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The issue of ‘trust’ or ‘mistrust’ in research with refugees: choices, caveats and considerations for researchers

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Abstract

This paper is based on issues raised in a research project investigating the experience of asylum seekers in the UK dispersal process. This study examines the refugee experience in its entirety, focussing on pre and post arrival in the UK. It investigates the history of mistrust and relationships of mistrust prior to arriving in the UK by examining the experiences of refugees from Myanmar¹ in refugee camps and urban centres in Southeast Asia. It investigates mistrust within the UK by examining the context, experiences and perceptions of various nationalities of refugees dispersed throughout the UK.

The research is built on the premise that refugees are the experts of their own experience and is therefore based on qualitative methods. Crucial to the success of these methods is the establishment of trust between the researcher and the researched. The refugee experience however, creates mistrust at a number of levels. Considerations of why refugees themselves mistrust; why refugees are mistrusted; who is trusted to provide information about refugees and how, as a researcher, the issue of mistrust can be handled are explored. These issues are examined in relation to their theoretical as well as practical dimensions.

Introduction

Central to any study on refugees is the issue of trust. Within this paper, trust is understood as being able to have confidence in a person or thing. It is accepted that this confidence has arisen and has been shaped by particular contexts but it is considered that trust is, fundamentally, a universal notion. This issue needs to be confronted for a number of reasons and at many levels – individual, institutional or societal – or from an international, national or local perspective. It cannot be assumed and left implicit – it requires explicit examination. When choices about research are being made – be they ontological, epistemological or practical – this issue requires consideration.

This paper will address the history of mistrust specifically in relation to the ‘refugee experience’². As Daniel and Knudsen point out ‘the refugee mistrusts and is mistrusted’ (1995:1) and this paper seeks to elaborate on this statement by exploring why and who refugees mistrust³ and why and by whom refugees are mistrusted⁴ at each phase of forced migration. To do this an eight-phase process model (Baker, 1990:67) will be utilised to distinguish the different stages of forced migration. This eight-phase model is used because a thorough understanding of the refugee experience requires viewing the entire process of becoming a refugee rather than focussing only on their experience upon arrival in the UK (Joly, 1996:150). This process model (Baker, 1990:67) includes: the period of threat; the decision to flee; in flight; reaching safety and a place of asylum; the refugee camp experience; reception into a host

¹ Burma was renamed Myanmar by the military authorities in 1989. Burma continues to be used by the democratic and ethnic opposition parties.

² The term ‘refugee experience’ is used because it emphasises the centrality of refugees themselves in any analysis (Ager, 1999:2).

³ See also Appendix I for overall framework.

⁴ See also Appendix II for overall framework.

country; resettlement; and post-resettlement. The model therefore details the recognised and much debated process involving refugee camps, whereas many refugees arriving in the UK have circumvented this form of containment.

Burmese⁵ refugees will be the main case study in exploring this issue prior to reception into a host country, although reference will be made to academic work on other countries in order to back up and/or compare points being made. These examples will be drawn from interviews, conversations and personal experience of working with Burmese refugees along the Thai-Myanmar border between August 1996 and April 2000.

Examples post-arrival in the UK will be drawn from research currently being conducted for a PhD on the impacts of the dispersal policy for refugees of various nationalities within the UK. I argue herein that the rise of mistrust felt towards refugees in the UK is due to past legislation on asylum that has been based on deterrence and other measures restricting rights of refugees. A more formally structured social exclusion of refugees in the form of compulsory dispersal through a separate agency – the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) – has separated refugees from mainstream society, leading to an entrenchment of this feeling of mistrust towards refugees at a national level.

It is suggested that there is a boundless social universe of mistrust – much of which will remain unknown to the researcher – requiring consideration when conducting research on refugees. This paper will explore past lessons and potential strategies for researchers attempting to negotiate this issue of mistrust in order to carry out research. This is done in the knowledge that it is too ambitious to think that a particular set of research questions and subsequent methodology will reconstitute trust but that mistrust inherent in the asylum system should be considered during their formation.

There are, of course, caveats that require attention throughout this paper, Firstly, not all refugees will experience all of the relationships of mistrust outlined herein – others may have different experiences. Secondly, although considered to be a universal notion⁶, there will be personal and cultural differences in the concept of trust (Muecke, 1999:36-49; Petzet, 1999:169) that show how trust arises from and is shaped by particular contexts. Thirdly, circumstances in countries of origin may often differ from those described within Myanmar given that contemporary Myanmar has such a variety of human rights violations and reasons for persecution from which to choose. Fourthly, the issue of trust and refugees is a subject that could be examined at a global or local level in relation to gender, social exclusion or inclusion, social capital, integration, racism and other related areas – all of which would be absorbing fields of enquiry and warrant papers in themselves. Finally, in the absence of government policies that attempt to reconstitute trust⁷, it is also interesting to consider the role of ‘agency’ and the ability of individual refugees to be resilient, survive

⁵ Although Burma is now known as Myanmar, it is unclear what nationals from Myanmar are referred to and this paper, therefore, continues to use the term ‘Burmese’.

⁶ For example, the Burmese word for trust is equivalent to its English meaning. The Burmese word ‘yon day’ is usually used with people to mean trust and the word ‘yon gyi day’ is used with things, i.e. news in newspapers, but it is also used with people in the sense of to trust and believe in them.

⁷ For example, the UK currently formally excludes refugees from seeking employment. It has been argued that refugees learn to trust and rebuild their lives through, amongst other activities, gainful employment (Carey-Wood *et al*, 1995).

and/or reconstitute trust in their lives – a subject that, again, warrants a paper in itself. It should also be noted that, unless included in quotations, the term ‘asylum-seeker’⁸ has not been used; rather the term ‘refugee’⁹ has been used to denote all people forced to migrate.

This paper does not provide an exhaustive account of the definitions or discourses on social exclusion, social inclusion, integration, the dispersal process or resulting secondary migration, nor is it a comprehensive account of the refugee experience from exodus to post-resettlement. It does, however, attempt to chart the relationships of mistrust that occur throughout the process of becoming and being a refugee and questions who is trusted to provide information about refugees throughout this process in order to be of interest to researchers.

Why and who do refugees mistrust?

Asking ‘why does the refugee mistrust?’ leads us to a number of answers, some of which can be addressed here. Zolberg (1983, 1989) suggests that the formation of new states is a ‘refugee-generating process’ in that ‘conflicts over the social order are a struggle between dominant and subordinate classes’ and that this process of restructuring the social order of the nation-state results in either the risky option of ‘exercise of ‘voice’...’ or the less risky option of ‘exit’(1989:246). This restructuring is often, on the face of it, along ethnic, language or religious lines and trust is broken down along these lines meaning that members of other ethnic, language or religious groups are to be mistrusted. Thus, at a societal level, trust breaks down along perceived differences – the former Yugoslavia¹⁰ is one such example, as is contemporary Zimbabwe where political trust has been lost by various groups who are experiencing persecution and being forced to flee.

Within Myanmar, the authoritarian nature of the political system and the ‘atmosphere of fear and repression’ that ‘envelope the country’¹¹ creates a situation whereby the ‘primary lens’ is ‘suspicion’ and mistrust (Fink, 2001:129), meaning that people do

⁸ An asylum seeker is a person who has moved across an international border seeking asylum but whose claim for refugee status has not yet been decided. An asylum-seeker does not gain access to the rights of a refugee until given Refugee status. The term ‘asylum-seeker’ began to be used more often in the ‘first half of the 90s’, *The Guardian*, 22 May 2001.

⁹ The term ‘refugee’ in this paper refers to not only the legal term Refugee as defined in the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees but also to a wider definition that includes asylum-seekers, those with ELR or ILR, and other forced migrants. Exceptional Leave to Remain (ELR) and Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) are a lesser status and do not provide the same rights as Refugee status. The ELR policy has now been replaced with a system of Humanitarian Protection (normally for 3 years; full access to mainstream benefits and employment; no right to family reunion) and Discretionary Leave (no longer than 3 years; full access to mainstream benefits and employment; no right to family reunion).

¹⁰ As an example, a witness at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) stated that Serb and Croat populations following the 1990 elections in Hrvatska Dubica of the former Yugoslavia no longer had ‘normal relations’ because “From the moment Zenga [Croat national guard] was established, the relations between the Serbs and Croats in the village changed. There was a lack of trust, and nobody felt safe anymore.” (Transcript of evidence of Josip Josipovic , 29 August 2003, Page 25660, lines 18-20, www.un.org/icty/transe50/030829ED.htm)

¹¹ Report of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Myanmar presented at the 58th session of the United Nations General Assembly, 5 August 2003 (A/58/219, Para.24)

not trust each other and do not talk freely. Recent research by the Special Rapporteur¹² documented ‘forced labour, arbitrary taxation and extortion, forced relocations, torture, rape and extrajudicial executions’ – all violations that add to the creation of further mistrust. As Fink suggests, the ‘culture of mistrust’ is said to ‘have characterised not only the military regime but, in many cases, the opposition groups as well.’ (2001:253). It is interesting to compare the situation in Myanmar with that of Guatemala. Within Guatemala, Manz also suggests that ‘suspicion is cultivated in the rural areas by the existence of ... self-defence civil patrols, military commissioners and other selected or coerced informers’ thus imposing ‘a network of informers’ which ‘pits neighbour against neighbour’ (1995:157). Thus in both Myanmar and Guatemala, mistrust can be seen as a basic characteristic of national and local politics.

During the period of threat (Baker, 1990:67), depending on the type of political activism being carried out, a person ‘in hiding’ may, as a survival strategy and as a direct result of past betrayals, mistrust all but a few close companions. As Robinson suggests; ‘... many asylum seekers have had to learn not to trust people to survive. Their persecutions in the country of origin may have been sparked by a casual comment made by a neighbour, a colleague, a friend or even someone who wished them ill.’ (2002b:64). Thus, prior to crossing a border and becoming a refugee, the capacity to mistrust is great.

Upon ‘the decision to flee’ (Baker, 1990:67), the ‘primary ontological security’¹³ (Richmond, 1994:19) of a person has been vastly threatened if not taken away. The ‘everyday life’ that ‘depends upon routine that, in turn, assumes a degree of predictability and trust in others (Ibid., 1994:19) has changed potentially forever. If it is considered that a social contract exists between the individual and the government, an event may occur at an individual or societal¹⁴ level that splits this.

Once this split has occurred, flight is often imminent as the refugee no longer trusts his/her own government with his/her own life. Thus, trust at the primary and secondary ontological level is lost¹⁵. At what point s/he decided to flee can mean the difference between life and death as well as whether international protection will be available. Kunz’s two kinetic types – ‘anticipatory’ and ‘acute’ – distinction (1973:131) is helpful here in that it categorises refugees into (a) those who anticipate persecution and plan their flight and (b) those who are coerced, often at gunpoint, and forced to flee. A photograph taken by Sebastiao Salgado (2000:116/117) of Ivankovo camp in eastern Croatia with 120 refugees living in a train demonstrates vividly ‘anticipatory’ refugees who had fled before becoming victims of rape, torture or

¹² Findings from research conducted in October-November 2002, Report of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Myanmar presented at the 58th session of the United Nations General Assembly, 5 August 2003 (A/58/219, Para.44)

¹³ Primary ontological security refers to ‘an individual’s self-confidence, derived from a sense of the permanency of things and the reliability of natural processes. ... Becoming a refugee ... generates extreme ontological insecurity.’ (Richmond, 1994:19)

¹⁴ For example, the events of August 1988 in Myanmar where students watched as fellow students were gunned down by the military.

¹⁵ Secondary ontological insecurity ‘arises when particular spheres of social life are threatened’ (Richmond, 1994:19), e.g. bereavement, divorce, loss of employment, etc. that ‘generate extreme anxiety. ... The duration of the feelings of insecurity will depend upon the individual’s ability to restore normal routines, re-establish trust, and achieve confidence in himself and others.’ (Richmond, 1994:19).

ethnic cleansing, i.e. individual persecution, and were thus not considered refugees under the 1951 Convention.

During flight the refugee is forced to trust various agents, be they travel facilitators, passport brokers or other brokers. S/he does this as a survival strategy and to ensure that ‘as few people know you are leaving is important, so you trust no one.’ (Robinson, 2002:64), often not knowing which country s/he will arrive in and what will occur upon arrival.

Upon ‘reaching safety and a place of asylum’ (Baker, 1990:68), mistrust of immigration officers, government officials, uniformed officials, soldiers and border guards is evident. This mistrust can be due to a number of reasons including a general fear of anybody in uniform – informed by past experience of officials in their country of origin. By the time a refugee reaches a refugee camp these past experiences of officials and past betrayals become matters of survival. Other refugees encountered may have different past or present political allegiances; they may be from a different ‘vintage’ (Kunz, 1973) of forced migration; or they may be in a position of authority.

For example, a Christian Karen refugee from Myanmar may totally mistrust a Buddhist Burmese refugee or a Christian Mon¹⁶ refugee who left Myanmar at the same time, is living in the same refugee camp, receives the same relief supplies and attends the same school. Camp committees, often containing identical membership as opposition groups, do not automatically command trust from refugees. This also applies to other ethnic, religious or other exile groups where trust, on the face of it, would be assumed by outsiders to be a given due to a similar set of circumstances being encountered.

Particular individuals may be followed into refugee camps by agents of the government of the country of origin and consequently mistrust all they encounter as a survival strategy. The possible existence of secondary persecution by non-state agents also needs to be considered. Non-state agents may also reside in refugee camps. Proving ‘secondary persecution’ by non-state agents at the Thai-Myanmar border was, for refugees from some ethnic groups, the only way in which to obtain ‘Person of Concern’ status from UNHCR.

Whilst refugees from Myanmar do arrive with a generic trust of the ‘UN system’, upon arrival in a refugee camp a process begins whereby UNHCR ceases to be trusted by refugees. On the ground, refugees may perceive UNHCR personnel¹⁷ as inaccessible diplomats who are interested in their own careers rather than being empathetic to the circumstances of refugees. Visits by field officers – often in shiny, four-wheel drive trucks and accompanied by Thai military officers in order to conduct interviews or assess populations – were rarely considered to offer any form of protection. The political exigencies of operating within Thailand are invariably cited as the core reason for UNHCR’s inability to act on behalf of refugees. At a broader policy level, the emphasis during the past decades on voluntary repatriation being the desired durable solution has translated into a belief that the very involvement of UNHCR means being sent ‘home’ to a situation where no fundamental change has taken place. Thus, along the Thai-Myanmar border, there is a widely held view by

¹⁶ Karen and Mon are ethnic groups in Myanmar.

¹⁷ This opinion also applies to some NGO personnel.

refugees in camps, and various NGOs, that the involvement of UNHCR denotes a ticking clock to 'voluntary repatriation' akin to the situation of the Rohingya Muslims who fled to Bangladesh.

Reception and settlement in a host country

Upon arrival in the UK, a process of isolation and intense social exclusion begins (Sales, 2002:456). Legislation since 1993 has gradually eroded rights that refugees in the UK have been entitled to leading to what Carter and El-Hassan term 'institutionalised exclusion' (2003:10-11). The Asylum & Immigration Appeal Act 1993 incorporated the 1951 Convention into immigration rules; embedded the 'safe third country' removal process; allowed asylum cases to be certified as 'manifestly unfounded' and removed the rights of appeal for certain visitors.

The Asylum & Immigration Act 1996 introduced sanctions on employers who gave work to unauthorized asylum-seekers and the creation of a 'culture of suspicion' (JCWI/Refugee Council/CRE, 1998) has permeated throughout the UK. This included the introduction of internal immigration controls, i.e. immigration checks at the point of accessing services and other benefits. A 'culture of disbelief' ((JCWI/Refugee Council/CRE, 1998) became shorthand to describe the relationship between the Home Office and potential refugees. This mistrust has been perpetuated in the press, both at national and local levels (Refugee Council, 2002:10). The Immigration & Asylum Act 1996 also imposed sever restrictions on welfare entitlements.

Until the mid-1990s, refugee resettlement policy was 'based on two key approaches in current social policy; equal access to general state provision and the support of community self-help' (Duke, 1996:7). Following the 1999 Act, NASS was created in order to disperse asylum seekers to regional consortia ('cluster areas'), organise social support and provide one option of accommodation (outside London and the Southeast). Asylum seekers to be dispersed were arriving without refugee or temporary protection status. They were not arriving *en masse* from a particular emergency, i.e. refugees from all countries were to be dispersed, unlike previous dispersal policies which have been based on a single nationality. Dispersal was, and is, compulsory for 'destitute' asylum seekers and social support is outside the normal system of welfare provision for residents.

Contemporary refugees arriving in the UK commence a process that begins with immigration officials who question their right to seek asylum. Thereafter the refugee goes on to encounter Home Office officials who interview them to obtain their case history to determine their claim. A number of RSPs, or 'reception assistants', in the dispersal process provide advice and assistance to refugees. In order to obtain subsistence support and/or accommodation from the National Asylum Support Service (NASS), these reception assistants assist the refugee to complete a 13 page application form¹⁸ that replicates immigration questions such whether the applicant passed through any other countries on the way to the UK¹⁹.

¹⁸ The NASS Application Form is completed in English.

¹⁹ Interview, June 2003.

There is evidence that this role confuses refugees and RSPs are ‘mixed up’ with immigration²⁰ which is problematic for caseworkers who wish to assist with shelter, clothing, food and ‘signposting’ to other essential services. Also, RSPs or RCOs who receive Home Office funding may have their roles perceived, in the eyes of an asylum seeker, as that of an agent for the government and thus their voluntary sector role may be perceived as being compromised²¹. Some London based RCOs²² also provide ‘reception assistance’ in line with contractual agreements they have entered into with RSPs. Thereafter, refugees are placed in Emergency Accommodation prior to being dispersed to cities throughout the UK.

Upon arrival, a refugee may ‘mistrust everybody they encounter’²³, including members of their so-called community. Refugee Community Organisations (RCOs) have much to offer individuals when they are attempting to rebuild their lives and reconstitute trust but even here trust is not a given²⁴. It may be the case that single-nationality RCOs are predominantly comprised of one ethnic group and may be perceived by newly-arrived refugees as pandering more or less to one particular ethnicity. The same applies to multi-nationality or ‘thematic’²⁵ RCOs.

The process involved in the dispersal of refugees across the country can result in refugees being confused and now knowing whom to trust. Whilst dispersal of refugees occurred in the past with the involvement of the voluntary sector, this role that in part replicates immigration questions, places voluntary agencies in the pressured, frontline role of implementing negative policies²⁶ within the context of dispersal being on a compulsory basis has proven to be difficult²⁷. Interviews²⁸ with refugees within this process have highlighted this perception that RSPs are not independent of NASS and are therefore not to be fully trusted. This view is challenged by RSPs who maintain their independence²⁹ and continue – often successfully – to carry out advocacy work in opposition to government policies. This tension does not, unfortunately, allow much space for trust that is a starting point for community development or work to enable empowerment.

Adding to this, the current discourse in the UK on removals, deportations, etc. creates yet another layer of mistrust. RSPs are also being co-opted into assisting with voluntary repatriation and, potentially, future compulsory repatriation programmes. These programmes will create increasing levels of mistrust. A research team looking

²⁰ Interviews, May – August 2003.

²¹ Interview, November 2002.

²² Interview, May 2003.

²³ Interview, November 2002.

²⁴ This is borne out by the research results of *Missed Opportunities: A Skills Audit of Refugee Women in London from the Teaching, Nursing and Medical Professions*, published by the Refugee Women’s Association and the Greater London Authority, December 2002. This reports states that friends and family are the main source of advice on arrival (63%) whilst the figure for RCOs is much less (16%). At later stages of the process friends and family are relied on less (34%) whilst RCOs are referred to slightly more (18%).

²⁵ For example, thematic RCOs may be based around gender, occupation, the media, campaigning or advocacy.

²⁶ For example, the escalation of the time spent in emergency accommodation.

²⁷ Interviews conducted during June and July 2003.

²⁸ Interviews conducted during June and July 2003.

²⁹ Interview, August 2003. See also Silver, J., (22 July 2003) *Has asylum seekers’ gamekeeper turned poacher?* BBC news, view at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/magazine/3074045.stm>

at this issue for Refugee Action, in association with IOM, has found that a key theme emerging from their research was this mistrust issue (Sales, 2003, forthcoming). Specifically they have found that:

- There was a lack of trust in the British government and agencies associated with the return programmes.
- This lack of trust was reflected in the reaction of many people to the research
- Many participants were mistrustful about the situation in Afghanistan, and
- There was considerable mistrust of specific groups within Afghanistan.

People working with refugees in the UK suggest that the problems of the home country are often reproduced in exile (Blackwell, 1989:13). As Lemos (2001:3) suggests; 'Often conflicts from other parts of the world are replayed in microcosm on a British council estate because people from communities in conflict are insensitively housed close to one another'. Particular issues emanating from home country values may also divide communities throughout the resettlement process. For example, it has been suggested that the concept of 'honour' in the Kurdish/Turkish population of North London creates further mistrust within the community³⁰. It is considered that 'if we speak publicly about honour crimes and honour killings' (Salim, 2003:8) shame will be brought to the community.

Similarly, the South Asian concepts of honour and shame as it relates to the question of honour related crimes, the silencing of women and the 'requirement to not disturb or challenge longstanding community silences about violence against women' (Gill, 2003:4) creates divides, commonly along gender lines. As women seeking asylum in the UK often have 'dependent' status on their husbands during gaining refugee status, this dependent status creates further obstacles to accessing services and resources.

Negative experiences or hostile encounters from officials, the service sector, housing providers and other service providers, the host population and their own community impact upon the ability to trust the new environment encountered. The level of discrimination encountered, the inability to gain paid employment, the ability to participate in society generally are all factors in the reconstitution of trust and the regaining of 'ontological security' (Richmond, 1994:19). Whilst individuals may begin to trust, it is unlikely that the world of officialdom³¹ will regain the trust of refugees, even if this were the intention.

Why and by whom are refugees mistrusted?

The relationships of mistrust outlined above also pertain to this section. However, there are occurrences when mistrust directed towards refugees is not mutually felt by both parties or there are substantially different motivations for the mistrust felt towards refugees.

³⁰ Interview, October 2002.

³¹ The term 'officialdom' is understood here to encompass government officials and, in some instances, the voluntary sector when they are involved in implementation of Home Office policies.

Refugees may be mistrusted by host governments, agents arranging travel and other brokers, UNHCR staff, staff of international NGOs, members of other ethnic or religious groups, opposition groups in exile and other exile groups.

Asking ‘why is the refugee mistrusted’ again leads us to Zolberg’s process of restructuring the social order of the nation state (1983, 1989). During the period of threat, refugees (to be) are mistrusted by their own government and/or agents of the government due to their perceived, concocted or real political connections. Barriers to exit, through physical borders or inaccessible documentation are manifestations of the mistrust governments have over their own populations.

As Robinson remarks, fleeing persecution involves:

‘The agent who arranges your flight will also not trust you. He will ask for full payment in advance and he may not even tell you which country he is going to smuggle you into. You will not be told the route, the identity of your guides, or even the identity of your fellow travellers.’ (2002b:64).

Members of dominant or minority ethnic and religious groups may mistrust each other. In a rural context, prior to or during flight the refugee may be considered to be a spy and/or a member of another ethnic or religious group and thus treated with mistrust by villagers. For example, villagers encountered by Burmese students who fled on foot to the borders following the 1988 uprising were deeply mistrustful of the ‘Burmese spies’ in their village. In an urban context, airline staff may well be mistrustful due to the laws and regulations enacted by receiving countries that impose fines for passengers without correct documentation on aircraft.

Throughout the process of becoming a refugee, at an international level, receiving governments and aid agencies will continuously attempt to define and redefine refugees dependent upon their Refugee Status Determination processes, their target or vulnerable group definitions and who they perceive to be ‘real’ refugees. Mistrust of those perceived as being outside definitions or in some way different to the perception of who deserves to be admitted as a refugee can occur even for those refugees who neatly fit the definition under the 1951 Convention³².

Also, the ‘vast variations in personal background ... and plans for the future’ (Daniel and Knudsen, 1995:3) are rarely incorporated into the definitions of agencies projects or programmes. As Baycan suggests, ‘refugee woman’ is not ‘a homogenous category, and universalising ‘refugee woman’ ... undermines the diversity in experience amongst them.’ (2003:23). This is recognised by UNHCR – as Crisp suggests, statistical data now recognises that ‘refugee populations are not simply an undifferentiated mass of people with identical needs and capacities.’ (1999:3). The next step from here is more difficult. The need to be fair, to treat people the same, in other words to homogenise the refugee experience is often the outcome of aid programmes.

³² As an example, Burmese ‘students’ and former political prisoners from Myanmar were considered by a number of NGOs to not be ‘real’ refugees because they were more vocal and able to access international resources. There had, however, often experienced individual persecution and thus fitted the 1951 Convention definition of a refugee although other ‘more deserving’ refugees who allowed NGOs to speak on their behalf were often considered the priority.

This mistrust operates at an individual and a group level. At an individual level, UNHCR may not believe the case history as told to them by a refugee. Whilst refugees along the Thai-Myanmar border are considered to be *prima facie* refugees, access to resettlement via quota systems has in the past involved a rigorous process of refugees travelling illegally across Thailand to be interviewed in Bangkok in the hope that they obtain Person of Concern status. At a group level, the debate about numbers, leading to oppressive practices and control (Harrell-Bond, 1992) is one example of how refugees are mistrusted by governments and other aid agencies. Waldron's (1987) examination of the atmosphere of blame towards Somali refugees identified the 'failure of the UNHCR to establish a sufficiently trustworthy relationship' in relation to a census as a major problem. The game of duplicity played between givers and receivers of material assistance – wherein numbers supplied by refugees themselves will rarely be trusted and, in fact, be considered to be inflated – is subjected to haggling regardless of whether the budget of the giver could accommodate it³³.

Reception and settlement in a host country

The numbers of people seeking asylum in the UK are regularly highlighted to demonstrate the rise of applications for refugee status. As Zetter et al (2003:91-92) graphically demonstrate, legislation is introduced after the 'high points' of 1991 and 1995 'suggesting that an essentially reactive approach to asylum applications' has been operative. UK governments have not highlighted the number of people who actually received refugee status. Rather they 'appear far happier to talk about the number of asylum applicants who fail to qualify for refugees status, a tactic which helps to reinforce the public perception that there is no essential difference between an asylum seeker, an economic migrant and an illegal immigrant.' (Crisp, 1999:14).

NASS 'operates on the presumption that the majority of asylum seekers are 'bogus' and 'undeserving', while the minority granted Convention status are the 'deserving'.' (Sales, 2002:463). Legislation and regulations surrounding asylum in the UK is confusing and changes continuously. As a result, at a national level, sections of the general population of the UK do not understand the need to honour legal obligations to accept refugees. When asylum seekers are housed without consultation with the local communities, sections of the local population protest. A recent example is the opening of an Induction Centre in Sittingbourne, Kent. Local people were not consulted by the Home Office and it has since been admitted that this was a mistake. The mystery surrounding plans for asylum creates hostility and further mistrust.

Peter Wrench³⁴, speaking for the Home Office, has stated that the government needs an asylum system that is 'credible' and 'trusted by British people' because 'the loss of public confidence is not sustainable'. There was no mention of an asylum system that is trusted by refugees or the international community. Accountability is clearly not towards refugees. The recent introduction of the 'As Soon as Reasonably Practicable'

³³ Assertion based on own experience of administering Burma Coordinating Group (BCG) relief programme to Burmese students. BCG consisted of the International Rescue Committee (IRC), the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), the Open Society Institute (OSI) and contributions from Thailand based non-governmental organisations.

³⁴ Deputy Director General of Policy, IND, speaking at the Refugee Council Conference, *Impact of Change*, 28 January 2003.

test under Section 55³⁵ of the 2002 Nationality, Immigration & Asylum Act has placed a further burden of proof on the applicant. To receive support from NASS, s/he needs to apply immediately upon arrival in the UK. No precise number of hours or days are specified and, instead, a series of examples, without definitive answers, have been utilised to provide guidance to IND staff. Within this guidance³⁶, one example (number 8) outlines a scenario wherein the ‘adult with no dependants’ applies for asylum claiming ‘that an agent told him not to apply for asylum on arrival’, that it took him ‘three days to find a solicitor’ and ‘that he did not know how to apply until he obtained legal advice’. The outcome of this scenario is that ‘support would normally be refused’ because ‘the applicant had the practical opportunity of claiming asylum on arrival’ and ‘his reasons for delay [in applying] is not considered to be adequate’. Trusting the agent in this case has led to refusal and mistrust of the applicant is the implicit assumption for his delay in applying.

Once a refugee is given refugee status they begin to be seen as being someone who can be trusted, allowed to work and obtain the rights they sought when seeking asylum. Even then, however, negative public discourse on refugees impacts upon them in a variety of ways³⁷.

Lessons learnt: considerations for researchers

The history of mistrust outlined thus far has not specifically looked at what this means for researchers, be it research in refugee camps or in countries of resettlement. As outlined below, obtaining data about refugees from official or authoritative sources is not always the optimum method. What follows is a consideration as to who is trusted to provide information about the refugee experience. Whether refugees are themselves the experts of the refugee experience is also a contested idea dependent upon ontological position. Researchers negotiate these two sources of information.

Whilst working along the Thai-Myanmar border, interviews conducted consistently spelled out identical experiences of human rights abuses that led to forced migration. In early 1997 during the same period, people once referred to as ‘refugees’ overnight became labelled ‘displaced persons feeling fighting’ in Thai government statements and throughout the media. It was also revealing to note that on 23 May 1997, UNHCR issued a press release commending the Royal Thai Government (RTG) for ‘the quick and efficient transfer of the 4,696 Karen displaced persons from Huay Sut and Bo Wi temporary camps to a new site, Tham Hin, ...’. In earlier statements, the term ‘refugee’ had been used in public statements rather than the term ‘displaced persons’. Clearly, the politics of various agents concerned with refugees dictated the semantics or ‘labels’ (Zetter, 1991) assigned.

In the same setting, UNHCR was not trusted by refugees, nor various NGOs working in the field who considered field officers to be ‘officials’ and, with exceptions, ‘careerists’, more concerned with the availability of salsa lessons than understanding or assisting refugees. Thus, it is understandable that it was also considered that UNHCR staff did not know enough about the politics of the refugee camps, be it due

³⁵ Came into force on 8 January 2003.

³⁶ Guidance can be viewed at: <http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/default.asp?PageId=3653>

³⁷ For example, there is confusion in the employment field over who is allowed to be employed – over time changing regulations have confused employers.

to insufficient time, resources, interest or inclination. This is akin to Kaiser's findings upon evaluating UNHCR's programme in Guinea, West Africa, when she states that the 'internal political dynamic of the camps is little researched and understood by those working with the refugees.' (Finding No.20, 2001:6).

Within the UK, mistrust of Home Office statistics has also been a source of articles for the press. An article entitled '*Asylum: Can we Trust the Figures?*'³⁸ illustrates this ongoing debate³⁹. This article points out what every researcher on refugee issues in the UK already knows – that the way figures are presented by the Home Office, even if closely analysed, remain confusing. There are no public figures for the number of appeal cases withdrawn by the Home Office. As of December 2001, the Home Office has begun producing quarterly statistics on the dispersal of asylum-seekers in the UK⁴⁰. They show total numbers dispersed to the regions, at a given date, who are in receipt of subsistence only support and those supported in NASS accommodation. The totals are not cumulative

Thus sources of information who, on the face of it, would be considered official or authoritative also need to be scrutinised. RSPs and RCOs purport to represent the needs of refugees. Given the issues raised earlier in the discussion about the perception by refugees of these organisations it questioned how information provided by these organisations are meaningful for refugees themselves? Funding exigencies may require information to be kept on refugee populations. Questioning why information is obtained needs to be continuous. The main question we are asking is; who to trust to provide an adequate representation of the refugee experience? Particularly, when seeking information about dispersal and secondary migration in the UK, who can provide accurate and reliable data?

Why trust refugees themselves to provide information?

In the past, research into refugee situations has often been disempowering and since the early 1980s there has been a call 'insisting that refugees must be allowed to represent their own claims, interests and concerns and make more vigorous input into the configuration of aid structures (Indra, 1989:223). As Beresford (1996:41) states in relation to the UK provision of social support; 'The research process has effectively been out of the control of users of state welfare and social care services. It has not primarily or necessarily reflected their interests.' and '... the general exclusion of service users from the research process has meant that the latter's particular concerns, interests, ideas, experience and aspirations have rarely been central to the formulation of research or research agendas.' (1996:42).

Refugees can be considered to be the experts of their individual refugee experience but, due to multi-layered mistrust, potential user-involvement in policy making is not an option in the UK. It is accepted that no study can be completely 'empowering' but

³⁸ See *Asylum: Can we Trust the Figures?*, BBC News Online, 2 December 2002. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/2468311.stm>

³⁹ Although the Mayor of Stoke on Trent, in a report *Asylum Seeking in Stoke-on-Trent: The Facts*, February 2003, considers that the report could be 'trusted' due to the fact that it 'is a compilation of data from Government and other authoritative sources.'

⁴⁰ These show the total number of asylum seekers supported by NASS in the eight English regional consortia outside London, plus Scotland and Wales.

attempts can be made to at least glean the perspective of refugees themselves at various stages. Baker, himself a refugee, called for ‘victim oriented survivor research’ (1990:69) in order to allow the formulation of ‘policies and programmes that are appropriate and meaningful to the refugees themselves’.

Also, Chambers (1983) called for ‘reversals’ in gaining knowledge about rural populations in the third world – he called for rural people themselves to be considered the experts in their own environments. This perspective has already been extended into refugee studies – a number of practitioners and academics (Indra, 1989:223; Harrell-Bond, 1992) putting the case for this quite succinctly.

Daniel and Knudsen state that; ‘Information provided by a refugee must not only *not* be used to oppress but if trust is to be restored, it must also be rendered meaningful.’ (1995:5). Taking an ontological position that refugees’ knowledge, understandings and experiences are meaningful and allow an insight into the refugee experience and an epistemological position that by interviewing refugees directly, this will be a legitimate way in which to generate data that reflects this allows this. This position allows the opportunity to consider that refugees are themselves ‘experts’ on the refugee experience. If this position is considered to be the most favourable, some considerations and strategies are outlined below that may be useful to researchers.

How can researchers expect or build trust?

‘The word itself, ‘research’ is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world’s vocabulary. When mentioned in many indigenous contexts, it stirs up silence, it conjures up bad memories, it raises a smile that is knowing and distrustful.’ (Smith, 2002:1)

The quote above explains how researchers in a refugees’ country of origin may not be trusted due, in part, to the way in which the historical ‘imperial and colonial attempts to deal with indigenous peoples ... within the wider discourses of racism, sexism and other forms of positioning the Other.’ (Smith, 2002:90). Thus, even prior to reaching a refugee camp where researchers may be present, the term ‘research’ is something that may not be trusted. Thereafter, the experience of being interviewed as a newly arrived refugee and not subsequently being informed of the outcome of the study may, if considered in tandem with not seeing any immediate changes following the study, may exacerbate this ‘distrust’.

Refugees have fled regimes that violated their human rights, unlawfully detained them and/or tortured them. They are negotiating massive obstacles in order to live in third countries that are, in the case of the UK, not necessarily responsive to the problems they encounter. Giving these considerations, interviewing refugees for the sake of academic research raises a number of ethical considerations as structures of, real or perceived, power need to be borne in mind. Inequalities of political rights, economic positions, psychosocial positions, gender and other social and cultural factors between the researcher and the researched all require attention.

Refugees, due to their lack of political rights pending status recognition, may feel particularly vulnerable and/or powerless in the process being researched, thus sensitivity to the feelings of refugees will be of paramount importance at all times.

However, refugees may consider that researchers may have a particular perception of what a refugee is and how they should behave. It may be that refugees will feel the need to demonstrate or point out their resilience or the fact that they are not someone to be pitied, be on the end of a 'charity approach'⁴¹ or be 'labelled as vulnerable' or a 'victim' (Baycan, 2003:22).

Economically, refugees are disadvantaged in the UK due to the current practice of providing lesser amounts of social benefits to refugees and researchers, interviewing refugees potentially in their homes, may have a negative impact on the household economy. Given that the central tenet of being a refugee is to have suffered persecution, psycho-social considerations will be a factor. Whilst avoiding any tendency to pathologise refugees' mental health, it may be that depression is evident and it is questionable whether or not it is ethical to ask a person to recall painful events if this will, however unintentionally, open or reopen a hidden psychological wound.

On the other hand, refugees are quite often glad to tell their histories to researchers, particularly if they have politicised the experience and recognise it in a political context. In fact, it has been argued that the telling of their stories, or 'bearing witness' actually assists in this process⁴². Thus, a line between these two points must be trod by the researcher and there needs to be recognition that a certain amount of intrusion into the life of the researched will occur. Investigating the location of other family members could have the effect, whilst a person is verbalising this, of creating a situation whereby the researched may encounter a feeling of guilt in that they have left their family behind.

Emmanuel Marx, in his research on social networks, puts forward the idea that there is a 'boundless social universe' of social networks that need constantly to be borne in mind when researching the lives of refugees. This paper suggests that there is also a boundless universe of mistrust that needs consideration when conducting research with refugees, much of which will remain unknown to the researcher. This does not mean research should not be carried out; rather the researcher needs to be aware of the layer upon layer of mistrust that is a product of the refugee experience. Neither does this mean that information received from refugees during the course of research is not accurate. What this does mean is that the researcher, the 'outsider', must be aware of mutual mistrust that may exist between the person being interviewed, the country of asylum and mistrust that permeates exile communities previously explained. As researchers we need to consider our approach at many levels. We need to choose whether we research *for*, *on* or *with* refugees. Given the issue of who mistrusts refugees and who is trusted to provide information about refugees to be outlined, a standpoint firmly in the *with* refugees approach is considered herein as most desirable.

As Omidan states; 'Establishing trust was the single most difficult factor in this study.' (1994:155). A report by the Refugee Women's Association, in association with the GLA, attempted to circumvent the issue of trust by 'employing refugee women to conduct interviews' to ensure that 'barriers arising out of a general mistrust of strangers and people perceived to be in authority' would be overcome (2002:3).

⁴¹ Interview, June 2003.

⁴² Presentation from the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture, Mental Health and Refugees Conference, London, 8 October 2003.

Using the same method, Bloch, in a survey carried out in Newham in 1996 on refugees, had a similar stand. She points out that; ‘interviewers noted ... a strong element of suspicion expressed by possible and actual respondents about the survey ... and that the gatekeepers and interviewers themselves were vital to the success of the survey as they legitimized it to prospective respondents’ (1999:379), whilst assuring people that results would not go to the Home Office.

Research requires trust to be built between the researcher and the researched and strategies are required to do this. Trust takes time and is difficult to establish. There are particular methods that may be used in order to attempt to establish trust at each stage of research. Some of these could be called refugee-specific and some are the same as for any type of research.

As well as the usual offers of anonymity and confidentiality, it may be useful to place emphasis on separation and independence from ‘officialdom’⁴³. It is good to be clear about why research is being carried out and who is funding it. There will always be limitations to any piece of research and explaining these to participants will at least begin to avoid the raising of expectations, although further clarification may be necessary. Establishing ‘credentials’ by working on a voluntary basis with a respected RCO can also be helpful although the expectations of the researched of the roles undertaken of advocacy versus academia may not be compatible.

Because refugees are not a homogenous group, avoiding the ‘over-dependence on one network’ that results in the ‘danger of interviewing people with similar experiences’ (Bloch, 1999:372) can be avoided by using multiple gatekeepers. In fact, ‘many starting points for the chain’ of a snowball sample are said to ‘yield a greater diversity’ than if there had been an ‘over-reliance on key community organisations’ (Bloch, 1999:372). This is something echoed by Castles in discussions on qualitative research and ‘the need to make the voices of immigrants and refugees more representative’. He points out that it is ‘crucial for this type of research not to rely on only one network’ and ‘to cover a variety of groups’ (2002:177-178) for such research. He also suggests that in order to include ‘marginalised individuals’, there is a need to ‘move away from community-based contacts in selecting interviewees and to seek alternative ways’ to access refugee populations.

Problems associated with the use of gatekeepers can be expected at many levels and these limitations need to be acknowledged and accepted. Whilst there are a number of benefits of using trusted gatekeepers, there are limitations such as gatekeepers wishing to gain control over the research being conducted and/or wanting to present themselves in a good light. It may be that RSPs may provide contact names of other RSPs rather than providing contact names of refugees due to client confidentiality issues or protective behaviour towards their clients. If they do provide refugee contact names it may be for what they perceive to be the ‘ideal’ sample for the study. For example, a RSP may provide a contact for a refugee in good accommodation that has been arranged by the RSP in question whilst there is potentially the opposite problem in that a RCO may provide a contact in bad accommodation in order to maximise the potential for advocacy.

⁴³ However, it may be the case that no matter how much stress is placed on independence from official government agencies, refugees may not believe this – Interview, June 2003.

If a RSP has a good relationship with their clients it may be that the task of the researcher is easier than if, for example, there is a perception amongst refugees that their interests are not being best serviced. Both RSPs and RCOs may wish for their own agendas to be given emphasis within the research. Whereas RSPs are likely to know the limitations of studies due to a more clear understanding of the reason for research, the gatekeepers, particularly of newer RCOs, may well have unrealistic expectations and the danger is that expectations will be raised. As RCOs will be dealing less with policy and more with the day-to-day realities of the lives of refugees there may well be a greater sense of urgency attached to the research than is actually possible. Clarity about the research aims and time scales may be necessary. Also, whilst the researcher will always be considered to be an 'outsider' due in part to their legal status within the UK, this will not necessarily mean that gatekeepers will hide the bleaker aspects of being a refugee – in fact, they may consciously seek these cases out.

Access 'with and through gatekeepers' means that there is a need to adopt a 'flexible' (Bloch, 1999:378) approach to fieldwork when working with refugee communities. RCOs and RSPs have many demands placed upon them on a daily basis and as a result researchers are often a low priority.

Thus, in order to gain trust it is necessary to be clear that gatekeepers themselves are trusted by the individual to be interviewed and that interpreters are trusted. Allowing the interviewee and the interpreter time to speak together prior to the interview taking place can be useful. It is easy to accept the expectation that fellow refugees will be empathetic but rigour is required throughout the interview to ensure this.

Robinson and Segrott, while conducting research for the Home Office, operated under a 'policy of full disclosure' (2002:14-15). This meant they explained 'the purpose of the survey fully and honestly' and the 'relationship with the Home Office'. They consciously attempted to 'give trust' by ensuring that 'research flyers distributed to potential respondents contained information about the researchers and their careers to date'. They provided 'ex-directory home telephone numbers' as 'a sign of good faith and openness' and 'potential respondents were encouraged to ring to discuss the project and any concerns'. During the interview room layout was considered so as to be non-threatening, humour was introduced to 'lighten the atmosphere', thought was given to 'what clothes to be worn for particular interviews', etc. The building of rapport throughout was considered important.

If possible, have a written translation of the research project's aims and ultimate dissemination strategy clearly outlined in order to obtain the 'informed consent' of the participant. It may prove helpful to provide this written outline prior to the interview taking place. Further clarification on the concept of informed consent may be necessary before, during or after the interview. After the interview, keep channels open for further communication or comments. If an informed consent form⁴⁴ is used, a space for comments can be added as can a space for an email address or address for a copy of the research findings.

If it seems appropriate, offer to send copies of the transcript to the interviewee and, if the offer is taken up, allow feedback. A 'principle of reciprocity and feedback'

⁴⁴ A non-obligatory informed consent form can be introduced if it seems appropriate prior to interview.

(Smith, 2002:15) when disseminating findings⁴⁵ allows a degree of trust to be established.

Conclusion

This paper has explored the history and relationships of mistrust that occur throughout the refugee experience. Mistrust has been discussed at a number of levels – individual, institutional, societal –and at different temporal stages. Mistrust amongst refugees from Myanmar has been examined as have the formal and informal measures that have been put in place within the UK that have created further mistrust.

In the UK there has been a rise of deterrence measures – vouchers, compulsory dispersal, etc. – along with a rise in measures to ensure obedience from refugees – reporting centres, the Section 55 ‘as soon as reasonably practicable’ test, etc. Secondly there has been a decline in trust of refugees and the creation of a culture of suspicion following the 1996 Act with a rise in social exclusion due to separation and unequal access to general state provision following the creation of NASS. A separate system of support and removing asylum seekers from mainstream society creates mistrust at a time when trust should be being built to ‘integrate’ refugees into society. The compulsory allocation of accommodation in dispersal areas indicates expected obedience by ‘outsiders’ and demonstrates clearly a lack of trust. Since 1993, each legislative measure has produced a further layer of mistrust.

Although the history of mistrust outlined has dealt with issues that researchers may need to take into consideration, this issue also needs to be taken seriously by agencies that assist refugees who have staff who may be perceived to be ‘officials’ as well as government ‘officials’ with ‘integration’ programmes. Making a space for trust should be regarded as a priority. As Daniel and Knudsen point out; ‘Much of the success of ... government policies regarding refugees pivots on this fulcrum of trust’ (1995:4) and that; ‘In the best of all possible worlds, at the point of a refugee’s reincorporation into a new culture and society, trust is reconstituted, if not restored.’ (1995:1). Socially excluding refugees creates mistrust both by refugees and towards refugees and policies are therefore counter-productive in the longer term.

Given the current environment internationally and within the UK on ‘voluntary’ repatriation and, potentially, future programmes to assist ‘return’ under compulsory repatriation programmes, creating a space for trust is difficult. Where international agencies and RSPs place themselves within this environment dictates, in the eyes of a refugee, how much they can be trusted. These programmes create increasing levels of mistrust towards agencies involved, agencies who are often ‘gatekeepers’ for researchers.

⁴⁵ To people who have assisted with the research and refugee community organisations - preferably translated into relevant languages.

Appendix I - Chart 1: A History of Mistrust – Why and who refugees mistrust

	The Period of Threat	The Decision to Flee	In Flight	Reaching Safety and a Place of Asylum	Refugee Camp Experience	Reception Into a Host Country (UK)	Resettlement (UK)	Post-Resettlement (UK)
Why a Refugee Mistrusts	<p>Due to process of restructuring social order of a nation-state (Zolberg, 1983,1989)</p> <p>Due to breakdown of trust in society, e.g. former Yugoslavia</p> <p>Seen friends/family jailed, killed or tortured, e.g. Burma . May be ‘in hiding’ due to political loyalties</p> <p>Has been forcibly relocated without compensation</p> <p>May have lost trust in political system, e.g. Zimbabwe</p>	<p>Primary ‘ontological security’ (Richmond, 1994:19) or assumptive world is destroyed</p> <p>Secondary ‘ontological security’ is threatened (Richmond, 1994:19)</p> <p>Perceive a split of the social contract between the government and the individual</p> <p>Anticipatory or acute distinction (Kunz, 1973)</p>	Survival	<p>Survival</p> <p>Due to past incidents of <i>refoulement</i> at borders</p> <p>Fear of betrayal</p> <p>Opposition groups may be from different ‘vintage’ (Kunz, 1973)</p> <p>May have different past or present political allegiances</p>	<p>Survival</p> <p>May perceive UNHCR as inaccessible diplomats and NGO personnel as careerists – neither empathetic to their circumstances</p> <p>Camp committee may contain same members as opposition groups</p> <p>Possible existence of secondary persecution by non-state agents</p>	<p>UK process of formal and informal social exclusion begins</p> <p>Negative experiences or hostile encounters</p> <p>If RSP or RCO received Home Office funding may be perceived as agent for government</p>	<p>Problems of home country are reproduced in exile (Blackwell, 1989:13)</p> <p>In exile, ‘issues’ may divide communities, e.g. ‘honour killings’ amongst Turkish/Kurdish population</p>	<p>Past experiences</p> <p>May begin to trust some individuals?</p> <p>Depends upon discrimination encountered</p> <p>Depends upon employment</p> <p>Depends upon ability to participate in society</p>
Who a Refugee Mistrusts	<p>Members of other ethnic or religious groups</p> <p>Informers</p> <p>Spies</p> <p>Government agents</p> <p>Military intelligence</p>	Own government with own life	<p>Various agents, e.g. travel facilitators, passport brokers, other brokers (although may be forced to trust them)</p>	<p>Government officials</p> <p>Other uniformed officials, soldiers and border guards</p> <p>Other ethnic or religious groups</p> <p>Opposition groups in exile</p> <p>Other exile groups</p>	<p>UNHCR</p> <p>NGOs</p> <p>Camp committees</p> <p>Other ethnic or religious groups</p> <p>Opposition groups in exile</p> <p>Exile groups</p>	<p>Immigration officials</p> <p>Home Office officials</p> <p>Host population</p> <p>RSPs and/or RCOs</p> <p>“Everybody”</p>	<p>Home Office</p> <p>Host population in area of resettlement</p> <p>Housing providers</p> <p>Sections of own ‘community’</p> <p>Political extremists</p>	<p>Home Office</p> <p>Host population in area of resettlement or secondary migration</p> <p>Political extremists</p> <p>‘Officials’</p>

Appendix II - Chart 2: A History of Mistrust – Why and who mistrusts refugees

	The Period of Threat	The Decision to Flee	In Flight	Reaching Safety and a Place of Asylum	Refugee Camp Experience	Reception Into a Host Country (UK)	Resettlement (UK)	Post-Resettlement (UK)
Why Refugee is Mistrusted	<p>Due to perceived or real political connections</p> <p>Due to process of restructuring social order of a nation-state (Zolberg, 1983,1989)</p>	<p>Creates a split of the social contract between the government and the individual</p> <p>Barriers to exit in some countries, e.g. North Korea</p> <p>Anticipatory or acute distinction (Kunz, 1973)</p>	<p>Rural context: may be considered to be spies and/or members of other ethnic or religious groups</p> <p>Urban context: due to deterrence measures enacted through laws and airline regulations</p>	<p>Refugee Status Determination process may not consider them to fit within definition</p> <p>Opposition groups may be from a different ‘vintage’ (Kunz, 1973)</p> <p>Different past political allegiances</p>	<p>UNHCR: At an individual level may not believe case history. At a group level may mistrust numbers provided</p> <p>International NGOs may not consider them to be within their ‘target group’ or may not consider them to be ‘real’ refugees</p>	<p>May be perceived as being ‘bogus’ or ‘undeserving’ (Sales, 2002:463)</p> <p>‘Culture of suspicion’ (JCWI et al, 1998)</p> <p>Home Office ‘Culture of disbelief’</p> <p>Media</p>	<p>May be perceived as being ‘bogus’ or ‘undeserving’ (Sales, 2002:463)</p> <p>Media</p> <p>Irresponsible statements from politicians</p>	<p>If granted ‘refugee’ or ELR status may begin to be trusted</p> <p>Discourses in media about links with terrorism, etc.</p> <p>Unable to work</p>
Who Mistrusts Refugee	<p>Own government and their agents</p> <p>Members of other ethnic or religious groups</p>	<p>Own government and their agents</p>	<p>Rural context: villagers met en route, e.g. Burmese students walking to borders</p> <p>Urban context: airline staff</p>	<p>Government officials</p> <p>Other uniformed officials, soldiers and border guards</p> <p>Opposition groups in exile</p> <p>Other exile groups</p>	<p>Host governments</p> <p>UNHCR</p> <p>International NGOs</p> <p>Members of other ethnic or religious groups</p> <p>Opposition groups in exile</p> <p>Other exile groups</p>	<p>Immigration officials</p> <p>Government and individual politicians</p> <p>Home Office</p> <p>National and local media</p> <p>Sections of national population</p>	<p>Government and individual politicians</p> <p>Home Office</p> <p>National and local media</p> <p>Sections of local population</p>	<p>Government</p> <p>National and local media</p> <p>Sections of national and local population</p>

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