which is different from their countries of origin, the necessity for acculturation causes shifts in their cultural preparedness, which eventually may or may not be beneficial (Arulmani, 2013).

The cultural preparedness approach introduces three constructs that influence cultural preparation: “the individualism–collectivism continuum, value attribution, and the processes of role allocation” (Arulmani, 2014, p. 94). These three constructs aim to explain how: (1) “the

individualistic/collectivistic cultural environments could differentially shape the individual's conception of work" (Arulmani, 2014, p. 89); (2) "enculturation and cultural learning influence the manner in which members of different social groups approach or avoid aspects of work and attribute value and/or prestige to certain works" (Arulmani, 2014, p. 92) and (3) "the philosophic and cultural persuasions of a group could influence the orientation of its members to occupational role allocation" (Arulmani, 2014, p. 93). Overall, the cultural preparedness approach considers and prioritises the roles of cultural learning among individuals in how they perceive work and offers a framework that allows context and culture to define career development. For instance, Arulmani (2014, p. 101) considers the definition of career as a "culture-bound concept with specific historical and economic connotations". In career counselling with populations who are culturally alien to the Western culture of the host country, imposing and applying certain definitions which are not culturally sensitive will not necessarily contribute to expected outcomes (Arulmani, 2013).

2.8.3 Narrative career counselling

As "self is not self-constructed but co-constructed through interpersonal interaction and this self is culturally shaped" (Savickas, 2013, p. 148), youth with refugee backgrounds are in charge of designing their lives. Therefore in "critically engaging" with career counselling theories (Watson, 2013, p. 5), career counsellors need to respond to the client's cultural frameworks and subjective frames of reference for this self-construction to occur. The importance of giving priority and paying particular attention to the client's cultural background and working through this cultural framework with sensitivity and creativity in career counselling, as evident in culture-infused counselling and the cultural preparedness approach, requires a theoretical framework that can accommodate the role of culture and context. Narrative

approaches are widely thought to be suitable in reorienting and reconstructing the field of career counselling towards a more culturally and contextually sensitive position (Arthur & McMahon, 2005; Di Fabio & Maree, 2013; Hughes, Gibbons, & Mynatt, 2013; Kuit & Watson, 2005; Maree & Molepo, 2006, 2007; McMahon & Watson, 2013; Mkhize, 2005; Mkhize & Frizelle, 2000; Timm, 2014; Watson, 2013). For instance, through a narrative approach in career counselling, youth with refugee backgrounds have the opportunity to “narrate their past and present career development, ultimately constructing their own future career” (Kennedy & Chen, 2012, p. 40). This also allows a more in-depth engagement of the counsellor with the client’s background and surrounding community and socio-cultural events (Stebbleton, 2007).

To engage in career counselling with youth with refugee backgrounds in Australia, career counsellors need to be cautious about applying previously established and mainstream or even emerging career theories (Watson, 2013) by adding an ‘innovative and guiding voice’ which constantly questions the “objectivist, reductionist frameworks” that have ruled the field for decades (Watson, 2006, p. 52). Career counsellors are required to render transparent many of the taken for granted practices and theories that can be “reproductive of the problematic aspects of the dominant culture” (White, 1995, p. 46) and of mainstream career counselling practices. Career counsellors need to adapt their practices so that their career counselling strategies respond directly to the long list of challenges and vulnerabilities faced by youth with refugee backgrounds.

Based on culture-infused counselling, the cultural preparedness model and narrative career counselling, four suggestions for career counsellors are elicited. First, career development of youth with refugee backgrounds may be more successful if it is viewed as a personal-cultural phenomenon for each and every individual. Second, the personal-cultural phenomenon of career

development is also heavily entrenched in both macro-level forces and contextual factors which are predominantly outside the control of youth with refugee backgrounds. Therefore, advocacy, social action and lobbying on behalf of clients need to be considered as important and necessary components of career counselling of youth with refugee backgrounds. Third, in light of the heterogeneity of youth with refugee backgrounds, the “positionality” (Alcoff, 1988, p. 428) of individuals towards the notion of ‘career’ and their ‘career development’ depends on how they make sense of their reality, that is, the surrounding cultural, contextual and relational factors. Fourth, career counselling using narrative approaches resonates well with such cultural, contextual and relational considerations for the career development of youth with refugee backgrounds. It not only accommodates diverse positionalities but also allows for them to be centralised and worked through. Using these four suggestions, the process of career counselling with youth with refugee backgrounds may be more relevant and inclusive for facilitating their transition into the world of work in Australia.

2.9 Conclusion

Tens of thousands of youth with refugee backgrounds are currently living in Australia (Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2014; UNHCR, 2014). Some are struggling with their education, career development and future career plans. The overall support system seems insufficient to address their needs. Key to better integration of youth with refugee backgrounds is the possibility of assisting them to find a fulfilling and meaningful future career trajectory that encompasses an element of long-term career empowerment allowing long-term outcome expectations. Career counselling models and interventions that assist youth with refugee

backgrounds to experience some sense of volition in defining their future career plans may act as a catalyst for a more successful resettlement and integration in Australia.

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Transition to chapter 3:

The previous chapter concluded by proposing three potential approaches to career counselling that could be relevant in working with young people with refugee backgrounds: 1) culture infused counselling (Collins & Arthur, 2010b), 2) the cultural preparedness approach (Arulmani, 2014), and 3) narrative career counselling. However, it is important to note that the two approaches of culture infused counselling and the cultural preparedness model are very recent. These two approaches remain more in their preliminary stages of development and have not been extensively researched with different populations. What is more important is that these approaches are more of a guideline for career counsellors who work with clients from different cultural and contextual backgrounds to be aware of the implications of their clients' cultural differences. For instance, the cultural preparedness approach is introduced more as a "process model" for career counsellors who work with diverse clients (Arulmani, 2014, p. 94) and not a career counselling approach with intervening strategies. However, narrative career counselling has been more widely adopted and many other approaches to career counselling fall under the umbrella term of narrative career counselling. Therefore, within the past twenty years, more research has been conducted on the application of various narrative approaches to career counselling with different populations in different contexts. As a result, this research focuses more on the potential application of narrative approaches to career counselling for young people with refugee backgrounds. The next chapter considers the underpinnings and potential applications of a narrative approach to career counselling within the context of the migration and resettlement journeys of people with refugee backgrounds.

Chapter 3: NARRATIVE CAREER COUNSELLING

Paper 2: Abkhezzr, P., & McMahon, M. (2017). Narrative career counselling for people with refugee backgrounds. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, 39(2), 99-111. doi: 10.1007/s10447-017-9285-z

Relevance to thesis

As concluded in the previous chapter, a narrative approach to career counselling may be useful to assist youth with refugee backgrounds with their career development and their future employability (Abkhezzr et al., 2015). This chapter focuses on the underpinnings and potential applications of a narrative approach to career counselling within the context of the migration and resettlement journeys of people with refugee backgrounds. Based on a literature review of the context of resettlement after a protracted migration journey and the core constructs of narrative career counselling, the paper explores the relevance of narrative career counselling for people with refugee backgrounds after resettlement.

Why this journal was chosen

The International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling was chosen for publishing this article due to the relevance of the content to international counsellors who work with people with refugee backgrounds as the integration of people with refugee backgrounds is an international issue. Career counselling is a specialised form of counselling that has previously been featured in this journal and as the content of this paper might be useful to a wide range of counsellors in different contexts who work with people with refugee backgrounds, this journal

was chosen not to limit the scope of its readership only to career counsellors and at the same time approach an international audience.

Statement of Contribution of Co-Authors for Thesis by Publication



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Narrative career counselling for people with refugee backgrounds

Peyman Abkhezr & Mary McMahon

Abstract

For people with refugee backgrounds, pursuing a meaningful career in their country of resettlement is important for their successful integration. However, for many, achieving this is a challenging process. Career counsellors may have a role to play in facilitating the transition and integration of people with refugee backgrounds, and narrative career counselling has much to offer. This article discusses the impact of prolonged transition under difficult circumstances on people with refugee backgrounds, and the potential contribution of narrative career counselling in assisting them. In particular, it identifies cultural considerations for narrative career counsellors who work with people with refugee backgrounds.

Keywords: Career counselling, Narrative career counselling, Refugees, Resettlement

3.1 Introduction

The forced displacement of people has now become a huge global issue, raising concerns within many fields. Every minute more than 24 people worldwide are being displaced and for the first time in recorded history, there are over 65.3 million people around the world who have been forcibly displaced (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, [UNHCR]; 2016). In 2016, the UNHCR suggested that in 2017 alone, more than 1,190,000, mainly children and young people, would find themselves in need of resettlement in other countries (UNHCR, 2016). This is a dramatic increase in the number of people in urgent need for resettlement, compared to the 691,000 people in 2014, and unfortunately it is predicted that this trend will continue (UNHCR, 2016).

After resettlement in a new country, when the difficulties and circumstances that have caused people to seek asylum or leave their home country behind become less pressing, a new phase of life with challenges of a different kind begins. These challenges are often such that integration is not always easily achieved.

As a result of prolonged transition under difficult circumstances, language differences, disrupted education backgrounds, and racism and classism in the host country (Flores, 2009), difficulties in relation to education and employment plans may appear. Career counsellors may have a role to play in facilitating successful transition for people with refugee backgrounds to meaningful work in their country of resettlement.

In search of a relevant career counselling approach for people with refugee backgrounds, culture, contextual and psychosocial factors, personal experiences and subjectivity need attention, and these elements are, it is suggested, most appropriately considered within constructivist, narrative, reflexive and critical approaches to career counselling (Reid & West,

2016). Narrative approaches to career counselling are considered suitable for populations with diverse cultural and contextual backgrounds, or for those at risk and who are disadvantaged (Clark et al., 2004; Young et al., 2007), including people with refugee backgrounds who have migrated from developing countries to developed countries, in need of assistance to find decent and dignified work or to make decisions regarding their career development (Abkhezr et al., 2015).

In this article, narrative career counselling is recognised as an approach that goes beyond the mere provision of information and advice to clients (Reid & West, 2016). The approach shifts the focus from objectivity towards subjectivity, through which it attends to constructs such as meaning-making, connectedness and agency in working with each individual (McMahon & Watson, 2011). Narrative career counselling and its core constructs will be elaborated in a later section of the article.

The majority of contemporary migrants in developed countries are people from developing countries who usually have experienced disadvantage, oppression, and/or marginalisation. Since the foundations of the career counselling field are rooted in the social justice legacy of its pioneers, such as Frank Parsons (1909), career counsellors of the present era should not lose sensitivity to the plight of others or feel content with providing only information and advice to clients. Narrative career counselling enhances sensitivity among career counsellors to issues of social justice and advocacy (Arthur, 2013) and reminds us that creativity and innovation are necessary to stay connected with the cultural, contextual and psychosocial domains of each client's life (Reid & West, 2016). Creativity in career counselling is not only about focusing on techniques; rather, it is more about being mindful of opportunities that can enhance the quality of the dialogue and the collaborative nature of the relationship between client

and counsellor (McMahon, 2017a). Creativity in narrative career counselling is mostly concerned with the detailed exploration of career stories and how they are continuously being shaped.

An important component of narrative approaches to career counselling is storytelling.

Storytelling can reflect the “temporal nature of career experiences” (LaPointe, 2010, p. 7) and explain how each single life event or experience is built upon previous experiences over time. As “our world is a storied world”, storytelling is considered as a natural tendency of all human beings; it provides us with the tools to make sense of the world around us and our social interactions (Murray, 1997, p. 10). Storytelling is a “central characteristic of African” (Pierce & Gibbons, 2012, p. 120) and Middle-Eastern cultures (Parks, 1997), which are the current dominant cultures of many people with refugee backgrounds. Such cultures are filled with rich historical and literary stories shared by a collective audience. The practice of storytelling by older adults, parents and even people who tell stories in the marketplace, streets or other public locations is common in these cultures (Pellowski, 1990). Engaging clients with refugee backgrounds in conversations that depict their own life events as cohesive and meaningful stories is a meaningful process that each person can directly relate to.

This article considers narrative career counselling as a particular form of assistance for people with refugee backgrounds who are considering and exploring their career options in their Western countries of resettlement. First, the article briefly considers the context of the migration process for people with refugee backgrounds and its potential impact on their account of narratives and stories that they hold as truths about themselves. Subsequently, narrative career counselling is discussed, extending to a discussion of how the approach might be highly suited for people with refugee backgrounds. Consideration is given to how sensitivity to cultural issues can enhance the collaborative nature of the counselling process.

3.2 People with Refugee Backgrounds and their Stories

People with refugee backgrounds who are settled in developed societies usually have been through a four-stage migration process consisting of: (a) pre-migration, (b) migration, (c) resettlement, and (d) living in the host country (Pierce & Gibbons, 2012). During these stages people with refugee backgrounds may have been repeatedly persecuted and their many stories and experiences challenged and questioned. Before being approved by UNHCR for resettlement in a new country (i.e., during the migration and pre-migration stages) or, in the case of those seeking asylum, being granted refugee status, typically, extensive interviews occur during which people with refugee backgrounds must provide detailed accounts (stories) of the experiences that have led to their displacement. They must extensively review and repeat stories of fear, hopelessness, helplessness and trauma that have contributed to their refugee status and provide proof about their current situation (Amnesty International, 2013).

Throughout this process, telling stories of their skills and strengths may not be perceived as useful, and might even be seen as hindering the processing of their case, and so people with refugee backgrounds may avoid talking about aspects of their lives other than the troubling issues that have caused them to seek asylum. Repeatedly telling ‘refugee’ stories may, therefore, lead to a diminishing of other stories (such as those related to their previous educational achievements, career successes or family and community experiences), and generate the construction of a ‘refugee identity’ that overshadows their previous accounts of identity. Eventually “a culture of disbelief and defeat” (Harris, 2002, p. 4) may escalate as being the dominant internal frame of reference. People with refugee backgrounds may begin living with stories about themselves that are restrictive, painful, confusing, desperate, unsatisfactory or unfulfilling in nature (Combs &

Freedman, 1994). The dominance of these stories may intensify even more after experiencing challenges and barriers to integration in their final resettlement country (Abkhezr et al., 2015).

In addition to the effects of the interview and processing phases of migration, which might promote a culture of disbelief, the “dominant Western deficit models that define refugee people” (Hutchinson & Dorsett, 2012, p. 55) as victims or as traumatised may also be influential in constructing a dominant story about their lives and identities. It is possible that the dominant Western deficit models and the escalation of a culture of disbelief operate in a reciprocal cycle, and it may take many years for people with refugee backgrounds to reconnect with, re-tell and regain their preferred stories of competence, achievement and strength held prior to migration. It is evident that the context of the migration journey of people with refugee backgrounds is often filled with many contradictory and opposing stories. For instance, young people might have experienced themselves in the past as being ‘a top student with excellent marks’, but throughout the migration journey as someone ‘with no access to school for a couple of years’ and/or subsequently in their final country of resettlement, as someone ‘ineligible for university entry’. It is possible then that during migration, people’s narratives and subsequent truths come to lean more towards their more recent stories. Holding onto such self-narratives could be detrimental to their personal development and “amendments to correct mistaken ideas, adjustments to soothe old conflicts, and alterations to enhance self-efficacy” might be necessary (Savickas, 2012a, p. 658).

Amendments to personal narratives may happen at any time and in different developmental life stages. However, the degree to which such detrimental self-narratives could influence an individual, is largely dependent on the cultural or social expectations that people prioritise, as well as the different circumstances and conditions of their new lives (McIlveen,

2012). Moving people with refugee backgrounds towards preferred career plans is only possible when revised self-narratives are established that promote a sense of purpose for becoming engaged in culturally meaningful future oriented projects (Flum, 2015). Narrative career counselling, given its nature, may facilitate the exploration of such new self-narratives and stories, so that the construction of new and preferred stories about life and future career plans becomes possible. The following material will first explore narrative career counselling and then propose cultural considerations corresponding to the practice of narrative career counselling with people with refugee backgrounds.

3.3 Narrative Career Counselling

Narrative career counselling aims to combine “a range of diverse, yet very similar, theoretical models and perspectives into a broader, more integrated” theoretical framework of the narrative approach in vocational and career psychology (Chen, 2007, p. 23). Suggesting a definition for narrative career counselling would be counter-intuitive to its own philosophical underpinnings in constructivism and post-structuralism, which consider narrative practice as a continuously and “rapidly evolving collection of ideas and methods” (McIlveen & Patton, 2007, p. 228) and not just a set of pre-determined or limited number of techniques or strategies.

Exemplifying the constructivist approach, McIlveen and Patton (2007) proposed:

Narrative career counselling emphasises subjectivity and meaning. It aims to facilitate self-reflection and elaboration of self-concepts toward an enhanced self-understanding that is subjectively and contextually truthful. It entails a collaborative process in which the client is supported in creating an open ended personal story that holistically accounts for his or her

life and career, and enables the person to make meaningfully informed career decisions and actions.

Evident in this conceptualisation of narrative career counselling are some of its core constructs, such as story, subjectivity, meaning-making, reflection, connectedness, and agency. The process of narrative career counselling is enhanced by utilising these core constructs. On the surface, narrative career counselling may seem to offer less structure, but four steps have been identified by different scholars (cf., Brott, 2005; Campbell & Ungar, 2004; Savickas, 2013) that shape the counselling process.

The narrative career counselling process begins by uncovering previously untold stories. In this initial phase (Step 1: co-construction) the counsellor and client collaborate in exploring the past and present life-career stories of the client. This collaborative exploratory environment opens up space (Step 2: de-construction) for uncovering alternative perspectives and exploring life roles, life themes, values, interests and motivations. That second step prepares and enables clients to assess the life themes and values, allowing them (Step 3: re-construction) to weave together a new and preferred unified narrative identity. Finally, going through the previous three steps and learning about how different experiences, life events and socialisations have influenced their progress in life, clients can now (Step 4: construction) look for new ways of action to move in certain directions and make new decisions.

This exploratory and reflective process provides more clarity, confidence and wisdom for people with refugee backgrounds, contributing to their career development. For instance, the somewhat confusing and disorienting employment markets of developed countries might be considered as being a challenge for the career development of many people with refugee backgrounds. In this regard, narrative career counselling can provide a “transitional space for

self-negotiation” (Reid & West, 2011, p. 4), re-authoring of a life/career narrative that enhances agency, and preparing people to “keep on keeping on” in disorienting situations (Reid & West, 2016, p. 4). The core constructs that are utilised throughout the process of narrative career counselling, in addition to the collaborative nature of the counselling relationship, are overviewed here.

Stories are used to clarify, understand, explain or make meaning of different aspects of life and existence. Actions, plans, decisions and experiences are primarily made meaningful through life stories (Polkinghorne, 1988). Stories do not happen in the real world but in the minds of people, constructing descriptions of life events. The vast array of stories that individuals hold about themselves have been conceptualised as narratives (Antaki, 1988). Individuals’ capacities to narrate life stories are not fixed or limited, as they are constantly receiving information about themselves from the outside world and from others around them. However, they “selectively highlight particular experiences to produce a narrative truth by which they live” (Savickas, 2005, p. 43) and form life themes.

Life themes have been conceptualised as sets of concerns that are prioritised in life above everything else and can lead the person in a certain direction to search for solutions and answers (Csikszentmihalyi & Beattie, 1979). These concerns or preoccupations are what narrative career counselling highlights and is interested to explore. Life themes, either pleasant or unpleasant (Savickas, 2013), “provide a framework for understanding the past events of one’s life and for planning future actions” (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 11). Some themes and life stories become ‘dominant stories’ because they rely on a stereotypical description of the person’s experiences (Freedman & Combs, 1996), and some stories are considered as ‘alternative stories’ (White &

Epston, 1990). Alternative stories may be untold, marginalised, forgotten, discounted and unrealised (McMahon, 2007) under the powerful effect of dominant stories.

After resettlement, people with refugee backgrounds normally try to begin a new life in their new home country. Seeking employment is a high priority in this process, which has to be achieved in very unfamiliar surroundings and, thus, may require considerable assistance (Abkhezr et al., 2015). In this process of looking for new career opportunities, refugees telling stories that may not have been accessed or told about themselves for a long time since departing their countries of origin will become important again; stories that might have become forgotten, hidden, or diminished (McMahon, 2007). By offering an invitation to clients from refugee backgrounds to narrate their pre- and post-resettlement stories, career counsellors can create an environment whereby clients become more aware of their capacity to tell alternative and preferred stories over those dominant stories they repeatedly had to tell during their premigration and migration stages. In this way, they may get to tell stories of hope, possibility, confidence and optimism (Amundson, 2009).

However, for this process of re-storying and re-authoring to be useful for people, other constructs that constitute and complement the process need to be explored. An important construct for shaping life themes and dominant or alternative stories is meaning-making. Subsequently a process of meaning-making will become influential as people constantly ascribe subjective meaning to each life event (Bruner, 2004).

Meaning-making is considered as a process construct of narrative career counselling that is linked to subjectivity (McMahon et al., 2012, p. 127). People subjectively make meaning of events, life experiences and their numerous stories about self and others. Unique culturally available linguistic resources are used for making sense of and organising events, people and life

experiences (Hartung, 2013; Kelly, 1955) within the stories. Narrative career counselling enables clients to make meaning of their lives by exploring their past and present narratives. Emphasising subjectivity and prioritising the clients' process of meaning-making, narrative career counselling aims to enhance contextual self-understanding through facilitating self-reflection.

Reflection is about the promotion of reflective thinking. Through the space provided within the process of narrative career counselling, clients think reflectively so that unclear or complex past stories are transformed into more clear and coherent meaningful stories (Dewey, 1933; McMahon et al., 2012). Establishing coherence among different stories, or different aspects of each story, requires a sense of wholeness rather than disparity, which promotes connectedness.

Connectedness provides the opportunity for clients to see their lives as a series of interrelated, connected and coherent events and experiences that occur in diverse contexts, rather than as a series of disparate or unrelated events. By reflecting through and making meaning of certain stories within the process of narrative career counselling, clients get to see their lives in relation to other people, interdependent with a wide range of factors and, therefore, systemic and recursive reflective thinking are enhanced (McMahon, 2007).

The overall operation of these process constructs within narrative career counselling supports clients' construction of "an open ended personal story that holistically accounts for her/his life and career, and enables the person to make meaningfully informed career decisions and actions" (McIlveen & Patton, 2007, p. 228). This process emphasises expanding the individual's capacity to "construct and tell stories that shape their identities" (McMahon, 2007, p. 71) in ways that are more preferred. It is perhaps the ultimate purpose of narrative career counselling to assist clients to become the creative authors of their new, often restored, identities

(Botella et al., 2004; McMahon, 2007) by expanding accessibility to their skills, knowledge, capabilities and special qualities that have been largely undermined and disqualified over time (White, 2007). Such new or restored identities might emerge as a “fluid and evolving work in progress” (Singer, 2004, p. 445) through a narrative process within career counselling that leads to enhancements in a perceived sense of agency.

Agency refers to a person’s sensed capacity for acting and speaking on behalf of themselves (McMahon et al., 2012; Monk et al., 1997). Narrative career counselling that aims to deconstruct and alter dominant stories that operate in disruptive, disadvantageous or generally not useful ways for the career development of people with refugee backgrounds, will provide a space not only for the emergence of preferred and alternative stories, but also paves the way for such stories to enhance agency and action. These narratives meaningfully move towards situating people with refugee backgrounds into their new context, and provide unity among their past, present and anticipated stories. Narrative career counselling offers them an opportunity to re-evaluate their position in their new country and identify what actions and decisions might bring them closer to or further away from their goals. Overall, this detailed exploration of life-themes, dominant and alternative stories, emphasising subjectivity and meaning-making within the process, enhances clients’ reflective thinking to arrive at a sense of coherence among their stories, which will then consequently assist them in becoming “self-regulating agents” of their own lives (Savickas, 2013, p. 155).

A trusting counselling relationship is essential when working with people’s life stories, especially when client and counsellor cultural backgrounds are very much different. Narrative career counselling is a collaborative process in which the counsellor is regarded as an “attentive listener” (McMahon et al., 2012, p. 138), “co-traveller” (Spangar, 2006, p. 146), “audience,

editor of the story and co-writer” (McLeod, 1996, p. 182), “curious and tentative inquirer” (McMahon & Patton, 2002, p. 59), and as a facilitator of storytelling with a “decentred but influential” posture (White, 2005, p. 9).

De-centring the role of counsellor means that personal stories, knowledge and skills of clients and their role as the primary author of their stories are prioritised (White, 2005). The narrative career counsellor assists clients by asking questions and providing reflective responses to build a scaffold so that more rich and alternative stories may be revealed, and some of the forgotten or neglected stories of the client’s life can re-emerge. To prioritise these personal stories, knowledge and skills of clients, narrative career counsellors engage in a cultural journey with each client in order to enrich this trusting counselling relationship and to be able to prioritise client subjectivity in practice.

If the actualisation of persisting or fading dreams is to occur, the preferred and alternative self-narratives of the client need space and opportunity to be accessed and woven together into future stories of hope and possibility that are congruent with the cultural and contextual backgrounds of the client. In this regard, culture is the basis of a wide range of stories from which people may choose in the re-authoring of their narratives (McAdams & Olson, 2010). As people “adopt and adapt culturally”, an ongoing modification happens to the stories and narratives that they hold about themselves (McIlveen, 2012, p. 67). Such story modifications or re-authoring experiences are contingent upon the person’s cultural background, as well as what is present in their discursive contexts.

3.4 Cultural Considerations for Narrative Career Counsellors

Accounts of flexible and open-ended narratives of people with refugee backgrounds are inevitably bound to their socio-cultural backgrounds from their countries of origin, as well as to the socio-cultural contexts of their migration journey and those of their new country of resettlement. Considerations of culture are central to narrative career counselling since the approach values the subjective and contextual aspects of each person's life (McMahon, 2014). To build trusting and collaborative relationships between narrative career counsellors and clients with refugee backgrounds, a number of cultural considerations should be taken into account, including: 1) clarifying the nature of the career counselling process; 2) previous interview experiences vs. the experience of narrative career counselling; 3) exposure to clients' unique cultural backgrounds due to the cultural differences between career counsellors and clients from refugee backgrounds; and 4) previous cultural experiences of work and collectivist orientations. These considerations and the role of narrative career counsellors in their work with clients with refugee backgrounds will be briefly discussed. Of course, as people with refugee backgrounds are a heterogeneous population and belong to very diverse range of cultures and backgrounds, these considerations will vary among clients.

3.4.1 Clarifying the Nature of the Career Counselling Process

The term 'career counselling' is a Western concept, as well as being a Western practice that cannot be simply translated into other languages (Reid, 2015) or be known to people of all cultures. Some people from refugee backgrounds make career- and education-related decisions relying on opinions of and directions provided by family members, their community and also fate (Stebleton, 2007). Consideration of clients' expectations about their understanding of and perceptions about career counselling are important, as many people with refugee backgrounds

would have never experienced career counselling as such (Sultana & Watts, 2008). Some clients with refugee backgrounds may consider career counsellors as having ‘magic powers’ (Amundson, 2009) that will help them find an ideal job or career pathway. So that clients are not disappointed as a result of such expectations, career counsellors are encouraged to first explore their client’s expectations about career counselling and then inform them about the narrative career counselling process, and, finally, work together to establish realistic expectations. To ensure that such messages are supportive, empathic and aligned with clients’ cultural backgrounds, the counselling relationship becomes of utmost importance. Narrative career counselling emphasises the therapeutic relationship (Cochran & Cochran, 2006) and the core elements of the person-centred approach (Rogers, 1957), involving empathy, congruence, and unconditional positive regard, along with what Amundson refers to as flexibility (2009, p. 40).

3.4.2 Previous Interview Experiences vs. the Experience of Narrative Career Counselling

As mentioned earlier, people with refugee backgrounds often encounter many professionals during and after their migration journey (e.g., UNHCR employees and immigration officers, physicians, psychologists), within interviews that might result in assumptions about the process of career counselling. Past experiences of interviews dealing with authorities and professionals during and after the migration journey (Harris, 2002) may also result in preconceptions and assumptions about career counselling. Career counselling might initially resonate as being another expert-driven process for people with refugee backgrounds, which will create a contradictory dynamic for narrative career counsellors because their focus will be on a collaborative process that creates a co-authoring and co-travelling relationship between counsellor and client. Thus, it becomes important for narrative career counsellors to clarify their

own role and their partnership with clients from different cultural backgrounds in an early stage of their encounter.

To clarify and communicate the process with a client and to express a genuine sense of interest without sounding like an expert but more like a “curious inquirer” (McMahon & Patton, 2002, p. 59) and an “attentive listener” (McMahon et al., 2012, p. 138), narrative career counsellors may need to explain the process and their role as early as possible. This explanation may cover issues such as the nature of stories the career counsellor is curious to have expressed, and the reasons behind this curiosity and what it can do for their partnership, and eventually for the client as a person. Such explanations are intended to a) invite clients to feel at ease with the career counselling process, b) give the impression that the counsellor needs their assistance in telling as much as possible about themselves, c) establish an open space for staying curious, and d) facilitate a detailed and ongoing sense of reflection, connectedness and meaning-making. Initiating the counselling relationship on this foundation will ensure that clients come to have an active role in constructing their careers, as well as ensuring that career counselling generates outcomes beyond the initial transition needs of people with refugee backgrounds (Pierce & Gibbons, 2012).

3.4.3 Exposure to Clients’ Unique Cultural Backgrounds

To clarify the role of narrative career counsellor for clients from refugee backgrounds, counsellors should make an effort to gain an in-depth understanding of the unique cultural background of each client. To do so, clients may be encouraged to take a role as a “cultural informant” (Leong & Pearce, 2014, p. 77) through which they share elements of their culture with the career counsellor. Being constantly curious about clients’ cultural backgrounds and cultural priorities will assist career counsellors to generate ideas about issues that may inform

and improve their practice contributions. In their process of integration, people from refugee backgrounds may also have come to value certain cultural practices of the host society and identify with them. Culture is considered as being a fluid concept (Stead, 2004) that calls for constant monitoring and learning by narrative career counsellors.

Instruments and strategies available in the different approaches to narrative career counselling may not be suitable for all clients from refugee backgrounds. Learning about some of the customs and traditions of the particular culture of each client could be helpful in choosing assessment instruments and strategies that might be more culturally responsive. Collaboration and communication with other professionals, such as psychologists, social workers or teachers, and other “cultural informants” (Leong & Pearce, 2014, p. 77) from the client’s culture, are highly recommended. Exposure to the personal culture of clients, as well as to the cultural backgrounds of their ethnic, linguistic, socio-political or religious group, could be helpful in understanding their experiences, expectations, and worldviews in regard to work and what career counselling may have to offer.

When clients observe and experience that their career counsellor is curious and interested in key aspects of their cultural practices and involvements, and is interested to know more about certain customs and traditions, the counselling relationship will be deeply enriched, developing heightened levels of trust and enthusiasm that will be useful for hearing more detailed and rich stories and descriptions. As a result of such movements within the counselling process, possibilities for constructing new meaningful narratives based on those cultural practices will emerge. Clients will then have a better chance of embedding such cultural stories into their future and preferred career stories.

3.4.4 Cultural Experiences of Work and Collectivism

What is considered as work is culturally constructed (Ferrari et al., 2009). In developed countries, which are currently countries of resettlement for most people with refugee backgrounds, paid work, which has also been referred to as “market work”, has been valued over unpaid work (Richardson, 2012, p. 87). However, in developing countries and collectivist cultures, voluntary, unpaid and care work are valued and may begin early in childhood. Understanding people’s previous experiences and cultural understandings of work is important, as their migration journey now faces them with an environment in which previously familiar work roles are not readily valued as much. Some people with refugee backgrounds have been engaged in work, responsibilities and actions that young people of their culture are expected to participate in from an early age (due to the absence of their parents or other familial, social and cultural norms). For instance, for many African clients their previous work role experiences would be “under the influence of cultural expectations” related to “fulfilling family or community obligations” and “working in service to others” (Stebleton, 2012, pp. 61– 62). Narrative approaches in career counselling need to be flexible in terms of engaging with populations from diverse cultural backgrounds, allowing people to evaluate their work life through their own cultural framework (Arthur, 2006) and, in the case of most people with refugee backgrounds, through a collectivist framework.

To engage people with refugee backgrounds in conversations about work and future career plans, narrative career counsellors need to be prepared for and informed about the key characteristics and cultural practices of clients that influence their orientations to work and career (Arulmani, 2011). Career counsellors are encouraged to ensure that their services resonate with local and traditional knowledge and ways of life that are specific to the subjective meaning-

making processes of clients (Arulmani, 2011). In the case of people with refugee backgrounds who grew up mostly in collectivist environments but now function in Western countries with more individualistic frameworks, certain traditions and cultural knowledge may be overshadowed by what is dominant in the new context. Providing space for collectivist frameworks to surface during career conversations, enables clients to value contextual and relational factors that still are apparent in their life, such as those concerning family, friends, community and the influence of social, historical and political systems. Such conversations value “interdependence, group work, group rewards” (Watson, 2017, p. 48) and “duty to the in-group and maintaining harmony” (Oyserman et al., 2002, p. 44) over certain Western values, and need consideration in terms of their impact in career construction and future decision-making.

The inclusion of culturally congruent work-related experiences in the process of narrative career counselling will contribute to the development of culturally informed perceptions about work and the world of work, preparing clients to construct new and preferred personal and career stories consistent with what is personally and subjectively meaningful for them. It is conversations involving such qualities that make career counselling of people with refugee backgrounds a culturally resonant practice.

3.5 Conclusion

Narrative career counselling with people with refugee backgrounds provides a space for exploration of their preferred accounts of life and career stories that may have become challenged before, during and after the migration journey. In this way, narrative career counselling transcends the provision of information, advice and point-in-time career counselling. By emphasising subjectivity, narrative career counselling aims to facilitate self-reflection and to

enhance cultural and contextual self-understanding among people with refugee backgrounds. To facilitate the emergence of alternative life and career stories, an important prerequisite for narrative career counsellors is to be sensitive to cultural issues in their practice. Through a culturally sensitive counselling relationship, a detailed and holistic exploration of contextual, social, historical, relational and psychological domains of people with refugee background lives becomes possible. The new autobiographical narratives that emerge as the result of narrative career counselling will be useful in assisting people with refugee backgrounds to experience a greater sense of continuity in life and, hence, assist them to meaningfully position themselves in their new environment in terms of career connection and development.

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Transition to chapter 4:

Career counsellors have been cautioned about the “objectivist, reductionist frameworks” that have ruled the fields of career development and career counselling for decades (Watson, 2006, p. 52). The application of previously established, mainstream or even emerging approaches to career counselling in the context of young people with refugee backgrounds after resettlement should be considered with caution. The promotion of any approach for career counselling of young people with refugee backgrounds should only happen with a thorough consideration of the long list of challenges and vulnerabilities that the population have faced throughout their often-protracted migration journeys, their educational and vocational needs and shortcomings after resettlement, and their cultural backgrounds in relation to the considered approach.

While a theoretical and conceptual case can be made for career counselling, particularly narrative career counselling, as an intervention that could assist young people with refugee backgrounds’ career development after resettlement, little research has been conducted to develop such conceptual frameworks. A fundamental assumption of career counselling, especially narrative career counselling, is that young people with refugee backgrounds ‘can’ and ‘will’ tell their life-career stories. However, this assumption may be challenged in three ways:

- 1) Despite the fact that storytelling is a widely practised aspect of African and Middle-Eastern cultures (Parks, 1997; Pierce & Gibbons 2012), which are the current dominant cultural origins of many people with refugee backgrounds, claiming that young people with refugee backgrounds who have endured years of living in transitory situations could easily access their own life stories is premature. Life in transitory-like situations and contexts is often different from the day-to-day conditions in which many aspects of their culture are normally practised. Some of these young people have spent a great deal of their lifetime in refugee camps or moving from one

country to another, and have not had the luxury of being exposed to practices of storytelling by others or opportunities to engage in a sort of storytelling that depicts various aspects of their own life.

2) Another very important consideration is the overshadowing of the young people with refugee backgrounds' previous accounts of identity as a refugee identity (Harris, 2002). This refugee identity is repeatedly overviewed and reflected through the process of being assessed for resettlement purposes in which re-tellings of personal painful, desperate, unsatisfactory, confusing, restrictive, unfulfilling stories occurs. Engaging in such lengthy assessment and vetting processes for years, might lead to a diminishing of other stories such as those related to their previous educational achievements, career successes or family and community experiences. Experiencing challenges and barriers to integration in their final resettlement country might also intensify the dominance of refugee stories and therefore these young people might need a long time to reconnect with, re-tell and regain their preferred stories of skills, competence, achievement and strength.

3) In light of the previous two factors, it is also important to consider young people with refugee backgrounds' familiarity with what we consider as 'career stories'. As both the term and practice of 'career counselling' are western concepts, these young people who have a variety of different cultural backgrounds may also have a different perspective on 'career counselling' and what might be considered as 'career' conversations. For instance, in some cultures career- and education-related decisions are made based on the opinions and directions provided by family members, their community and also fate (Stebbleton, 2007). Therefore, never experiencing career counselling as such (Sultana & Watts, 2008), people might have different expectations and perceptions about the process of career counselling.

These three factors challenge the assumption that young people with refugee backgrounds 'can' and 'will' easily engage in the process of telling their life-career stories to someone whom they have never met before and is perhaps from a different cultural background. Therefore, rather than investigating narrative career counselling, this research is taking a step back to investigate whether young people with refugee backgrounds can tell life-career stories.

Chapter 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The present research is located within the fields of career development and career counselling where there has been a relatively limited number of studies informed by qualitative methodologies (Stead et al., 2011). Conducting qualitative exploratory and constructivist research, especially that involving diverse populations in different contexts, is an urgent need of these fields (Bimrose & Hearne, 2012), so that they remain vital and responsive to the needs of a whole gamut of people (Savickas, 2001). Qualitative research is also aligned with the recent “narrative turn” within the fields of career development and career counselling (Savickas, 2007, p. 2). Such a narrative turn requires an expansion of understandings of career development in more “empathic and experience-near manners”, by accessing “other sources of knowledge” (Stead et al., 2011, p. 107) such as the “insider knowledge” of participants (Leong & Pearce, 2014, p. 77) about their career development. Qualitative research could explore the insider knowledge of participants with refugee backgrounds about their career development.

This chapter first provides an overview of qualitative research and the rationale for employing it here and then explains the ontological, epistemological, axiological, rhetorical and methodological assumptions that shape narrative inquiry as a qualitative research methodology in this research. Finally, the method, including the procedures of recruitment, data collection, analysis, steps for the enhancement of research rigour and ethical considerations are outlined.

4.2 Qualitative research and inquiry

A qualitative research design was chosen for this research since the research aims are focused on enhancing understandings of a phenomenon about which little is known (Yin, 2003,

2014), specifically, the career development of young people with refugee backgrounds after resettlement in Australia, by exploring the participants' life-career stories, perspectives and anticipated career plans. Therefore, for the purpose of such exploratory research, qualitative methods are appropriate. Qualitative research is a disciplined inquiry that examines participants past and ongoing life events, experiences, perspectives, actions, plans, their stories and the meanings they ascribe to such stories (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Yin, 2015).

The locus of inquiry in qualitative research is on interactions, relationships and conversations, and therefore, when it comes to the relationship between the researcher and the topic of study, a higher degree of “closeness” rather than “distance” is expected and experienced (Creswell, 2007, p. 247). Such closeness necessitates the establishment of a professional research relationship between the researcher and the researched which assumes that researching disadvantaged, underprivileged and marginalised populations is an ethical responsibility of researchers (Hewitt, 2007; Liamputtong, 2007). However, ethical responsibility must reflect the researcher's attempt to contribute to the amelioration of practice, research, theory or policy related to such populations (Smith, 2005) by generating new knowledge. This ethical responsibility entails that a social justice approach to research is indispensable when exploring the career development of disadvantaged participants (Josselson, 2007) such as young people with refugee backgrounds. The social justice approach to research entails that the qualitative researcher who engages with the disadvantaged must go beyond the principles of “*primum non nocere* (first do no harm)” (Liamputtong, 2010, p. 37). For such purpose, “ethics of caring” (Noddings, 1984, p. 497) and the “responsive and responsible” (Clandinin, 2006, p. 53) practice of qualitative research with such populations are applied which oblige the researcher to not only consider the benefits of the research community, but also to consider the potential benefits of the

research participants or their communities when conducting the research. A social justice approach in this research aligns with a reorientation of the fields of career development and career counselling towards their original mission of responding to the disadvantaged and marginalised by producing knowledge that could “ameliorate or prevent problems with work behaviour regardless of the prestige or level of education” (Brown & Lent, 2013, p. 10). The social justice approach of this research is reflected through its exploration of research and practice that could ultimately inform and improve career services offered to young people with refugee backgrounds and has been explained in the previous chapters (Chapter 1, Section 1.6 and Chapter 2).

The underlying assumptions and theoretical orientations of the researcher about the nature of reality and knowledge assist the design and implementation of research (Creswell, 2013). However, exposing these assumptions throughout the research process is an important aspect of qualitative research which focuses on the persuasiveness and depth of research findings rather than absolute truth or conclusive data (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The design of this qualitative research has been informed by ontological, epistemological, axiological, rhetorical, and methodological assumptions (Creswell, 2013). Each assumption is briefly explained.

4.2.1 Ontological assumptions

Ontology refers to ways of understanding “the nature of reality” (Creswell, 2007, p. 16). Ontological assumptions allow researchers to respond to questions such as “what is there that can be known?” or “what is the nature of reality?” (Guba & Lincoln, 1998, p. 200). Ontological assumptions are those that inform readers about the researcher’s position for exploring the reality of a phenomenon. For the purpose of this research, the constructivist and social constructionist worldviews informed the ontological assumptions as they prioritise cultural and contextual

experiences of people, especially for those who come from and have transitioned through a diverse range of contexts and cultures. A worldview is described as “a basic set of beliefs that guide action” (Guba, 1990, p. 17). The social constructionist worldview relies on relativist ontology which assumes that individuals gain their understanding of the world in which they live and work (their reality) by subjective meaning making which is negotiated socially, culturally and historically and by interacting with others and the cultural norms that operate in their lives. Briefly described, a social constructionist worldview contends that “reality is socially constructed” (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1998, p. 271). In explaining that meaning is not discovered but constructed, Crotty (2003) defines social constructionism 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” (p. 42). Consistent with this worldview, the goal of qualitative research is to rely on each participant’s perspective of the situation and then recognise that personal meanings and subjectivity are influential in shaping their experiences (Creswell, 2013). The subjective and particular ways by which each person deals with social constructions underlie constructivism (Young & Collin, 2004). In this regard, constructivism focuses on meanings derived from the life experiences and contexts in which each person interacts with the social world (Watson, 2006). Therefore, social constructionism is concerned with sustaining knowledge through social processes, while constructivism is concerned with shaping knowledge as a result of individual cognitive processes. The constructivist and social constructionist ontological assumptions employed in this research assist the researcher “to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of [each participant’s] real life events” (Yin, 2014, p. 2), specifically how youth with refugee backgrounds anticipate their careers given their backgrounds.

In the context of this study, constructivism and social constructionism recognise that youth with refugee backgrounds come from varied familial, relational, cultural, transitional and historical backgrounds and have had different journeys through the migration pathway, with differing educational and vocational opportunities. Therefore, their subjective experiences and meaning making processes leave them with varied interpretations of events and experiences as they interact with the complexities of integrating into Australia's education system and world of work and their perceptions of career development. As a result of employing constructivist and social constructionist worldviews, the exploration of the participants' subjective experiences and ways of meaning making are prioritised. The ontological assumptions of constructivism and social constructionism that informed the researcher's position for exploring the nature of reality in qualitative inquiry, have implications for the epistemological assumptions of this research.

4.2.2 Epistemological assumptions

Epistemology refers to the characteristics and principles that guide researchers in the process of getting to know the topic under investigation (Crotty, 2003). It portrays the particular way of uncovering reality and the interrelatedness between the researcher and the topic of study (Creswell, 2007). Epistemology is concerned with the philosophical positions that guide the kind of knowledge that is possible to obtain and explore in research (Crotty, 2003).

The constructivist and social constructionist worldviews (the ontological stance of this research) brings forward three distinct epistemological suppositions. First, meanings of experiences are multiple and varied (Creswell, 2007). This first supposition is consistent with the ontological assumption described previously that the perspectives (understandings, interpretations, decisions, plans and actions) of youth with refugee backgrounds are shaped by their unique subjective experiences.

The second supposition reflects that meanings are derived from the interaction between the researcher and the participant while also being negotiated socially and historically. This interaction between the researcher and each participant, also transforms and exposes the researcher's understanding of the topic of inquiry and therefore leads to the emergence of a new set of information and interpretation through consensus and dialogue (Guba & Lincoln, 1998) for both the researcher and the participants.

Finally, the third epistemological supposition emphasises the researcher's background in shaping the design of the research, the quality and nature of the professional relationship established between the researcher and participants, and possibly influencing the interpretation of participants' experiences that is documented as data (Creswell, 2007). Therefore, the researcher's values and intentions that are aligned with the social justice approach mentioned earlier, need to be presented clearly. My values and intentions that led to the development of this research were made transparent through sharing my background story in chapter one and will be further reviewed in relation to the axiological assumptions of this research.

4.2.3 Axiological assumptions

Axiological assumptions refer to the role of values in research (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). Qualitative research is value-laden and biased to some degree (Creswell, 2013) by the value systems and beliefs held by the researcher. A consideration of the stories and experiences explained in the first chapter that informed the shaping of this research method are also useful for clarification of assumptions that informed the researcher's inquiry into the experiential lives and knowledge of participants with refugee backgrounds. I am aware that my cultural, personal, educational and socio-political backgrounds, my biases and values are to some degree influenced by the process of gathering data and the interpretation of information shaping

the outcome of inquiry. My background as an individual born and raised in Iran, migrating out of the country at the age of 21 and thereafter living in three different countries (Cyprus, Malaysia and Australia) with diverse cultural systems is influential in shaping my values and potential biases. My experiences of acculturation and coming to terms with each country's systems of education and worlds of work have influenced my values. My involvement with young people with refugee backgrounds in three different non-governmental organisations (NGOs), charity school environments in Malaysia and later in Australia during this research, and interactions with such organisations and their staff have all been influential in reshaping my values. Consequently, these values have been influential in reshaping my perspectives about the research topic and the value of conducting research. Strategies used in this research to deal with my values and potential biases are further described in the trustworthiness section of this chapter. While considering my professional background in familiarising myself with narrative ideas in practice and research (see Section 1.5 in chapter 1) is important, the influence of the language of narrative approaches to research and practice on this research also need to be acknowledged. The rhetorical assumptions of qualitative research expand on such linguistic influences.

4.2.4 Rhetorical assumptions

Rhetorical assumptions are concerned with the nature of language employed in the research to persuade readers about the trustworthiness of its findings (O'Neil, 1998). The language of qualitative research is informal (Creswell, 2013) and it focuses on participants' perspectives, their meanings and subjective views (Hatch, 2002). In this research, the influence of the language of constructivist and social constructionist worldviews that inform narrative approaches in research and practice are to be acknowledged. Familiarising myself with narrative ideas in practice and research as evident in my stories (see Chapter 1), has been influential in

prioritising narrative aspects of participants' lives and stories. The idea that "narrative itself as a form of re-description is a mode of knowledge" is informed by a "narrativist turn" in human sciences and research (Kreiwirth, 2000, pp. 293-294). Informed by this idea, the rhetorical assumption of this research, prioritises the narratives of the participants as a form knowledge and considers them worthy of exploration. Therefore, this research intends to produce authentic narratives through the stages of data collection and data analysis by attending to the subjective meaning of each participant's narratives. Through an authentic narrative experience, the reader and listener must be engaged and enabled to grasp the experience and interpretation of each participant's life-career stories and get as close as possible to their subjective ways of living those stories. Vignettes from the interviews and the stories told by each participant are reported to offer a narrative experience for the reader.

In the overall rhetorical assumption of qualitative research informed by constructivist and social constructionist worldviews, reporting on the subjective reality of each participant is emphasised and "a subjective and interactive researcher role prevails" (Ponterotto, 2005, p. 132). Therefore, qualitative research informed by constructivist and social constructionist worldviews has no intention of producing generalisable data about a population. Through the ontological, epistemological, axiological and rhetorical assumptions that informed this qualitative research, a foundation for defining its methodological assumptions was established.

4.2.5 Methodological assumptions

"The strategy, plan of action, process or design" that shapes the choice of particular methods and instruments are considered as the methodological assumptions of research (Crotty, 2003, p. 3). Describing and justifying the use of particular instruments and procedures for this qualitative research is the aim of exploring methodological assumptions (Wellington, 2000). It is

important to note that the combination of the previous four assumptions determine the choice of instruments and procedures in this research that explores the career development of young people with refugee backgrounds as a disadvantaged, marginalised, heterogeneous, multicultural, and rarely researched population in the fields of career development, career counselling and vocational psychology. An exploratory multiple-case study design was chosen for this research and will be explained in the next section.

4.2.5.1 Exploratory multiple-case study design

Case studies are a method of investigating an individual phenomenon, activity, or case (Merriam, 1988; Yin, 2014) and as a research design, they study a single or a limited number of phenomenon, systematically, rigorously, and in depth, over time (Creswell, 2007, 2013; Merriam, 1988; Schram, 2006). Studying a single unit under investigation according to these guidelines provides a way of distinguishing between those who are considered within the case and those who are not (Yin, 2014). When the aim of research is exploring situations or processes which have no clear, single set of outcomes, using an exploratory case study is recommended (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014).

Applying a case study strategy which explored the subjective experiences of participants in this research was also consistent with the previously explained ontological and epistemological assumptions that subjective experiences of individuals are constructed in lived social and historical contexts (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 1995). In this research, an exploratory case study design facilitated a holistic exploration (Merriam, 2009) of the career development of young people with refugee backgrounds.

A multiple-case study methodology was considered more appropriate than a single case study due to heterogeneity of the focus population and its capacity to showcase potential existing

comparisons within and between cases (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Multiple-case study design “uses the logic of replication” (Yin, 2003). The researcher replicates the processes of data collection and data analysis for each case to examine how similar concepts are approached by each case and/or how a particular procedure might work for each case (Yin, 2014). The constructivist and social constructionist worldviews value the subjectivity and uniqueness of each individual.

Therefore, in this research the multiple case studies provided a framework for understanding how the identical processes of this research were received differently by each participant and have no intention of making conclusive generalisations about the population. The next section outlines the research method.

4.3 Method

A three-part qualitative method was chosen to enhance and enrich the exploration of participants’ career development. In this exploration, achieving a richer understanding about the career development of young people with refugee backgrounds, requires the provision of a culturally and contextually sensitive space in which participants could access and voice their knowledge, skills and expertise while telling their life-career stories. To provide this sensitive space, narrative inquiry was selected as the method of inquiry.

Narrative inquiry is a methodological approach that concerns the study and exploration of stories and is built on the assumption that human beings make their lives meaningful through telling their life stories (Andrews, Squire & Tambokou, 2008). Narrative inquiry aims to study human experience in relation to stories people tell about themselves and has “a view of human experience in which humans, individually and socially, lead storied lives” (Clandinin, 2006, p. 45). Narrative inquiry has the potential to facilitate non-interventional exploratory studies

(Clandinin, 2007). Additionally, narrative inquiry's methodological rigour resonates with the constructivist, social constructionist framework of this research that prioritise explorations of participants' different ways of constructing meaning from within their social contexts and experiences to shape life-career stories (Trahar, 2013).

Narrative inquiry can occur in different forms such as interviews, storytelling, shared field notes, letter writing, autobiographical and biographical writing, journal records and other narrative data sources (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Interviews emphasising the storytelling nature of participants are regarded as one of the primary tools of data collection in narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2013). However, using other instruments of data collection along with the interviews could clarify accounts of the multiple levels of each participant's lived experiences (Clandinin, 2007). Looking for multiple levels of lived experience within the process of inquiry is based on the idea that "people are both living their stories in an ongoing experiential text and telling their stories in words as they reflect upon life and explain themselves to others" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 4). As a result, narrative inquiry that employs multiple narrative tools to collect data, increases the chances of exploring lived experience and getting as close as possible to the subjectivities of participants' life-career stories. Additionally, the trustworthiness of the research findings is significantly enhanced when multiple and parallel sources of data collection are introduced. Finally, as narrative inquiry intends to make the research process a reflexive context for both the researcher and participants (Trahar, 2009), designing this three-part qualitative method has the advantage of being useful for formulating further research based on the portrayal of participants' lived experiences (Clandinin, 2007) in different contexts.

Details related to the conduct of the three-part qualitative method that was used for the exploratory multiple-case study design of this research will be described in the following

sections. First, the process of sampling and recruitment of participants will be explained followed by an explanation of the instruments used. The data collection procedures are then described, followed by the data analysis. Finally, methodological considerations regarding the enhancement of the trustworthiness of this research and ethical considerations are described.

4.3.1 Sampling and recruitment of participants

Purposive sampling is a nonprobability sampling technique that is used when the population under study is very large, very heterogeneous and the nature of study is not aimed at generating conclusive generalisable data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Initial sampling occurred through purposive sampling which means the researcher only chose participants based on the selection criteria among those who volunteered. The constructivist and social constructionist ontological and epistemological assumptions of this research, suggest that finding young people with refugee backgrounds who can be considered as representative of the entire population is not feasible and instead consider the experiences, stories and social constructions of each participant as unique. The rhetorical and methodological assumptions of this research encourage a small sample size (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), providing the opportunity to get as close as possible to the participants' subjective ways of meaning making and their stories. Maintaining a small sample allowed the researcher to focus on collecting informative and exploratory data and enabled a richer exploration of the participants' life-career stories (Patton, 2002). Therefore, a small number of participants from the target population was sufficient for the purpose of obtaining access to their subjective and experiential knowledge. Additionally, a small sample size in the form of multiple case studies has been previously used successfully to explore career development of particular groups, such as: Korean full-time mothers (Jung & Heppner, 2015), undocumented college students (Kantamneni et al., 2016), Latina first-generation college

students (Storlie, Mostade, & Duenyas, 2016), first-generation college students in the USA (Tate et al., 2015) and the lives of people with refugee backgrounds after resettlement (e.g., Brar-Josan, 2015; Darrow, 2015; Omar, 2011; Puvimanasinghe et al., 2014; Wong, 2013).

In purposive sampling, issues such as meeting certain criteria for participation, accessibility, proximity, participants' schedule and above all their willingness to participate need to be considered. Snowball sampling was also considered when possible, as it could provide further opportunity to recruit more participants who met the selection criteria and were willing to participate. Snowball sampling is a nonprobability sampling method where existing participants assist the researcher to recruit future participants who meet the selection criteria from among their acquaintances (Heckathorn, 1997). Snowball sampling is pertinent to purposive sampling, as current participants have a sound knowledge of others who might be eligible and willing to participate (Ezzy & Liamputtong, 2006). Snowball sampling was used as a sampling method when participants who already completed the research process informed the researcher that they had told their friends about their participation and their friends were eager to participate in this research project. Three of the participants were recruited through purposive sampling from two Technical and Further Education (TAFE) Queensland centres (centres' names are not mentioned to protect participants' confidentiality). After these three participants participated in the research, the other two participants were referred to the researcher through them.

After ethical approval was granted from the university ethics committee, two Technical and Further Education (TAFE) centres in Brisbane were contacted through email and were provided with the Participant Information Sheet (see Appendix D) and a Participant Consent Form (see Appendix E). Upon the TAFE centres' agreement, a poster (see Appendix C)

containing information about this research including the selection criteria for participation was placed on notice boards of each TAFE centre.

Interested participants were instructed on the poster to contact the researcher by phone and that they would then be asked a few short questions to ensure they met the selection criteria. The selection criteria for participants were listed on the poster as well as the participant information sheet. Participants were selected from volunteers who 1) were aged between 18 to 25; 2) had entered Australia after 2011; 3) had been granted refugee status by the Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship; 4) had enough knowledge of spoken and written English so that they could communicate with the researcher without the need for translation or interpretation; and 5) had not been referred to a psychologist/psychiatrist within the past five years. The age range of 18 to 25 was considered as the Australian government's definition includes those between the ages of 15 to 25 as youth (Vandenbroek, 2015). However, because of the disrupted schooling experiences of young people with refugee backgrounds through the migration journey, many need further schooling as well as learning English language after resettling in Australia. Therefore, only those young people above the age of 18 were considered for this research.

Potential participants who contacted the researcher and met the criteria were then emailed the Participant Information Sheet and the Participant Consent Form and asked to read them, and to contact the researcher to confirm their participation. They were then invited to sign the participant consent form and bring it to their first interview. Participants were given instructions by the researcher over the phone about travelling to QUT and were asked if they required any assistance. None of the participants needed assistance. Participants were also informed through the Participant Information Sheet that their travel expenses to and from QUT would be

reimbursed and they would receive a token of appreciation in the form of a \$AUD100 gift card for a supermarket chain.

4.3.2 Participants

Five participants, four females and one male, aged between 20 to 28 were recruited on a voluntary basis. Table 4.1 provides demographic information about the five participants.

A brief introduction to each participant will be provided here.

Table 4.1

Participants' demographics

| Pseudonyms* | Time in Australia | Continent of origin | Gender | Religion | Age |
|--------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|-----------------|------------|
| Maysa | 6 months | Africa | Female | Muslim | 28 |
| Zafeera | 6 months | Africa | Female | Muslim | 23 |
| Asima | 6 months | Africa | Female | Muslim | 22 |
| Kali | 1 year | Africa | Female | Christian | 20 |
| Amir | 6 months | Africa | Male | Christian | 21 |

*Note: These pseudonyms were chosen with each participant's approval

4.3.2.1 Maysa was the first participant who contacted the researcher. However, because of being a few years older than the age selection criteria, she was reserved until further participants were selected and later was interviewed as the second participant after her younger stepsister. The decision to include Maysa in the research was made after her stepsister Zafeera, the second participant, explained the story of their migration journey together and how Maysa was involved in the journey as the eldest. After being forced to take three of her younger cousins and stepsisters out of her village when it was under attack, Maysa and her “sisters” (she calls

them all sisters) travelled mostly on foot around their home country and a neighbouring country in Africa for approximately two years, before settling in a refugee camp in a third African country. Maysa and her sisters then spent sixteen years in the refugee camp. During this time, Maysa's primary role was to take care of her younger sisters. At the time of the first interview, Maysa and her sisters had been living in Brisbane, Australia for approximately six months. Maysa and her three sisters were registered in a certificate three English language skills course at a TAFE centre. Maysa was soon to complete her certificate and was thinking about her next steps. Her ideas for future careers were becoming a nurse or a midwife and she hoped one day to return to Africa to help others.

4.3.2.2 Zafeera was the second participant who showed interest in participating in this research, but was interviewed first, as her age was consistent with the age selection criteria. Her migration journey was similar to Maysa in terms of the locations they moved to throughout the journey. During her six months in Australia, Zafeera had almost completed her certificate three English language skills course at a TAFE centre and was also thinking about her next steps. She had some ideas about studying a bachelor of international relations or maybe psychology and counselling.

4.3.2.3 Asima was the youngest of the "sisters" who participated in this research. She also completed the certificate three English language skills course at a TAFE centre like Maysa and Zafeera. Asima was clearer and more decisive about her career path than her sisters and had already made some practical steps during the six months that she had lived in Australia. She was about to begin a business for which she had recently signed a contract. Asima had some business ideas and only wanted to go to university to study a bachelor of business after these ideas and her business plan were implemented.

4.3.2.4 Kali was the only participant who moved to Australia with both her parents and her siblings. In her migration journey, she was always accompanied by her family. Kali's family had spent approximately ten years in the refugee camp in Africa and some years in a neighbouring country before that. She had been studying the certificate three English language skills course at TAFE in the year that she had spent in Australia. At the time of her interviews, Kali was also thinking about her next steps that were related to studying a bachelor degree in a university that could subsequently help her work in community service with unaccompanied minors and children.

4.3.2.5 Amir was the only male participant of this study. Amir's migration journey was slightly different compared to the other participants. Instead of living in a refugee camp, he had lived most of his life in a transitory African country and not inside a refugee camp. Amir lost his parents when he was very young and he was then taken care of by a religious community service provider when he was a minor. Amir had a younger sister who accompanied him with her son to Australia and he felt very responsible for both of them during those years. He was certain that he wanted to pursue a career in IT and software programming. Amir had spent the five months prior to the research studying a certificate three in English language skills course at TAFE. He had recently received an offer to study a Bachelor of Computer Science at a university.

4.3.3 Instruments

Three complementary instruments were used in this research so that consistent with its aim, the life-career stories of participants could be explored and participants could be given opportunities to review, revise and story additional narratives. These instruments were Semi-structured narrative career interviews, Reflective sessions based on Interpersonal Process Recall and the Future Career Autobiography. The order in which these instruments were used is

described in a step by step format in table 4.3 (see page 119). Each instrument will be described briefly.

4.3.3.1 Semi-structured narrative career interviews

Interviews are the primary source of data collection in qualitative research and are central to making sense of life (Gabrium & Holstein, 2012). Interviews and storytelling are important instruments for making narrative inquiries (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) into the lived experience of individuals. The choice of interviews as the primary source of data collection in this research were also related to the constructivist and social constructionist ontological and epistemological assumptions of the research that view people as storytellers (McMahon, 2017b).

The constructivist view of self-narratives and “self-telling of life narratives” (Bruner, 2004, p. 694), echoes that “stories do not happen in the real world, but are rather constructed in people’s heads” (Bruner, 2004, p. 691). Basing the epistemology on such worldviews meant that the research must invite the narration of pre-, within- and post-migration stories. Therefore, interviews were planned to be the entry to inquiry; the portal through which participants’ storying of their experiential lives through the migration journey were accessed (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). The interviews enabled the researcher to get as close as possible to the subjectivities of participants and their personal worlds of meaning making through storytelling. Allowing participants to narrate rich and detailed descriptions of their lives and ways of meaning making, was at the core of this research exploration and was aligned with Clandinin’s (2006) approach to narrative inquiry that considered narratives both as phenomena under exploration and the methodological instrument. The interviews as a method of narrative inquiry needed to provide a space within which participants could narrate rich stories in order to enrich the exploration of lived experience. Therefore, aiming for a degree of flexibility for accessing the

life-career stories of participants with refugee backgrounds, their lived experiences and the meanings they ascribe to such stories, semi-structured interviews were used.

Semi-structured interviews accommodate a range of research goals and the use of various questions, prompts and research tools to invite the participant more fully and wholeheartedly into the process of inquiry (Galletta & Cross, 2013). In semi-structured interviews, certain anticipated areas of exploration relevant to the theory and context of research were prepared in advance, yet their order in the interview protocol could remain flexible to accommodate the flow of inquiry with each participant (Galletta & Cross, 2013). It is the versatility of semi-structured interviews with different participants that makes them suitable for the purpose of narrative inquiry.

Unstructured interviews are often used in conjunction with other sources of data such as observational data and are deemed as poor choices if only one or two interviews are planned (Qu & Dumay, 2011). On the other hand, structured interviews correspond more with positivist epistemological assumptions and only provide a limited space for participants to respond with brief answers or answers from a list (Qu & Dumay, 2011).

The versatile environment of the semi-structured interview has other implications for improving the quality of narrative inquiry. During the semi-structured narrative career interviews and through the overall process of data collection, participants could feel and understand that the storying and narrating of their lived experiences and consequently their knowledge about themselves and their career plans matter and were prioritised by the interviewer. It was anticipated that being attended to by a curious and yet empathic interviewer, positioned participants with refugee backgrounds for the first time through their migration journey, as the one who knows and whose opinions and knowledge matters (Gubrium & Holstein, 2012). Maintaining such a position of mattering for participants is one of the main characteristics of the

narrative approaches to counselling and inquiry (Amundson, 2009) and expands participants with refugee backgrounds' access to marginalised, "silenced, untold or forgotten" self-narratives (McMahon, 2017, p.20). Therefore, choosing semi-structured interviews over structured interviews avoided an interview environment that could potentially eliminate the prioritisation of participants' sense of mattering and knowledge.

Two semi-structured narrative career interviews were used so that participants could reflect upon both the stories narrated in the first interview and also their experience of participating and engaging with other instruments of this research.

4.3.3.1.1 Interview one: Interview one addressed a range of different aspects of participants' lives related to their career development. The interview questions (see Appendix F) covered aspects of life-career stories such as: past and current future career goals and plans [3 questions], past and present educational achievements and engagements [5 questions], the migration journey and personal experiences during such periods and their significance in shaping career plans [1 question], educational and vocational backgrounds of family members and relatives [3 questions], work and community involvements [4 questions], role models and important others in their life [4 questions], what they considered as challenges and/or achievements throughout the migration journey [2 questions] and finally post-resettlement experiences in Australia [3 questions] (see the first interview protocol in Appendix F). These prepared questions were not asked in a particular order and were used more as a guideline about the areas to be covered during the narrative inquiry interviews.

The degree to which the initial interview with each participant focused on certain areas more than others was left open, depending on the participant's willingness and motivation to talk about particular stories and life domains. By allowing a degree of flexibility in qualitative

research, participants' voices and ways of meaning making about their lived experience was maintained (Rabionet, 2011). Such flexibility during the interviews, allowed participants to perceive themselves as active participants of the interview rather than passive respondents to a series of pre-determined questions (Gabrium & Holstein, 2012). By experiencing themselves as active participants, their personally and contextually meaningful life-career stories could find more space to re-emerge. The experience of active participation and collaboration between the researcher and participants is at the core of narrative inquiry. In fact, narrative inquiry emphasises the development of a research relationship between the researcher and the participants through which both sides find "voice" to tell their stories (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 4). While the participants of this research found chances of telling their stories through the interviews, relating to the participants through the process of narrative inquiry enabled the researcher to tell his stories in relation to the research topic in many other contexts.

To achieve a collaborative research relationship that gives voice to participants with refugee backgrounds, I demonstrated the qualities required of narrative inquirers such as being "empathic, nonjudgmental, concerned, tolerant, and emotionally responsive" (Josselson, 2007, p. 539). The facilitation of narrative inquiry, involved asking clarifying questions, inviting the participants to make meaning of, reflect on or connect certain aspects of their experiences and stories together.

4.3.3.1.2 Interview two: Narrative inquiry is about studying lived experience (Clandinin, 2006). However, throughout the research process, it seeks to enrich and transform those experiences so that they can be explored in many ways (Clandinin, 2006). The first interview questions were identical for all participants and in this way, they guided the expressions of varied lived experiences. Therefore, the second interview questions had to further encourage the

storytelling rhythm of each participant and make this second encounter another occasion for re-storying and re-authoring personally and contextually meaningful stories. Therefore, unique questions were prepared for each participant, based on the content of the first interview. Table 4.2 lists examples of the questions that were asked during these second interviews.

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| <p><i>Table 4.2</i></p> <p><i>Sample questions of the 2nd semi-structured interviews</i></p> |
| <p><i>Questions about the first encounter</i></p> <p>What do you think about our last meeting? What sort of ideas, might have come up for you as a result of our last week conversation? (<i>similar for all participants</i>)</p> |
| <p><i>Challenges and achievements</i></p> <p>You talked about so many challenges in your life so far. But you also talked about resisting them and still wanting to achieve your goals. How did you manage to resist the influence of all these challenges?</p> <p>What does this success in resisting the influence of all these challenges, says about you as a person?</p> <p>What does this (achieving despite challenges) say about the person you are?</p> <p>I'm interested to know, what does this achievement might do for you and for your future?</p> <p>How do you think, this achievement could be helpful for you in getting closer to what you are planning?</p> |
| <p><i>Spiritual influences</i></p> <p>In resisting the influence of difficulties and challenges, you talked about the role of god and faith. How do you see the role of religion in your life, and in general, how much do you think it is related to some of your career plans?</p> |
| <p><i>Cultural influences and identifications</i></p> <p>Living in so many different places and spending time with people from different countries and cultures, after all these years, what culture do you identify with?</p> <p>When you say "I'm ... by nationality or my culture is the ... culture", I'm just curious to know, what does it mean for you?</p> <p>How is this culture visible in your everyday life to an outsider?</p> <p>How do you think this connection that you see in yourself with the ... culture has influenced your life and perhaps some of your career plans?</p> |

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|--|
| <p><i>Roles models and important people</i></p> <p>How do you think the people you encountered and worked with have influenced your future career plans?</p> <p>You said that X encourages you from far away. What does her encouragement mean to you?</p> <p>What do you think he (a role model) would say to you, if he knew that he has been so influential in your life and career plans?</p> |
| <p><i>Work and educational experiences</i></p> <p>How do you think your work experiences in different places have influenced your future career plans?</p> <p>How do you think studying in university for a while might have changed your plans?</p> |
| <p><i>Themes and patterns</i></p> <p>When I listened to some of your potential career plans, I felt that there was a theme, there was a pattern in these two areas (international relations and psychology). It was mostly about finding solutions or answers. What do you think about this pattern?</p> |
| <p><i>Connecting plans and interests</i></p> <p>What is the connection between singing as a passion or as an interest for you, that you are quite seriously following it, and your future career plans in community services?</p> |
| <p><i>Other possibilities</i></p> <p>Coming to Australia instead of America, do you think this changed some of your plans for the future? How could it be different if you went to America?</p> |

The development of exploratory questions for the second interview with each participant was facilitated through a reflection process based on Interpersonal Process Recall (IPR; Kagan, 1980, 1984).

4.3.3.2 Reflective sessions based on Interpersonal Process Recall

IPR was first introduced to the discipline of psychotherapy as a counselling method and later became a well-established skills training technique for counselling students (Kagan, 1984) in which the video-recorded counselling session was viewed shortly thereafter by the client and counsellor separately and in the presence of a ‘recall interviewer’. During the encounter between the client and the recall interviewer (and/or between counsellor and the recall interviewer), the

focus was on facilitation of emotional and cognitive processes that might have been overlooked during the session and provision of opportunities to acknowledge those processes (Larsen et al., 2008).

IPR was later incorporated into many different disciplines for different purposes such as research, intervention or supervision. Examples of applying IPR in different disciplines include psychotherapy (Spivack, 1974; Elliott, 1986), medical education (Benedek & Bieniek, 1977) and counselling (Rennie, 1994; Watson & Rennie, 1994). In career development and career counselling, the application of IPR as an additional stage to foster reflexivity was first used recently, when a special issue of the *Journal of Vocational Behaviour* was dedicated to better understand the process of career counselling and how change was brought about using IPR as an exploratory instrument (Symposium on Reflexivity in Life Design Interventions) (Savickas, 2016). Furthermore, IPR has been suggested useful as an additional reflective stage of a research interview that incorporated and introduced a qualitative career assessment instrument (McMahon, Bimrose, Watson, & Abkhezr, submitted).

A version of IPR was deemed appropriate as a methodological step in this research that could: 1) in a non-hierarchical way, invite participants to become more actively involved with the research project and make the narrative inquiry more participatory, 2) provide a chance for participants to carefully watch and listen to the interview rather than only reading the transcripts that were in English (not the first language of the participants), 3) assist the researcher to prepare further relevant exploratory questions for the second interview with each participant, and 4) simultaneously enhance the trustworthiness of the findings and the richness of the collected data.

Watching the semi-structured narrative career interviews, gave participants a chance to reflect on their storytelling and clarify, add, or remove parts of their story, or even ask questions

of the research team. Watching the interviews enabled the researcher to prepare exploratory questions for the second interview by reflecting on his thoughts and ideas for questions through the process of reflective sessions based on IPR. When the researcher watched the semi-structured narrative career interviews in the presence of a recall interviewer (one of the PhD supervisors) he had an opportunity to: a) reflect on what was happening within the interview and his performance as a narrative researcher, b) identify biases or blind spots by not paying attention to certain aspects of the participants' stories, c) generate conversations about ideas for further questions and d) discuss potential areas of exploration for the second interview with the recall interviewer. Together these reflective opportunities were helpful to generate unique questions for the second interview with each participant. Finally, the process of giving participants and the researcher a chance to watch the videos separately (each in the presence of a recall interviewer—one of the supervisors), reflected the iterative nature of the reflective sessions that enhanced the trustworthiness of this research that will be later discussed in this chapter. Any additional data gathered from the reflective sessions were considered and analysed with the data from semi-structured narrative career interviews. Inquiring into the lived experiences of participants by the application of the two instruments of semi-structured narrative career interviews and reflective sessions, together made the researcher curious to employ another instrument through which the implications of such engagements for participants could be explored.

4.3.3.2.1 Curiosity about the implications of narrative inquiry for participants

Remaining curious about the implications of participating in qualitative research and inquiry for participants is a natural response of a narrative inquirer (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). The importance of “thinking in responsive and responsible ways” (Clandinin, 2006, p. 53) about the implications of narrative inquiry on lives and experiences of the participants is highlighted

(Huber & Clandinin, 2002) and discussed through the second aim of this research by exploring potential narrative changes to the future career plans of participants in this research. As the boundaries between qualitative research and intervention can become blurred sometimes (Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen & Liamputtong, 2006), it is important to respond to such curiosities.

Qualitative research and inquiry, particularly informed by constructivist and social constructionist worldviews, emphasise the construction of reality and constitution of lives based on social processes, relationships and the discursive context of research (Gergen, 1994; Richardson, 2005; Young & Valach, 2004). When the nature of narrative inquiry demands the inquirer (researcher) to get as close as possible to the subjectivities of participant's lived experiences, build and maintain rapport with them (Josselson, 2007), the constitution of lives and construction of realities becomes a potential outcome of such social and relational processes (Gergen, 1994; Young & Valach, 2004). For narrative inquirers to achieve a collaborative research relationship, complying with processes that involve the "researcher's capacity to be empathic, nonjudgmental, concerned, tolerant, and emotionally responsive" were highlighted earlier in this chapter (Josselson, 2007, p. 539). These capacities and qualities are similar to those that are required in narrative career counselling to develop a collaborative counselling relationship (Abkhezr & McMahon, 2017) that emphasises relational components of empathy, flexibility and mattering (Amundson, 2009).

By operationalising such qualities in the research context, the advised and intended professional detachment (Lupton, 1994) present in other types of research (e.g., quantitative research) is challenged. The social and relational aspects of the discursive and actively engaging context of narrative inquiry, despite a cautionary approach to remain within the boundaries of a

“professional researcher” (Dickson-Swift et al., 2006, p. 855) may challenge the “traditional notions of boundaries” between research and intervention (Richardson, 2005). These blurring boundaries and overlaps between the role of researcher and counsellor (De Haene, 2010; Richardson, 2005) could have potential implications for participants in this research. Improving the degree of rapport and trust between the researcher and the participant increases the participant’s degree of “self-revealing” and, thus, a greater degree of trust could be given to data reflecting a holistic image about the lived experiences of the participant (Josselson, 2007, p. 539). It could be possible that as a result of being actively and relationally engaged in a research context that positioned participants first as narrative “performers” during the semi-structured narrative career interviews and then as “an audience to their own performances” (White & Epston, 1990, p. 18) during the reflective sessions, a degree of change may have occurred to participants’ narratives of future career plans. Therefore, to examine potential changes in the narratives of participants about their future career plans, the Future Career Autobiography (Rehfuss, 2009) was used.

4.3.3.3 Future career autobiography

The Future Career Autobiography (FCA) was introduced in career counselling as a narrative measure of career intervention effectiveness that “collects and highlights an individual’s personal and career motives, values, and direction in a narrative form” (Rehfuss, 2009, p. 83). The purpose is to facilitate the expressions of current and future career aspirations and narratives of the participants in a “brief, focused and concise” way, so that potential changes through time could be compared (Rehfuss, 2009, p. 84). Despite the present research not being an intervention, the procedures that engaged participants actively in their storytellings, ethically necessitates the narrative inquirer to remain curious about the implications of such engagements

for participants (Josselson, 2007) to see whether any changes had occurred as a result of their participation.

Acknowledging the qualitative nature of narratives, “qualitative narrative tools” are more appropriate to measure “narrative change” (Rehfuss, 2009, p. 82). Because the FCA uses a qualitative strategy to engage participants in narrative and written forms of storytelling about their future it was relevant in this research as a means of narrative inquiry about change as a result of participation in the research. In career counselling, the FCA is designed to be used once before and once after an intervention (Rehfuss, 2009) and each time invites participants to write a paragraph about their future career narrative (Rehfuss & Di Fabio, 2012). Each participant was given a sheet titled “Future Career Autobiography” with an instruction: “Please use this page to write a brief paragraph about where you hope to be in life and what you hope to be doing occupationally [five years from now]” (Rehfuss, 2009, pp. 83-84). This instruction was adapted from Rehfuss’s original version by changing the wording in the brackets from “...five years after graduating from college”. Participants wrote their FCA paragraphs at the beginning and at the end of this research, once before the first semi-structured narrative career interview and once after all other steps of this qualitative research were completed (see Tables 6.3 to 6.7 in chapter six).

The application of these three instruments (semi-structured narrative career interviews, reflective sessions based on IPR and FCA paragraphs) acted as a complementary process for inquiring into the narratives of participants by infusing a participatory and reflective approach into the research process (for both the participants and the researcher). Additionally, as qualitative researchers and narrative inquirers are encouraged to remain curious and to think in “responsive and responsible ways” (Clandinin, 2006, p. 53) about the implications of actively

participating within the reflexive space of narrative inquiry for participants, participants' potential narrative changes were explored using FCA. Next, the data collection procedures of this research will be described.

4.3.4 Data collection procedures

The data collection procedures involved steps to effectively employ the three instruments, specifically: The Future Career Autobiography (FCA; Rehfuss, 2009), semi-structured narrative career interviews and reflective sessions based on Interpersonal Process Recall (IPR; Kagan, 1980, 1984). Before describing the data collection procedures, Table 4.3 provides a step-by-step clarification of the overall procedure with each participant. As indicated in Table 4.3, each participant had two encounters with the researcher and the research team.

Table 4.3

Data collection procedures

| 1st encounter | |
|--|--|
| Meeting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The researcher and the participant met for the first time The participant was invited to meet with the supervisor who later acts as the recall interviewer during the IPR sessions |
| FCA 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The participant was given the first FCA sheet to complete Upon completion, participant informed the researcher The 1st FCA sheet was collected |
| Semi-structured Interview 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The participant and researcher moved to the interview room Semi-structured interview began Semi-structured interview was video-recorded |
| Break | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The participant had a 20-30 minutes break The researcher prepared the semi-structured interview video in the IPR room to be watched |
| 1 st Participant-Recall Interviewer IPR style session | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the recall interviewer (supervisor) and the video were ready, participant was invited back The participant and the recall interviewer did the first IPR session The IPR session was audio-recorded Upon completion, participant was given instructions for returning next week The participant was reimbursed for all travel expenses |
| Transcription | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The researcher transcribes the first semi-structured interview The researcher prepared some areas of exploration based on his observations of the 1st interview while transcribing |
| 1st Researcher-Recall Interviewer IPR | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The researcher and the same recall interviewer did their first IPR session The IPR session was audio-recorded |
| 2nd encounter | |
| Semi-structured Interview 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> About a week later the participant returned to the researcher for the 2nd round They began by conducting the second semi-structured interview and it was video-recorded again |
| Break | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The participant had a 20-30 minutes break The researcher prepared the 2nd semi-structured interview video in the IPR room to be watched |
| 2 nd Participant-Recall Interviewer IPR style session | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the recall interviewer (supervisor) and the video were ready, participant was invited back The participant and the recall interviewer had their second IPR session The IPR session was audio-recorded |
| FCA 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The participant was given the second FCA sheet to complete The 2nd FCA sheet was collected from the participant |
| Farewell | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The researcher and the recall interviewer (supervisor) thanked the participant for participation The participant received a gift-card and left |
| Transcription | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The researcher transcribed the second semi-structured interview The researcher prepared some areas of discussion with the recall interviewer based on his observations of the 2nd interview while transcribing |
| 2 nd Researcher-Recall Interviewer IPR | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The researcher and the same recall interviewer did their second IPR session The IPR session was audio-recorded |
| Analysis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data from the two semi-structured interviews were analysed using a voice centred relational method of analysis FCA results were analysed using narrative analysis methods |

The procedures of data collection using the three instruments through the two different encounters will be elaborated.

4.3.4.1 The first encounter

Meeting the participant and the first FCA: Before the first encounter with the participants, the researcher ensured that the participants faced no difficulty in finding the research venue. After greeting and welcoming each participant, the participant was invited to meet with the supervisor who later acted as the recall interviewer during the reflective sessions. Shortly after, each participant was invited to a room with a desk (different from the semi-structured interview or IPR room) to complete the FCA. Each participant received a sheet of paper with the FCA instruction on it, was briefed about the FCA, and was asked to notify the researcher who waited outside the room upon completion. Completed FCA sheets were collected by the researcher, kept confidential and were returned to participants at the end of the study, when they received a copy of their FCA sheets by email.

Semi-structured interview one: After the participant completed the FCA, he/she was invited by the researcher to the interview room where audio and video recording instruments were prepared in advance. The researcher acted as the interviewer during these interviews that lasted between 70-90 minutes with each participant and were both audio and video recorded. This first semi-structured interview followed the interview protocol (see Appendix F). Towards the end of the first interview, the researcher read the FCA for the participant and then asked them some brief questions about aspects of the FCA that were not already storied by the participant. For example, if a participant's FCA paragraph mentioned working in a particular environment and nothing about this was mentioned by the participant during the interview, the researcher would then

inquire about it. Upon completion of the first semi-structured interview, each participant was given a break.

Break: The break was included so that participants could rest and the researcher could prepare the recording equipment for the next step. Each participant left the interview room during the break and waited for about 20-30 minutes before returning to the researcher.

First Participant-Recall Interviewer reflective sessions based on IPR: After the break, the participant returned and was guided by the researcher to the IPR room where the recall interviewer (one of the supervisors) was waiting for them. Then, the researcher left the participant and the recall interviewer together.

In the absence of the researcher, the participant sat with the recall interviewer to begin the first reflective session. Each participant was briefed by the recall interviewer about what would happen during this phase of the process with instructions such as:

“Hi. My name is ... and I’m Peyman’s supervisor in this project. Now we will watch the video of the interview you just had with Peyman. You will have the remote control and you may pause the video at any point you choose. You can pause the video to make a comment that comes to your mind as you watch this video. You may want to change something that you said or you may want to add something to your story. You can also say anything about what Peyman asked you. After you feel that you have no more to add, you may continue to play the video. Our current session will also be audio recorded.”

Then the recall interviewer played the video and together they started the first reflective session. During these recall sessions, the recall interviewer did not ask any pre-determined questions and only minor questions were asked if necessary to clarify participant’s additional comments and explanations. At the end of the video-recording, the recall interviewer asked the participant:

“Now that you have watched the whole interview, is there anything that you want to add? How was the whole process for you, talking about your career plans and career development and watching yourself in that interview?”

The reflective sessions lasted between 90-120 minutes inclusive of the time taken to watch the video. After the reflective session, the recall interviewer contacted the researcher who returned to the room. The researcher thanked the participant, compensated their travel expenses for both research encounters. After scheduling an appointment for the second encounter, the participant left.

Transcription: The researcher transcribed the first semi-structured interview to create a reflexive space. The process of transcription operated as “an intermediate, reflective step” for the researcher (Oliver, Serovich, & Mason, 2005, p. 1273) by employing a reflexive attitude towards his interview skills and questions, participant’s responses, the researcher-participant relationship and what might have been done differently. Additionally, the researcher developed a preliminary list of areas to explore in the second semi-structured interview. At this stage, the researcher also made several notes in his reflective journal about the research and interview process, participant’s responses and when necessary tried to familiarise himself more with the contexts of the participant’s life by doing online searches about the geographical locations mentioned by participant, and biographies of the important people, or organisations mentioned by participant. All of these observations, curiosities and reflections were recorded as part of the researcher’s personal journal and included in audit trail records that will be explained later in this chapter in the section on trustworthiness and dependability (section 4.4.1).

First Researcher-Recall Interviewer reflective sessions: Once the researcher completed transcription of the first semi-structured interview (usually within 1-2 days) and had a list of

potential areas to explore in the second semi-structured interview, a meeting with his supervisor who acted as the recall interviewer within the participant reflective session was arranged. This meeting was in the form of another reflective session.

These reflective sessions were always conducted with the same recall interviewer who conducted the relevant participant reflective sessions. For example, if recall interviewer X conducted both participant reflective sessions with participant H, the same recall interviewer X conducted both researcher reflective sessions with the researcher. The researcher reflective sessions usually occurred in the same room at QUT Kelvin Grove as the participant reflective sessions. As the researcher was aware of the procedures, there was no briefing required by the recall interviewer. The first reflective session based on IPR between the researcher and the recall interviewer began by playing the video of the first semi-structured interview. While watching the video, the researcher paused the video at points where he realised he needed to clarify himself or when he wanted to discuss the relevance of a potential area of exploration and question for the second semi-structured interview. Despite the researcher being in charge of pausing/playing the video, the recall interviewer occasionally asked some minor questions from the researcher. These questions were aimed to clarify the interview process, the questions that the researcher asked the participants during semi-structured narrative career interviews and by doing so explore any potential biases and areas that might have been missed by the researcher. These questions however, were always intended for clarification purposes and never criticised the researcher's interview skills or intentions. The recall interviewer also contributed in the development of questions for the second interview by providing feedback and suggestions to the researcher. The researcher reflective sessions usually lasted between 110 to 175 minutes inclusive of the time

taken to watch the video. These sessions were also audio recorded so that the researcher could listen to them when necessary.

4.3.4.2 The second encounter

Semi-structured interview two: Approximately a week after the first encounter, participants returned for the second round of data collection. The participant and the researcher immediately started the second semi-structured interview. In the initial minutes of the second semi-structured interview, the researcher explored each participant's thoughts and reflections about the first encounter and the overall procedures that occurred on that first encounter. The researcher showed curiosity about whether participants had learned anything about themselves, what they thought about their first encounter and what ideas might have come up for them as a result of such conversations. Following these preliminary explorations about the first encounter, the researcher asked the unique questions that were finalised for each participant after the first researcher reflective session based on IPR. The second semi-structured narrative career interview was also video recorded. Upon completion of the second semi-structured interview, each participant was given a break.

Break: While the participant was having a break, the researcher prepared the equipment for the second Participant reflective session.

Second Participant-Recall Interviewer reflective session: The second participant reflective session followed the same procedures as the first session. The participant was then invited to another room where the second FCA was written.

Second FCA: This FCA followed the same procedures as the first FCA. Upon completion, the researcher gave the participant a \$AUD100 gift card for a supermarket chain as a token of appreciation for participation in the research.

Farewell: After collecting the FCA, the researcher thanked the participant once again for taking the time to participate in the research and followed the participant outside where they said farewell.

Transcription: The researcher transcribed the second semi-structured interview. Although the researcher was not aiming to develop further interview questions, this second round of transcribing helped the researcher stay reflexive about the interview process, his own biases, assumptions and what might have been missed or forgotten to explore. Furthermore, the observations, curiosities and reflections as the result of the transcription of the second semi-structured interview were also recorded as part of the researcher's personal journal and included in the audit trail.

Second Researcher-Recall Interviewer reflective session: Finally, the researcher completed another reflective session with the recall interviewer. The reflection notes of the researcher generated through the transcription process were discussed in this final reflective session based on IPR. The iterative nature of these reflective sessions assisted the researcher to become more reflexive about the overall process of data collection, the content of the collected data and so enhanced issues related to confirmability that will be discussed later in this chapter in the trustworthiness section (Viney & Nagy, 2012). After all data was collected, the analysis of data was conducted.

4.3.5 Data Analysis

Data collected through two of the instruments (semi-structured narrative career interviews and FCA) were analysed using separate analytical processes.

4.3.5.1 The analysis of semi-structured narrative career interviews

Narrative inquiry's emphasis on engaging participants in a collaborative relationship with an aim of storying rich descriptions of participants' lived experiences (Clandinin, 2006) prepares the research context for eliciting multiple voices from the life-career stories of participants. Voice, as a polyphonic way of expression, relates to the many different possibilities through which individuals tell their stories. Therefore, a voice centred relational method of analysis (VCRA) was chosen to analyse the data from the semi-structured narrative career interviews as it "keeps respondents' voices and perspectives alive" (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998, p. 120) through the process of data analysis.

VCRA is an analytical method consisting of a series of steps that intend to operate together as "a listening guide" for "tuning into the polyphonic voice of another person". (Gilligan et al., 2003, p. 157). It is concerned with the voices of participants in both stages of data collection and analysis to explicate "who is speaking" and "who is listening?", so that the analysis process is clear about the researched-researcher's relational dynamics that might have influenced the findings (Brown & Gilligan, 1991). VCRA consists of four distinct listening stages in which the researcher looks for particular aspects of participants' stories and narratives by listening to the interview carefully as well as reading the text a number of times. Each of these four analytical stages is described in chapter five, a journal article in press (Abkhezr, McMahon, Glasheen, & Campbell, in press). Part of the data from the semi-structured narrative career interviews that were related to the participants' future career goals and plans were analysed again, using thematic analysis, to enrich the narrative analysis of FCA paragraphs. This thematic analysis is briefly explained in the next section and further explained in chapter six.

4.3.5.2 The analysis of FCA paragraphs

Reh fuss (2009, 2015) considers the analysis of the FCA consistent with rules that govern qualitative analysis. To analyse the FCA paragraphs, it was particularly important to pay attention to the way participants' statements about their future careers changed (e.g., do they become more specific or broader?). In order to evaluate and better understand the possible changes in the narratives of participants about their future careers, each participant's initial and subsequent FCA paragraphs were to be located side by side, so that through a narrative analysis of the two paragraphs, a "Degree of Change" theme could be identified for each participant's changing nature of future career plan narratives.

For instance, in his research with 48 undecided undergraduate students, Reh fuss identified eight "Degrees of Change" themes as potential themes that were generally seen as a result of conducting the two subsequent FCA paragraphs (2009, p. 85). These eight themes are summarised in Table 4.4. These 'Degrees of Change' themes are only presented here as examples and as a result of the narrative analysis of the participants of the present research FCA paragraphs, other 'Degree of Change' themes emerged.

Table 4.4

'Degree of Change' themes adapted from Rehfuß (2009, p. 85)

| 'Degree of Change' themes | Brief description |
|--|---|
| General Fields and Desires to Specification and Exploration theme | A movement from a very general field towards a specific occupation in that field with some possible steps for exploration |
| General Interests to More Specification theme | A movement from a variety of interests that are not in a particular field towards narrowing on a particular field or occupation |
| Nondescript Job to Specification theme | A movement from a nondescript job that only meets some values or interests towards a specific field or occupation |
| Disregard to Direction theme | A movement from disregarding occupations in their paragraphs towards a specific occupation |
| Vagueness to Focus theme | A movement from a sense of uncertainty and vagueness about a career towards a clearer direction and focus |
| Hindered to Hopeful theme | A movement from a sense of fear or indifference towards specificity and importance |
| Fixation to Openness theme | A movement from prematurely foreclosing on occupations towards a degree of openness about possibilities, yet a minimal or non-existent narrative change within the two FCA paragraphs |
| Stagnation theme | Not much movement to be reported. Generally, a sense of stagnation accompanied by indifference about a future career |

In order to identify each participant's 'Degree of Change' theme in this research, the initial and subsequent FCA paragraphs were compared and qualitatively analysed to explore "any changes, expansions, or clarifications in the individual's narrative" (Rehfuß & Di Fabio, 2012, p. 453). Even the slightest of differences within these two separate FCA paragraphs, were compared. For this comparison, a thematic analysis was first conducted on excerpts from the transcripts of the semi-structured narrative career interviews that were related to the participants' future career plans (the detailed process of the thematic analysis is explained in chapter 6). The themes and sub-themes that were identified through the thematic analysis were used to enhance

and guide the narrative analysis of the FCA paragraphs. Therefore, a deductive process guided the narrative analysis and comparison of each participant's two FCA paragraphs based on the identified themes and sub-themes from the semi-structured interviews (This process is explained in more details in chapter 6). The analytical procedures and other methodological steps that were outlined earlier, were considered and conducted in ways to enhance the trustworthiness of the research and its' findings.

4.4 Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of the qualitative research refers to the researcher's honesty in reporting the findings and the integrity of the findings (Schram, 2006). Trustworthiness of qualitative research is somewhat synonymous with concepts of validity and reliability in quantitative research (Shank, 2006). In this research, an overall criterion for the quality of research which stresses the findings' rigour of interpretation was used (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). Trustworthiness consists of qualitative criteria such as dependability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002; Shank, 2006). To evaluate the rigour and substantiate the trustworthiness of this qualitative research, a number of steps and strategies were employed by the researcher. These steps and strategies will be outlined for each of the qualitative criteria.

4.4.1 Dependability refers to the extent of the findings' replicability (Golafshani, 2003). An emphasis on reporting any possible flows of change that might have occurred through different stages of data collection and analysis is due to the limited replicability of qualitative research. By carefully reporting and reflecting on any changes and surprise occurrences that happen during the process of data collection, the researcher can ensure dependability and answer questions such

as how these changes might influence variables under investigation (Shank, 2006). An “audit trail” is the primary method used to enhance dependability (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 317). An audit trail is a “thorough collection of documentation regarding all aspects of the research” (Given, 2008, p. 43) from the initial stages of research planning until the final stages of reporting and publication.

An audit trail of intentions, aims, goals, plans, initial notes, plans of collecting different forms of data, researcher’s reflective notes and journals, use of different instruments, comparison of data from different sources, triangulation of data, choice of analytical methods and rationale together substantiated the dependability of this research and minimised any unexpected changes in the process of data collection and research plan.

4.4.2 Credibility refers to a form of internal validity and the believability of the findings which can be improved by providing consistent and cohesive data (Shank, 2006). In this research, the researcher continually went through biases and discussed them with supervisors and other professional members of the community so that credibility was assured. Publishing three journal articles, conducting three workshops for practitioners in the field of career development and counselling and two conference presentations, throughout this research, all contributed to receiving multiple feedback, comments, questions and suggestions from various sources outside the researcher supervisory team to improve credibility. Clarifying the steps involved in data analysis and providing a rationale for using the particular data analytic method that was employed, and the consistency of the analytical tools with the aims, epistemological and methodological assumptions of the research also established credibility (Saldaña, 2008).

Furthermore, data triangulation (multiple methods to collect similar data) that has been considered as a method of substantiating qualitative research credibility (Tashakkori, 2003), was

also used in this research. When participants were given a chance to view their interviews with someone else rather than the interviewer, and consider their responses and stories that are highlighted throughout the interview, data collection was considered to be triangulated.

Participants also received the de-identified transcripts of the semi-structured interviews to read and add/remove/change anything that came to their mind. Additionally, hearing and reading about the future career plans of participants through the semi-structured interviews, reflective sessions and FCA paragraphs were forms of data triangulation that enhanced credibility.

4.4.3 Transferability which corresponds with external validity in quantitative research, can be enhanced by providing thick descriptions of the research context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, as it is not primarily an objective of qualitative research to produce generalisable information, it is the responsibility of the reader to apply the findings of the qualitative research to their own context (Golafshani, 2003). In this research, the choice of the data collection instruments and the analytical method of VCRA all prioritised the generation, construction and presentation of rich descriptions about the life-career stories of participants.

4.4.4 Confirmability refers to the possibility of verification of qualitative research outcomes by others (Golafshani, 2003). It means that the findings of the research are reflecting the data collected from the participants and not based on the motivations or biases of the researcher (Patton, 2002). Reflexive processes for the researcher throughout different stages of data collection and analysis was a useful way of enhancing confirmability. The iterative review nature of the reflective sessions, that required the researcher to watch the videos in the presence of a recall interviewer, assisted him to become more reflexive and so enhanced issues related to confirmability. Additionally, the process of transcribing the interviews by the researcher himself

so that he could reflect on the interview process and narratives of participants contributed to improved confirmability.

The integrity of the research process and its findings also relate to a consideration of ethical issues in conducting research. Ethical considerations are discussed in the next section.

4.5 Ethical considerations

In complying with ethical principles of autonomy, integrity, respect for persons, justice, beneficence and non-maleficence, this research followed the guidelines of ethical research according to the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (National Health and Medical Research Council [NHMRC], 2007a) and also the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (NHMRC, 2007b). Some of the steps taken to achieve these criteria will be described.

In conducting this research and working with participants from the population of youth with refugee backgrounds in Australia, the principle of “*primum non nocere* (first do no harm)” (Liamputtong, 2010, p. 37) was taken into consideration to avoid any emotional or physical harm that could jeopardise the social well-being of the participants. It was important that the research relationship between the researcher and the participants reflected this principle throughout the research process and that the participants felt that the researcher was considerate, empathic and supportive of them, so that they could trust the research relationship in which an inquiry was made into their life-career stories.

From the very early stages of developing informed consent forms, communicating with TAFE centres, recruitment of participants and later within the process of interviews, reviews and analysis, autonomy, respect, anonymity and confidentiality were complied with. To establish a

sensitive ethical relationship between the researcher and the participants throughout the research process, many meetings and revisions were held between the researcher and the supervisory team before applying for ethical clearance through the university, to ensure that all aspects of ethical research were considered and clearly explained to the participants. Therefore, the Participant Information Sheet (Appendix D) and the Informed Consent Form (Appendix E) were developed as a result of a careful and progressive revisionary processes by the researcher, the supervisory team and also feedback from the QUT Faculty of Education ethics committee. Through these documents, the participants were informed about the research process including the purpose of the study, the procedures, the voluntary nature of participation, the right to withdraw at any time without penalty, the expected benefits and potential risks as well as issues related to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality (see Appendix D for more details).

To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, pseudonyms were used in all documents and electronic files (FCA paragraphs, interview transcripts and filenames of electronic documents such as audio and video files of interview sessions and reflective sessions). The choice of these pseudonyms was negotiated with participants and only used after their approval. The researcher frequently kept in touch with supervisors about the conduct of ethical research.

In compliance with QUT codes of conduct and ethical guidelines for management of research data (D/2.8 Management of research data), all records including audio and video files as well as written FCA paragraphs and interview transcripts were stored in a safe, secure and organised way and carefully retained by the researcher in locked filing cabinets in the researcher's office and in the electronic space allocated by the university that was only accessible by the researcher. All forms of data will be retained for sufficient time to allow referencing or future inquiry by other researchers or interested parties.

During the consent process, participants were familiarised with the selection criteria. One of the potential risks for participants that was outlined in the Participant Information Sheet, was the unlikely possibility of emotional discomfort and stress as a result of storying past life events. Despite the addition of a criteria that required participants to ‘not have been referred to a psychologist/psychiatrist within the past five years’ to minimise emotional risks, a list of free culturally sensitive counselling service providers was given to participants within the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form, to ensure that they could be provided with assistance in case of any emotional distress. Lastly, the researcher’s previous training and professional background in counselling and his experience in working with participants and/or clients from diverse cultural backgrounds, asylum seekers and those with refugee backgrounds assisted him to be more aware and sensitive of any potential harm that might come to participants and to avoid such avenues in his encounters with participants.

4.6 Summary

This chapter provided a rationale for qualitative research, and explained the ontological, epistemological, axiological, rhetorical and methodological assumptions that shape qualitative research and narrative inquiry. It then outlined the qualitative multiple case study method that was conducted in the form of narrative inquiry. Sampling and recruitment processes were explained and the instruments and data collection procedures presented. The choice of data analysis for two different types of data were also outlined, and finally strategies and steps that were used to enhance the trustworthiness of the research, as well as steps that were employed for conducting ethical research were outlined. The next two chapters will report the findings of this research.

Chapter 5: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Paper 3:

Abkhezzr, P., McMahon, M., Glasheen, K., & Campbell, M. (2017). Finding voice through narrative storytelling: An exploration of the career development of young African females with refugee backgrounds. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*. doi: 10.1016/j.jvb.2017.09.007

Relevance to thesis

This chapter is a journal article that has been accepted for publication in a “special issue of the *Journal of Vocational Behavior* on vocational behaviour of refugees”. By reporting on the findings of the semi-structured narrative inquiry interviews with three of the participants in this research, this paper corresponds with the first aim that was to enhance understandings of the career development of young people with refugee backgrounds through culturally and contextually sensitive exploration of their life-career stories. The three participants were specifically chosen, as they were from the same village and started their migration journey at the same time, spent years in transitory contexts and finally were resettled into Australia together. The choice of selecting these three participants could clarify the role of various cultural, relational and contextual factors and how despite such similarities in their protracted migration journey, each of them could highlight different experiences and tell different life-career stories based on her own internalisation of different cultural, contextual and relational influences.

This exploration is enhanced through the analytical lens of the Voice Centred Relational Analysis. The findings are discussed in the context of vocational psychology, career development and career counselling of people with refugee backgrounds after resettlement.

Finally, the paper concludes with implications for practice, theory and research as well as some orientations for future research.

Why this journal was chosen

Journal of Vocational Behavior was chosen for publishing this paper as it is the leading journal in the fields of career development and career counselling (Impact Factor 2.555, 5-Year Impact Factor: 3.885). Specifically, this paper was submitted to this journal as there was a call for papers for a “Special Issue on Vocational Behavior of Refugees”. As papers published in this journal are highly recognised by career practitioners and career researchers worldwide, a wide international audience is targeted through this publication.

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| Co-author's name | Mary McMahon <small>Provided advice and feedback on research methodology including data analysis, proofread and provided feedback on drafts of the paper, reviewer feedback and paper revisions.</small> Kevin Glasheen <small>Provided feedback and assisted with the proofreading of drafts of the paper.</small> QUT Verified Signatures |
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Principal Supervisor Confirmation

I have sighted email or other correspondence from all Co-authors confirming their certifying authorship. (If the Co-authors are not able to sign the form please forward their email or other correspondence confirming the certifying authorship to the RSC).

Kevin Glasheen
 Name

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3/11/17
 Date

Finding voice through narrative storytelling: An exploration of the career development of young African females with refugee backgrounds

Peyman Abkhezr, Mary McMahon, Kevin Glasheen & Marilyn Campbell

Abstract

Understanding the complex process of career development of young people with refugee backgrounds, who resettle in developed countries after experiencing prolonged migration journeys, is a contemporary priority at a time when the highest number of people in recorded history is in urgent need of resettlement. Moving towards anticipated futures and access to appropriate work could be challenging for these young people after resettlement, considering the effects of protracted displacement that might have silenced their agency. To propose new ways of assisting young people with refugee backgrounds with such challenges, further research that increases knowledge about their career development is needed. The current research aimed to enhance understandings of the career development of young people with refugee backgrounds through culturally and contextually sensitive exploration of their career stories. Using a qualitative exploratory multiple case study method informed by narrative inquiry, qualitative data were generated through interviews and analyzed using a voice-centred relational method. Each participant's unique career story reflected the operation of various voices, relationships, social structures and dominant narratives, influential in reshaping their future career plans. Findings revealed that narrative inquiry fostered rich storytelling for young people with refugee backgrounds. These findings suggest that narrative career counseling could assist them to re-contextualize their skills, strengths, knowledge and career plans after resettlement. Through such re-contextualization, voices that might have been lost or diminished during multiple transitions

have space to re-emerge. This process may be a first step towards gaining a sense of agency that is needed for the actualization of preferred career plans.

Keywords

Storytelling, Career Development, Refugee, Youth, Voice, Narrative career counseling

5.1 Introduction

With nearly one percent of the world's population forcibly displaced for the first time in recorded history (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, [UNHCR]; 2016), millions of people are migrating to countries that hold the promise of a safe and fulfilling life. Young people with refugee backgrounds face a complex process of career development while resettling in developed countries (Schultheiss & Davis, 2015; Yakushko, Backhaus, Watson, Ngaruiya, & Gonzalez, 2008). The world of work in these resettlement countries is undergoing dramatic shifts with employment markets and educational systems significantly different from those that people with refugee backgrounds might be familiar with; thus access to meaningful and appropriate work is no longer assured (Blustein, Olle, Connors-Kellgren, & Diamonti, 2016; Duffy, Blustein, Diemer, & Autin, 2016). Successful integration of young people with refugee backgrounds in developed countries is linked to their career development (Abkhezr, McMahon, & Rossouw, 2015; Beadle, 2014).

More than 70% of those with refugee backgrounds resettled in developed countries are below the age of 30 (UNHCR, 2014) and are considered as youth in this article. These young people might need career development assistance. They come from diverse cultural, religious, linguistic, socio-economic, educational and career backgrounds, experience different migration journeys and therefore tell very different life stories. The career development of these young people is influenced by unique experiences during their childhood and adolescent years in contexts very different from that of their final countries of resettlement. Exploring their career development, prior to and across the stages of the migration journey is important for shaping a richer understanding about how they make career decisions after resettlement. Little research has been conducted on the career development of young people with refugee backgrounds after

resettlement in developed countries. Career development, primarily underpinned by principles of social justice, multiculturalism, educating and intervening for social progress and change (McMahon, Arthur & Collins, 2008; Stebleton & Eggerth, 2012), is now confronted with an important task in relation to the refugee crisis. As the number of people with refugee backgrounds continues to grow, further research is needed to better understand their career development in order to propose new ways of assisting them.

5.1.1 Young people with refugee backgrounds and finding voice

Many young people with refugee backgrounds have faced traumatic experiences such as torture, loss, rape, displacement and other uncommon experiences which have denied them opportunities to access and manifest their voices, leading to self-silencing and a sense of voicelessness (Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg, & Bertsch, 2003; Wessells, 2004). In addition, they have been through extensive and repetitive interviews focusing on detailed stories of fear, hopelessness, helplessness and trauma that have led to their refugee status (Amnesty International, 2013). The repetitive re-telling of such stories becomes a usual part of the complex internal and external experiences of young people throughout their migration journey. As a result of such re-tellings, certain voices may be ignored. Voice as a “polyphonic and complex channel of psychic expression” (Brown & Gilligan, 1993, p. 15), can be silenced, censored or lost. These youths might have never had an opportunity to story their career journey and therefore, their efforts, achievements, struggles and challenges for reconnecting with their skills and abilities might have never been voiced. Therefore, an exploration of their career development inevitably needs to involve a process of finding voices that might have been lost or silenced (Abkhezr & McMahon, 2017). However, to do this, the heterogeneity of these young people must be acknowledged (Schultheiss & Davis, 2015).

New trends in the field of career development and a shift towards post-modern approaches that emphasize the context, culture and subjectivity of individuals (Duffy et al., 2016; McMahon, 2014; Savickas, 2012b, 2013; Watson, 2017) seem to accommodate the heterogeneity of the population of young people with refugee backgrounds (Abkhezr et al., 2015; Hughes & Scott, 2013; Słowik, 2014). Researchers and practitioners have been cautioned about relying on theories and ways of practice that do not prioritize the subjective experiences of diverse populations (Watson, 2006). Instead, relying on approaches that provide a space for the exploration of various culturally and contextually shaped voices present in the lives of participants have been encouraged (Abkhezr et al., 2015).

Attending to the voices present in people's ways of storytelling (Brown & Gilligan, 1991) is an innovative approach to stepping away from traditional discourses that usually do not prioritize people's subjective career stories and experiences (Richardson, 2012). Such an approach could provide a space where youth with refugee backgrounds may narrate career stories and, through the experience of storying, find an opportunity to voice career plans, motivations and concerns for the first time. Exploring and raising sensitivity to the career development of young people with refugee backgrounds among researchers and practitioners is subject to the provision of such a space and finding lost and silenced voices which can be achieved using narrative approaches (Abkhezr & McMahon, 2017; Maree, 2007; McMahon & Watson, 2013). Narrative approaches to career counseling honor people's subjective experiences, local and particular ways of narrating career stories and conceptualizations of work (Abkhezr & McMahon, 2017; Abkhezr et al., 2015; Blustein, Kozan, Connors-Kellgren, & Rand, 2015; Maree & Molepo, 2007; Słowik, 2014).

5.1.2 Narrative approaches, constructivism and social constructionism

A narrative approach to inquiry embedded within a constructivist, social constructionist framework informs the ontological and epistemological assumptions of this research. Despite similarities, constructivism focuses more on internal cognitive processes by which every person makes meaning of experiences, while social constructionism considers the influence of wider contexts on how such cognitive processes evolve within the individual. Such assumptions in the field of career development claim that people's career preferences are shaped through internalizations of available cultural and contextual stories, resulting in a construction of an "evolving life story" (McAdams, 2001, p. 117). Therefore, career development exploration based on a constructivist and social constructionist epistemology involves "working with storytellers" (McMahon, 2017, p. 17). A narrative approach to exploration, and also to inquiry, provides an opportunity for storytellers to meaningfully deconstruct and connect aspects of their internalized, evolving life stories. Such deconstructions facilitate a better understanding of socializations that have been influential in the shaping of career plans and anticipations.

In career counseling, narrative approaches emphasize the facilitation of storytelling and collaboration between counselors and their clients towards exploring career stories that inform the career development of clients. Additionally, by deconstructing such stories, career counselors and clients together reach a consensus about the sort of socializations, cultures and contexts that have been influential in shaping of those career stories. Through the facilitation of storytelling, the core constructs of narrative career counseling, such as reflection, meaning making, connectedness, learning and agency (McMahon, Watson, Chetty, & Hoelson, 2012; McIlveen & Patton, 2007) are utilized. The operationalization of such narrative career counseling constructs will trigger a storyteller's sense of agency (McIlveen & Patton, 2007; Savickas, 2016).

In research, storytelling as a response to narrative inquiry emphasizes the operationalization of similar constructs and has the potential to facilitate non-interventional exploratory studies (Clandinin, 2007). Narrative approaches acknowledge the role of people as the primary author of their stories and focus on an exploration of “thick descriptions” (Geertz, 1973, p. 10) that shape people’s life-career stories. Subsequently, inquiry will attend to participants’ unique preferences, skills and knowledge about their careers. Therefore, facilitating storytelling by making narrative inquiry enhances the possibility of finding voice.

5.1.3 Goals of the research

This article presents research that explores the career development of three young women with refugee backgrounds by inviting them to tell career stories that have shaped and continue to constantly reshape their anticipated future directions prior to and across their migration journey. The overall aim of the research was to enhance understandings of the career development of young people with refugee backgrounds through culturally and contextually sensitive exploration of their career stories. To achieve this richer understanding, provision of a space in which participants could voice their knowledge, skills and expertise as part of their career-life story was essential.

5.2 Method

An “empathic” qualitative exploratory multiple case study method was used to generate “experience near” data that was culturally and contextually pertinent to the participants (Stead et al., 2011, p. 107). This exploratory research occurred in the form of a narrative inquiry that is concerned with “inquiry into narratives” or “stories” of participants (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2). The methodological rigor of narrative inquiry resonates with the constructivist,

social constructionist framework that gives the researcher an opportunity to explore the very different ways by which participants construct meaning from within their social contexts and experiences to shape their stories.

Narrative inquiry needs to cover a “three-dimensional” experiential space (temporal, spatial, and personal-social) (Clandinin, 2007, p. 247). To connect with all such dimensions of participants’ stories, an openness to the “multiple voices” of participants within the process has been emphasized (Clandinin, 2007, p. 428). Providing a space in which different voices that have operated and continue to operate throughout the lives of participants is an important consideration of narrative inquiry.

Interviews emphasizing the storytelling nature of participants are regarded as one of the primary tools of data collection in narrative inquiry. An inquiry made into the narratives of participants is concerned with the overall trustworthiness of the research and is intended to be reflexive research that can portray a glimpse of participants’ lived experiences and subsequently be useful in formulating further research (Clandinin, 2007).

5.2.1 Sampling

Subsequent to ethical approval to conduct the research from the relevant university ethics committee, participants were recruited by purposive and snowball sampling through educational institutions and community organizations providing services for young people with refugee backgrounds. Purposive sampling was initially chosen as a non-probability sampling method due to the nature of research and particular characteristics of participants (e.g., refugee and resettlement experience, age, English language skills). Participation was voluntary. After the first participant was recruited through purposive sampling and completed the interviews, she was so

happy about her experience that she informed her two cousins who contacted the first author and expressed willingness to participate in this research (snowball sampling).

5.2.2 Participants

Participants were three young African women who have lived and travelled together since their childhood. Maysa (all names are pseudonyms to protect the identity of participants), the oldest participant was approximately 28 years old, Zafeera, her younger cousin, 23 and Asima, the youngest cousin, 22. The participants were forced to flee when their village was attacked by militants, approximately 18 years prior to the interviews. In the chaos, Maysa and Asima lost their parents and never heard from them again (Zafeera's mother passed away when she was 2). With the care of Maysa and people they met during their journey, the participants survived two years of travelling, mostly on foot, to different towns in a neighboring African country, and finally found their way into a refugee camp in a third African country. Inside the refugee camp, despite the efforts of UNHCR officers to place the girls separately with different families as they were minors, they resisted separation and managed to stay together in the same house. Except for Maysa, who sometimes missed secondary school trying to support her younger cousins financially, they completed primary and secondary school inside the camp. The three participants arrived in Australia approximately six months prior to the research, under the humanitarian visa stream of the Australian government and UNHCR resettlement program. All three were guided by refugee support organizations to do a six months' English language certificate course. At the time of the interviews, they were on the verge of completing their certificates and thinking about their next steps. As all participants referred to each other during the interviews as sisters; hereon they will be referred to as sisters.

5.2.3 Instrument

Semi-structured interviews were used to provide a space in which participants could express subjective understandings of their career development, voice their career stories and make meaning of their future career plans based on their life-career stories. This interview process operated as an invitation for storytelling. The first interview contained questions exploring participants' migration journey, educational and vocational backgrounds, family members' educational/vocational backgrounds, role models, future career plans and current engagements (see Table 1). Such questions were designed to facilitate storytelling and therefore further relevant questions were also posed occasionally to encourage the emergence of thicker descriptions within participants' stories. These questions were also useful for addressing the three different dimensions of narrative inquiry (temporal, spatial and personal-social) which corresponds with social constructionist and constructivist theories.

The second interview (see Table 1) began with questions about participants' feedback and reflections on the first interview. Further questions of the second interview were prepared separately for each participant and were derived from the transcriptions of the first interview. Sample questions from interview two are italicized in Table 1. These questions aimed to extend storytelling, connect different aspects of participants' stories and enhance meaning making.

Table 1

Questions from the First Interview

Sample Questions from Second Interview (in italic)

Educational Background

What is your current level of education? Where did you study?

How was the experience of education in these locations?

What educational challenges did you face?

How did you manage to achieve this level of education despite the challenges?

What does this (achieving despite challenges) say about the person you are?

Vocational Background

What sort of work experiences did you have before you come to Australia?

How did you make the decision or happen to engage in those work experiences?

How did you find those work experiences?

What challenges or learnings did they bring forward for you?

How do you think those work experiences and the people you encountered through them have influenced your future career plans?

Future Career Plans

What are your future career plans?

How did your future career plans change over time as a result of work experiences or other incidents?

Family Educational/Vocational Background

What were the educational levels of your parents/siblings and their careers?

What sort of influence did your parents or siblings have on your future career plans?

What do you think your father would say to you if he knew that you have such future career plans?

Role Models

Who were some of your role models in life?

How did you get to know about these people?

What have you learned from them?

How do you think they might have influenced your career plans?

What do you think X (a role model) would say to you, if she/he knew that she/he has been so influential in your life and career plans?

Achievements/Challenges

What do you consider as achievements/challenges in your life so far?

Post-Resettlement Experiences

When did you arrive in Australia?

What have you been doing since you arrived in Australia?

What are your next steps in order to achieve your career plans?

After all the places you have been to and being exposed to so many people from different cultures, what culture do you identify with more? What are the implications of this cultural identification on your future career plans?

Coming to Australia instead of America, do you think this changed some of your plans for the future? How could it be different if you went to America?

5.2.4 Procedures

After providing information about the research through the participant information sheet and obtaining participants' consent, participants attended two interviews. The first author

conducted all interviews and facilitated storytelling by posing clarifying questions that invited the participants to connect aspects of their story, reflect on their journey, and make meaning of their overall stories. These questions were not necessarily asked in the order presented in Table 1 and were explored depending on each participant's answers to previous questions, to connect aspects of their stories in a meaningful order.

The first interviews were transcribed by the first author which afforded him an opportunity to re-experience the interaction, reflect on the participant's story, and devise exploratory questions that could further facilitate storytelling in the second interview (see Table 1 italicized questions) that was conducted approximately one week later.

All interviews were conducted in a university interview room at a time suitable for the participants, video/audio recorded, and lasted between seventy to ninety minutes. Participants were reimbursed for their travel costs and participation.

5.2.5 A voice-centred relational method of data analysis

Consistent with the constructivist and social constructionist framework informing the research, a voice-centred relational analysis (VCRA) (Brown & Gilligan, 1993; Gilligan et al., 2003; Mauthner & Doucet, 1998) was employed to acknowledge and explore voices, relationships and broader social and cultural contexts within the narratives of participants. An exploration of voices present in the life-career stories of participants through the analytical lens of VCRA “keeps respondents’ voices and perspectives alive” (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998, p. 120). A VCRA also provides an opportunity to explore a wide range of relational, cultural and contextual factors influential in participants’ career development in an experience near manner while the interplay of lively voices is considered.

The VCRA consists of four listening stages to explore the narratives of participants, specifically, listening for: 1. the plot, 2. the I-poems, 3. relationships, and 4. placing participants within their cultural contexts and social structures. Each stage is briefly described here:

Stage 1) *Listening for the plot* focuses on “what is happening or what stories are being told” (Gilligan et al., 2003, p. 160) by the participant, focusing on main events, actors, and the social context in which the plot occurs. Attending to the overall story being told by each participant and rearranging smaller stories of the two interviews to form the overall story was the core of this step. By listening to the plot of the participants’ stories, similarities and differences in terms of how each one narrated her journey were explicated.

Stage 2) *Listening for “I-poems”* focuses on the voices of “I” and the I-positions of each participant in describing herself (Gilligan et al., 2003, p. 162). The creation of I-poems makes it possible to distinguish and listen for “cadences and rhythms” and the different voices that shape the ways participants talk about themselves (Gilligan et al., 2003, p. 162). The relational method emphasizes distancing the researcher from objectifying participants’ voices. The I-poems assist the researcher to highlight subjectivity by tuning into shifts of the use of ‘I’ within participants’ narratives (Brown & Gilligan, 1993).

To create the I-poems, all pronouns of “I” along with the descriptive phrase behind them were copy-pasted sequentially to a different document like the lines of a poem. Each participant’s new beginnings, transitions, frustrations, confusions or hopes are reflected through the I-poems and point to aspects of their sense of self. This listening must get as close as possible to participants’ “multi-layered” (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998, p. 130) and “contrapuntal” voices (Gilligan et al., 2003, p. 164) that occur simultaneously. The concept of contrapuntal voices refers to the assumption that the human psyche, like the voices heard within a musical concert, is

polyphonic and not monotonic. Every single voice co-occurs with other voices and has a particular relationship (e.g., tension, support, opposition) with other voices within self, voices of others or voices heard within a particular cultural or contextual social structure (Gilligan et al., 2003).

Stage 3) *Listening for relationships* involves exploring how each participant experiences herself in the “relational landscape of life” (Brown & Gilligan, 1993, p. 16) and the types of relationships highlighted in re-telling life and career stories. Listening to participants’ ways of relating to other people, certain segments of the text including narratives about other people and their interactions were highlighted and a separate list for each participant was prepared. Certain details or stories related to these relationships were then extracted from the transcripts and compiled into the list. By explicating the nature and dynamics of these relationships, the relational dimensions of the participants’ stories were further exposed.

Stage 4) *Listening for placing participants within their cultural contexts and social structures* aims to find a place for the participants’ “accounts and experiences within broader social, political, cultural and structural contexts” (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998, p. 20). This listening informs the researcher about the cultural contexts, social structures and institutions within which each participant has experienced her story and reveals the dominant and macro-level narratives, structured power relations and the role of cultural norms and societal values which might have been influential in shaping the overall career story. This stage provides a foundation for linking the previous VCRA stages, explores the dynamics of different voices and relationships within broader cultural contexts, and prepares the researcher for making connections between the multilayered accounts of the participants’ story: the plot, the voices and the relationships.

Each listening stage involved multiple readings of the transcripts and listening to the recordings of the interviews. Every stage was completed independently and a comprehensive report of the four stages was developed for each participant. For the purpose of illustration, only highlights and comparisons of the three participants' reports will be presented here.

5.2.6 Trustworthiness

To substantiate the trustworthiness of the qualitative data and findings in this research, steps were taken throughout the data collection and analysis stages. To enhance trustworthiness, the lead researcher continually and systematically went through biases and discussed them at length with one of the other members of the team after transcribing every single interview with participants. Furthermore, strategies such as analyst triangulation and maintaining field notes throughout the process of data collection and analysis were used to enhance confirmability and credibility of the findings. Constant analysis and checking of incoming data through transcribing by the first researcher, guided future questioning strategies to ensure confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 2000).

5.3 Findings

Rich stories about the career development of participants that incorporated stories of transition, hope, resilience and perseverance in diverse contexts were revealed and are best reported through the four stages of the voice-centred relational method of data analysis (see also Balan, 2005; Gilligan et al., 2003; Mauthner & Doucet, 1998).

5.3.1 Listening for the plot

The three stories shared similar points of origin, but the plots substantially differed. Each participant highlighted certain stages of her migration journey, contexts and sources of meaning

making to story experiences and justify future plans. The first major plot of Maysa's stories was rooted in the pre-refugee camp experiences and filled with detailed and vivid descriptions including those of many unfortunate experiences, while her sisters' starting point of the plot was determined by camp and post-camp life experiences. Maysa's plot specifically had a theme of caring present that wasn't evident in the plots of her sisters, for whom Maysa became the primary carer:

My sisters were all young. They don't know nothing, they just cried ... I was a father, a mother ... I have to take care of them. Like I do anything in my power just to keep them alive; to give them what they want ... for them, I used to sacrifice what I wanted to do.

Zafeera's stories mostly covered camp experiences (school experiences, voluntary and work engagements) while Asima highlighted life outside the camp and in Australia. Maintaining her refugee status, Asima worked outside the refugee camp at a pharmacy and later opened a handicraft shop. Therefore, her plot consisted of current and future plans in Australia similar to her previous work experiences.

All three participants storied very difficult transitory schooling experiences, yet considered the completion of their secondary education in such contexts as an achievement:

School was very hard because you can't study with no access to books or when the sun is very hot and we had to sit outside ... sometimes you can find like 400 students in a class ... we really didn't have qualified teachers ... they just recently finished year 12 [Zafeera].

I did my primary and passed, but my high school ... really not passed. Most of the times, I dropped out to go and work, so that I bring something home for my sisters ... we needed someone to teach them English. So, I had to work to get money for that [Maysa].

Although pursuing tertiary education was mentioned as unplanned and spontaneous, all three participants' plot of the story revealed that throughout their years of schooling and even after completing secondary education in camps, tertiary studies were always considered an important aspect of developing their careers and part of their future plans. This intention was supported by managers, colleagues and some friends or role models. Storying the movement through various contexts and being exposed to a range of relationships and work experiences highlighted the influential role of relationships in diverse contexts for constantly shaping and reshaping future career plans. Being on the move, seemed to beget transitions for participants, both in terms of the work and education they pursued and in terms of their anticipations of the future.

Each participant storied transitions through various work roles inside and outside the refugee camp or Australia and also storied the transitions of her anticipations about future career plans. For instance, Maysa highlighted how conversations with various people and being exposed to their stories, reactions and responses operated as planning guidelines for her:

When we started shooting the movie in the hospital, I just felt like I want to help there. I had a feeling that I just need to do it but ... I don't know anything about injection ... then I start talking to doctors and nurses. I asked: Can I help you? ... she said: you know what? I see you really like to be a nurse ... later I saw advertisement of a nursing course.

Zafeera storied a transition from modelling to a helping profession:

They [models] always go and help the homeless, orphans ... build [schools or orphanages] and visit them. So, I thought like, if I have that opportunity, maybe I can help more people ... but there will come a time that you step down if you are a model... if you have not studied.

She continued to consider many other socialization processes (encounters with other displaced African people, workers of international humanitarian organizations and role models) as factors that enhanced and eased her transitions. She storied that her transformation from a “*shy girl*” to an outgoing and outspoken girl was the result of these socialization processes:

... once I started working with them ... first it was very hard to go and approach people ... but slowly it just made me to have that power inside me, to have that encouragement ... my manager always told me: Zafeera! You should not fear. That’s normal, just talk to them.

Asima also storied her career transition from caring for disabled children into bookkeeping, store management and pursuing some tertiary studies in management. Her stories pointed to several influential factors that shaped her transitions such as being exposed to media, people who were affected by poverty, people who assisted those in need by offering employment or other people such as her role models and feedback from others around her:

... because of my love for mathematics, teachers told me: “You are going to work in a bank” ... I admired accountants ... in movies or magazines, the way they dress and present themselves ... I used to tell myself: that is what I want to be ... I want to be like her ... someone else later said something about accountants ... through [her] I realized who I am ... working with her, has really helped and influenced me ... I got the experience of running my own business.

Overall, the plots revealed transitioning in movement. As a result of relating to different people and being exposed to different social, cultural and contextual stories, various formulations of anticipations about future careers appeared. These relationships and transitory social contexts which were influential in forming pre-occupations and internalizations about anticipated career directions, will be explored within the third and fourth stages of listening. Before that, in order to get closer to the subjectivities of participants in those relationships and contexts, different voices

contributing to the storying of career interests, plans and transitions will be identified and explored through the I-Poems.

5.3.2 Listening for I-poems

For each participant, 4 to 5 different voices emerged from the I-poems. Some of these voices worked in similar ways for each participant while others worked uniquely. Overall, four distinct groups of contrapuntal voices were identified and will be presented.

5.3.2.1: External and restrictive voices included voices of authority, deprivation, powerlessness, and underestimation, and a silencing voice. Different life aspects of each participant were echoed through these voices. These voices were present when, as young women, they faced challenges and difficulties such as those on their way to the camp, social pressure to get married at an early age, demanding and restrictive authorities (e.g., in their country of origin, the refugee camp, the host country), or people who belittled and underestimated their potentials, efforts and future plans:

I don't have anyone / stood up and slapped me / we have to / I sat / marry me / we don't want / you are already useless / you will not have kids / you will be useless / ... I won't be / I will be useless / you will never get a chance to work /... made me to get married / ... we can't make it / told me / you can't / ... I got so angry

5.3.2.2: Internal and agentic voices usually followed the external and restrictive voices and included those of determination, continuity, exploration, transition, shift, effort, trial, initiation and an overcoming voice. These voices reflected participants' internal dialogue that seemed to accompany them in challenging times and in most cases led to a perceived sense of agency:

I have learned / I really achieved / I came to camp / I speak / I never knew / I just spoke / I can hear / I can speak / I will not be useless / you are in a process / ... I just see our culture / I really like it / made me think / I'm just proud / we have been strong / we supporting each other

For participants to transition from external, restrictive voices to internal, agentic voices, a bridging voice was heard.

5.3.2.3: *The bridging voices of resistance and perseverance* were heard when participants storied their transition between the two categories of external and internal voices. Reflecting on how such transition might have occurred, participants drew upon their resilience. For instance, Zafeera's over-use of the phrases '*I still*' and '*I have to*' was explicit in her I-poems (each appeared around 50 times). The storying of difficult and challenging situations of the migration journey, repeatedly followed by the use of such phrases, signified the continuation of curiosity and determination, allowing the extension of the voices of resistance and perseverance into new internal-agentic voices such as the voices of trial and effort:

I want to do and help / I'm just focusing / me achieving my dream / I can help / I have not achieved / I will never help / I'm just going to work / what you have / you haven't given up / you have gone [through?] so much in life / you will just have to / I have to achieve ... gives me encouragement, power, inside me / I have to make / I have to build / I have to be

5.3.2.4: *Distinct voices* were unique to each participant, but also played an important role for interacting with other voices. Asima's advising voice was an example of a distinct voice related to her desire of becoming a successful career role model. The voice of determination and her advising voice interplayed. In the examples of I-Poems that follow, Asima's advising voice is heard through the repetitive use of 'you', when reflecting through achieving some of her plans despite challenges and advising others to follow her example:

*You take the risk / I can take a risk / find myself falling into a trap / I can / you find yourself /
I took the risk / you never know / you may take the first risk / you must work again / you can
do / you find out ... read about me / read about my life / you come from a poor, refugee
background / you never succeed / you come from that / you succeed more / you want to fight /
you want to reach / you want to have things / makes you build yourself / be who you want to
be*

These excerpts of Asima's I-poems reveal the interplay between different contrapuntal voices and how each voice shapes, supports, fuels, silences or invites other voices into play.

5.3.3 Listening for relationships

A cross-cases analysis revealed the paramount influence of different relationships in shaping, sustaining or marginalizing the participants' career plans. For instance, childhood ideas of becoming a model, an actress or accountant which were primarily attributed to the influence of certain relationships, over time transformed through new social and relational contexts. By relating to certain new individuals, groups or media role models, alternative future careers were considered. Overall different ways of relating were heard within the two broad realms of relational harmonies and relational challenges.

The realm of relational harmonies: Storying their career development, educational decisions, future career plans and transitions through various contexts, the three participants eagerly and repeatedly talked about the role of a range of supportive, guiding, encouraging and inspirational relationships.

Maysa's passion and excitement for relating to people filled her migration journey and career development stories with relational narratives. Narrating these stories, she was surprised about the diversity of people who played a role in her career journey: "... *in the camp, people*

usually don't do that ... but I don't know, nobody wanted me to leave" (referring to keeping her involved in work). Relationships in her stories were themed around the provision of help and assistance: *"They were all helping me with ideas ... helping me build up what I want to do"*. This theme became her organizing lens through which she considered relationships and determined the relational dimensions of her career plans.

Zafeera's less crowded realm of relational harmonies mostly focused on people as groups. The only two individuals whose support stood out in Zafeera's story were Maysa and her camp work manager. The encouragement and support she received through these relationships was regulated by, and regulating of her exposure to the work of other groups of people who inspired her. These groups included those who assisted people in the refugee camps of Africa, the employees of active international organizations, and celebrities whose work she was exposed to through media; all had a salient influence in constantly re-shaping a broader picture of potential career options that matched her personal life story of *"going through so much"*. By learning about the life of those who worked in service to refugees and who, similar to her, had also been *"through so much"*, Zafeera formulated new career possibilities:

... in UN and other organizations ... they studied international relations and their background was not as good as other people ... they are the ones who studied international relations and helping people ... they have gone [through] so much in life, that's why most of the time when I follow them up ... they come from a poor background and they struggled so hard to be where they are now.

Similar to Zafeera, Asima's less crowded world of relationships was limited to her three sisters, an emotionally supportive relative who lives in another country and above all the manager she was working for. The role of this *"lady manager"* was emphasized as the most

directly influential relationship in her life-career plan: *“I thought she was a person from nowhere ... she was like my sister, my mother ... we shared ideas but she was much older than me ... through her, I realized my dreams and who I am”*. Themes highlighted through this relationship for Asima, included: prioritizing work, empowering the poor by creating work, generating ideas, creativity and innovation. These themes provided a base on which Asima made sense of her previous observations about the lives of people in Africa and related to disadvantaged people through the provision of work. Instead of considering herself as one of those in need of help, through this relationship she found the opportunity to identify more with the ‘team of helpers’.

Despite not having parents to support them, the participants seemed to still find other avenues for deriving meaning and support from these “absent but implicit” (White, 2000, p. 35) relationships by relating to their parents in metaphoric ways, honoring their presence and making it useful in challenging and overwhelming times. The salient influence of the role of family seemed to split among other relationships with teachers, managers and role models (mostly celebrities). Relating with different role models opened up new possibilities for direction and action.

The realm of relational challenges: Some relationships in the participants’ stories reflected relational challenges such as discouragement, oppression, constraint and being silenced. The dominant theme of this realm related to issues of power, oppression and abuse when participants came in contact with certain groups of people. Examples included: 1) the militant groups in Africa that caused their forced displacement: *“They attacked our village and everybody was running away. We just don’t know what was going on. I just throw everything and hide ... they were shooting and burning houses” [Maysa]*. 2) sexually abusive men: *“the man who was*

supposed to protect us tried to rape one of my sisters ... we just escape at night”, 3) community members and elders who enforced traditional ways of being for women:

... everybody was telling me, you are old, you have to get married ... they really discouraged me ... from thirteen, you are already married ... everybody was telling me: ‘you have to get married Maysa! You are getting old ... you will be useless’ [Maysa].

... [from a young age] they always think that you are already grown up woman. You should not wait any longer ... if you study, you will never work ... going to school, it will never take you anywhere. You never get a chance to work because everything is for men [Zafeera].

and 4) the abusive and discouraging attitudes of some people after resettlement:

He said: ‘You black people! This is not your home, go back to where you came from’ ... I just wanted to know what is the problem? ... why he was abusing us ... Is it color? I don’t know ... but I started to learn and study more about people [Maysa].

They say it’s almost impossible for you to do this in Australia ... they think I can’t, because I don’t have support or finance. But I told myself ‘I have to’!... I have to focus with my dreams and achieve my goals. I have to stand with it! [Zafeera]

The narratives of relational challenges were usually followed by two particular strategies:

1. reframing the challenge as learning opportunities and 2. remembering relationships which could counter-balance the oppressive influences. Both strategies assisted participants to focus on plans and find a voice to continue moving forward. Maysa reflected on her resistance against the challenge of the community to get married and how metaphoric, local and spiritual relationships assisted her to counter-balance the challenge and move forward:

There was a time I even tried to kill myself. But then I asked myself: No. If I kill myself, who will take care of my sisters?’ ... I just sat down and read a small Surah and I said god forgive

me and thought of my sisters, my mom and dad. My dad used to say: 'Just put in your mind that I'm with you and god is also with you'. So, when I remember some of my dad's words and I will be strong enough, I pray and cry. And I just went back home and they beat me, they do anything, I still smile and stay happy.

Borrowing strength from the realm of relational harmonies to balance the influence of oppressive and abusive relationships along their migration journey was common to the stories of all three women. Every relational challenge was followed by an explanation of finding resources from other relational domains including spiritual, cultural and broader social relationships.

Exploring the two distinct relational realms made the interplay of different voices, their sources or intensifiers explicit and visible. For instance, Maysa's explanations that negative relational experiences will not hinder her career development and may even provide a learning opportunity, showed how the voices of trial, initiation and agency have gained some momentum in Australia against the voices of powerlessness, confusion and struggle. Listening for relationships signified the importance of the next stage of listening as the three participants' plot of the stories and ways of relating were filled with relationships that were made meaningful when placed within broader cultural contexts and social structures.

5.3.4 Listening for placing participants within their cultural contexts and social structures

The participants narrated local, cultural and contextual stories based on twenty years of being witness to ethnic, religious and political conflict, war, travelling through different locations across Africa and meeting new people from other countries who shared similar contextual experiences in various social structures. These local cultural and contextual stories consisted of dominant narratives, cultural norms and values.

The other social structure simultaneously providing a dominant narrative was the portrayal of and exposure to Western work behaviors and values through media and social networks. Exposure to media, as a source of dominant macro narratives, must be considered in view of the participants living with hope and knowledge that one day they will live and work in a Western country. These social structures and contextually available dominant narratives, in addition to the normative contextual and cultural forces available to each participant individually (e.g., relational domains), facilitated the construction and extension of a unique guiding narrative for a future career plan.

To get a sense of how each participant's particular contexts and life events might have shaped her unique guiding narrative for a future career plan, it was important to sequentially and in detail consider those events, in light of dominant cultural narratives and social structures. As this detailed elaboration is outside the scope of this paper, only the placing of Maysa's stories within cultural contexts and social structures will be presented here.

Participants started their journey together when Maysa was 10, Zafeera 5 and Asima 4 years old. Maysa's age and the sequence of events initially became vital in defining a 'caring role' for her. Additionally, being older and spending more time in their own village, exposed Maysa to contextual and culturally acceptable feminine work values of their community (perhaps caring roles). Maysa lived, experienced and saw the world for some years through the lens of being a carer for her two sisters whom she felt constantly responsible for. This perceived sense of responsibility sensitized her to young African females' broader social issues such as female circumcision and trying to force young girls into early marriage both of which she experienced. The new context of the refugee camp still required Maysa to maintain her caring role in different ways. For Maysa, work in this new context slowly shifted its purpose from merely surviving to

social and community involvement and finally a degree of self-determination. This transition in the purpose of work was not completely aligned with some of the cultural stories of the African communities. For example, the presence of a restrictive dominant cultural narrative about the social participation of females was reflected through the stories of participants. Maysa said:

In Africa, most of the times we ladies, we women, people and society don't see us that we are so important ... even if you study hard, you are not that important. You will still get married and take care of your kids. So you can't do anything.

The meaning of 'career development' of women in the context of certain religious or tribal communities is limited to feminine work roles associated with the agrarian era. But even among such local communities, there were exceptions and differences. Maysa's realm of harmonious relationships provided her with a different set of dominant narratives. As a result of tensions between the different available social structures, Maysa's unique guiding narrative for a future career plan became one of 'helping through caring for women in Africa':

Things are almost similar in Africa ... the problems young babies and mothers are facing ... circumcision of ladies ... that's the reason why I have to count from the day I came here to six years ... because all my plans are about helping them all.

The different social structure and macro narratives operating in Australia distanced the participants from restrictive dominant social forces that limit the social participation of women. In this new context, participants actualized career plans that were previously partially constructed cast with uncertainty:

Coming here, it has really changed me and my life ... I was a traditional person ... it has really opened my mind. I see that age, it doesn't matter. You can even reach your thirties; you still get married. Australia really helped me open my mind and see my plans clear.

Maysa's new context weakened the alliance between the voices of powerlessness and confusion, and provided more space for the operation of internal and agentic voices of initiation, trial and agency.

Through this final stage of analysis, an exploration of dominant and normative narratives available within a diverse range of cultural contexts and social structures occurred. This exploration revealed a range of cultural and contextual stories from pre-, within- and post-refugee camp contexts and from different educational and vocational settings in which participants' career constructions constantly reformed and evolved. Finally, these cultural and contextual stories enriched the understanding of the interplay between different contrapuntal voices and relationships influential in the career development of participants.

5.3.5 Participants' reflections on the interviews

All three participants viewed the interviews as extremely helpful with feedback beyond researchers' expectations. Between the two interviews, Maysa initiated discussion with her case manager about university entry and subsequently met with a university admission consultant about potential entry pathways.

Before beginning the second interview, Asima reflected on her first interview experience:

I think it made me to be courageous ... and I've learned a lot and when I went back home, I was like "Oh, so I can talk" ... And I think it made me comfortable ... I was just smiling all the time, until my sisters were like: 'Wow. These days we haven't see you smile like this' ... it made me feel like, there are people like you, who are ready to listen to our stories and even if I didn't say everything, but I think we really need it. Because we have problems and we keep it to ourselves. We are just scared of sharing it.

Maysa, reflected on her first interview:

It was amazing. There are some things I didn't know, but I learned more about myself ... it opened my mind more; to know more ... some things become clear to me and some things also change ... like it became more clear for me that I really want to study nursing ... and my six year plan for going back also changed.

After completing all interviews, Zafeera said: *“This is the best thing that has happened to me after I came to Australia. I never had a chance to talk about these with someone”*.

Asima began the second interview with the goals of improving her speech and asking questions of the interviewer. Shifting the power dynamics of the interview, Asima took the role of the interviewer within its last few minutes. This repositioning beyond the role of a participant, was a re-clarification of her abilities and sense of self, contributing to the re-authoring of alternative life-career stories.

Participants who started with shaking hands, uncertain and confused attitudes, ended up with a shift in their positions. Such shifting in the positioning of participants after two interviews in a context filled with attention, curiosity and reflexivity, generated a sense of agency about their career development goals.

5.4 Discussion

This research provided a space for participants to voice their career-life story. The voice-centred relational method of analysis prioritized the subjectivities of the participants and their voices. By storying their career development, participants revealed the importance of socializations, social structures, dominant narratives, relationships and cultural and contextual domains, prior, across and post migration. Thus, the findings highlighted the importance of

career theory and practice taking account of contexts, cultures and relationships for understanding the career development of young people with refugee backgrounds.

The findings revealed the participants': 1. sense of self in transition, 2. their relational resourcefulness for self-reliance in times of tension and 3. the role of storytelling for giving voice to participants' experience of the recursive relational, cultural and contextual variables in shaping of their career interests and plans. Each will be discussed.

5.4.1 Sense of self in transition

Protracted displacement of youth with refugee backgrounds during their migration journey, transitioning through various locations and waiting for final resettlement, exposes them to a diverse range of cultural and contextual influences in their countries of origin, transitory and resettlement countries. Such multi-directional exposure to diverse social structures invites a constant sense of “in-betweenness and split existence” that often promotes “agency in waiting”, particularly among youth (Brun, 2015, pp. 19-21). Youth, as a transitory, heterogeneous process and a “relational concept” is constructed through social processes (Wyn & White, 1997, p. 10). Simultaneously being attached to past, present and anticipated future locations provides a foundation for generating narratives about future plans and possibilities based on many different and at times contradictory sources. Therefore, as participants' narratives indicated, two transitory processes were occurring at the same time for them: one related to the construction of narratives of self in the maturation process and the other related to narratives of self in transition through contexts. Simultaneously experiencing the two transitory processes and their associated conflicts and supports, influences the construction of transitory values, interests and aspirations.

Protracted displacement of youth with refugee backgrounds characterized by active waiting, hope and anticipation (Conlon, 2011) of future life and careers, directs their attention to

sources that envision and portray future possibilities in potential countries of resettlement. Yet these anticipated possibilities are still partially entangled with the cultural aspects of the previous stages of transition. Therefore, in actively waiting for a future in another location, there was a constant interaction between the participants' everyday lives and the stories circulating in local and non-local cultures about future possibilities. Particular attention to non-local and global stories reflects the importance of media and role models outside the context of refugee camps or African cultures. The interplay of cultural stories available within the context of Africa and the refugee camp with cultural stories presented through media, provide a constantly transforming lens by which life stories are interpreted and future possibilities evaluated. It was the explorative process of narrative inquiry that provided a stage for reflection upon such interplays, for re-storying new or forgotten narratives that could potentially provoke "agency in waiting" and re-contextualize it in the new environment of the resettlement country.

The influential nature of exposure to Western conceptualizations of career through available local or global stories brought some degree of clarity to anticipated future careers as well as tension to the participants' lives. As the career development of women is limited to work in the home and in families in agrarian contexts, construction of career identities based on social structures outside their local cultures invited tension.

5.4.2 Relational resourcefulness for self-reliance in times of tension

The stories of emerging tensions between the participants and their communities as a result of career internalizations that were not aligned with local cultural values, illustrated participants' relational resourcefulness for self-reliance in challenging times, when faced with "aversive relational influences" (Blustein, 2011, p. 6). Consistent with the conceptualization of vocational behavior as "an inherently relational act" within the frameworks of the "relational

theory of working” (Blustein, 2011, p. 1), when faced with tensions about their career choices and anticipations, participants looked for support and affirmation among various relational sources. Participants relied upon constructions of a ‘resilient self’ to transition from I-positions that initially sounded restrictive, incapable, passive and uncertain towards self-affirming, hopeful and active I-positions. To expedite such transition for situating themselves in preferred anticipated careers, participants drew upon metaphoric, local and global relational stories.

Metaphoric relationships were those related to their parents, family of origin and spiritual dimensions. Participants found that remembering what their parents directly told them in the past or might have anticipated for their future, assisted them in times of tension to transition from silencing to empowering voices. These ‘absent but implicit’ (White, 2000), narratives, usually rehearsed along with metaphoric spiritual narratives, were found to be most useful to move on in traumatic and chaotic situations. The powerful role of family in the career development of young people has been elaborated in some career theories (Brown, 2004). In a critical analysis of the role of family in the career development of people from diverse cultural backgrounds and social strata, Brown (2004) considered two important factors: a) “perceived parental support” and b) “extended family members” (p. 589-590). Considering that the participants had no parents or guardians across their journey, their narratives repeatedly illustrated the extraction of “perceived” relational support from absent, imaginary and metaphoric relationships (e.g., mostly with parents) as well as extended family members. The vacant role of parents was substituted by important others who occasionally took the role of family members in exposing new domains of work, affirming, rejecting or weakening certain decisions and actions. Such interactions became influential in shaping participants’ anticipations and internalizations about future career plans and ultimately contributing to the composition of

narratives of self in transition. It is important to note that in African culture the concept of extended family members is fluid and was evident when participants repeatedly named their friends, supportive elders and cousins, as sisters, uncles or aunts. Overall, ‘perceived parental support’ experienced through metaphoric relationships with their parents was contingent upon the availability of local supportive relationships.

Local relationships included participants’ interactions with other refugees, relatives in other countries, teachers, managers, employees of international organizations and community professionals (e.g., physicians, nurses, journalists). These relationships operated as I-position catalysts and assisted participants to reconsider preferred anticipated careers. However, it is noteworthy to consider the role of local relationships in exposing young people in refugee camps to global stories which are not aligned with local cultural values (e.g., a manager in camp who reinforces Maysa’s consideration of Angelina Jolie as a role model). In times of tension with local communities that rejected participants’ preferred anticipated careers, some local relationships supported them. The dualistic role of supportive local relationships, is not surprising as most people in refugee camps experience a ‘self in transition’, lost between social structures and dominant narratives that promote collectivist work values and also individualist - mostly Western- work values. The narrow boundary between relating to role models and local relationships was reflective of the recursive nature of local and global relationships.

Global relationships refer to relating with discourses that connect participants with sources of meaning through which contextual and cultural complications and conflicts can be understood. These understandings consequently propose potential future careers for negotiation between participants and their local relationships. This was evident in participants’ choices in relating with Black African role models and also global figures (e.g., Nelson Mandela, Kofi

Anan, Oprah Winfrey, Michelle Obama, Michael Jackson, Emmanuel Jal). Contrary to earlier studies that found limited access to occupational role models for disadvantaged young people (Ladany, Melincoff, Constantine, & Love, 1997), three factors contributed to broadening the participants' access to occupational role models: 1) expansion of technological advances even into the refugee camps of Africa, 2) the absence of parents promoting the need to relate with various other meaningful relationships while in transition, and 3) the significance of role models in the discursive context of refugee camps. The richness of both local and global relationships stories, explains how youth with refugee backgrounds, particularly those who have experienced protracted displacement and active waiting, manage their sense of self in society by relating to various meaningful relationships and through this relating, exercise communication in different ways (Daiute, 2010). Participants identified with aspects of role models' stories that reflected a transition from identical or semi-identical contexts and underprivileged situations to anticipated future contexts and situations; from voicelessness to finding voice. The act of storying such identifications and relations within various transitory contexts reflects the social-relational nature of participants' anticipated career narratives.

5.4.3 Storytelling and giving voice to participants

Facilitating the process of storytelling as an act of inquiry into the career narratives of participants exhibited examples of the five process constructs of reflection, meaning making, connectedness, learning and agency, inherent in the practice of narrative career counseling (Abkhezr & McMahon, 2017; McMahon et al., 2012). Additionally, the curiosity and tentative listening posed by the interviewer, allowed participants to experience a relational power dynamic which was different from many of their previous interview experiences (Abkhezr & McMahon, 2017).

During the interviews, which were in no way intended as an intervention, participants reflected on and made meaning of various critical moments, relationships, social and contextual structures throughout their migration journey. They also made connections between stories that reflected various aspects of their life, interests, values and anticipated future directions. They learned more about themselves and the stories contributing to the construction of their anticipated future directions and plans. The position of “perspectivism in interpretation” (Besley, 2002, p. 131) inherent in narrative approaches (e.g., storytelling), promoted an awareness for participants about a multitude of contributing factors to their career development. Therefore, consistent with social constructionist and constructivist theories, storytelling operated as a practice of reflexivity over the relational, social, cultural and contextual dimensions of participants’ career development.

The experience of reflexivity is often linked with agency (Savickas, 2016). Facilitating a sense of agency, defined as the “sensed capacity to enact a desired role” (Cochran, 2007, p. 14), is an important goal of career counseling. In the context of youth with refugee backgrounds, often with collectivist cultural backgrounds, agency is conceptualized as a relational concept (Doucet & Mauthner, 2008). Participants’ experience of recursiveness between various aspects of their migration journey re-contextualized and translated their sense of ‘agency in waiting’ into agency after resettlement. Participants were reminded that they had not been passively waiting for their current situation, but have been active participants in the construction of such internalizations and stories.

Therefore, a ‘voice friendly space’, sensitive to subjective, cultural and contextual experiences of participants whose voices might have been lost or silenced, and the experience of storying career development throughout the migration journey (which is by itself another act of

socialization), had two important implications for participants: a) a reconstruction of career stories and plans following a de-construction that occurs through the research process and b) re-vocalizing or finding new or silenced voices as a result of such reconstructions.

5.5 Implications for practice, theory and research

Loss of voice and a decline in sense of agency becomes very likely for youth with refugee backgrounds, due to the development of a “culture of disbelief” and “defeat” (Harris, 2002, p. 4) through the long journey of protracted displacement. Being invited to participate in research interviews allowed participants to experience themselves as worthy of providing opinions about their skills, strengths and knowledge (Gabrium & Holstein, 2012) that carried them through such unique and challenging transitions. Such experience transformed participants’ subjectivity from passive respondents to active “constructive practitioners of experiential knowledge” (Gabrium & Holstein, 2012, p. 32).

This research was not intended as and does not claim to be an intervention. However, the findings indicated that exploring career development through storytelling in the form of narrative inquiry facilitated by semi-structured interviews benefitted participants by re-vocalizing silenced or diminished voices, finding new voices and enhancements of their sense of agency after resettlement through a re-contextualization of ‘agency in waiting’. During the interviews, there were occasions where the constructs of narrative career counseling manifested within the stories told by the participants. This suggests the potential usefulness of narrative approaches to inquiry and counseling when working with young people from refugee backgrounds as such approaches recognize the importance of cultural, contextual, relational and social considerations for understanding their career development. Therefore, narrative career counseling, grounded in

social constructionist and constructivist theories, may be an appropriate approach for career practitioners to use when working with young people from refugee backgrounds.

The current research is contributing new knowledge to the field of career development about a neglected population, demonstrating how career development research can be an enterprise that “cuts across privilege and identity statuses” (Duffy et al., 2016, p. 127).

Furthermore, examining the qualitative data related to the career development of this neglected population through VCRA for the first time, expanded on the relational and contextual components of their career development.

5.6 Limitations and future research

As an exploratory qualitative study, this research aims to expand knowledge about and possibilities of narrative inquiry with a group that has been neglected in career research. This research could be seen as a first step among many that need to be taken, before developing interventions for young people with refugee backgrounds whose unique life and career transitions require particular attention that can be best achieved by experience near and qualitative research. However, there were limitations to this study. One limitation is related to axiological assumptions of qualitative research which emphasize the possibility of the researcher’s values and worldviews interfering with objective analysis and reporting. The first author who conducted the interviews also conducted the analysis of data which might have resulted in biases, reducing the confirmability of findings. To enhance confirmability, the first author employed reflexivity strategies such as keeping a “reflexive journal” including “data reduction and reconstruction, synthesizing strategies, process notes, and materials relating to intentions” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 319) throughout the research process. In his encounters

with a co-author after transcribing the first interview, the first author discussed his process notes, reflexive journal material, intentions, ideas and potential questions for the second interview. Additionally, the team of authors cross checked the data analysis several times, raised questions and provided feedback to ensure maximum confirmability and trustworthiness of the findings. Future research could include larger samples, male participants and young people from a wider range of cultural backgrounds and diverse migration journeys.

5.7 Conclusion

Moving and anticipated movement through various geographical, social and cultural locations is the nature of protracted displacement. This protracted migration journey may weaken youth with refugee background's sense of agency or silence their voices. Exploring the career development of youth with refugee backgrounds needs to give voice to forgotten and weakened stories of hope, skills and experience by remaining sensitive to the cultural and contextual elements of various stages of the migration journey. Narrative career interviews that facilitated the exploration of participants' career development in this research manifested as a voice giving process that enhanced recently resettled youth with refugee backgrounds' sense of agency.

Epilogue

Asima who recently rented a shop, is doing well in her business. She plans to continue working and when things are settled, begin studies in business management. Zafeera is exploring her options for gaining university entry to study international relations. Maysa is studying a certificate in Aged Care that ultimately can articulate entry into university to study a bachelor of nursing and midwifery.

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Chapter 6: FUTURE CAREER AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Paper 4:

Abkhezr, P., McMahon, M., Glasheen, K., & Campbell, M. (2017). An exploration of the implications of participating in narrative inquiry for young people with refugee backgrounds: Convergences between narrative research and practice. Manuscript in preparation.

Relevance to thesis

Corresponding with the second aim of this research, this chapter will explore the implications of participating in qualitative research in the form of narrative inquiry for the young participants of this research. To tell the thesis story, the potential convergences between narrative research and narrative practice will be considered in depth. This chapter will form the basis of a future paper to be submitted for publication.

6.1 Introduction

A dichotomous relationship between qualitative research and intervention seems to be taken for granted. The distinct boundary between research and intervention might be more visible in the context of positivist research that aims to achieve generalisability and certainty about the findings, through an assumingly objective, distanced, neutral and disengaged position about the participants, their lived experiences and stories (Chase, 2005; Cho & Trent, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). However, qualitative research designed for exploring and inquiring into lived experiences and narratives of participants might have the potential to cross the boundaries with narrative practice and intervention (Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen, & Liamputtong, 2006; Richardson, 2005), particularly in the case of disadvantaged populations as participants (Warr, 2004) as they might have had fewer opportunities to voice their experiences, feel heard and validated.

Many forms of qualitative research encourage researchers to remain curious about the implications of participating in qualitative research for participants, and even consider this curiosity a natural response of the inquirer who seeks to maintain an ethical stance towards the participants who share aspects of their lived experience (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). “Thinking in responsive and responsible ways” (Clandinin, 2006, p. 53) about the implications of qualitative research on the lives and experiences of participants who are actively engaged in the process of inquiry (Huber & Clandinin, 2002) obliges researchers to reflect and examine the boundaries of their work with participants, in particular with those participants who come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The two areas of constructivist and social constructionist qualitative research and narrative practices in career development will be overviewed here. This is to build the rationale for this part of the research which explored the implications of participating in qualitative research using narrative inquiry for young participants with refugee backgrounds before exploring the overlapping boundaries between the two areas of research and practice.

6.1.1 Constructivist and social constructionist qualitative research

Qualitative research and inquiry informed by constructivist and social constructionist worldviews contemplate the construction of reality and constitution of self as an agent based on social processes, relationships and the discursive contexts in which people interact with each other (Gergen, 1994; Richardson, 2005; White, 2005; Young & Valach, 2004). In many forms of qualitative research informed by constructivist and social constructionist worldviews, for the purpose of inquiry, participants' subjectivities are accessed by the researcher through interacting with them. Through these interactions, participants are engaged in conversations that operationalise the process constructs of reflection, meaning making, connectedness and agency which are central to constructivist and social constructionist philosophies (Burr, 2015; Gergen, 2001). In particular, social constructionist epistemological conceptualisations of reality, consider face- to -face interactions and conversations as human beings' primary reality construction tool (Richardson, 2005; Shotter, 1993a, 1993b). Interviews, as an exemplar of these face- to -face interactions and conversations, are one of the most widely used tools for exploration of lived experience and participants' life stories and perspectives in research (Gabrium & Holstein, 2012; Hewitt, 2007). Therefore, participation in the social, relational and the discursive context of research interviews has the potential to become reality-constructing and "self-constitutive" (Richardson, 2005; White, 2005; Young & Valach, 2004).

More recent re-conceptualisations of knowledge production within the discursive context of research interviews (Chase, 2011) have urged a reconsideration of the interview enterprise that was once considered only as a “unilaterally guided mean of excavating information” from participants (Gabrium & Holstein, 2012, p. 27). Within the recent narrative turn in qualitative research (Gabrium & Holstein, 2009; Hyvärinen, 2008; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007) a more active role for interview participants is assumed and the potential for “active narrativity of the enterprise” (Gabrium & Holstein, 2012, p. 28) is highlighted. Qualitative research informed by the narrative turn considers participants’ narrative productions through research as not only a “form of re-description” but as an active practice of knowledge production (Chase, 2011; Kreiswirth, 2000, p. 293). Therefore, within interviews that inquire into narratives of participants’ lived experiences, participants are seen as engaged in the act of producing “subjects, texts, knowledge, and authority” (Briggs, 2007, p. 552).

As a result of the constantly unfolding questions and answers of “a non-hierarchical” (De Haene, 2010, p. 6) and “egalitarian” (Kvale, 2006, p. 481) research interview, and the trusting, caring and collaborative researcher-researched relationship, a reflexive space emerges within which narratives become formulated, reshaped and restructured (Gabrium & Holstein, 2012). Engaging in such active productions during research interviews activates a constructive and agentic role for participants in relation to their narrative reproductions that could potentially enhance their sense of “narrative agency” (Gabrium & Holstein, 2012, p. 33). It is through the privileging of participants’ agency during interviews (Borer & Fontana, 2012) that a potential convergence between research interviews informed by constructivist and social constructionist worldviews with narrative practice and intervention might occur (De Haene, 2010; Dickson-Swift et al., 2006; Gabrium & Holstein, 2009a, 2009b, 2012; Richardson, 2005). However,

qualitative research informed by constructivist and social constructionist worldviews has many forms of inquiry, one of which is narrative inquiry that has even further potential for crossing the boundary with narrative practice.

Narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2013) is a form of qualitative research that aligns with the recent narrative turn for inquiring into participants' lived experiences and honours and prioritises "lived experience as a source of important knowledge and understanding" (Clandinin, 2006, 2013, p. 17). For its exploratory purposes, narrative inquiry demands the inquirer (researcher) to get as close as possible to the subjectivities of participants' lived experiences and stay "attentive to the intersubjective, relational, embedded spaces" in which life stories are lived and constructed (Clandinin, 2007, 2013). To access and understand participants' different social constructions of reality and the contexts and cultures in which their life stories have been constructed, through their chain of questionings, narrative inquirers engage in a form of collaborative co-construction with participants (Clandinin, 2013; Trahar, 2008, 2013). This form of questioning however, requires the establishment of a collaborative research relationship.

For narrative inquirers to achieve a collaborative research relationship, the "researcher's capacity to be empathic, nonjudgmental, concerned, tolerant, and emotionally responsive" is prioritised and therefore narrative inquirers are required to develop and maintain rapport with each participant (Josselson, 2007, p. 539). Josselson (2007) concludes that in the context of narrative inquiry, improving the degree of rapport and trust in the researcher-researched relationship increases participants' degree of "self-revealing" and, thus, a greater degree of trust could be given to data (p. 539). Operationalising such relational qualities and capacities in narrative inquiry challenges the concept of professional detachment (Lupton, 1994; Trent & Cho, 2014) intended for certain other types of research (e.g., quantitative and positivist research).

Considering that researchers are repeatedly advised and cautioned about remaining within the boundaries of a “professional researcher” (Dickson-Swift et al., 2006, p. 855), enhancing the narrative agency for participants due to the social, relational and contextual aspects of narrative inquiry, could further challenge the “traditional notions of boundaries” between research and intervention (Richardson, 2005, p. 3). In the context of this research on the career development of young people from refugee backgrounds, to illustrate the potential for impingement between qualitative research using narrative inquiry with narrative practice in career counselling, the next section briefly overviews narrative approaches to career counselling.

6.1.2 Narrative approaches to career counselling

New trends in career counselling have also taken a narrative turn within the last few decades (Hartung, 2013; McMahon, 2014). Narrative career counselling is also based on constructivist, social constructionist worldviews and emphasises reflection and revision rather than decision making (Savickas et al., 2009). In an uncertain, unstable and rapidly changing world of work, career counsellors are encouraged to concentrate more on facilitating meaning making and reflective spaces within the counselling process than on choice (Krieshok, 2003; Richardson, 2009). An important goal of the change triggering process of narrative career counselling is enhancing a client’s sense of agency (Cochran, 1997; LaPointe, 2010; Young & Domene, 2011).

As clients are invited to tell their life-career stories and counsellors work with them collaboratively to co-construct, de-construct, and re-construct these stories (Abkhezr & McMahon, 2017), a re-authoring of life-career stories occurs that aims to enhance agency, and prepare people to “keep on keeping on” in disorienting situations (Reid & West 2016, p. 4).

However, just like narrative inquiry, narrative career counselling has its own relational dynamics.

The relationships between narrative career counsellors and their clients are egalitarian and collaborative and career counsellors display characteristics of a “curious and tentative inquirer” (McMahon & Patton, 2002, p. 59), an “audience” (McLeod, 1996, p. 182), “attentive listener” (McMahon et al., 2012, p. 138) and “co-traveller” (Spangar, 2017, p. 148). Narrative career counsellors display relational qualities such as empathy, flexibility and mattering (Amundson, 2009) so that trust is established (Abkhezr & McMahon, 2017). The characteristics of the career counselling relationship and its aim of enhancing agency resemble the relational aspects of narrative research and inquiry as well as their potential outcomes. Privileging participants’ narrative agency during qualitative research and narrative inquiry (Borer & Fontana, 2012) facilitates “a voice giving process” (Abkhezr et al., in press, p. 35) for participants. Such a process is also aligned with the expected aims and outcomes of narrative approaches to career counselling. As career counselling focuses on assisting people with their career decisions and transitions, it overlaps with narrative inquiry that investigates and explores career transitions. Such blurring of boundaries between narrative inquiry and narrative career counselling could expand with participants who might have been disadvantaged, marginalised and disempowered such as young people with refugee backgrounds (Abkhezr et al., in press) for whom finding voice is a crucial challenge. Finding voice is considered to be linked with enhancements of narrative agency (Gabrium & Holstein, 2012).

6.1.3 Young people with refugee backgrounds’ narrative agency after resettlement

As agency should be evaluated in context (Schoon, 2007), it is crucial to understand the agency of young people with refugee backgrounds after resettlement in the context of their often-

protracted migration journey (Abkhezr & McMahon, 2017; Brun, 2015) and the complex challenges of their pre-, within- and post-migration processes which can interfere with their sense of agency over their stories (Abkhezr, McMahon, & Rossouw, 2015; Abkhezr & McMahon, 2017; Abkhezr et al., in press; Beadle, 2014; Kogen, 2014; Lee, 2013). Although some aspects of prolonged waiting in transitory countries and refugee camps might promote what has been considered as a sense of “agency in waiting”, the nature of protracted migration and spending long times in transitory contexts overshadows young people with refugee backgrounds’ sense of agency with uncertainty (Brun, 2015, p. 19). Experiences such as trauma, torture, loss, rape, displacement experienced by these young people may result in self-silencing and a loss of voice (Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg, & Bertsch, 2003; Wessells, 2004). This sense of voicelessness combined with the lack of career support services before resettlement (Beadle, 2014; Hughes & Scott, 2013), together make young people with refugee backgrounds’ future career planning throughout the migration journey a personal process that occurs mostly in silence, overshadowed with uncertainty (Correa-Velez, Gifford, & Barnett, 2010; Eastmond, 2007). In their previous interviews (often limited to interviews with UNHCR employees, immigration officers, physicians or psychologists for the purpose of processing of their cases with UNHCR and the government of resettlement countries) young people with refugee backgrounds have mostly experienced interviews as an occasion in which they are passive respondents to authority figures. Through their previous interviews, these young people have faced interviewers who position themselves only as experts and consider interviewees only as those who provide answers in the form of information (Gabrium & Holstein, 2012) while building rapport and relationships are not intended or prioritised. There is also an expectation of recounting the traumatic and negative parts of their stories in order to be resettled. By contrast,

research interviews based on narrative inquiry aim to establish collaboration and partnership between the interviewer and interviewee in an egalitarian relationship. This might be surprising and unexpected for young people with refugee backgrounds who may see the research interviewers as interested and fascinated by their responses. What might be even more surprising for these young people in narrative inquiry relates to the curiosities of the researcher over previous positive experiences and stories of skills and strength.

As a result of participating in this research, the participants were encouraged to tell their life-career stories through responding to narrative inquiry. Therefore, an exploration of the implications of engaging these young people in the reflective procedures of narrative inquiry, with a consideration of the potential blurred boundaries between qualitative research and narrative practice is essential and is the focus of this chapter.

6.1.4 Aim of the research

This chapter, addresses the second aim of this research that was to explore the implications of participating in qualitative research using narrative inquiry for young people with refugee backgrounds. Better understanding of such potential implications for participants could add to the limited existing literature on the potentially overlapping boundaries between qualitative narrative research that explores career development and narrative intervention such as narrative career counselling.

6.2 Method

The method section of this part of the research is identical to that explained in chapter four. However, a brief description of the sampling process and the five participants of this research will be presented next, followed by a description of the instruments used for this phase

of the research. The procedures were also identical to that explained in chapter four.

Subsequently the analytical procedures and the findings will be presented followed by a discussion.

6.2.1 Sampling

Subsequent to ethical approval to conduct the research from the relevant university ethics committee, five young participants with refugee backgrounds were recruited on a voluntary basis by purposive and snowball sampling through community organisations providing services for young people with refugee backgrounds. Purposive sampling was initially chosen as a non-probability sampling method due to the nature of research and particular characteristics of participants (e.g., refugee and resettlement experience, age, English language skills) (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Three of the participants were recruited through purposive sampling and two were recruited through snowball sampling.

6.2.2 Participants

Five participants, four females and one male, aged between 20 and 28 who had resettled in Australia within the year prior to the research were recruited on a voluntary basis. A brief introduction about each participant was provided in the method chapter and Table 6.1 provides demographic information about the five participants.

Table 6.1

Participants' demographics

| Pseudonyms* | Time in Australia | Continent of origin | Gender | Religion | Age |
|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------|--------|-----------|-----|
| Maysa | 6 months | Africa | Female | Muslim | 28 |
| Zafeera | 6 months | Africa | Female | Muslim | 23 |
| Asima | 6 months | Africa | Female | Muslim | 22 |
| Kali | 1 year | Africa | Female | Christian | 20 |
| Amir | 6 months | Africa | Male | Christian | 21 |

*Note: These pseudonyms were chosen with each participant's approval

6.2.3 Instruments

The instruments used in this research were semi-structured narrative inquiry interviews and the Future Career Autobiography (Rehfluss, 2009, 2015).

6.2.3.1 Semi-structured narrative inquiry interviews

Participants completed two semi-structured narrative inquiry interviews about their life-career stories and future career plans (Abkhezr et al., in press). This chapter focuses particularly on the potential changes that might have occurred to participants' future career plans as a result of narrating their life-career stories and their evolving future career plans through the semi-structured narrative inquiry interviews. Table 6.2 lists some of the questions that were asked during the two semi-structured narrative inquiry interviews that were related to participants' future career plans.

Table 6.2

Questions related to past and current future career plans in the first interview and relevant sample questions of the second interview

First Interview Questions

1. What are your future career plans?
 2. How did your future career plans might have changed over time as a result of work experiences or other incidents?
 3. What sort of influence did your parents or siblings have on your future career plans?
 4. How do you think your role models might have influenced your future career plans?
 5. What are your next steps in order to achieve your future career plans?
-

Second Interview Sample Questions

1. What do you think about our last meeting? What sort of ideas, might have come up for you as a result of our last week conversation? (*similar for all participants*)
 2. How do you think, this achievement could be helpful for you in getting closer to what you are planning?
 3. How do you see the role of religion in your life, and in general, how much do you think it is related to some of your career plans?
 4. How do you think this connection that you see in yourself with the Kenyan culture has influenced your life and perhaps some of your career plans?
 5. How do you think the people you encountered and worked with have influenced your future career plans?
 6. How do you think your work experiences in so many different places have influenced your future career plans?
 7. What is the connection between singing as a passion or as an interest for you, that you are quiet seriously following it, and your future career plans in community services?
 8. Coming to Australia instead of America, do you think this changed some of your plans for the future?
-

To explore the boundary between narrative inquiry and narrative intervention such as career counselling, potential changes that might have occurred to the narratives of participants about their future career plans as a result of participating in the semi-structured narrative inquiry

interviews needed to be examined. To examine potential changes in the narratives of participants, the Future Career Autobiography (FCA; Rehfuss, 2009) was used.

6.2.3.2 Future Career Autobiography

The Future Career Autobiography (FCA) was introduced in career counselling as a measure of narrative change following career intervention that “collects and highlights an individual’s personal and career motives, values, and direction in a narrative form” (Rehfuss, 2009, p. 83). Despite the present research not being an intervention, its procedures that engaged participants actively in their storytellings ethically necessitates that the narrative inquirer remain curious about the implications of such engagements for participants (Josselson, 2007). Considering the issues of boundaries between qualitative narrative research and narrative practice, and that the reflexive and empathic environment of qualitative narrative research could potentially enhance narrative agency (Gabrium & Holstein, 2012), this research investigated participants’ narratives of future career plans in written forms before and after the process of narrative inquiry to clarify whether any form of narrative change has occurred.

Acknowledging the qualitative nature of narratives, it is important that “qualitative narrative tools” are used to measure “narrative change” (Rehfuss, 2009, p. 82). Because the FCA is a qualitative strategy to engage participants in narrative and written forms of storytelling about their future, it was relevant in this research as a mean towards further narrative inquiry. The FCA’s purpose is to facilitate expressions of current and future career aspirations and narratives of the participants in a “brief, focused and concise” way, so that potential changes through time could be compared (Rehfuss, 2009, p. 84).

In career counselling, the FCA is designed to be used once before and once after an intervention (Rehfuss, 2009) and each time invites participants to write a new paragraph about

their future career narrative (Reh fuss & Di Fabio, 2012). Each participant is given a sheet titled “Future Career Autobiography” with an instruction: “Please use this page to write a brief paragraph about where you hope to be in life and what you hope to be doing occupationally [five years from now]” (Reh fuss, 2009, pp. 83-84). In the present research, participants wrote their FCA paragraphs in the beginning and at the end of this research, once before the first semi-structured narrative career interview and once after all other steps of this qualitative research were completed.

As qualitative researchers and narrative inquirers are encouraged to remain curious and to think in “responsive and responsible ways” (Clandinin, 2006, p. 53) about the implications of engaging participants within the reflexive space of narrative inquiry, participants’ potential narrative changes were explored through the application of FCA. The procedures of collecting data for this part of the research were identical to what has been outlined earlier in the method chapter (Section 4.2.4 of Chapter 4). The analytical procedures through which potential changes within the narratives of participants in FCA paragraphs were explored, will be described next.

6.2.4 Analysis

Data from the semi-structured narrative inquiry interviews were first analysed using Voice Centred Relational Analysis (Brown & Gilligan, 1993; Gilligan et al., 2003; Mauthner & Doucet, 1998) and were reported earlier in Chapter 5, a paper accepted for publication in the *Journal of Vocational Behavior* (Abkhezr, et al., in press). However, in the present chapter parts of the data from the semi-structured narrative inquiry interviews that were related to the participants’ future career plans were re-analysed, using a thematic analysis to clarify and enrich the narrative analysis of the participants’ Future Career Autobiographies. Finally, a narrative analysis of the Future Career Autobiographies provided evidence on potential narrative changes

that might have occurred for participants' narratives of future career plans as a result of participating in qualitative narrative research and therefore the implications of participating in qualitative research using narrative inquiry were explored.

6.2.4.1 The thematic analysis of the semi-structured interview excerpts

From the transcripts of the two semi-structured narrative inquiry interviews of each of the five participants, excerpts that were related to their future career plans, intentions and goals were extracted and copy/pasted into a separate document. As a result, a separate document was generated for each participant that listed narratives about her/his future plans, intentions, actions, goals, values and inspirations that were storied and explained in the two semi-structured interviews. A thematic analysis was then conducted on these extracted interview materials to identify themes and sub-themes that were influential in shaping of the future career planning of the participants. The thematic analysis was conducted based on the “six phases of thematic analysis” introduced by Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 87). For this purpose, an “inductive approach” to thematic analysis was used in which the process of coding does not try to fit data into a “pre-existing coding frame” and as a result, this form of thematic analysis is “data-driven” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 83). The six phases of the thematic analysis of the excerpts of the semi-structured narrative inquiry interviews are described next.

Phase 1 - Familiarisation with data: In this phase, the researcher primarily is concerned with becoming familiar with the data. For this purpose, the researcher read and re-read the interviews several times. In addition, this phase of the analysis was strengthened by the researcher transcribing the interview material himself. This is an important strategy that could facilitate “close-reading” and enhancement of “interpretative skills” needed for data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 88). Furthermore, analysing the data once before through the process

of a Voice Centred Relation Analysis significantly enhanced the researcher's familiarity with data.

Phase 2 - Generating initial codes: After familiarisation with the data the next phase is generating initial codes attributed to different segments of the text. These codes are generated to organise data into meaningful groups. As an inductive approach to thematic analysis was employed in this research, the process of coding was more “data-driven” rather than “theory-driven” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 89). The coding process aims to eventually form a basis for repeated patterns across the data. The coding was conducted manually by highlighting segments of the text with particular colour codes. Some examples of the codes that were generated include: future career titles, future workplaces, university degree, influential people, encouraging people, value outcome, social outcome, working as an instrument.

Phase 3 - Searching for themes: This phase involves collating all the identified codes and sorting them into the broader level of themes. Combining codes that seem to be similar and considering them as overarching themes or subthemes happened at this phase. To do this, in a separate document all similar codes were grouped into theme-piles. This is the phase in which besides the main themes, some sub-themes might also be identified. Sub-themes are also generated at this phase and are essentially useful for “giving structure” to a theme, as well as “demonstrating the hierarchy of meaning within the data” (Braun & Clarke, p. 92). This phase is completed when an initial list of potential themes and sub-themes are generated. Nothing is abandoned at this stage, as some of the potential themes and sub-themes might be “combined, refined and separated, or discarded” at later phases (p. 91).

Phase 4 - Reviewing themes: In this phase, a process of reviewing and refining potential themes occurs. Some potential themes might merge and form another theme and some potential

themes might be broken down into two themes or sub-themes. As coding is considered “an ongoing organic process” (Braun & Clarke, p. 91), the codes that were developed and compiled within the previous phases to form a basis for the themes, might need to be re-coded to ascertain that the themes are consistent with the codes. Furthermore, any additional data within themes that has been missed in earlier coding stages, might need to be coded and therefore a new theme or subtheme might be identified. It is at this stage that a thematic map (Figure 6.1) might be drawn and reworked if there is any newly identified themes and subthemes or if any of the themes are to be merged together and form a new theme or to be broken down.

Phase 5 - Defining and naming themes: Once a final thematic map is developed (Figure 6.1), a process of “defining and refining” occurs in which the essence of each theme is identified and different aspects of data captured by each theme are determined (Braun & Clarke, p. 92). The overall explanations that link each theme and its sub-themes to the research aims are developed and written within this phase and each theme’s “scope and content” need to be described succinctly (Braun & Clarke, p. 92). The working titles of each theme and sub-theme might go through a process of renaming if needed. In this research, the findings from the thematic analysis of the semi-structured narrative inquiry interviews revealed four major themes consisting of eleven subthemes on future career plans of the participants. Figure 6.1 lists all the themes and subthemes. A list of some of the codes as well as their relevant sample participants’ comments that were identified and used for generating the themes and sub-themes is included in Appendix G.

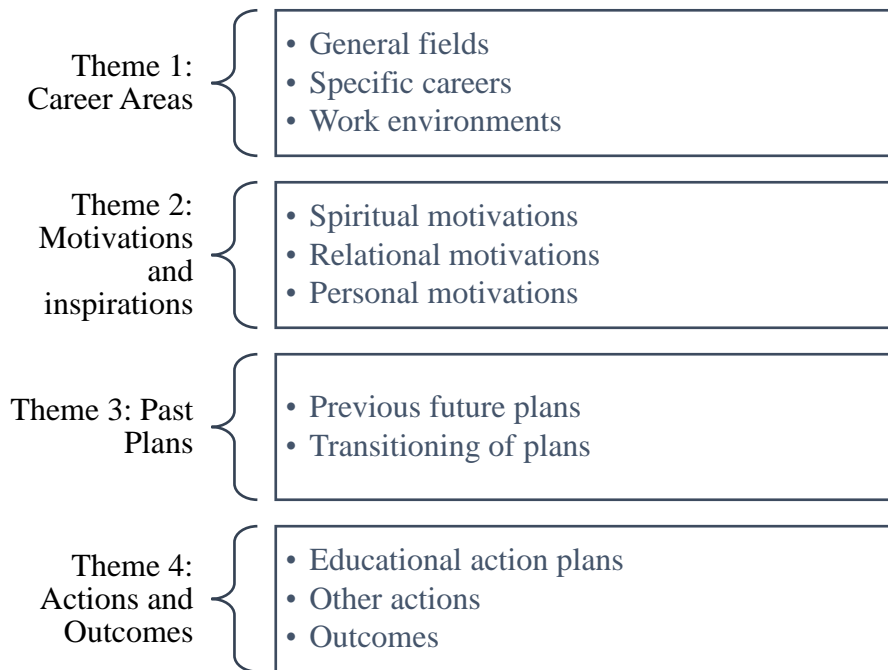


Figure 6.1 Themes and subthemes that emerged from the thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews

Phase 6 - Producing the report: The final phase involves writing-up the final analysis as a “concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive and interesting account of the story the data” revealed within and across themes (Braun & Clarke, p. 93). The four major themes and their accompanying sub-themes are briefly explained here.

Theme 1: Career Areas

The theme of career areas, consists of the participants’ comments about the fields in which they see themselves working in the future. During the semi-structured narrative inquiry interviews, participants talked about plans for specific or general types of work and particular places they hope to work in the future. As a result, three subthemes emerged for this theme: 1) General fields, 2) Specific careers, and 3) Work environments. Almost all participants’ future career planning involved the three subthemes.

General fields: This subtheme reflects participants' general interests towards broad fields of work such as community services or women's health. In terms of general fields of interest, Amir had a general interest in the field of Information Technology and wanted to "*design games, web pages and applications*". Maysa had general interests in the two areas of social-political reform and women's health: "*... the other thing is when we are all together, the generation coming up, we will try our best ... to change our leaders, like whatever it is that they are doing, it is not good*" and "*all my plans are to help the babies, the mothers, for giving birth. That's really a problem ... the circumcision of girls*".

Specific careers: The subtheme of specific careers refers to specific titles or roles that were mentioned by the participants as desired future options. During her first interview, Maysa's specific career was more related to becoming an entrepreneur and activist in the health field:

We open up [a hospital] for women's difficulties in giving birth [as a result of] the circumcision and ... then maybe we can hire some professionals to help these women to give birth. Yeah, that's what we want to do.

However, later in the second interview, she mentioned some more specific roles such as an aged care nurse, midwife or gynaecologist to lend support to her entrepreneurial career in the women's health field: "*aged care is also one of the things that I'm thinking about. If I achieve all my goals, it is one of the things I want to be able to do*" and "*I just thought of doing midwifery ... so that I will be helping them and ... if I go back also maybe do the campaign and talk to them*".

Work environments: This subtheme reflects participants' workplace preferences such as the type of workplace and its mission, values, culture and general environment, as well as naming a specific organisation. Kali and Zafeera both mentioned having intentions to work with

UNHCR or other similar organisations who work with people seeking asylum and refugees who live in camps in Africa. Kali explained her persisting plan to work with UNHCR:

I was twelve years old. Our teacher usually asked: “What you want to be in future?” I said:

“I want to work with UNHCR.” Most of our teachers, they usually ask that question ...

Everyone wanted to be a lawyer, a doctor, but I said: “I want to work with UNHCR.”

Maysa planned to work in a hospital in Africa, while Amir had a different work environment in mind: *“I mean to get a white-collar job in the future. I want to work as a professional ... I want to work as someone with people ... with papers, computers”*. To story their plans for general fields, specific careers or a particular work environment, the participants talked about various sources of motivations and inspirations that influenced their plans.

Theme 2: Motivations and inspirations

The participants' future career plans relied on the support they storied from various sources of motivation and inspiration. Participants repeatedly drew support for their future career plans from spiritual sources and their faith, while at the same time relying on personal inspirational stories and stories of relating with people who became influential in shaping a particular plan. Three subthemes were identified for the major theme of motivations and inspirations: 1) Spiritual motivations, 2) Personal motivations and 3) Relational motivations.

Spiritual motivations: This subtheme concerns participants' considerations of the role faith and spirituality in their future career planning. For example, Asima talked about the role of faith in planning for her future career and how, despite her own planning, she is aware that god might have planned differently for her and she is therefore prepared to adapt her plans accordingly in the future:

I know what we plan is not what god plans for us. So, you just put your list down and do it. And I'm aware that the road does not go straight. There are corners and I'm ready to pass through them. So, that's why I know, I plan this but god plans another one for me.

Relational motivations: This subtheme reflects the motivational support that the participants drew from experiences of relating with important others in their life. Kali storied her father's continuous support of her future career plans despite some other people's discouraging words:

My dad always told me: "No. If it's your plan to do the thing that you have planned in your life, you must remain with it. No one can change your mind ... if you are willing to do community service, you can do that one".

Asima also storied how her teachers were influential in shaping her future career plans: "*I remember my teacher used to tell me: 'Politicians usually love mathematics' ... because of my love towards mathematics another teacher told me: 'I think you are going to work in bank'.*" As apparent in Asima's words, throughout the storying of motivations and inspirations that influenced their career planning, participants talked about their past plans and the changing nature of these plans.

Personal motivations: The subtheme of personal motivations consists of the participants' inner experiences in the context of migration that have inspired them to continue working towards their anticipated career plans, despite the challenges. Within the last minutes of her second interview, Asima revisited her motivations and inspirations for achieving her future career plans and this time she relied more on her own personal story of once being a refugee and making meaning of that story:

Most people believe if you come from a refugee background, you will never succeed. But they forget that if you come from that, you succeed more. Because you really have the energy, you wanna fight this life, you wanna overcome all the difficulties, you wanna reach the point where you wanna have things that you didn't have. So, it makes you build yourself and be who you wanna be.

Theme 3: Past Plans

At times, shaping of the participants' current future career plans were associated with their past plans. Despite realising that their past plans for the future were different from their current future plans, when narrating their current future career plans, some of the participants made connections between their previous future plans and their current future plans. Therefore, two subthemes shaped this major theme: 1) Previous future plans and 2) Transitioning of plans.

Previous future plans: This subtheme concerned the participants' referrals to specific titles they had in mind in the past. Zafeera talked about previous plans of wanting to become a model: *"I always told my sisters that I want to be a model, a supermodel"*. Asima mentioned that she had wanted to become a politician and later a banker. Maysa also mentioned that she wanted to become an actress.

Transitioning of plans: Some of the participants who mentioned having previous future plans, talked about how this previous future plan changed over time and gave way to their current future plans. This subtheme consists of those comments on the transformation and evolution of the future plans. Zafeera, Asima and Maysa storied how their previous plans for future careers, evolved and gave way to their current career plans. For instance, Zafeera talked about how her previous future plan of becoming a model transformed into wanting to get engaged in community services and helping people:

I always told my sisters: “I want to be a model, a supermodel” ... but because in the camp, we never had that access, so I just said that thing will never help me ... But since I was young and wanted to be a model something has changed. Nothing has changed about me ... I still have that power inside me, I still want to help people.

Knowing and learning more about her skills in mathematics, Asima storied how her plans of wanting to become a politician or a banker eventually gave way to her current career plans:

I thought that I wanted to be a politician ... but I was like “I can’t be a politician” ... then I was like “Yeah, I want to work in bank”. But when I grow up and know there is no money in the banks, I would say: “No I don’t want to be a banker”.

During her second interview, Asima revealed another aspect of her change of plans from initially planning to focus on her studies in Australia to a decision of postponing university studies to after establishing a business, in order to have a steady source of income that would enable her to find her mother in Africa:

Now here even if I'm going to study for four years and not even be sure that I will get a job after school, that means by the time I am finishing my studies, I will be twenty-six. And that means my energy for work, it will go down. Because I'm growing older ... But if I work and get money, I can find my mother and see her ... at least I can see her before it is too late.

As a result of storying their past and current future career plans, the participants highlighted the importance of achieving their plans through some required actions and the potential outcomes of these plans.

Theme 4: Actions and Outcomes

This theme refers to the participants’ comments on actions that they had considered for achieving their future career plans. As a result of these educational or non-educational actions

and getting closer to their future career plans, the participants also envisioned certain outcomes that could be life changing either for themselves or for others. Three subthemes were identified for this major theme: 1) Educational action plans, 2) Other actions, and 3) Outcomes.

Educational action plans: The subtheme of educational action plans include all participants' plans for tertiary education. All participants had plans about what they wanted to study and repeatedly emphasised their educational action plans and their desire to attend university in Australia. Three participants considered further study beyond a Bachelor degree and expressed their willingness to obtain a Master degree. For instance, Zafeera said:

I'm just trying to look for a tertiary preparation course. I try to look at these two universities. Then I can do that for another six months. I still want to improve my English and then just apply for a bachelor degree in the middle of it. Right now, I still go with the Bachelor of International Relations. After that, for my masters, I want to do something like psychology.

Kali also had some step-by-step educational action plans:

I have only four weeks in TAFE. Then I finish level three. I was planning maybe if I can do this tertiary preparation in that college, it will keep improving my English. Then I will join university. If I fail that, I can do certificate three in community services. When I finish certificate three in community services, then I will join and do diploma or maybe try university again.

Other actions: Participants talked about other actions (including education related actions) that could bring them closer to their future career plans. Sometimes these actions were education related which means that the participant spoke about taking action that would bring them closer to achieving some of their educational action plans. Details of some of these actions

changed and evolved as a result of the two interviews or the interviews motivated the participants to take steps for consulting others about their plans. For instance, Maysa wanted to work for six years in Australia upon the completion of her university studies, save money in order to be able to travel to Africa and join her friends so that together they can build a local hospital. In her second interview, she revised the timeframe of these actions: “... *the way I calculated my time for six years, it is not going to be six years ... It will be longer*”.

In between the two interviews Zafeera also took some other actions that despite relevance to educational action plans, were more concerned with her future career explorations:

Previously I was planning, but I have never made any steps ... like to think about it or to talk to anyone. So, I have talked to a few. This week I have talked to someone from that University and I had a meeting. I first talked to my teacher and then she organised the meeting ... I just wanted to know about my career. What if I study International Relations and in which organisation should I work with after that?

Two of the participants even considered the act of participating in this research as an action that could assist them in achieving their career goals. Beginning her second interview, Kali reflected on her experience of the first interview session and said:

I think it [knowing that I can talk] will help me very much. Because if I can't talk to people, how to do community service? I have to talk to people so that I can achieve my goals. So, if I'm quiet, nobody can know that I have a problem or I want this. But if I talk to people, I will get more chance to go where I want to be in life in the future. So, it's good to talk to people, to interact with everyone.

Asima also said:

I think it [the last interview] made me to be courageous ... when I went back home, I was like “Oh, so I can talk” ... I can ask questions from the people who want to give me the shop in the project ... If they ask me about the products, I can be able to explain, I won't be shy.

Zafeera reflected similarly:

Now I can stand and talk about it [my life and plans]. Like before I was not so confident because I knew I don't have a good education background, so I'm always, just keeping to myself and I never had the confidence to be open.

Outcomes: This subtheme reflects the participants’ comments on the potential and expected outcomes of achieving their future career plans. By undertaking the educational action plans and other actions, the participants imagined the possibility of generating various longer term or broader social outcomes. For example, Amir reflected on the outcomes of his future creative action plans in this way: *“When you try to create something, you have to make sure that people benefit from it. You create something that people will love, that people will look up to it and see something different”*. As a broader social outcome of her future career plans, Asima also said: *“I want to change a lot of people’s thinking and lifestyle”*. Kali also linked her future career plans of building an orphanage with her spiritual singing actions:

Building the orphanage to help people in need and then there are some people who still don't know who is god, so through my singing, I can sing to them. And I can make them know more about god. So, the way I'm singing and they can be interested with my singing and they can follow what I mean to them.

The four themes that were described here, together provided a broad understanding of the future career plans of these five young participants with refugee backgrounds in the context of their life-career stories. It is important to acknowledge that achieving a complete degree of

separation between the themes and sub-themes is impossible and there always remain some overlaps and interrelations between the themes and some of their subthemes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As the semi-structured interviews involved a detailed and empathic inquiry into lived-experiences of participants, these themes and subthemes were prioritised in facilitating an understanding of their future career plans. Therefore, these themes and subthemes were used as a template for the narrative analysis of the two FCA paragraphs of each participant with the purpose of measuring narrative change.

6.2.4.2 The narrative analysis of FCA paragraphs

The analysis of the FCA should be consistent with rules that govern qualitative analysis (Reh fuss, 2009, 2015). In a qualitative analysis of the FCA texts, each participant's initial and subsequent FCA paragraphs were located side by side (as in tables 6.5, 6.6, 6.7, 6.8 and 6.9). To qualitatively analyse "any changes, expansions, or clarifications in the individual's narrative" (Reh fuss & Di Fabio, 2012, p. 453), each participant's statements about her/his future career plans within the initial and subsequent FCA paragraphs were compared, so that the nature of narrative change within these two texts could be identified (e.g., do they become more specific or more broad?). Reh fuss identified eight "Degrees of Change" themes (2009, p. 85) by analysis and comparison of the FCAs of 48 American "undecided undergraduate students" (2009, p. 82) that were collected before and after a career related intervention. These eight themes were summarised in chapter four (Table 4.4).

It is important to speculate that new 'Degree of Change' themes might emerge for different participant groups depending on their cultural and contextual backgrounds and not assume that the eight 'Degree of Change' themes that were identified in Reh fuss's research are capable of capturing and reflecting all possible degrees of narrative change. For instance, by

considering the themes and subthemes identified in the thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews, the young participants of this research had many future career plans and ideas and were not undecided. Therefore, the differences between the participants of this research and the participants of previous research on FCA, necessitates consideration that new ‘Degree of Change’ themes may emerge.

To reduce the influence of the researcher’s interpretations on the narrative analysis of the FCA paragraphs (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), the themes and subthemes from the thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews, provided structure and clarity. Considering the themes and sub-themes of the semi-structured interviews as a guide, triangulated the FCA data with the interview data and minimised the potential influence of the researcher’s interpretations. Another important reason for which the use of the themes and subthemes as guidelines was helpful for the narrative analysis of FCA was that narratives are “context-sensitive” and they should not be “treated in isolation” from different contexts of each storyteller’s life (Kim, 2016, p. 191). Therefore, a deductive process guided the narrative analysis of each participant’s two FCA paragraphs based on the identified themes and sub-themes from the semi-structured interviews.

For this purpose, each of the eleven subthemes were first colour coded (e.g., specific careers: Green, general fields: Yellow, etc.). Then, each FCA paragraph was read several times for the purpose of highlighting phrases, statements and words with a relevant colour code. Subsequently the colour coded FCA paragraphs of each participant were located side by side to compare the colour codes. The comparison of the colour coded FCAs was performed to highlight differences between them: repeated parts of the initial FCA in the subsequent FCA, missing parts of the initial FCA in the subsequent FCA and new parts that only emerged in the subsequent FCA. At times, even the repeated segments had slight differences which were considered. If a

participant's two FCA paragraphs had identical colour codes (i.e., the exact subthemes repeated) and comparison of each colour code revealed no detailed text differences, no change between the initial and subsequent FCA paragraphs would be reported. This would mean a high degree of consistency between the two FCA paragraphs and perhaps the 'Degree of Change' theme considered for this situation would be "None" or "Extreme Consistency". However, this did not occur with any of the participants' FCA paragraphs. Among the five participants' FCA paragraphs, subthemes from all four themes were evident, many subthemes were repeated within the two FCA paragraphs, some were only present in the initial FCA, and some emerged only in the subsequent FCA.

For example, in the case of Maysa (Table 6.3), after the exclusion of the identical colour coded segments of a her two FCA paragraphs, the initial FCA paragraph remained with some colour coded segments that belonged to six of the subthemes and were not present in the subsequent FCA paragraph, and the subsequent FCA paragraph only contained two subthemes that were not present in the initial FCA paragraph. These differences will be considered as evidence for a 'Degree of Change' that has occurred to Maysa's FCA paragraphs. To determine her particular 'Degree of Change' theme, the nature of the remaining subthemes was considered. Maysa had the six subthemes of 'educational action plans' (Orange), 'specific careers' (Yellow), 'relational motivations' (Blue), 'other actions (Green), 'outcomes' (Pink) and 'work environments' (Grey) remaining in her initial FCA that were not repeated in the subsequent FCA, and the two subthemes of 'general fields' (Red) and a more general value oriented statement related to the theme of 'motivations' (Black). Overall, a 'Degree of Change' theme was identified by interpreting the nature of narrative movement between the remaining subthemes within the two FCAs. For instance, in the case of Maysa, it can be concluded that a

comparison of the changing subthemes of her FCAs represented some narrative movement from ‘some specifications to general fields and values’ and this same wording of narrative movement is considered as her ‘Degree of Change’ theme.

Through repeating this procedure, the narrative analysis of each participant’s two FCA paragraphs resulted in the identification of a unique ‘Degree of Change’ theme for her/him. Finally, four different ‘Degree of Change’ themes were established as a result of the narrative analysis of the two FCA paragraphs (two participants had the same ‘Degree of Change’ theme). Following, each participant’s initial and subsequent FCA paragraphs will be reported in a table and a brief description will be provided about the analytic procedures that revealed the findings and her/his ‘Degree of Change’ theme. The word counts reported for each FCA paragraph is only considered as a measure of highlighting narrative changes and “does not validate change” but is rather reported to “clarify quantitatively the degree of narrative change that has taken place for secondary descriptive purposes” (Rehfuss, 2015, p. 156).

6.3 Findings from the FCA paragraphs

1. Maysa

Table 6.3

Maysa’s initial and subsequent FCA paragraphs

| Initial FCA | Subsequent FCA |
|---|--|
| <p>Studying nursing and obstetrics and gynaecology. It is my dream to become an obstetrician and gynaecologist because where I come from it is big problem to baby and mothers. When I finish my studies in obstetrician and gynaecology, I start working in Australia for 8 years, then go back home to help the women in need. So, I’m planning to [work] with the NGO or UN in future.</p> | <p>Five years from now I will be finishing my studying and start work, becoming a better person in the community. With the help you showed me it was really incredible to me to succeed in life.</p> |
| Word count: 68 | Word count: 36 |

Maysa’s FCA ‘Degree of Change’ theme was considered as ‘some specifications to general fields and values’. This theme was identified as Maysa’s FCA paragraphs’ (Table 6.3) narrative change was representative of movement from a more detailed plan (from studying nursing/obstetrics/gynaecology and becoming an obstetrician/gynaecologist) to a more general and value oriented plan of “becoming a better person in the community”, with no specification. Only a few words were repeated and a general focus on “finishing studies and starting work” was shared between her two paragraphs. Six subthemes were found within her initial FCA paragraph (specific careers, work environments, relational, educational action plans, other actions and outcomes) and four subthemes (general fields, educational action plans, other actions and outcomes) were found within the subsequent FCA paragraph. There is no trace of the specific careers subtheme in the subsequent FCA paragraph and even the general fields subtheme is more

reflective of a general value rather than a career. The educational action plans have been generalised and there is no mention of a particular course in the subsequent FCA.

The only new and more surprising response in Maysa's subsequent FCA was her comment about the effect of research participation on her future career planning motivation. Therefore, Maysa's 'Degree of Change' theme of 'some specifications to general fields and values', does not reflect a step backward or confusion in her career planning. It only reflects her current state of situating herself within a new set of information and understandings (both about herself and the educational/occupational availabilities in Australia). Whether she is moving in the direction of compromising and pursuing a different path that is more practical and feasible to achieve her long-term goal of assisting women and children in Africa (particularly for becoming a social activist against female circumcision), is something that cannot be concluded with the FCA paragraphs within this short timeframe. Overall, the movement from specifications to general descriptions in Maysa's FCAs, with a consideration of the reflective space of the narrative inquiry interviews is more reflective of an agent who is getting ready to re-assemble her knowledge, skills and resources for a new journey ahead.

2. Zafeera

Table 6.4

Zafeera's initial and subsequent FCA paragraphs

| Initial FCA | Subsequent FCA |
|---|--|
| <p><i>I'm really interested to study international relations and peace building. My aim is to become someone who can help a country to solve problems. I like helping the communities and hopeless people. I see myself in five years that I have finish my education and start working and maybe I will become a manager in the future. I know one day I will go back to my country to help my people because they really need help at the moment.</i></p> | <p><i>I'm interested to study international relations and peace building so that I can help my people back in my country. I'm really interested to know more about how to offer solution to different countries. I have interest to work with different organisations in the world. I wish one day to become a manager in my country. In five years, I will like to finish my degree in international relations and go back to help my people.</i></p> |
| Word count: 80 | Word count: 76 |

Zafeera's 'Degree of Change' theme is 'consistency towards some work environment specification'. Her FCA paragraphs (Table 6.4) are very similar in their focus and their associated subthemes. Many details are repeated and there is minimal change in the narratives. Two very small detailed differences are: 1) the omission of "I like helping the communities and hopeless people" and 2) the addition of "I have interest to work with different organisations in the world" in the subsequent FCA paragraph that belongs to the work environments subtheme. The five subthemes that were present in the initial FCA (general fields, specific careers, educational action plans, other actions and outcomes) were all present in the subsequent FCA. The subsequent FCA only has a new subtheme that is 'work environments'. Therefore, Zafeera's FCA is more representative of a slight movement towards more specification on work environments and consistency of other plans. Remaining consistent about the details of her

educational action plans and other actions through both initial and subsequent FCA paragraphs is reflective of Zafeera’s certainty about her future career plans. Such certainty and consistency was also evident throughout both of the semi-structured interviews.

3. Asima

Table 6.5

Asima’s initial and subsequent FCA paragraphs

| Initial FCA | Subsequent FCA |
|---|--|
| <p><i>I thank Allah for bringing me to Australia and I believe that I will achieve my goals and my dream. I would love to be an entrepreneur, but before that I would like to continue with my study that is business management and accounting; hopefully five years from now, hope to achieve it.</i></p> | <p><i>I have the faith and believe five years from now, I will be a successful person if I continue with the same spirit and dream. Five years from now I hope to business stable and half-way done with my studies.</i></p> |
| Word count: 53 | Word count: 40 |

Asima’s ‘Degree of Change’ theme is representative of narrative movement from ‘some specifications to general pragmatics’ and is named as such. Her FCA paragraphs (Table 6.5) have both similarities and differences. Despite the emphasis within the initial FCA on the term “entrepreneur”, and prioritisation of education plans in two specific fields (management and accounting), the term “entrepreneur” and these educational action plans are absent in the subsequent FCA and seem to be secondary in relation to her primary goal of running a stable business. Asima’s FCA has become more connected to her current actions of doing business and thus more practical about her educational plans. In her interviews, she considered that while she has recently started business, her educational action plans might need to be postponed for a while. Her first FCA reflects a sense of completion of studies by five years (“*hopefully five years*

from now, hope to achieve it”), while her second FCA reflects being “*half-way done*” with studies in five years. She has changed from the two fields of management and accounting into only a general mentioning of “my studies” for now. The narrative change in Asima’s FCAs could be considered in light of her comments during the interviews when she made it clear that she prioritises establishing her business over university studies at this point.

The changes reflected within Asima’s FCAs are perhaps the best example to emphasise the need to consider the participant’s stories and the processes or events that have happened in the timeframe between writing the two FCAs. A detached analyst who has no familiarity with the participant’s career-life stories and current context of life, might consider Asima’s ‘Degree of Change’ theme simply a movement from some specifications to general interests. The problem with such interpretation or naming is that it implies a negative movement; a movement from orientation to disorientation. However, considering that within the timeframe between the two FCAs, Asima was informed that she will certainly have the opportunity to rent the shop she has been inquiring about within the past few months, many of her potential plans changed. She no longer prioritised education at this point and planned for university only when she becomes more certain about the stability of her business. To better grasp the nature of Asima’s experience on this matter, it becomes important to note two subthemes that emerged repeatedly within Asima’s semi-structured narrative inquiry interviews: ‘transitioning of plans’ and ‘outcomes’. Asima made it clear in her interview that as a result of reflecting on the expected outcome of finding her mother in Africa, she has gone through some future planning transitions ever since she arrived in Australia:

I’m having a very big thing that is influencing all this. It’s finding my real mom ... By us coming here, we are coming for studies, and that’s why I knew that I will just come here

and I go to school. But now it has changed to working, owning my own business. So, I think it has changed.

With this knowledge about the context of Asima’s life and a consideration of the pragmatics of her life, instead of only reporting Asima’s movement from specification into general, a more accurate description of narrative change was achieved by adding the term pragmatics. It reflects Asima’s adaptability and spontaneity in the face of change and new circumstances as well as her planfulness and preparation for differing circumstances as she also mentioned it during the interviews that in case of opening the shop, her educational plans will be postponed to a time her business gains stability.

4. Kali

Table 6.6

Kali’s initial and subsequent FCA paragraphs

| Initial FCA | Subsequent FCA |
|--|---|
| <i>In five years to come, I would like to work with international community service, but after completing my study because at the moment am still learning and I’m trying all my best so that I can join any university in Queensland.</i> | <i>In my future, I would like to work with international community service, but I have to finish my study first. Also, I would like to support children with no parents and other people in need. And I hope to work specially with UN. That are my future plans in five years to come.</i> |
| Word count: 41 | Word count: 53 |

Kali’s ‘Degree of Change’ theme is considered as ‘Educational action plans to more career specification’. Kali’s subsequent FCA starts with a very similar statement to her initial

FCA that belongs to the specific careers subtheme. Except for this opening line, most of the initial FCA is consisting of the educational action plans subtheme. In the subsequent FCA, the educational action plans have given space to content related to the general fields, relational motivations and the work environment subthemes. More relational details about “*work with international community service*” is provided within the subsequent FCA as Kali became more specific about it by mentioning “*children with no parents and other people in need*” as well as even a very specific organisation to work with.

However, by considering Kali’s two semi-structured narrative inquiry interviews, these narrative changes are clarified further. During her first interview Kali stated that it has been her long-lasting career plan to work with UNHCR and help those in need such as orphan children:

I was twelve years old. Our teacher usually come in class and said: “What you want to be in future?” I said: “I want to work with UNHCR” ... I hope to help orphans. The children who have no parents and widows ... and others who are suffering. If I have that ability to help them, I think I would love to help them.

The consideration of these excerpts from the interviews becomes even more important as she adds further details about working with UNHCR (work environment subtheme) within the last minutes of her second interview: “*I want to work in Kenya. That is the particular country that I like to work with UNHCR*”. The interview process provided a space in which different aspects of her life-career stories were connected, so that she was enabled to reflect on the details of her career plans and to extend these career plans specifications into her subsequent FCA.

5. Amir

Table 6.7

Amir's initial and subsequent FCA paragraphs

| Initial FCA | Subsequent FCA |
|--|---|
| <p><i>I hope to have finished my degree and started working as I will be planning to start masters. I want to be someone who works in technology things like networking, computer software and a lot more which deal with computing. My aim is to work in computing environment in future.</i></p> | <p><i>After my degree, I would like to work a little bit and see whether I can achieve my future goals and then continue with my masters degree. I want to start my own company that I based on computing and be my own boss. All in all, what I want to be is to be someone that can create things and everyone will talk about them and appreciate.</i></p> |
| Word count: 50 | Word count: 68 |

Amir's 'Degree of Change' theme is considered as 'moving towards more career specification'. His initial FCA paragraph contains four of the subthemes (educational action plans, general fields, work environments and other actions), while the subsequent FCA has an additional subtheme (outcomes). While Amir's educational, other actions and general fields seem unchanged, an expansion on his work environment and the outcomes of such career plans are more visible through the subsequent FCA. Details about his desire to start his "own company", be his "own boss", "create things" [applications and software] and be "talked about and appreciated by everyone" are added in the subsequent FCA.

Similar to Kali, movement in the narratives of Amir's FCAs are reflective of a higher degree of career specification. These further specifications reflect Amir's storying of life-career plans through the two semi-structured narrative inquiry interviews. Amir only started to talk about the potential personal, relational and societal outcomes of his career plans during his second interview:

Creativity is part of one's mind, like part of one's knowledge. But now I have done nothing yet, I probably do something in the future. I will be very happy if I create something and then people love it. And seeing people using it, of course you will be happy ... (Personal) Because he (nephew) will be looking at me, like how the uncle does everything, he'll be seeing me going to school, doing everything on computers and working or trying to do some things ... trying to create something ... then he will try to follow my footsteps ... (Relational) For people to have a better future, I'm talking about money. Because for the future to become better you need money, it just can't become better without money ... (Societal)

Finally, Table 6.8 provides a summary of all five participants 'Degree of Change' themes.

Table 6.8

Participants' 'Degree of Change' themes

| Participants | 'Degree of Change' themes |
|---------------------|---|
| <i>Maysa</i> | Some specifications to general fields and values |
| <i>Zafeera</i> | Consistency towards some work environment specification |
| <i>Asima</i> | Some specifications to general pragmatics |
| <i>Kali</i> | Educational action plans to more career specification |
| <i>Amir</i> | Moving towards more career specification |

6.4 Discussion

Overall, the findings showed that all five participants had an initial sense of direction about their future career plans before participating in this research and somewhat knew in which general fields and directions they were going to invest their efforts and actions which was also

reflected through their FCAs. This general sense of direction and self-knowledge about future career plans of the young participants with refugee backgrounds clarified how the protracted migration journey, years of living in temporary and transitory situations with the hope of resettlement in a country such as Australia, could contribute to the formation of some general anticipations about a future career. The formation of such general anticipations is a good example of “agency in waiting” and actively relating to “alternative notions of the future” (Brun, 2015, p. 19).

Each participant’s anticipations about a future career that were culturally and contextually embedded within and constructed through her/his life-career stories were re-storied in the collaborative space of the semi-structured narrative inquiry interviews (Clandinin, 2013; Trahar, 2013). After enduring a protracted migration journey, the participants who might have lost voice and experienced a deterioration of their sense of narrative agency (Abkhezr et al., in press), participated in qualitative research that inquired into their life-career stories and future career plans and now these ‘Degree of Change’ themes in their narratives of future careers potentially reflect the implications of such participations. By participating in qualitative research that aimed to achieve an empathic, collaborative, egalitarian and non-hierarchical relational approach, participants found voice and enhanced their sense of narrative agency, which led to narrative changes as reflected in their FCAs.

The findings from the narrative analysis of the five participants’ FCA paragraphs suggests the possibility that for each participant of this research, one or more of the following effects could be attributed to participating in the semi-structured narrative inquiry interviews: 1) provided them with a reflexive opportunity to gain more clarity about what might be ahead and highlighted the need to revise aspects of their future plans, or 2) provided a space to add more

specificity about what they had in mind, or 3) confirmed their plans and encouraged further explorations for taking more agentic steps on their own, without any intervention from the interviewer. Such changes in the narratives of participants' address the aim of this research that was to explore potential implications of participating in qualitative research that uses narrative inquiry for young participants with refugee backgrounds. The narrative changes in the future career autobiographies of participants in this research suggests potential convergences between narrative research (in this research, narrative inquiry as a form of qualitative research) and narrative practice (narrative career counselling as a postmodern career intervention) and illustrate the transformative function of narrative tools used in qualitative research.

6.5 Implications for research

There are two areas in which the implications of the current research need to be discussed; one that refers to the process of engaging participants in the act of storytelling through narrative inquiry and another that refers to the application of Future Career Autobiography (Reh fuss, 2009, 2015) as a qualitative tool for measuring narrative change. Therefore, the implications of the current findings for research will be briefly explored under the two subheadings of: Narrative inquiry and Future Career Autobiography.

6.5.1 Narrative inquiry

The dialogical and conversational qualities of narrative inquiry provided a foundation on which constructive and reflexive possibilities were generated for the young participants with refugee backgrounds who might have been disadvantaged in their life (Chase, 2005; De Haene, 2010; Jorgenson & Bochner, 2004). The potential dialogical power of these newly constructed meanings for participants who might have rarely experienced narrative agency in their lives

proved to be transformative to some degree. This brings us to one of the criticisms of narrative inquiry as a qualitative research method (Trahar, 2009); that by privileging participants' voices for storying lived experience, narrative inquiry tends to be more therapeutic rather than analytic (Ellis & Bochner, 2000).

The privileging of participants' voices for storying lived experience in this research, clarified the potential for impingement between narrative inquiry and narrative career counselling. Therefore, an awareness of the "inherent transformation" (Anderson & Gehart, 2007, p. xviii) that might occur as a result of the collaborative, dialogical and relational nature of narrative research demands an acknowledgment of the blurring boundaries between qualitative narrative research and narrative interventions. The findings of this research clarified that pursuing qualitative narrative research responsively and responsibly means that a consideration of such blurring boundaries should be an essential preparatory component of research design. Some strategies for dealing with the potential blurring of boundaries are explained here:

1) *Familiarity with the conversational and dialogical dynamics of narrative and qualitative research* that involves stepping away from the "dispassionate, neutral stance and objectifying gaze" (De Haene, 2010, p. 7) of traditional positivist research, aims for an abandonment of the expert role traditionally associated to the researcher (Anderson & Gehart, 2007; Miller, 2017). As the emergence of the participant's subjective lived experiences in the dialogical context of research occurs through an active-responsive listening (Anderson, 2005; De Haene, 2010), researchers are urged to reflect on the power imbalance of the researcher-researched relationship throughout the research process.

2) *Self-reflexivity* is therefore essential to ensure a constant reflection over the power imbalance of the researcher-researched relationship (De Haene, 2010). The self-reflexivity of the

researcher operates in a two-directional inwards and outwards movement (De Haene, 2010, p. 7): a) reflecting on her/his own internal dialogues and feelings (inwards) and b) selectively sharing relevant inner reflection or even personal experiences that invite further dialogue (outwards).

Self-disclosure is thought to prevent the establishment of a privileged status for the researcher (Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen & Liamputtong, 2007) and is considered as an essential part of creating a non-hierarchical, egalitarian and collaborative relationship. However, it could pose risks for both the researcher and the participant (Dickson-Swift et al., 2006, 2007). A type of researcher's self-disclosure that could promote collaboration, particularly in working with disadvantaged or marginalised populations, relates to matters of clarifying researcher's social justice values. For instance, in this research as participants were given opportunities to ask questions from the researcher during the research interview, three of them asked questions on the research purpose. These were occasions in which the participants held more power through the interview and their curiosities about research intentions were appreciated and responded to with care. Valuing the participants' curiosity, the researcher disclosed aspects of his journey, pre-occupations and intentions that were grounded in a social justice approach for the career development of young people with refugee backgrounds' after resettlement. Issues such as researcher's self-disclosure and building rapport with participants highlight the importance of relational responsibilities.

3) *Relational responsibilities* refer to issues of care and ethical practice. In particular, when participants have marginalised, disadvantaged or silenced backgrounds, issues of care for participants are even more highlighted in postmodern research that values activism and a social justice agenda (Dickson-Swift et al., 2007; Gergen & Gergen, 2002; Richardson, 2005). As a “deeply ethical project” (Clandinin, 2013, p. 30), narrative inquiry values relational ethics based

on the “ethics of caring” (Noddings, 1984, p. 497). When opportunities exist for qualitative researchers to incite change that is aligned with values of activism and social justice, taking a neutral and detached stance contradicts the foundations of ethical research. Acting in responsive and responsible ways obliges the researcher to not only stand responsive to the research community, but also to the participants and their communities. It is on such grounds that an “embracing of a double, private as well as public, transformative goal” has been proposed for qualitative narrative researchers (De Haene, 2010, p. 5). Hence, while engaging participants who might have lost voice throughout the protracted migration journey in narrative research, the researcher ‘is required to’ embrace such double transformative goals (corresponding to criticisms of the therapeutic goals of narrative inquiry).

6.5.2 Future Career Autobiography

FCA was originally introduced to measure narrative change over time and as a result of engaging in some sort of intervention (Reh fuss, 2009, 2015). However, the present study was the first to employ FCA as a method to explore the implications of engaging participants in qualitative narrative research and it has proved useful for clarifying the overlapping and converging boundaries of narrative research and practice. One of the implications of using FCA for measuring change that may follow qualitative research rather than intervention, was that its analysis process required further clarity in relation to the interviews that were conducted in between the two FCA tasks. A comparative narrative analysis of the initial and subsequent FCA paragraphs, independent of the content of qualitative research (particularly one with a constructivist and social constructionist epistemological lens) and the participants’ life-career stories, contradicts the very foundation of narrative research that prioritises the participants’ subjectivity and meaning making in the dialogical processes of research. It is important for the

researcher to pay attention to the particularities of the research process with each participant and reflect on the content of interviews as well as the context of each participant's life to achieve a more "experience near" narrative analysis of FCA paragraphs (Stead et al., 2011, p. 107). Using FCA in qualitative research with a population such as recently resettled young African people with refugee backgrounds in Australia who have also endured the difficulties of a protracted migration journey, required a new understanding of the potential 'Degree of Change' themes and therefore the new set of 'Degree of Change' themes (Table 6.8) emerged with a consideration of the participant's life-career stories, cultural and contextual backgrounds as well as the interviews' content.

6.6 Limitations of the research

Considering participants' 'Degree of Change' themes raises questions about what might have occurred in between the two FCA tasks through the semi-structured narrative inquiry interviews that has resulted in such narrative changes for participants. Three processes could be considered influential in between the writing of the two FCA paragraphs: 1) Semi-structured narrative inquiry interviews, 2) the process of watching the semi-structured narrative inquiry interviews in the presence of a recall interviewer (refer to Reflective sessions based on Interpersonal Process Recall (IPR) in the method chapter (Section 4.2.3.2), and 3) other personal experiences of the participants outside the context of this research. It is not clear whether one of these three processes on its own or a combination of these processes were more influential on the resultant narrative changes. Hence, the broad phrase, 'implications of participating in qualitative narrative research' is used in this chapter.

To compare and contrast the initial and subsequent FCA paragraphs, it is important to acknowledge the possibility of the researcher's interpretation influencing the findings of the analysis (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Using a deductive process for the narrative analysis of FAC paragraphs and employing the themes and subthemes of the semi-structured interviews as guidelines in this analytical process, was a step to reduce the influence of the researcher's interpretations. Another step that was considered useful to reduce the possibility of researcher's interpretations influencing the process of data analysis, was data triangulation. By using data about the future career plans of participants from the semi-structured interviews in conjunction with their future career plans mentioned within their FCA paragraphs, the trustworthiness of the analysis process was enhanced through data triangulation.

Another limitation concerns the small number of participants in this research. Therefore, despite some learnings about the lived experiences of young people with refugee backgrounds that corresponds with their career planning and career anticipations, this research did not intend to produce generalisations about the future career planning behaviour of young participants with refugee backgrounds. Instead, it explored the implications of engaging these participants in qualitative research and the act of storytelling, so that an exploration of the converging boundaries of narrative research with practice could be made possible. Future research could expand the usefulness of FCA along with other instruments for providing knowledge about the career planning behaviour of young participants with refugee backgrounds.

6.7 Future research

One of the primary steps that future researchers could undertake to improve understanding of the evolving nature of future career planning behaviours of young people with refugee backgrounds after resettlement, is to use FCA as part of a longitudinal exploratory research with more participants from various cultural backgrounds. Following a wider sample of young people with refugee backgrounds through time and exploring their potentially changing future career plans by using the FCA and other instruments could provide a better understanding of the evolving nature of young people with refugee backgrounds future career plans after resettlement. Another suggestion for future research that uses narrative inquiry as a method of career exploration is to consider the use of FCA for measuring potential narrative changes that might occur to the career plans of participants, given the potential for impingement between narrative inquiry and narrative interventions.

Finally, future research could interview the participants of this research after a longer time interval (e.g., one year), collect a new set of Future Career Autobiographies and inquire about their actions and decisions within the timeframe. This way, the evolving nature of participants' future career plans in the context of their life after resettlement and some other implications of participating in this research could be explored further. Using the current two FCA paragraphs and the newly collected FCA paragraph by then, the researcher could inquire about any changes that might have occurred to the narratives of participants concerning their future career plans over time and what might have triggered those changes.

6.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, the implications of participating in qualitative narrative research for young participants with refugee backgrounds were explored through measuring narrative change within the participants' initial and subsequent Future Career Autobiographies. The findings confirmed that a 'Degree of Change' occurred to the narratives of participants about their future career plans. The occurrence of such narrative changes as a result of participating in qualitative research that used narrative inquiry, highlights the overlapping and converging boundaries of narrative research with narrative interventions, particularly in the context of career research that explores the career development of disadvantaged or marginalised participants.

Chapter 7: CONCLUSION

This concluding chapter provides an overview of the aims of this thesis and outlines the implications and contributions of the current research for career research, practice, theory and policy. Finally, by considering the strengths and limitations of this research, some avenues for future research are proposed.

7.1 Overview of the thesis

The career development of young people with refugee backgrounds is considered a challenging aspect of their process of integrating into a new country. The field of career development has its roots in a social justice approach that prioritises assisting disadvantaged and underprivileged people with their career development. Career practitioners (e.g., career counsellors) are thought to have an important role in assisting young people with refugee backgrounds move towards their anticipated career plans in the complex and unfamiliar context of the world of work of post-industrial societies such as Australia. Among the many approaches that career counsellors could use in their work with these young people, a narrative approach has the potential to re-contextualise their stories of skills and strengths and their sense of “agency in waiting” (Brun, 2015, p. 21). However, the potential use of stories when working with young people with refugee backgrounds has never been investigated before, and so it was important to take a step back from narrative career counselling in which the counsellor facilitates a process through which new life-career stories are to be co-constructed and investigate if and how these young people could engage in telling their life-career stories. Engaging these young people in the exploratory context of narrative inquiry enabled investigation about their career development and whether the process of re-telling ‘life-career stories’ is culturally and contextually relevant and

possible for them. Through such engaging processes, the overlapping and blurred boundaries between narrative research with narrative practice could be explored, so that the potential implications of participating in qualitative narrative research for participants with refugee backgrounds could be clarified. Such clarifications could ultimately inform career research and practice and assist career counsellors to support this group more effectively. As a result of such considerations, this research had two aims: 1) to enhance understandings of the career development of young people with refugee backgrounds through culturally and contextually sensitive exploration of their life-career stories, and 2) to explore the implications of participating in qualitative research using narrative inquiry for young people with refugee backgrounds.

Corresponding with the first aim of this research, chapter five reported on the findings from the life-career stories and the continuously reshaping anticipated future directions of three of the participants of this research who travelled together during their migration journey. The findings of this part of the research revealed rich stories about the career development of the participants that included stories of transition, hope, resilience and perseverance in diverse contexts. Overall, the stories of protracted displacement of these three young African females with refugee backgrounds, revealed how their sense of self has transitioned through various locations and has been exposed to a diverse range of cultural, contextual and relational influences in their countries of origin, transition and resettlement.

The reflective space that was provided by narrative inquiry made it possible for participants to re-contextualise their sense of “agency in waiting” – that accompanied them throughout the migration journey – in the new environment of the resettlement country (Brun, 2015, p. 21) and find more voice. Finding voice as a result of participating in qualitative research

that used narrative inquiry, revealed how “storytelling operated as a practice of reflexivity over the relational, social, cultural and contextual dimensions of participants’ career development” (Abkhezr et al., in press, p. 12).

The two major findings were:

1. The voice finding and the reconstructing power of storytelling through narrative inquiry for these young people with refugee backgrounds was evident from their reflections in the interviews. Participants’ reflections on the process of engaging in the act of storytelling through semi-structured narrative inquiry interviews suggested that such processes benefitted the participants to re-vocalise silenced or diminished voices, find new voices and enhance their sense of agency after resettlement through a re-contextualisation of their ‘agency in waiting’. The realisation of the potential usefulness of such processes for the participants led to the second finding.

2. The manifestation of the constructs of narrative career counselling – that are the process constructs of constructivism and social constructionism – throughout the narrative inquiry interviews validated that the young participants in this research could eagerly and reflectively engage with their life-career stories.

Together these two findings suggested potential convergences and overlaps between narrative research and intervention related to the second aim of this research which was to explore the implications of engaging participants in qualitative narrative research. Evidence of narrative change in future career plans of the participants could imply that the two domains of narrative research and narrative intervention overlap. A detailed investigation of the potential changes to participants’ narratives of future career plans, that was conducted through a narrative analysis of FCA paragraphs, revealed a degree of narrative change that confirms the overlapping

boundaries of the two domains. Therefore, another finding of the current research is about the potential convergences between qualitative research that uses narrative inquiry and narrative approaches to career counselling. Based on this finding, certain implications for career research and practice are further discussed in the following sections.

7.2 Implications for career research

This thesis explored the career development of young people with refugee backgrounds as a heterogeneous, vulnerable, underprivileged and disadvantaged population whose career development is contingent upon social, relational and cultural influences of various contexts. Therefore, employing a contextualist worldview was relevant and useful in this research. The contextualist worldview that is more aligned with constructivist and social constructionist epistemologies, clarified the relevance of qualitative methodologies such as narrative inquiry for career development exploration of diverse groups of working people who transition through various contexts and cultures. Qualitative methodologies prioritise exploration in which the cultural and contextual influences of the protracted migration journey are considered. As a result, the first implication for research is that qualitative methodologies are appropriate to use when researching the career development of people with refugee backgrounds.

The engaging and boundary crossing procedures of the current research with participants who might have been through silencing and limiting experiences, echoed the importance of contemporary social justice efforts (Blustein, 2011; Richardson, 2012) that prioritise responding to the need for explorations of the wide range of work-related problems faced by those who are disadvantaged. To apply this social justice approach in career research, researchers are encouraged to remain sensitive about the implications of the engaging and reflexive procedures

of their research for the participants. By acknowledging the overlapping boundary between narrative interventions and such engaging exploratory research processes, career researchers have an opportunity to make their research practices more reflexive, engaging and participatory when they explore the career development of people who might have been through silencing, oppressing and marginalising experiences. Ethics of care demands career researchers to avoid limiting their research goals to learning about the career development of disadvantaged and marginalised, as these research goals are only tailored towards the research community, but make their research process a stage on which these participants could gain a sense of voice. As a result, another implication of the current research for qualitative researchers – particularly those who adopt constructivist and social constructionist epistemologies in their work with disadvantaged populations – is that they are encouraged to responsibly design research that could engage participants in processes through which they are transformed from passive respondents to active “constructive practitioners of experiential knowledge” (Gabrium & Holstein, 2012, p. 32). However, in designing such research, career researchers are invited to consider some preparatory strategies that could assist them before stepping into the converging and overlapping boundaries between narrative research and narrative practice.

7.3 Implications for career practice

The findings of this thesis confirmed both the possibility of working with young people with refugee backgrounds as career storytellers and the usefulness of career storytelling for them to find voice and a sense of agency. Through storytelling, the five participants of this research engaged in reflective performances through which many of the cultural, contextual, relational and socio-political backgrounds that influenced their career development were reviewed and re-

contextualised within their new post-resettlement context. As a result of such confirmations, the potential usefulness of narrative approaches to career counselling in working with young people with refugee backgrounds is suggested.

7.4 Implications for theory

Traditional career theory's ethnocentric view on career development has overlooked the evolving nature of external influences on career choice of disadvantaged people whose career development occurs in various and yet impoverished and underprivileged contexts. In the case of young people with refugee backgrounds who are exposed to various cultural and social forces throughout the protracted migration journey, their sense of self, along with their career preferences evolve in transition. Career theories informed by constructivist and social constructionist worldviews, that take an individual in context view, could offer insight on how the person makes different meaning of these influences over time, as the surrounding environment changes. Therefore, implications of the current research for career theory are related to the promotion of theorising that adopts a more inclusive view of the career development of all gamut of people. In particular, this inclusive view needs to consider those who might have been denied career development opportunities through which they could have actualised their career plans and move closer to their career goals. Career theory needs to be sensitive about the impact of changing contexts on how the meaning, significance and relevance of external influences change for this population and other people who at these times of increasing human movement across the globe, transition through various contexts. Career theory should focus more on enhancing understandings about the career development process that occur in transitional contexts.

7.5 Implications for policy

The findings of this thesis suggest the potential usefulness of career development support services that have an element of long-term career empowerment (such as narrative career counselling) early after resettlement. Meaningful, decent and dignified work for these young people relies on achieving their long-term career goals. Therefore, policies need to be responsive to the development of adaptive and diverse strategies for different cohorts of people with refugee backgrounds. To foster successful integration of young people with refugee backgrounds in the post-resettlement context of post-industrial countries in which the job market is undergoing dramatic shifts, the findings of the current research signify the potential usefulness of career development support services that are contextually and culturally sensitive to their diversity. Therefore, to expand relevant career support services beyond services that meet the point in time and immediate employment needs of this group, cooperation of the service delivery sector with the research sector is highly recommended. This cooperation could facilitate further exploratory research on the diversity of the career development needs of this group, at early and later stages of resettlement, that contributes to development of career support services that facilitate pathways through which long-term career goals are achieved.

7.6 Contributions

This research contributed to career theory by providing new knowledge about the career development of a neglected population in career theory and research. It enhanced understandings about the career development of young people with refugee backgrounds through a consideration of the role of pervasive social forces that might have limited their access to necessary resources

at different stages of the protracted migration journey and the influence of various cultural, contextual and relational factors on their career development. The current research revealed that the evolving nature of the participants' career development in the post-resettlement contexts continues to be influenced by the cultural and contextual stories of the migration journey. Additionally, this research emphasis on cultural aspects of the career development of young people with refugee backgrounds extends its contributions to career theories by prioritising the cultural aspects of the participants' life-career stories, while most extant career theories are criticised for their lack of cultural sensitivity due to an extreme ethnocentric view on issues of career development and vocational behaviour (Young, Marshall, & Valach, 2007).

This research contributed two innovations in career research. First, it extended the application of Future Career Autobiography (Rehfuss, 2009, 2015; Rehfuss & Di Fabio, 2012) to career research. This instrument has rarely been researched and has only been used to measure narrative changes following career interventions and never been employed to measure narrative change as a result of participating in qualitative exploratory research. Second, corresponding with calls to consider career development as an inherently relational construct (Blustein, 2011), the use of the Voice Centred Relational Analysis as an analytical tool to explore the career development of these young people was another innovative step in this research that as far as can be established, has not been previously used in career development research.

7.7 Limitations of the research

One limitation of this research corresponds with the participants of this study belonging to a specific group of young people with refugee backgrounds, that is, those who have been through a protracted migration journey. Furthermore, there were only five participants with one

male. However, as the findings of this qualitative exploratory multiple-case study research are not intended to be generalisable, the task of expanding on these limitations to propose generalisable conclusions remains with future research.

One final limitation that relates to all qualitative research is how issues of interpretation and the influence of the researcher's values and worldviews throughout different stages of research design, data collection, analysis and reporting, might interfere with the trustworthiness of the research. Strategies were used throughout the research to enhance trustworthiness based on the four qualitative criteria of dependability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability. Some examples of these strategies are: using an audit trail that involved a thorough collection of documentation regarding all aspects of the research to enhance dependability, data triangulation and receiving various forms of feedback from supervisors, the research and professional communities to check potential research biases and enhance credibility, using certain instruments and analytical tools (such as VCRA) to produce thick descriptions of the participants' life-career stories and enhance transferability, and finally using reflective strategies such as the reflective sessions between the researcher and a supervisor (recall interviewer) to watch the interview sessions and transcribing the interviews by the researcher to reflect further on the interviews all contributed to issues of confirmability.

7.8 Future research

Further career development research is needed to enhance our understandings of the complex career development of young people with refugee backgrounds and the challenges they face after resettlement. Future research could engage participants with other migration, ethnic and cultural backgrounds or more male participants. Future research could also investigate

narrative approaches to career counselling with young people with refugee backgrounds. Another avenue for future research could be longitudinal research that explores the evolving nature of young people with refugee backgrounds' career development and future career plans after resettlement.

7.9 Concluding Statement

This research was a timely, essential and relevant response to the calls for assisting young people with refugee backgrounds in the complex process of integration after resettlement by offering insights on their career development and future career planning that might lend support to this complex process by informing career practitioners and career researchers about various dimensions of working with these young people. Assisting young people after resettlement to find a fulfilling and meaningful future career trajectory that encompasses an element of long-term career empowerment is considered a key to improved integration outcomes in society. In its efforts to provide a glimpse of the career development of young people with refugee backgrounds, this research provided an opportunity for its participants to story the role of various cultural and contextual influences of their migration journey and integrate them into their career development. As some of these influences had operated in silencing and restricting ways, the engaging and reflexive process of storytelling through narrative inquiry operated as a voice finding and agency enhancing encounter. Through the telling of their stories, these young people reflected on and reconnected with their determination to use skills, strengths and qualities that would assist them in following their career plans in the context of the resettlement countries. The new understandings about the career development of young people with refugee backgrounds that emerged through this exploratory research and the considerations that were proposed for

both the career research and career counselling community, together improved the foundation through which the career development of this resilient population could be supported.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Conference Paper

Abkhezr, P., & McMahon, M. (2016, November). People with refugee backgrounds: A case for narrative career counselling. In *Conference of the International Association of Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG)*, Madrid, Spain.

Abstract

One of the most pressing issues in the world today is the displacement of, and subsequent need to resettle, millions of people. For many people with refugee backgrounds, their country of settlement is vastly different from their home countries and integration may be challenging. Continuing with their education and gaining employment in the country of resettlement may pose particular difficulties as a result of prolonged transition under difficult circumstances, language differences, disrupted education, and high expectations. Career counsellors may contribute to the integration of people with refugee backgrounds in their country of resettlement. This paper considers people with refugee backgrounds and the potential of career counselling to support them. It proposes that narrative career counselling may be an appropriate intervention. First, the paper outlines the transition, migration, and resettlement experiences of people with refugee backgrounds and then offers suggestions for career counsellors. Second, it proposes the use of narrative career counselling and poses cultural considerations for narrative career counsellors who support people with refugee backgrounds.

Introduction

The number of displaced people, particularly asylum seekers and refugees seeking resettlement has dramatically increased in recent years. In 2016 alone, more than 1,150,000 people, mainly young people and children, need to be resettled in other countries (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, [UNHCR]; 2015). Integration into their new country is important to resettlement and successful transition. Interventions that address multiple domains such as education, language, employment, and social and community inclusion are important for

successful transition and may involve career counsellors (Abkhezr, McMahon, & Rossouw, 2015; Beadle, 2014). This paper considers the career development needs of people with refugee backgrounds' and the potential of career guidance and counselling to support them. It proposes narrative career counselling as an appropriate intervention. First, the paper outlines the transition, migration, and resettlement experiences of people with refugee backgrounds and offers suggestions for career counsellors. Second, it proposes the use of narrative career counselling and poses cultural considerations for narrative career counsellors who support people with refugee backgrounds.

The migration journey and challenges to integration

People with refugee backgrounds usually experience a four-stage migration process consisting of: (a) pre-migration, (b) migration, (c) resettlement, and (d) living in the host country (Pierce & Gibbons, 2012). During some of these stages they may have been persecuted and their stories, experiences and identities may have been challenged or questioned. Since identity is produced in context over time (McAdams, 2001) and is constantly in play with the surrounding environment and the socio-historical events of people's lives, such transitional experiences become an important part of their account of narrative identity (Flum, 2015). The context of the migration journey of people with refugee backgrounds may lead to contradictory and opposing stories which could be detrimental to personal and career development.

Many resettled youth with refugee backgrounds report high rates of interruption to and low quality of education (Cassidy & Gow, 2006; Uptin, Wright, & Harwood, 2014). Therefore, in addition to experiences such as multiple losses, trauma, demeaning treatment in camps or detention centres, statelessness, and stresses related to immigration and resettlement procedures, they face challenges in terms of language, education and employment after resettlement. Amplifying these challenges are the high expectations held by most people with refugee backgrounds and their families. For example, the number of students with refugee backgrounds planning to attend university is significantly higher than their country of settlement counterparts (Hatoss, O'Neill, & Eacersall, 2012). Despite willingness and motivation to participate in education, learning and work, limited language skills or disrupted schooling experiences may narrow the career and vocational options of this group, hinder successful integration, and may eventually lead to disengagement (Olliff, 2010).

Narrative career counselling

Assisting people with migrant and refugee backgrounds to successfully transition through vocational guidance was central to the field more than a century ago when Frank Parsons (1909) initiated the ‘vocational guidance movement’ (Savickas, 2009). Now at another critical point in history, vocational guidance and career counselling may have a similar important role to play.

When assisting people with refugee backgrounds, especially through career counselling, three important factors need to be considered (Abkhezzr et al., 2015). First, their career development should be viewed as a personal-cultural phenomenon. Second, their career development is heavily entrenched in macro-level forces and contextual factors predominantly outside their control. Third, because of the heterogeneity of people with refugee backgrounds, individuals may perceive ‘career’ and ‘career development’ differently. Narrative career counselling resonates well with these considerations by accommodating diversity and providing space for exploration and subjective reflexivity.

Narrative career counselling is appropriate and relevant for reorienting and reconstructing the field of career counselling (Arthur & McMahon, 2005; Di Fabio & Maree, 2013; Watson, 2013) and for engaging with populations who are at risk or disadvantaged (Maree & Molepo, 2007; Young, Marshall, & Valach, 2007) including people with refugee backgrounds (Abkhezzr & McMahon, submitted). Aiming to facilitate the exploration of narrative identity and the construction of new self-narratives, narrative career counselling becomes useful in making “amendments to correct mistaken ideas, adjustments to soothe old conflicts, and alterations to enhance self-efficacy” (Savickas, 2012a, p. 658).

Emphasising subjectivity and meaning making, narrative career counselling provides a space for clients to self-reflect and enhance their contextual self-understanding. For people with refugee backgrounds who may face challenges in finding, managing and expanding career opportunities after resettlement, telling stories which they may not have told about themselves for a long time may become important; stories that might have become forgotten, hidden, or diminished (McMahon, 2006) through their migration process. By narrating pre- and post-resettlement stories, clients may become more aware of their capacity to tell alternative and preferred stories which are different from those repeatedly told during the pre-migration and migration stages (Abkhezzr & McMahon, 2016); stories of hope, possibility, confidence and optimism may be

emphasised over stories of fear, hopelessness, helplessness and trauma. Assisting people with refugee backgrounds to access their skills, knowledges and special qualities that have been undermined or disqualified over time (White, 2007) will eventually enable them to become creative authors of their new identities (McMahon, 2007).

Narrative career counselling may provide people with refugee backgrounds with “a surer and more graceful footing on life’s path” (Singer, 2004, p. 446) which will contribute to the accumulation of wisdom, flexibility and adaptability, helpful to their career development in the unstable labour markets of post-industrial countries where most are resettled (Abkhezr & McMahon, submitted). In this regard, narrative career counselling provides a “transitional space for self-negotiation” (Reid & West, 2011, p. 4) and for re-authoring a life/career narrative that enhances agency in a disorienting context (Reid & West, 2016).

Contextual and cultural considerations have been proposed for career counsellors working with clients with refugee backgrounds (Abkhezr & McMahon, submitted; Abkhezr et al., 2015) including: 1) clarifying the nature of the career counselling process for clients with refugee backgrounds who may not be familiar with ‘career counselling’ and therefore might have pre-conceptualisations and assumptions about it; 2) being aware that because of previous expert driven interview experiences during the migration process, narrative career counselling might initially resonate as another such experience and jeopardise the dynamic and collaborative nature of narrative career counselling; 3) gaining exposure to clients’ unique cultural backgrounds due to the cultural differences between career counsellors and clients from refugee backgrounds; and 4) attending to the previous cultural experiences of work of clients with refugee backgrounds who might evaluate their work life from a collectivist framework and value “interdependence, group work and group rewards” over independence or other Western values (Watson, 2006, p. 51).

Conclusion

The career development of people with refugee backgrounds is important to their integration within host societies. Career counsellors who work with people with refugee backgrounds have a critical role in assisting their transition to stable and meaningful employment. As the interplay of culture and context is central to the career development of people with refugee backgrounds,

narrative career counselling was proposed as a relevant approach in the context of career counselling with people from refugee backgrounds.

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Appendix B: Conference Abstract

Abkhezr, P., & McMahon, M. (2017, July). Finding voice through narrative career interviews: Exploring the career development of young African females with refugee backgrounds. In *15th European Congress of Psychology*, Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Finding voice through narrative career interviews: Exploring the career development of young African females with refugee backgrounds

Young people with refugee backgrounds (YRB) resettling in developed countries, transition through a complex process of career development. Successful integration of YRB is linked with their career development. YRB's career development is a non-linear, heterogeneous and multi-dimensional process contingent upon various cultural, contextual and relational stories and influences of the pre- and post-migration journey. YRB experience 'self in transition' and 'active waiting' that contribute to the emergence of anticipated future directions as well as a loss of voice and agency as a result of challenging transition processes. Additionally, the world of work in countries where most YRB are resettled is undergoing dramatic shifts. Access to meaningful and decent work is no longer a given for many people including those with refugee backgrounds who face unexpected and unanticipated challenges when moving towards their anticipated future directions.

Shaping a richer understanding about how previously constructed anticipated future directions reshape after resettlement could facilitate a more detailed exploration of the complex career development process of YRB. Little research has been conducted on the career development of

YRB after resettlement, particularly qualitative research that can generate culturally and contextually pertinent experience-near data.


Objectives: The current research used a qualitative exploratory multiple case study method to explore the career stories of three young African females who as a result of being forcibly displaced travelled together, spent years in refugee camps, and finally resettled in Australia.

Method: To facilitate the exploration of participants' life-career stories and to give voice to their lived experiences, narrative career interviews were conducted using a narrative storytelling approach. Interviews were analysed using a voice centred relational method.

Results: The unique plot of each participant's story reflected the operation of various voices, relationships, social structures and dominant narratives, influential in constantly reshaping future career plans.

Conclusion: Narrative career interviews assisted participants to gain a sense of agency useful for the actualisation of their preferred career plans through finding voices that were lost or diminished during multiple transitions. Implications for research and practice will be considered.

Appendix C: Recruitment Poster

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|----------------|--|------------------------------|-------------------|---|------------------------------|----------------------------|---|-----------------------------|-----------------|--|
|  | <h1 style="margin: 0;">PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH</h1> <h2 style="margin: 0;">Information for Prospective Participants</h2> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p><i>The following research activity has been reviewed via QUT arrangements for the conduct of research involving human participation. If you choose to participate, you will be provided with more detailed participant information, including who you can contact if you have any concerns.</i></p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <h3 style="margin: 0;">Exploring the career development of youth with refugee backgrounds by narrative storytelling</h3> | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Research team contacts</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%;">Principal Researcher:</td> <td style="width: 40%;">Peyman Abkhezr</td> <td style="width: 40%;">PhD student, Queensland University of Technology (QUT)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Principal Supervisor:</td> <td>Dr Kevin Glasheen</td> <td>School of Cultural and Professional Learning, Faculty of Education, QUT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Associate Supervisor:</td> <td>Professor Marilyn Campbell</td> <td>School of Cultural and Professional Learning, Faculty of Education, QUT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>External Supervisor:</td> <td>Dr Mary McMahan</td> <td>School of Education, The University of Queensland (UQ)</td> </tr> </table> | | Principal Researcher: | Peyman Abkhezr | PhD student, Queensland University of Technology (QUT) | Principal Supervisor: | Dr Kevin Glasheen | School of Cultural and Professional Learning, Faculty of Education, QUT | Associate Supervisor: | Professor Marilyn Campbell | School of Cultural and Professional Learning, Faculty of Education, QUT | External Supervisor: | Dr Mary McMahan | School of Education, The University of Queensland (UQ) |
| Principal Researcher: | Peyman Abkhezr | PhD student, Queensland University of Technology (QUT) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Principal Supervisor: | Dr Kevin Glasheen | School of Cultural and Professional Learning, Faculty of Education, QUT | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Associate Supervisor: | Professor Marilyn Campbell | School of Cultural and Professional Learning, Faculty of Education, QUT | | | | | | | | | | | |
| External Supervisor: | Dr Mary McMahan | School of Education, The University of Queensland (UQ) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>What is the purpose of the research?</p> <p>The purpose of this research is to investigate:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) The career development stories of youth with refugee backgrounds, and b) Their experience of telling these stories in interviews. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Are you looking for people like me?</p> <p>The research team is looking for participants who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are aged between 18-25. • Have been previously granted “refugee status” and are now considered as permanent resident of Australia. • Entered Australia in 2011 or later. • Are able to write and speak English. • Have not been referred to a psychologist/psychiatrist within the past five years. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>What will you ask me to do?</p> <p>Your participation will involve two visits to QUT Kelvin Grove Campus. At every visit, two consecutive separate interviews will be conducted. The first interview will last about 45 minutes. During the second interview which will last between 60-90 minutes you will watch your first interview and whenever you wish, you may pause the video and make comments about it. Interviews will be video and audio recorded. Before the first interview and after the last interview you will be asked to briefly write your future career plans in a few words or sentences. Interviews will take place at Queensland University of Technology (Kelvin Grove), however all transport costs will be reimbursed and you will also receive a \$100 gift card as a token of appreciation for your time and effort.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Are there any risks for me in taking part?</p> <p>The research team has identified the following possible risks in relation to participating in this study:</p> <p>You will be asked to share information about your career and educational goals, along with experiences since your arrival in Australia. You may experience some discomfort as the result of answering some interview questions about your future career and educational goals or as a result of disclosing information related to past events. We also understand that it might be inconvenient for you to travel to QUT for interviews and attend two consecutive interviews each time you come.</p> <p>Strategies are in place to manage these risks and full details will be provided should you choose to participate. In the unlikely event that you might experience emotional distress or discomfort during or after the interviews you are provided with free counselling services by QUT Counselling Services.</p> <p>It should be noted that if you do agree to participate, you can withdraw from participation at any time during the interviews without comment or penalty and up to 4 weeks after the completion of interviews or before data analysis begins.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Are there any benefits for me in taking part?</p> <p>It is expected that this project may not benefit you directly. However, it may benefit researchers, professionals and policy makers who deal with issues related to education and career development of people with refugee backgrounds.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Will I be compensated for my time?</p> <p>To recognise your contribution should you choose to participate, the research team is offering you a \$100 gift card as a token of</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

appreciation for your time and effort.

Additionally to compensate you for your contribution should you choose to participate, the research team will provide you with out-of-pocket expenses for all your travel expenses to/from QUT for the purpose of attending the interviews in QUT.

I am interested – what should I do next?

If you would like to participate in this study, please contact the researcher for details of the next step.


When you phone the researcher, you will be asked a few short questions to make sure that you meet the criteria listed above in dot points. You will also be provided with further information to ensure that your decision and consent to participate is fully informed.

If you are interested in participating, please contact us by phone: **Peyman Abkhezr –0405 354 149**

Thank You!

QUT Ethics Approval Number: 1600000178

Appendix D: Participant Information Sheet

| | |
|---|--|
|  | PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FOR QUT RESEARCH PROJECT – Interview – |
| Exploring the career development of youth with refugee backgrounds by narrative storytelling | |
| QUT Ethics Approval Number 1600000178 | |

RESEARCH TEAM

| | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Principal Researcher: | Peyman Abkhezzr | PhD student, Queensland University of Technology (QUT) |
| Principal Supervisor: | Dr Kevin Glasheen | School of Cultural and Professional Learning, Faculty of Education, QUT |
| Associate Supervisor: | Prof Marilyn Campbell | School of Cultural and Professional Learning, Faculty of Education, QUT |
| External Supervisor: | Dr Mary McMahon | School of Education, The University of Queensland (UQ) |

DESCRIPTION

This project is being undertaken as part of a PhD study for Peyman Abkhezzr. This project is under the supervision of Dr Kevin Glasheen, Professor Marilyn Campbell and Dr Mary McMahon.

The purpose of this research is to investigate: a) the career development stories of youth with refugee backgrounds, and b) their experience of telling these stories in interviews.

You are invited to participate in this project because you have self-identified as someone with a refugee background and have shown interest to talk about your career development and stories related to your future/current career and education plans.

PARTICIPATION

You will need to come to QUT Kelvin Grove Campus for two visits.

In each visit, you will be involved in the following procedure:

Visit 1:

1. You will be asked to briefly write your future career plans in a few sentences (maximum one paragraph).
2. Participate in a 45 minutes interview with the principal researcher. This interview will be video-recorded. The interview content is about your career decisions, plans and factors which might be influential in your future career. Some sample questions of this interview will include:
 - What is your current level of education? And how/where did you attain these educational experiences?
 - What are some of your interests, hobbies and role models in life?
 - What do you think are some of your achievements in life?
3. You will have a short 15 minutes break.
4. There will be another session in which you will watch the video of the previous interview in the presence of either Dr Kevin Glasheen or Dr Mary McMahon (supervisors). The purpose of this interview is for you to watch and comment on the video recorded material of the previous interview. Only you will have the control to pause the video at any time and comment or elaborate on what you have watched. This interview will be audio recorded.

Almost one week after the first visit, you will be invited for a second visit:

Visit 2:

1. Participate in a 45 minutes interview with the principal researcher. This interview will be video-recorded. The interview content is about your career decisions, plans and factors which might be influential in your future career.
2. You will have a short 15 minutes break.
3. There will be another session in which you will watch the video of the previous interview in the presence of either Dr Kevin Glasheen or Dr Mary McMahon (supervisors). The purpose of this interview is for you to watch and comment on the video recorded material of the previous interview. Only you will have the control to pause the video at any time and comment or elaborate on what you have watched. This interview will be audio recorded.
4. You will be asked to briefly write your future career plans in a few sentences (maximum one paragraph).

It is expected that overall you will spend a maximum of 6 hours of your time for this project.

Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. If you do agree to participate you can withdraw from the project without comment or penalty any time before interviews are completed and up to 4 weeks after data collection or before data analysis begins. If you withdraw up to 4 weeks of data collection or before data analysis begins, on request any identifiable information already obtained from you will be destroyed. Your decision to participate or not will not impact your current or future relationship with the organisation/service where you accessed information about the project, or with QUT (for example your grades).

EXPECTED BENEFITS

It is expected that this project will not benefit you directly. However, it may benefit researchers, professionals and policy makers who deal with issues related to education and career development of people with refugee backgrounds.

To recognise your contribution should you choose to participate, the research team is offering you a \$100 gift card as a token of appreciation for your time and effort.

Additionally, to compensate you for your contribution should you choose to participate, the research team will provide you with out-of-pocket expenses for all your travel expenses to/from QUT for the purpose of attending the interviews in QUT. Each time you come for interviews, you will be paid the amount of money you spent on your transportation and you will be given the same amount to return (please provide receipts if the amount is more than \$20).

As you will need to dedicate a maximum of 6 hours of your time, to compensate and appreciate your dedication to this project, you will be given a \$100 gift card as a token of appreciation.

RISKS

There are minimal risks associated with your participation in this project. These include potential discomfort associated with answering some interview questions about your future career and educational goals or as a result of disclosing information related to past events.

To minimise the risks, you can always choose not to answer any question that you don't feel comfortable with and you can avoid talking about certain topics. You are encouraged to let the

interviewer know that you don't want to talk about certain issues or you don't feel comfortable to answer certain questions any time. You can also ask the interviewer to stop the recording at any time you feel that you don't want certain parts of the conversation to be recorded. After the completion of interviews you will be given a de-identified transcript of all interviews to read and you can ask for the removal of certain parts if you want to.

In case of experiencing an emotional distress as a result of interviews, you can choose to seek help from free counselling services in QUT. QUT provides for limited free psychology, family therapy or counselling services (face-to-face only) for research participants of QUT projects who may experience discomfort or distress as a result of their participation in the research. Should you wish to access this service please call the Clinic Receptionist on **07 3138 0999** (Monday–Friday only 9am–5pm), QUT Psychology and Counselling Clinic, 44 Musk Avenue, Kelvin Grove, and indicate that you are a research participant. Alternatively, Lifeline provides access to online, phone or face-to-face support, call **13 11 14** for 24 hour telephone crisis support. For young people aged between 5 and 25, you can also call the Kids Helpline on **1800 551 800**.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

All comments and responses will be treated confidentially unless required by law. The names of individual persons are not required in any of the responses.

Participation in this research involves video recording the interviews, and you will have the opportunity to review the de-identified transcripts and verify your responses. The video files will be destroyed 5 years after the last publication. Non-identifiable data from our interviews will be used for publication of articles in related journals and only the researcher and his supervisors will have access to video files and the transcripts.

Any data collected as part of this project will be stored securely as per QUT's Management of Research Data Policy. Please note that non-identifiable data collected in this project may be used as comparative data in future projects or stored on an open access database for secondary analysis. Non-identifiable data from our interviews will be used for publication of articles in related journals.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

We would like to ask you to sign a written consent form (enclosed) to confirm your agreement to participate.

QUESTIONS / FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT

If you have any questions or require further information please contact one of the researchers listed below.


| | | |
|------------------|--|--------------|
| Peyman Abkhezr | p.abkhezr@qut.edu.au | 0405 354 149 |
| Kevin Glasheen | k.glasheen@qut.edu.au | 07 3138 3425 |
| Marilyn Campbell | ma.campbell@qut.edu.au | 07 3138 3806 |

CONCERNS / COMPLAINTS REGARDING THE CONDUCT OF THE PROJECT

QUT is committed to research integrity and the ethical conduct of research projects. However, if you do have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project you may contact the QUT Research Ethics Advisory Team on 0731385123 or email ethicscontact@qut.edu.au. The QUT Research Ethics Advisory Team is not connected with the research project and can facilitate a resolution to your concern in an impartial manner.

Thank you for helping with this research project. Please keep this sheet for your information.

Appendix E: Participant Consent Form

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|---|---|
|  | CONSENT FORM FOR QUT RESEARCH PROJECT – Interview – |
| Exploring the career development of youth with refugee backgrounds by narrative storytelling | |
| QUT Ethics Approval Number 1600000178 | |

RESEARCH TEAM CONTACTS

| | | |
|------------------|--|--------------|
| Peyman Abkhezr | p.abkhezr@qut.edu.au | 0405 354 149 |
| Kevin Glasheen | k.glasheen@qut.edu.au | 07 3138 3425 |
| Marilyn Campbell | ma.campbell@qut.edu.au | 07 3138 3806 |
| Mary McMahon | marylmcmahon@uq.edu.au | 07 3365 6550 |

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

By signing below, you are indicating that you:

- Have read and understood the information document regarding this project.
- Have had any questions answered to your satisfaction.
- Understand that if you have any additional questions you can contact the research team.
- Understand that you are free to withdraw at any time without comment or penalty.
- Understand that if you have concerns about the ethical conduct of the project you can contact the Research Ethics Advisory Team on 3138 5123 or email ethicscontact@qut.edu.au.
- Understand that the project will include video and audio recording.
- Understand that non-identifiable data collected in this project may be used as comparative data in future projects.
- Agree to participate in the project.

Please tick the relevant box below:

- I agree for the interviews to be video and audio recorded.
- I do not agree for the interviews to be video and audio recorded.

Name

Signature

Date

Please return this sheet to the investigator.

Appendix F: Interview One Protocol

Good morning (afternoon) _____. My name is Peyman. Thank you for coming to this interview. I'm going to begin this interview by asking some brief questions about you and then some other questions about your career journey. After these questions, I'm going to read what you have written in your FCA -that I have here- and if there is anything that comes to your mind about it and we haven't talked about it, you can tell me more by then. After this interview, you will have a 20 minutes break and then I will call you back to watch the video of this interview with my supervisor whom you met just now.

I assume that you have read the Participant Information Sheet and if you still have any questions about it, you can ask me now. As you know, we will be video and audio recording this session today, if it's okay with you. But I want to assure you once again that no one else except me and my supervisors would have access to these videos and your identity will remain confidential at all future stages of publishing and reporting the findings of this research.

If you feel uncomfortable to share anything and don't want it to be recorded, please don't hesitate to tell me and I will stop the recording. One more thing that I want to remind you about is that, if participating in the interviews make you feel emotionally distressed or uncomfortable for any reason, you can choose to seek help from free counselling services here at QUT. You have their contact details in your Participant Information Sheet.

Do you have any questions?

If Yes: Ask your question.

If No: Demographic Questions.

Demographic questions:

1. How old are you?
2. Where were you born?
3. How/when did you arrive in Australia?

Questions from the First Interview*

Educational Background

- What is your current level of education? Where did you study?
 - How was the experience of education in these locations?
 - What educational challenges did you face?
 - How did you manage to achieve this level of education despite the challenges?
-

Vocational Background

- What sort of work experiences did you have before you come to Australia?
 - How did you make the decision or happen to engage in those work experiences?
 - How did you find those work experiences?
 - What challenges or learnings did they bring forward for you?
-

Future Career Plans

- What are your future career plans?
 - How did your future career plans change over time as a result of work experiences or other incidents?
-

Family Educational/Vocational Background

- What were the educational levels of your parents/siblings and their careers?
 - What sort of influence did your parents or siblings have on your future career plans?
-

Role Models

- Who were some of your role models in life?
 - How did you get to know about these people?
 - What have you learned from them?
 - How do you think they might have influenced your career plans?
-

Achievements/Challenges

- What do you consider as achievements/challenges in your life so far?
-

Post-Resettlement Experiences

- What have you been doing since you arrived in Australia?
 - What are your next steps in order to achieve your career plans?
-

**After the demographic questions, we started with the “Educational Backgrounds” questions below. But eventually, these prepared questions were not asked in this particular order and were used more as a guideline about the areas to be covered during the narrative inquiry interviews.*

Appendix G: Codes/Themes/Sub-themes of Thematic Analysis

| Themes | Sub-themes | Codes | Sample Participant's comment |
|--------------|---|---|--|
| Career Areas | General pre-occupation areas and fields | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan to help women giving birth • Not many professionals in that field • Concerned about circumcised girls giving birth • Helping doctors on these occasions • Bring social change as new generation • Helping people both at home/Australia • Helping people in camps • Giving voice and support to people in her country | <p>All my plans are to help the babies, the mothers, for giving birth. That's really a problem ... women giving birth ... in that field we really don't have people.</p> <p>Girls who come to refugee camp and they get pregnant but they can't give birth because some doctors they really don't know about it [circumcision]. Maybe I can help them.</p> <p>The other thing is like when we are all together, the generation coming up, we will still try our best to change our leaders. Whatever that they are doing, it is not good. I go and help people back home and even the same in Australia too. because yeah, people in Australia ... We also have to help people in Australia, because when we came to Australia, they gave us opportunity.</p> <p>So, seeing people suffer in camps, just made me to feel like I really want to help and do something for them. I think my people in my country need me, I will get that opportunity to go and have the</p> |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International relations and working with different types of organisations • Defending people as a politician • Helping some people by teaching or giving advice • Helping people who suffer • Becoming a good person in community • Enjoying time with children | <p>voice and maybe support them.</p> <p>I really want to work with current affairs, government and just non-governmental. So, I just focused with the international relations because I can do different things in a different world.</p> <p>... as a politician ... Imagining how I will defend other people.</p> <p>Maybe I can't help everyone but I will still maybe create time to teach people and give them advice and what they should do and that and that ...</p> <p>The people who are suffering, any kind of people who are suffering. If I have that ability to help them, I think I will love to help them. Because I'm planning maybe when I ... I will be a good person in community.</p> <p>like sitting with children, yeah. They are very nice, you know. I like when they're talking: "teacher, teacher!" yeah, I like it.</p> <p>Next step is, start working</p> |
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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working in I.T • Business expansion as usual life | <p>I will get to information technology in Australia</p> <p>Then I go back to my usual life and see what to do ... expanding my business maybe.</p> |
| | <p>Specific careers</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community service builder • Social activist in women's health • Nurse • Midwife • Community service worker • Accountant • Entrepreneur • International community service provider | <p>I can build a house for orphans or widows or like that ... or I can build schools.</p> <p>So, we have to open our hospital and then maybe we can hire the, the professionals to help these women to give birth.</p> <p>Maybe I start doing nursing or midwifery.</p> <p>Something that I really wanted to do in my life is just going and working in the community.</p> <p>So ... and accountant, until now I feel like I can be an accountant even if I am an entrepreneur, I can be an accountant by myself.</p> <p>I'm planning to work as in international community services ... to focus on community services.</p> |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child care for orphans • Training other people to do child care | <p>... taking care of children ... you know ... because I have already experienced talking with children ... how they have suffered and I will know how to deal with children.</p> <p>I will be having small children, who I can take care of them. Something like that. Yeah. And if I will not be able to be there with them, but I can train people, who can take care of them very good, yeah. Because I have that skill, so I can teach other people and they can do that.</p> |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing games, web pages & apps | <p>... and you know, designing games, designing web pages, applications.</p> |
| | Work environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International work context • Working with the UN • Interactive workplace • UNHCR | <p>I would like to work internationally.</p> <p>once you study something and to me it's international relations ... I can work with the UN and the same as psychology, I can say, work with the UN.</p> <p>It is where I want to work, I want to interact ... I want to feel myself interacting with people.</p> <p>Because I like helping people, you know, I would like to work</p> |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working in Kenya • Becoming a successful freelancer • Working in office, administrative settings | <p>in UNHCR. Since I was twelve years old ... I wanted to work with UNHCR.</p> <p>I want to work in Kenya. I like it, but even other country I can go ... but I like Kenya mostly.</p> <p>I want to be my own role model ... I want to be my own boss [in I.T]...</p> <p>I mean to get a white-collar job in the future. I want to work as a professional ... I want to work as someone with people ... with papers, computers.</p> |
| Motivations & inspirations | Spiritual motivations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepared for changing her plans according to what god plans • Seeking god's help • Dad's advice: god is with for your plans | <p>I know what we plan is not what god plans for us. So, you just put your list down and do it. And I'm aware of that the road does not go straight. There are corners and I'm ready to, to pass through them. So, that's why I know, I plan this but god plans another one for me. I go, I wanted to go east, you find yourself going west.</p> <p>I pray to god that, so that he can help me about my plans in my life.</p> <p>My dad told me: "don't ever give up in life and don't ever give up in Allah ... You just have to pray and be strong. He's always there and he's watching you. Even if I'm not here, or if anything that we are</p> |

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| | | | not together, just put in your mind that I'm with you and god is also with you". (belongs to both spiritual and relational motivations subthemes) |
| | Relational motivations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning from Oprah • Kofi Anan approving her plans • Returning people's favour • Her encouragements | <p>I just feel like she is strong and if Oprah can do it, who am I not to do it.</p> <p>So he [Kofi Anan] was not practicing the law, but he was practicing the international relations ... so I think he is to tell me "it's a good thing".</p> <p>I see people, some people coming and helping our family, then I say: "Oh, god. I have to help people" ... because there are people who are helping us. And I have to help other people who are suffering.</p> <p>When I talk to her, she keeps telling me: "No. Your plans have to be your plans. You have to stick on your plans. If you see that you can make it, so you have stick with it."</p> <p>My dad told me that: "No. If it's your plan to do ... the thing that you have planned in your life, you can remain with it. No</p> |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dad’s encouragement • Relating with people through singing • Teacher motivating her to become a banker. | <p>one can change your mind. if you are willing to do community service, you can do that one”.</p> <p>[By singing] you can say a little about your story in your life. You can sing about your story. And people will go: “Oh, so you passed like this and this. Oh, god. maybe even me I can be like, like her”. Like encouraging people.</p> <p>Because of my love towards mathematics, my teacher was telling me: “I think you are going to work in a bank”.</p> |
| | <p>Personal motivations</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging self to be strong and determined • Believing in her confidence • Pulling resilience and strength from her past | <p>Don't fear, just be strong. Whatever that you wanted to do in life, just do it, go with it and believe in yourself and you will reach your goals.</p> <p>Now I can stand and talk about it [my life and plans]. Like before I was not so confident because I know like, I had, I don't have a good education background, so I'm always, just keeping to myself that and I always never had the confidence to be open.</p> <p>... if you come from a poor, a refugee background, you succeed more and more. Because you are really, you have energy, you wanna fight this life, you wanna overcome all the difficulties, you wanna</p> |

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| | | <p>challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Believing in her efforts | <p>reach at the point that you wanna have things that you didn't have. So it makes you build yourself and be who you wanna be.</p> <p>... even though they say that: "Kali! You can't make it" But through to my effort, I will make it</p> |
| Past Plans | Previous future plans | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous plan limited to education in Australia • Previous plan of becoming a politician • Previous plan for becoming a business woman • Previous plan to become a banker • Previous plan of becoming a | <p>before coming here, I just knew that I'm coming to study and that's it.</p> <p>I thought that I want to be a politician.</p> <p>Since I was in class six ... I used to like how they [business women] dress and present themselves ... I used to say: "that's what I want to be".</p> <p>For a while, I was like: "Yeah, I want to work in a bank".</p> <p>Since I was young ... I wanted to be a model ... I always told</p> |

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| | | <p>supermodel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous plans of becoming an actress or filmmaker • Previous plan of just working in a hospital | <p>my sisters: “I want to be a model ... a supermodel”.</p> <p>I wanted to become an actress or film maker.</p> <p>Yeah, [Back in Kenya] I had it in mind, but it was not like build a hospital. It was just like to go and work in a hospital and help people there.</p> |
| | Transitioning of plans | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition from focusing solely on studies to other plans such as owning a business • Change of mind about working in the bank • A change of plans on how to utilise the power of a model, for helping people | <p>... by us coming here, I first thought that we are coming for studies, and that's why I knew that I will just come here and I go to school. But now it has changed to working, owning my own business. So, I think it has changed.</p> <p>But when I grow up and know that in the banks there is no money, I would say: “No I don't want to work in a bank”.</p> <p>Something has changed, nothing has changed about me being a model but because I never got the opportunity there, but [realised that] I still have that power inside me, I still want to help people.</p> |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realising that modelling is not aligned with her goals • Realising the possibility of going beyond just working in a hospital and instead building a hospital • Coming to Australia has changed some plans | <p>... because in the camp, we never had that access, so I just said that thing [modelling] will never help me.</p> <p>But when I came here, and I got many friends, then I was just talking to them and then when I talk to them and they told me: “Maysa! you know what you can do? We can all study ... and build a hospital together. In Congo, at least, we can go and help there.</p> <p>Australia really helped me to open my mind and see ahead of me, see my plans and I'm just seeing it clear ... Some things become clear to me and yes, some things also change.</p> |
| Actions & outcomes | Educational action plans | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finish a certificate to gain entry to university • Education as a conversation topic among friends | <p>I'm planning to finish certificate three and I'm also applying to go and do my, my tertiary preparation program. When I finish, I just wanted to know how to get to university here.</p> <p>When we sit together, all of us, we talk about education, education, education.</p> |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finishing a certificate for entry to university • Planning to do two diplomas • Degree in peace building and/or international relations • A way into university after English course • Maybe doing masters (psychology) after a degree in international relations • Education and work at the same time. But must continue studying | <p>After I finish it [cert 3], I'm also doing a ... Preparation ... Tertiary preparation. So, when I finish my certificate three in Aged Care, I think ... then I will also process in to university. Yeah, I want to proceed to university.</p> <p>I just maybe do diploma, both of them. I study both of them, finish this and go to this.</p> <p>I always say that I want to study ... international relations and peace building in university.</p> <p>I'm still studying English, I'm still doing English, but I look for any [link] so that I can go to university and study what I want to study.</p> <p>I still go with the international relations after that ... I, go with my masters, I want to do something to do like psychology.</p> <p>... Then I go to school, during the day, or I can work during the day and go to school during</p> |
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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study hard, get a degree for a better job • Certificate, diploma and then university • Currently only focuses on education • Education: a degree and then maybe masters | <p>the night. I'm still working on that ...But I want to continue studying.</p> <p>I need to study very hard ... until I get my degree, so, you know, if you didn't study, you can't get a better job.</p> <p>Certificate three in community service ... then diploma. Then I can join the university.</p> <p>For my future, my mind is on studies at the moment. I don't want to do anything apart from continuing my education. I want to stick on my university.</p> <p>Education I have to do, if I do my degree, then see if I do my masters, if there is still time.</p> |
| | Other actions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doing a test for a pathway to university program • Wanting to learn about creating things | <p>But last Monday ... I went to University to do a test on Tertiary Preparation.</p> <p>I have never created anything yet, but I want to plan more and then I want to know how to do things, to be creative.</p> <p>When I finish my uni in</p> |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving to Canada and learning French and Arabic • Getting married after university • Wanting to practice interaction with people • Self-employment in her own business for a while • Employing somebody else when going to university • For doing business, wanting to engage in a project and getting a shop • Postponing marriage | <p>Australia, I can go maybe ... maybe I can go to Canada and learn French. Yeah. I will learn French. Yeah, if I learn French, then I can learn also Arabic.</p> <p>I want to study first ... then I will get married later.</p> <p>... talking to people. So, it is a good practice, more talking, I have to be good at talking. Don't be harsh, you have to talk politely to people. I practice that.</p> <p>I thought I'm not going to employ myself, but for now I have to employ myself for like a month or two months, until I know how my business is running and then employ somebody so I can focus on my university</p> <p>I saw this advertisement ... It's a project in X ... before applying for it, I had an idea in my mind. I wanted to do business in Australia. Now I think I should do it with them ... they gave me the shop</p> <p>If I get married, I will have to just take care of the kid and family, so for now that is not really what I want.</p> |
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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consulting with others about future career • Working for six years to save money for future plans. | <p>This week I have talked to someone from the University of X. I had a meeting. So, I talked to my teacher first and then she organised the meeting with X ... I just wanted to know about my career.</p> <p>Six years it is enough, because I calculated. When I work for six years here, I will be having enough savings to do what I want to do in Africa.</p> |
| | <p>Outcomes</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better life for self and kids • Having money to help people • Education might help her to solve her country's problems • Helping people by creating jobs | <p>... to have a better life and my kids will have better life.</p> <p>... to have money ... so I can help people.</p> <p>I always ask myself: If I can be educated one day and go back, maybe I can solve something ... I know I can't solve everything in my country, but I can solve just a part of it and see how I can do the others.</p> <p>So that I can help them, because I create jobs for them.</p> |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having money to see mother • Changing people's thinking and lifestyle • Familiarising people with god through music • Having money to build • Happiness from seeing people benefit/love his creations | <p>If I work and get money, I can find her [her mother] and see her, at least I can see her.</p> <p>I want to change a lot of people's thinking and people's lifestyle.</p> <p>So, there are some people who still don't know who is god, so through my singing, I can make them know more about god. So, the way I'm singing and they can be interested with my singing and they can follow what I mean to them.</p> <p>If I have a good money, good job, I can build some schools, orphanages ...</p> <p>... but when you try to create something, you have to make sure that people benefit from it. I will be very happy, if I create something and then people love it. And you see people using it, of course you will be happy.</p> |
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