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Home away from home

A visual participatory project exploring what young people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds communicate about their everyday lives in London.

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Abstract

This thesis concerns the ways in which young people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds navigate new places, negotiating conflict and creating paths to peace in London. Those with the most proximate experiences of migration are often excluded from peacebuilding processes. Coloniality entangled into the praxis of peace and conflict fashions a dogma in which Global North understandings of peace are hegemonically adopted, meaning research paradigms are often detached from the communities they are working with. This study seeks to reimagine the dynamics between researchers and researched, embracing a collaborative approach.

Through a visual participatory approach, seven young people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds participated in a two-week-long participatory photography project. Through workshops, the study taught participants skills of photography and communication which led to them participating in a weeklong photography task in which they had to capture their everyday experiences of living in London. After this week, participants collectively reflected on the task and identified key patterns across the data in relation to notions of conflict and peace in the space of London. Key findings suggested how conflict still existed within the space of the city as conflict became experienced corporeally. But peace was also found in the city through third places and social networks. The results of the project did not only present findings that could be utilised in top-down approaches such as policies, but they also reimagined the audience of peace as participants addressed the issues of migration from the bottom-up.

Key words: Visual participatory research, migration, peace, corporeal conflict, coloniality

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1 Introduction

Peace can be understood in a myriad of ways (Freund, 1988). There are many versions of peace (Richmond, 2014) and therefore, our understandings of peace and peacebuilding should embrace a kaleidoscopic lens in research which is 'pluriversal' in nature rather than universal (Reiter, 2018). Yet, the current praxis of peace and conflict often acts as if peace is neutral or technical, as it continually preproduces models to solve conflict in a linear fashion which ultimately disguises the multiple versions of peace (Mac Ginty, 2012; Williams & Mengistu, 2015).

These approaches are entwined in the webs of coloniality as these models are endorsed by the authoritative voice of the researcher who is often from the metropoles of the Global North (Cruz, 2021, p. 274). Coloniality of power and knowledge (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018; Quijano, 2007) have created a dogma in peacebuilding which is shaped by Western knowledge and understanding. Coloniality has allowed a hegemonic Global North to dominate knowledge and understandings of peace and conflict. Subsequently, this has allowed a replication of universal understandings of peace and conflict to avoid scrutiny, as well as camouflage production of knowledge from the Global South (Demeter, 2021). An architecture thus has formed in peacebuilding where knowledge from the Global South is often overlooked or neglected. In turn, those most proximate to the lived experience of the journey of conflict to peace are often restricted from paradigms that allow them to be considered as agents of peace (McMullin, 2022). Approaches to peace that disregard proximate understandings become detached from reality and thus overlook the complexity of the lived realities that are imminent (Torjesen, 2009, p. 411).

People with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds are often not consulted when assessing migration issues. Instead, they are often characterised in one of two dichotomous ways, either as victims or as threats, but neither role regarded as capable agents of peace (Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2017, p. 1173). This project, thereby seeks to reassess who defines the boundaries of peacebuilding.

This research regards people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds not as passive subjects of research, but as active agents in peacebuilding whose understandings and knowledge of lived experiences can inform future migration policy and peacebuilding initiatives, as well as harbour spaces for peace from the bottom up. This study employed a

participatory visual approach as seven young people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds were given cameras to use as a tool of communication to express their experiences of London as a "*home away from home*." Participants raised both the conflicts they faced in the city, as well as the ways they negotiated these challenges to create pathways to peace. Participatory methods were employed to engage with more proximate knowledge at all stages, from research design, to implication, to constructing analytical frameworks. Traditional boundaries embedded in research are deconstructed and this work reimagines the approach to constructing knowledge, as well as the concepts of peace and conflict themselves. Though it is important to be conscious throughout that the academic architecture has been mediated by myself as the researcher and thus the limitations of this will be addressed in the project.

1.1 A note on terminology

Legally the definition of a refugee outlined by the 1951 Refugee Convention is "someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion" (UNHRC, 1988). An asylum seeker is someone whose request for sanctuary is still pending as their claims to refugee status are awaiting to be determined (UNHCR, 1988). This thesis acknowledges that the terms 'refugee' and 'asylum seeker' are unable to convey the complexity and diversity of identities when operating through fixed categories. It is important to recognise that these terms do not define people and their experiences cannot be understood as monolithic. After conversations with collaborators, participants are referred to as people with refugee or asylum seeker backgrounds in this thesis to not attach overbearing labels to individuals.

Moreover, the notions of the Global North and Global South should be clarified from the start. It is important to be conscious of the use of these terms as they have become arguably popularised labels in research, often being superficially employed in social science discourse (Kloß, 2017, p. 2). Looking at these terms in the context of academic architecture, the Global South can be seen as knowledge that is often deemed inferior to that of the Global North. In this thesis, Global South becomes more than just a notion attached to spatial dimensions, but the idea of the Global South becomes an active practice that restructures the global paradigms of power established by the hegemonic Global North (Kloß, 2017, 8). These notions are thus applied in this thesis to reflect the dynamics of power paradigms that are

entangled in knowledge. This study acknowledges that the Global North and Global South are diverse within their own dimensions, consisting of diverse microcosms with multiple perspectives. This thesis utilises these terms primarily to help clarify the divide and hierarchies installed in modern world systems by coloniality (Grosfoguel et al., 2015).

1.2 Problem statement

People with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds through bureaucratic processes and policies of marginalisation are distanced physically and psychologically, being made invisible in academic architectures (O'Reilly, 2019, p. 71). Research thus becomes shaped by a prism in which 'privileged outsiders' often study realities that are 'alien' to them (Mac Ginty, 2019, p. 271). Within peace and conflict research there is a gap between the social worlds of communities and the paradigms of research, as the researcher is often detached from the former. Coloniality entangled in peacebuilding thus allows those proximate to conflict to be overlooked as the field of peace becomes the "matter for a few; an elites exercise" (Cruz, 2021, p. 279). This is not to say that these communities are necessarily complaisant to this notion, but their resistance to these models are often overlooked in traditional paradigms of research.

The overbearing Global North's presence in discussions of migration has in turn perpetuated a politicised rhetoric of migration, significantly through visual media (Pruitt, 2019; Pugh, 2004). These narratives fuelled by the Global North create a binary where people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds are tied to either notions of needing protecting or being prone to violence (Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2017). Both binaries restrict them from being regarded as actors and agents of peace (Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2017, p. 1174). A hostile milieu characterises the landscape of migration in the UK currently as there has been a significant increase in policies fuelled by deterrence from 2021 to 2023, such as the *Nationality and Borders Act* 2022, policies to send individuals to Rwanda, and the *Illegal Migration Bill* 2023 (Vargas-Silva, 2022) . The act of migration has thus been manipulated through a prism which shapes it as a threat to order and thereby the antithesis of peace (Richmond & Mac Ginty, 2019, p. 608). Dismissing those that take on the journey of migration as spoilers for peace, their potential for and acts of peacebuilding are overlooked. Thus, research ignores the realities of young people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds that have lived experiences of conflict who have been able to negotiate peace on mundane and everyday levels.

1.3 Research objectives

This thesis reimagines the goal of peace research not to form replicable models or offer fixed solutions, but to explore spaces of transdisciplinary dialogue to understand the lived experiences of those navigating conflict to peace (McMullin, 2022, p. 518). This project seeks to embrace multiple voices and understandings in the accumulation and representation of knowledge, which can act as counternarratives to mainstream and stereotypical representations of migration. This study thereby aims to extend the boundaries of research and address power imbalances that are entangled in the current praxis of peace and conflict (Richmond & Mac Ginty, 2019, pp. 607-608). Through a participatory visual approach this thesis aims to create a space for "epistemological reconstitution," (Quijano, 2007, p. 176) that looks at the more mundane dimension in which young people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds negotiate conflict and peace in a place central in the modern/colonial world. Through interacting with those with lived experiences of conflict to peace, the project seeks to learn new knowledge and understandings of peace and strategies for building peace from those most proximate to this journey. This project, therefore, seeks to close the gap between research paradigms and communities, listening to proximate understandings and projecting them into visible domains. The project thus aims to facilitate collective understandings between researchers and communities.

The objectives of this thesis can be summarised by the following:

1. To create a space through a collaborative and participatory approach in which young people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds can express their lived experiences of conflict to peace in the space of London.
2. See what the participants choose to communicate about their experiences of living in, using photography as a tool of communication and to elicit collective understandings.
3. Assess what participants choose to communicate to understand challenges to peace and potential pathways to peace, learning from their everyday actions.

1.4 Research questions

To achieve these objectives, the research questions stated below were used to form the framework for this project:

1. What are the everyday realities of young people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds living in London?

2. How do participants navigate conflict to peace in the space of London?
3. What can we learn from these understandings? How can the findings of the project help inform future migration policies and peacebuilding initiatives?

1.5 Relevance to peace and conflict

Mac Ginty argues that one of the most pressing issues facing peace and conflict research is the division between those working in the Global South and those in the Global North (2019, p. 271). Peace and conflict scholars are now seeking more innovative and pragmatic approaches to complex social paradigms as liberal peace models are failing (de Coning, 2018, p. 301). The hegemonic position of the Global North is now falling under scrutiny as Western assumptions "are no longer a reliable vantage point and may even be dangerously misleading" according to Pankaji Mishra (cited in Mac Ginty, 2012, p. 48). The participants of this project all come from conflict-affected or politically violent societies where peacebuilding activities and interventions have at least to some degree failed. As Richmond and Mac Ginty argue "governance for peace, development, security and rights, needs to move over with their subjects rather than constrain them" (2019, p. 618). Therefore, this thesis proposes new avenues for peace and conflict research in which peace moves with its subjects rather than restricts them to Westernised universal understandings of peace. It is essential for peacebuilding to explore emic understandings of peace from multiple lenses to create more effective approaches that are relevant to those most proximate (Linabary et al., 2017). This project thereby is a relevant development of innovative approaches to peacebuilding through its use of participatory visual methods which aim to dissolve the gap between research paradigms and communities.

1.6 Literature review

Methodologically this thesis adds to the small but steadily growing body of literature concerning participatory visual methodologies in the social sciences and specifically migration. This next section presents and dissects the current paradigm of knowledge that concerns the research questions and objectives introduced above. Gaining an overview of the academic literature that uses visual participatory research in the domain of migration, helps to situate this research into a wider academic architecture, demonstrating how this thesis can contribute to this existing literature as well as narrow gaps within this dimension. This literature review aims to assess the visual attached to migration as well as previous visual

participatory research projects carried out within social science, highlighting its strengths, limitations, and the implications of application.

1.6.1 The importance of images in the field of migration

An academic body has formed in looking at the implications of the visual within the dimensions of migration studies. Images have been dissected in their role of harbouring significant representations of people with refugee or asylum seeker backgrounds within research and wider public discourse. There has been a lot of academic attention towards how media reproduces a "generic migrant figure," which is ambivalent (Nikielska-Sekula & Desille, 2021, p. 8). Images of people with refugee or asylum seeker backgrounds often portray them into one of two polarising categories; predators invading that are a threat to nation-based order, or paradoxically as victims stripped of agency and in need of protection (Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2017, p. 1164). However, most literature regarding images in the dimension of migration focus more on conflict and representations (Bleiker et al., 2013; Memou, 2019; Wilmott, 2017). The potential of photography instead being a tool for peace has been noticeably under explored and under conceptualised (Möller, 2019).

1.6.2 Visual methodologies in social science

There has arisen an established core of literature exploring visual methodologies in the social sciences. Visual images have been explored and appointed as being capable of being vectors of meanings, but also as holding the ability to communicate (Moxey, 2008). Literature belonging to the visual turn has thus offered a recognition of images being capable of communication with great freedom from language constraints. Therefore, this body of literature characterised as the visual turn, sheds light on the significance of images' role in the production of meanings. Various disciplines which fall under the branches of social sciences have produced significant works in exploring the use of visual methodologies particularly within the paradigms of geography, anthropology, cultural studies, health, and visual ethnography. The creative process of the visual has been developed further into a new dimension of understanding rather than simply just representing human experiences (Pink, 2007). The use of visual images in social sciences and social action has a grounded history but this body of literature does not necessarily address where the understandings are rooted and the visual remains a tool of communication for the researcher rather than the researched.

1.6.3 Visual participatory research

Collaborative participatory methods for constructing knowledge and understandings of lived experiences, places new demands on social scientists. Early attempts to give cameras to the "Other" were established by Rouch's shared anthropology (Rouch & Feld, 2003) and MacDougall's participatory cinema (MacDougall & Taylor, 1998, p. 136). The academic body of visual participatory research is gaining momentum, presenting one approach that is offering a shift in the dynamics of research dogma and explores more innovative paths to peace. This visual participatory research stems from participatory research which has been most active in dimensions of education, geography, healthcare, and development (Chevalier & Buckles, 2013).

1.6.3.1 Visual participatory research and migration

More recently taking an interdisciplinary approach, combining these schools of thought an academic architecture has started to form around the foundations of visual participatory methodologies in migration studies. Nikielska-Sekula and Desille have been notably at the forefront of combing the multiple disciplines to explore visual methodologies' role in migration studies, with their recent book *Visual methodology in Migration Studies. New Possibilities, Theoretical Implications, and Ethical Questions* (2021). Formulated on a collection of empirical cases, they highlight that researchers can utilise visual methodologies such as still and moving images, as well as mental maps, as a mechanism for knowledge production in migration. They argue the significance of visual methods offering new approaches for data collection and analysis within the domain of migration studies. As well they also highlight the potential challenges, ethical barriers and theoretical implications that are attached to employing these methodologies.

Within this book they highlight Piemontese's study (2018) with Young Roma "Affected by Mobility" (Nikielska-Sekula & Desille, 2021, pp. 177-196). The study worked with a group of Romanian Roma adolescents with mobility experiences, living in Madrid. This chapter proposes a theoretically informed empirical account of the experiences of using a participatory photography and video-making approach in research. An important aspect of this study to highlight is Piemontese's observations of collective action of the participants which transformed the research into a dialogical space. The relationships between the participants meant a space was facilitated in which personal fragments of their shared experiences of mobility could merge and frame a collective memory and imagery. This open space with a trusting dynamic amongst participants meant that topics could be explored which

Piemontese recognised as subjects before he would have overlooked or avoided, such as sexuality and romantic relationships (Nikielska-Sekula & Desille, 2021, p. 183). The study further highlights, that without meaningful participation or due to participants trying to preserve a certain image, researchers cannot assume self-representation will necessarily counter and oppose hegemonic images.

Trencsényi and Naumescu's chapter *Migrant Cine-Eye: Storytelling in Documentary and Participatory Filmmaking* (Nikielska-Sekula & Desille, 2021, pp. 117-140), assesses their study in which they ran workshops with refugees and asylum seekers, running participatory photography and filmmaking exercises concerning their lives in Hungary. They found that the photo stories triggered important stories about the homes that the participants had left behind and their journeys to Hungary. Like Piemontese's study they also reflected on the importance of a collective memory formed through a dialogic space, as small details, such as shoes, triggered important stories and collectively shared experiences (Nikielska-Sekula & Desille, 2021, p. 131). They found the approach allowed participants to shift from 'passive migrants' to 'involved participants and storytellers.' Through this active role their stories diverged from the objectifying frame of humanitarian, securitisation, and integration discourses, instead participants could form new perspectives on issues affecting themselves as well as the broader realms of society.

1.6.3.2 Photovoice and migration

Photovoice, a type of participatory visual research, has been a particularly popular route for working with participants with refugee, asylum seeker and migrant backgrounds, with numerous studies adopting this approach (Berman et al., 2001; Green & Kloos, 2009; Pearce et al., 2017). Photovoice was pioneered by Wang and Burris (1997) who appointed the intention behind photovoice being "to enable people to record and reflect their community's strengths and concerns, to promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important community issues through large and small group discussion of photographs, and to reach policymakers" (1997, p. 370). Photovoice projects in relation to migration have been explored in the spaces of the UK, such as Biglin's study (2021, 2022). Biglin used photovoice for participants with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds to take photos of things that represented their experience of place, belonging and citizenship in the Northwest of England. One key finding explored in this study was the potential for this approach to explore everyday spaces and how these were significant to peace. Mundane spaces such as urban public green spaces, libraries and religious faith buildings were all relayed as places to improve wellbeing

by the participants as they acted as therapeutic sites for the participants. These liminal and informal spaces offered emotional retreat and became symbolic for hope.

Though the previous literature on photovoice is useful for this thesis, there are some limitations that must be raised surrounding this body of work. These studies adopting the methodology of photovoice follow a systematic framework set by Wang and Burris (Green & Kloos, 2009, p. 461). A lot of photovoice studies provide structures for participants to follow, proposing certain questions or topics to be responded to be participants taking photographs. Subsequently, power paradigms are not necessarily addressed as the researcher remains the main force in shaping the agenda of the research. Understandings entangled in coloniality thus are not deconstructed as participants are still guided by an authorial researcher.

2 Conceptual framework

This chapter introduces the concepts and theoretical perspectives that form the backbone of this thesis. The framework of this project is multifaceted, drawing from different disciplines and perspectives to not assume basic understandings and universal approaches to peace and conflict research. Universal understandings are paradoxically positioned as inefficient and harmful as outlined in the opening chapter and thereby will be reimagined in this section. The underlying sentiment to this project that fuses these concepts together is that coloniality is a fundamental issue in the contemporary world as it becomes entangled in everyday structures (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). This often renders those who have lived experiences of navigating conflict to peace to outside paradigms of knowledge, restricting them from peacebuilding despite holding the most proximate understandings (Cruz, 2021). This chapter will highlight how coloniality creates an imagined line of difference between those from the Global North and the Global South, and how through this chimera, concepts of peace and conflict become formed around these divisions (Grosfoguel et al., 2015).

Basic understandings and concepts are dismantled in this chapter as it constructs a framework in which the notions of conflict and peace are reimagined. Thus, this chapter follows Väyrynen's notion to 're-theorise peace,' reimagining it by situating it within social and political contexts as well as exploring the practices and 'eventness of mundane peace' to understand how young people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds navigate conflict to peace (Väyrynen, 2019, p. 146).

2.1 Coloniality of power

The concept of coloniality was introduced by Quijano (2007), as he explored the entangled relations between the division of labour, global, racial, and ethnic hierarchies, which have stemmed from the hegemonic Eurocentric epistemologies of the modern world praxis (Grosfoguel et al., 2015). Coloniality departs from colonialism which refers to a "political and economic relation in which the sovereignty of a nation or a people rests on the power of another nation, which makes such a nation an empire" (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, p. 243). Coloniality instead suggests that patterns of power are intertwined in current culture, labour, and knowledge production which have emerged from colonialism and surpassed the dimensional boundaries of the colonial era. Thus, coloniality is an abbreviation for *coloniality of power* (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 140). Despite the formal makings of the colonial world coming to an end, coloniality bypassed these physical eradications, permitting non-European

and non-Western people to be subjected to living under Euro-American domination. Coloniality, therefore, rendered people of the Global South to an exploitative position and at the bottom of the hierarchal workings of society. The previous colonial hierarchies continue to hold an undisputed hegemon over the Global South, making coloniality distinct from colonialism, as the colonial forms of domination continue without any colonial administrations being active (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, p. 243) .

The current world system has been shaped by colonialism and a relationship of domination and subordination continues long after colonial rule (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). The modern world, therefore, constituted by these patterns of domination and subordination, harbours a space that normalises hierarchy creating a world system of power. As Grosfoguel argues the architecture of society is a "global hierarchy of human superiority and inferiority, politically, culturally, and economically produced and reproduced for centuries by the institutions of the capitalist/patriarchal western-centric/Christian-centric modern/ colonial world-system," an imaginary line of division is created (Grosfoguel et al., 2015, p. 636). Yet, despite this line being a socially constructed myth, the implication of this imagined divide becomes actualised and thereby embedded into the realm of reality. We see this play out as supposed superior human beings (those in the Global North) that are situated above the line enjoy access to rights; human rights, labour rights, civil rights, and/or women's rights. Whereas those determined under this line are deemed 'subhuman' or 'non-human', their humanity thus becomes questioned and subsequently, as Fanon (1967) would suggest, 'negated' (Grosfoguel et al., 2015, p. 636). Boaventura de Sousa Santos calls this an 'abyssal line' arguing that it is a significant characteristic of modernity that draws false dichotomies between those that inhabit above or below this line (cited in Grosfoguel et al., 2015, p. 638). People with refugee or asylum seeker backgrounds reside in the latter category, where access to rights thus becomes more limited (Dembour & Kelly, 2011), therefore, they arguably face more challenges daily as they try negotiating their position below this line in a dimension that operates above the line. The dogma of the divisional line thus assigns peace to people perceived above the line, and conflict as inherent to the people below.

2.2 Retheorising peace and conflict

Divisions and hierarchies that oscillate amongst social, economic, and political paradigms through paths engendered by coloniality have shaped the boundaries in which concepts of 'peace' and 'conflict' have been defined. The current praxis of peace and conflict research is

still arguably widely preconceived by strict spatial imaginations, defining the boundaries of what 'conflict' and what 'peace' constitutes (Selimovic, 2022, p. 584). Coloniality has allowed the Global North the hegemonic position in constructing universal understandings and definitions of peace and conflict (Cruz, 2021). This has led to the "marginalisation of research," with one of the underpinning pillars that supports this is being "a claim to what constitutes valid knowledge about war and peace; a rejection of active, engaged, or critical scholarship; and a narrow understanding of what constitutes policy-relevant research" (Krause, 2019, p. 293). Peace and conflict research, thus becomes formed and disciplined by the boundaries outlined by the Global North. This claim is often based on understandings that are typically prescribed through a spatial lens, which has been subject to tunnel vision shaped by a colonial mentality. Bounded spatial imaginations are entangled in webs of coloniality as a hierarchy is assumed in which the Global North becomes the home of peace as it is characterised as progressive and rational, with a superior culture (Selimovic, 2022). Smith (1999) argues on the other hand this renders those who are considered outside the dimensions of Euro-American modernity to instead be characterised as 'irrational' beings. Colonial narratives fuel false dichotomies such as the West and the Rest, intelligent and stupid, hard-worker and lazy, superior, and inferior (Grosfoguel et al., 2015). Thereby, the Global North established themselves as the "protagonists of global history," erasing mass human suffering they had caused through colonialism, framing discourse in which the Global South is fundamentally inferior and thus this is the root cause of their conflict (Rutazibwa, 2019, p. 65).

Coloniality of knowledge (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018) renders European culture as being exclusively rational. It has the capacity to contain 'subjects', whereas other ways of life are characterised not as rational as they cannot be nor maintain 'subjects'. 'Others' are perceived inferior in nature and thus, excluded to only inhabit the position of 'object' of knowledge and domination (Quijano, 2007, p. 174). For Jacques Rancière politics is a matter of who is considered to belong to a community and who is cast out, this is an important stance to consider in peace and conflict research as it arguably becomes fundamental to the creation of sustainable peace to acknowledge who is included in processes of peacebuilding (Vayrynen, 2018, p. 5). Coloniality of knowledge is arguably entwined in the processes of peacebuilding, making it an exclusive process belonging to the Global North. Liberal peace dominating peacebuilding practices arguably functions through 'gatekeeping' or 'avatarism', as certain actors are excluded from the project of peace as universalist impositions are

constructed from Western notions of peace (Dzuverovic, 2018, p. 114). Coloniality of knowledge enters the domain of analysis in this thesis as the methods used are intended to readjust the position of those who are rendered to 'objects' of knowledge to instead become holders of 'subjects.'

Moreover, these imaginations ultimately assign conflict as 'there' referring to the Global South and peace as 'here' referring to the Global North (Selimovic, 2022, p. 584). A Eurocentric myth of a superior Western model of life is constructed by the dominance of Global North knowledge which perceives its own approach through its social, cultural, and economic model to be superior to the rest of the world. The European culture and way of living through coloniality of knowledge has been made to look "seductive" (Quijano, 2007, p. 169). Cultural Europeanisation is, therefore, metamorphosised into an aspiration and a structure to follow. Quijano argued that "after all, beyond repression, the main instrument of all power is its seduction," as European culture is adopted as a universal model (2007, p. 169). Cultural Europeanisation thus is advertised to offer the same material benefits and the same power as Europeans, through engaging in the 'developed' modern world. Quijano argues that images entangled in the webs of coloniality of knowledge has allowed this 'mirage' of a seductive West to become successful, and this chimera reigns attractive to so many people still (2007, p. 176). Through listening to new knowledge, the analysis of the empirical material works to deconstruct this false phantom presentation of an affluent London that contains numerous opportunities to all.

It is clear to state as this point before going forward the potential caveat that understanding concepts of conflict and peace to instead to be corporeal and mobile does not mean that there should be a disconnection from paradigms of space and place (Selimovic, 2022, p. 585). Distinctions of peace and conflict are not universally accepted to be fixed in dimensions of place, but they still do take place somewhere and are spatially constructed (Björkdahl & Buckley-Zistel, 2022). The corporeality and mobility of conflict and peace is, therefore, more considered as concepts of mentality which free understandings of peace and conflict from fixed Global North dimensions of 'here' and 'there'. It highlights the mobility of peace and conflict as they are embedded in the body and therefore, does not adhere to universalised colonial understandings that characterises the Global North as the sole holders of peace.

2.2.1 Retheorising conflict: corporeal conflict

The idea of the body is a concept that considers the physical and mental experiences of moving within new dimensions and negotiating new places. A corporeal approach highlights that through the bodies of people with refugee or asylum seeker backgrounds fleeing from conflict or violent situations, conflict and its consequences remain present in the everyday of the 'affluent' and modern world of the city, countering its often-conceived state of peace being 'here' (Selimovic, 2022, p. 585). Selimovic raises the notion that conflict is not restricted to the borders of conflict-affected states, as conflict "morphs and travels' within migrating bodies (2022, p. 586). This draws from concepts discussed by Dempsey (2020) who argues that the violence that made a person leave home cannot be assessed as an isolated event, but instead must be considered as a catalyst. Thereby "while violence may occur in one place, the trauma of that experience is not bound to that place and time, but travels with victims, producing a stream of violence across space" (Dempsey, 2020, p. 1). Conflict, thus, cannot be considered in a vacuum but instead trigger a chain of violent events for migrating subjects. Accordingly, conflict cannot be assumed to be resolved once a person reaches a dimension of perceived peace (Selimovic, 2022, p. 586).

The body being a carrier of pain and trauma encourages theories of conflict and space that reimagines the scale in which conflict is recognised and analysed, rescaling it to the intimate more mundane spheres of the everyday to understand the mobility of conflict that is attached to the corporeal (Selimovic, 2022, p. 588). Conflict and violence, thereby, transcends spatio-temporal dimensions. 'Migrant bodies' are often marked by the original violent or oppressive situations they flee, which can further cause acts of violence against them by certain actors. This means that memories of conflict follow the 'migrant body' as well as create a constant marker in which people with refugee or asylum seeker backgrounds face further "quests for recognition and dignity" (Selimovic, 2022, p. 585). Assumptions constructed from coloniality create a belief that people coming from conflict-affected areas are intrinsically bound to an inferior culture and are characterised as being violent.

Bodies are the bearers of 'racial' and socio-cultural codes, which affects how mobile subjects encounter selves, others and places (Longhurst et al., 2009). Moreover, "the reinforcement of physical and psychological borders against racialised bodies is a key instrument through which to maintain the sanctity and myth of superiority of Western civilisations" (Walia, 2013, p. 7) . This in turn leaves people with refugee and asylum seeker

backgrounds from the Global South to face further boundaries, even if they did not necessarily come from a conflict-affected area since the Global South is characterised monolithically as a violent dimension. Bodies that are not deemed to belong, thus face borders to reinforce the dominant groups position. Boundaries can be challenges faced within labour markets, for example, people with refugee backgrounds fleeing from places that are associated with conflict are often characterised being violent and distrustful, therefore, finding work becomes difficult when the body is marked by colonial constructed preconceptions (Waage in Bjarnesen & Turner, 2020, p. 89). They are also then not regarded as agents of peace but considered more as spoilers.

Departing from a determined fixed site and period of conflict, conflict can be reimagined as a catalyst which does not necessarily imply conflicts end for people with refugee or asylum seeker backgrounds once they have arrived in a characterised dimension of the peaceful city in Europe. People with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds continue to experience constant insecurity, living in transient states, navigating (re)making a life, coping with little money, poor accommodation, and unpredictable circumstances that suddenly change (Selimovic, 2022, p. 593). An approach that considers the body, therefore, opens explorations of the often-neglected everyday migrant practices, helping to recognise the emotive and agentive elements entangled in the migration process (Wang, 2021, p. 2).

2.2.2 Retheorising peace: corporeal and mundane peace

Just as conflict cannot be configured in a vacuum, peace also must also be removed from Western universalisation. Väyrynen (2019) argues that when peace is removed from its corporeality, peace is also detached from its everydayness and thereby, from its 'mundane visibility' (Väyrynen, 2019, p. 147). Peace instead is often conceived to be an elusive notion which Shinko stated used to "bludgeon humanity with its extraordinariness, forever out of reach, illusive by definition, a dream too flatteringly sweet to be substantial" (cited in Väyrynen, 2019, p. 147). Instead theorising of peace through the body and the everyday following feminist and post-colonial approaches, peace becomes expressed and takes place through "acts and points of everyday contact" between bodies (Väyrynen, 2019, p. 156). This way, research through the corporeal pays more attention to events and processes that are marked by mundaneness, ordinariness and their 'everydayness', considering embodied data to advance conceptions of peacebuilding (Väyrynen, 2019, p.158).

Corporeal experiences can make migrant bodies more secure as place becomes constructed and understood through these experiences. Places become invested with meaning and emotions, in which place and body align. The city becomes a space that harvests encounters, networks and corporeal experiences that diverge from formal structures and peace becomes navigated within the in-between spaces of the city (Badescu, 2022). Selimovic argues that for migrant bodies "human networks are the most important form of protection" (2022, p. 593). People with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds must navigate through challenging journeys, corporeal encounters with people willing to help them negotiate peace become significant in strengthening their fractured agency. Strong social networks are made significant as they can facilitate access to resources which can support young people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds navigate conflict to peace in a place (Ager & Strang, 2008). Social networks arguably can offer individuals more social capital, strengthening them both socially and economically (Pittaway et al., 2016).

Everyday life is related to resistance, creativity, and societal change (Kärrholm et al., 2023, p. 271) and can thereby harbour peacebuilding activities. Everyday peace was developed out of an interest in the everyday practices of 'ordinary' people to assess how they negotiate within dimensions of conflict, which within this thesis transcends traditional boundaries as expressed above. As conflict is mobile the lifeworld of migrants becomes defined by fractured agency and is always under threat. Yet, migrants have also developed expertise to counter this violence and increase their own security (Selimovic, 2022, p. 595). This navigation of peace by young people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds starts from the moment migrant bodies use their agency to move from violence towards peace (Selimovic, 2022, p. 596). Richmond and Mac Ginty argue this movement is the most prominent example of everyday mobile agency, as migrants move away from conflict-affected zones and areas of limited economic development to seek their own peace (Richmond & Mac Ginty, 2019, p. 613). This negotiation of peace through re-establishment of place often requires a sacrifice of possessions, status, identity, and rank (Richmond & Mac Ginty, 2019, p. 614). These mobilities challenge how assumptions and practices that inhabit contemporary conflict, peace, agency, and power are understood and realised.

A mobile peace sees migration, formal or informal as a path to peace and order when in the absence of security and a viable state (Richmond & Mac Ginty, 2019). Peace in this thesis, therefore, is not an elusive notion but instead is reflected in lived experiences and mundane everyday acts of peace. Peace can be made and found in mundane spaces that reside

outside of the formal domains often tied to peacebuilding. This means our attention should not be restricted to looking for peace within official dimensions but instead turn to the liminal spaces as well as mobile bodies where peace can also thrive. This parallels the observations by Möller (2019) as he argued that scholars to learn about peace should study small acts and acknowledge the significance of everyday details. Peace is thereby retheorised to highlight mundane and everyday processes that migrant bodies engage in when navigating new places.

3 Methodological framework

Attention to the methodological grounding is essential when trying to facilitate collective understandings about peace, to generate and sustain ethical encounters with individuals who have more proximate encounters with conflict and peace (McMullin, 2022, p. 517). Therefore, as "methods are not passive strategies," choosing the method for this project became an extremely important consideration (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013, p. 187). Methods can be considered at the core of constructing knowledge, as Smith argued that the method is regarded the way in which knowledge is acquired and thus, becomes a way in which we make sense of what is real (1999, p. 164). This thesis follows the notions of situated knowledge and thus believes "that the sort of knowledge made depends in who its makers are" (Rose, 1997, p. 307). Therefore, it became my responsibility as a researcher to search for a method that would construct, expose, and *listen* to the voices of those who are usually hidden in research to extend the boundaries of the makers of knowledge. The method employed is of a participatory nature in which a group of young people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds created subject-generated visual content surrounding their everyday experiences in London. The fieldwork for the project was conducted over two weeks, consisting of two full days of workshops and a week-long photography task responding to a brief: "*Create a personalised photo series about your experiences and views of London as a new place you are living, a home away from home."*

3.1.1 A qualitative approach

The biggest difference between qualitative and quantitative research is that qualitative research places an emphasis on words and quantitative on numbers (Bryman, 2012, p. 380). This thesis is adopting an open qualitative approach to emphasise a value in understanding another person's narrative and not to just render them into another number or figure of data. Qualitative research's epistemological feature can be characterised as interpretivism, to understand and interpret behaviour dominates over the goal to generalise and predict (Noordin & Masrek, 2016). As Gibson and Argent argue, migration is a complex social and spatial phenomenon, therefore, this complexity can only be captured partially through census statistics quantitative methods reproduce, and a commitment to more qualitative methods may prove more useful (2008, p. 136). Furthermore, another advantage of qualitative research can be considered as the space to allow participants to negotiate their position more (Dahinden et al., 2021, p. 549). Qualitative research creates encounters between the researcher and participant, creating a potential space in which participants can negotiate and even contest the

researcher's questions or the issues raised. Quantitative research is bounded by categories, though it would be naïve to assume categories do not influence qualitative research as well, it can produce a space in which these categories can fall under scrutiny by participants (Yilmaz, 2013, p. 313).

3.1.2 A participatory approach

Participatory research is defined by Cornwall and Jewkes as a "bottom-up approach with a focus on locally defined priorities and local perspectives" (1995, p. 1667). Postcolonial feminists have viewed participatory research as an approach that creates a space for academics to engage in reflexive research that directly connects to the diverse and real-life experiences of participants (Giles & Darroch, 2014). Participatory approaches aim to deconstruct power paradigms through narratives and the prioritisation of participant storytelling, promoting an alternative and local construction of knowledge to upend knowledge production that is "deeply embedded in the multiple layers of imperial and colonial practices" (Smith, 1999, p. 2). Participatory methods, therefore, suggest a level of collaboration in which there is a shift from the concept of working 'on' social movements to working and thinking together 'with' social movement activists as co-researchers (Arribas Lozano, 2018, p. 455). This means that participants are not simply rendered to the position of object of research but also play an active role in the research. Fals Borda argues that the exchange of stories between the researcher and participants creates a symmetrical reciprocity, where participants are also considered as contributing to knowledge production (1999, p. 13).

This methodological approach thus recognises research participants as individuals which contain subjects, holding valuable knowledge and experience relating to the research. Co-creating knowledge remains at the core of the approach instead of data extraction, which aligns with the objectives of this thesis in creating new collective understandings of peace (McMullin, 2022, p. 528). Participatory research is to achieve "inclusivity, multiple perspectives and ways of knowledge," with a recognition that research is not "value free" (Koster et al., 2012, p. 195). Participatory research can be characterised as a methodology that allows people to set the agenda themselves and therefore, in turn they place certain demands on it (Nikielska-Sekula & Desille, 2021, p. 444).

3.1.3 A visual approach

A visual approach was adopted in this research as it proposes "new ways of knowing and thinking across established debates and research problems" (Pink, 2013, p. 262). Pink (2007) asserts that visual methodologies are particularly effective in creating spaces of research in which participants can represent their experiences and realities of their everyday paradigms. Visual methodology can show the "triviality of everyday" (Nikielska-Sekula & Desille, 2021, p. 56). It is thereby a useful approach to employ when assessing peace on more mundane and everyday levels.

Visual methodology can arguably push boundaries further than traditional methodologies to construct narratives outside of common architecture of research. Nikielska-Sekula and Desille assess visual methodologies within migration studies stating they can counter the "colonial gaze," as it can be seen as a tool to restore agency and power for participants (2021, p. 44). The utilisation of art further questions and ruptures boundaries of traditional research since it can work to recalibrate the rationalist and elite-centric perspective that valid knowledge is confined to science. Jo Spence argues that utilising a tool like photography can arguably remove itself from hierarchical attitudes "because it negates elitism" as it resides outside of traditional research milieu and therefore, opens the space of research (1995, p. 5). Participatory arts-based approaches thus do not conform to the typical social scientific ways of doing and understanding of research methods. Instead, it is a method that is employed to allow participants to open up creatively to invoke alternative narratives in both social paradigms and at the policy table (Mitchell et al., 2018).

Furthermore, arts-based methods arguably create the opportunity for "convivial modes of sociality and knowledge production" (Kaptani et al., 2021, p. 71). Working with visual data is arguably more engaging and understandable for participants (Piemontese in Nikielska-Sekula & Desille, 2021, p. 180). It can create playful spaces that diverge from pedagogical prescriptions, which is especially significant when working with younger groups. This can allow for research to reflect on issues that might often be taboo or shied away from in more formal paradigms.

3.2 Methods of data collection

This study mainly relied on participatory photography methods to gain access and construct data on new ways of seeing and understanding. The study ran two full days of workshops

with a week in between where seven people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds from the ages of 18-23 were given cameras to capture their lives in London. The participatory visual content was supported with various other participatory techniques such as captioning of images and group discussions, as well as other methods such as observation, conversation, and informal interviews. Participatory visual methods, specifically photography, were explored as a more innovative and creative approach to research.

There are two paths of participatory visual methods; the use of visual stimuli in an interview setting, and the approach of stimulating participants to produce their own imagery regarding a certain issue (Pauwels, 2013, p. 96). This study was more heavily weighted on the latter, though it does not draw too much of a distinction between the two as these approaches are easily intertwined. The process is significant to the method and the creation of visual content can be seen simply as a tool to obtain knowledge in itself. Therefore, the goal of participatory visual methods is not necessarily the final content created but what is gained through the process (Nikielska-Sekula & Desille, 2021, p. 39). In this context, photography was used as a method to kickstart "processes related to sensing, thinking, feeling and experiencing" (Jarldorn, 2019, p. 1).

The fieldwork aimed at directly provoking a new way of seeing through handing over cameras to young people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds to capture London through their perspectives. The participation in this method was not only limited to the 'performative way' of showcasing agency through photography but surpasses these boundaries to also continue a level of participation throughout all stages of the research from the planning to the writing. Therefore, the camera acted as a catalyst for discussions, and the photos the participants made are assumed as sites of meaning potential in this thesis (MacDougall & Taylor, 1998).

This method does not follow a linear approach since it is difficult to apply fixed structures when the researcher has limited control in the direction of the project as the participants can drive their own agenda (Pauwels, 2013, p. 102). The next section, thus, will attempt to depict the journey entailed when employing this method.

3.2.1 Finding participants

To first realise this project the initial barrier was to find participants. I started out by emailing several non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working with people with refugee, asylum

seeker and migrant backgrounds to gain access to participants. This was a lot more challenging than I first anticipated as though I received many replies being interested in the project, most were unable to accommodate due to their lack of funding or commitments to other projects. A big barrier I encountered was the international workings of my research, being based in Norway trying to get in contact with people in England made this even harder logistically. Moreover, the lack of time and funding, I believe cannot not be separated by the current trajectory of migration in the UK, with the present landscape of NGOs in the UK being largely centred around efforts with Ukrainian refugees.

Eventually, I encountered an NGO working predominantly in London with people with refugee, asylum seeker and migrant backgrounds. The NGO itself is founded by someone with a refugee background, and those associated with them all have refugee, asylum seeker or migrant backgrounds. It was then through this NGO I had access to participants. The name will remain anonymous in this thesis for reasons of confidentiality for the sake of participants. Throughout the project I worked closely with the founder of the NGO, Arman (pseudonym), who I collaborated with throughout the whole course of the project, from the initial stages of planning to the final steps of this thesis. Arman, acted as a 'cultural-anchor,' having a refugee background himself and was embedded in the lives of the community explored (Green & Kloos, 2009, p. 476).

3.2.2 Study area

Subsequently, due to the NGO mainly working with people in London it became apparent this was the most convenient place to conduct my fieldwork. However, as highlighted by the participants as well as Arman, it is clear to state that being a person with a refugee or asylum seeker background ending up in London is considered 'lucky' in some sense. This is compared to other places in the UK being more rural, less culturally diverse and holding less opportunities. When being in smaller towns your identity is exemplified as it is a lot harder to be invisible, therefore, there are more chances of facing discrimination and stereotyping as invisibility can often help when negotiating uncertainty (Cooper & Pratten, 2015, p. 2). Uncertainty becomes harder to handle when identity markers are more visible in more homogenous milieus. One issue I was warned about at first was the sudden movement of people to new accommodation and that this meant potentially the participants might suddenly be unable to participate. Concerning this I asked if they are told about their relocation in which the response I received was telling; "if it is somewhere ok like London yes, but if you

are going someplace like Boston for example, they are not going to tell you" (Arman). It then came apparent and must be reflected on that this is a study that is situated in London, which should be treated as its own organism containing many diverse micro systems within and therefore, results should not be generalised to all experiences of being in the UK. London is diverse, having 32 different boroughs which also all contain multiple microcosms; thus, the spaces of London cannot be treated as homogenous. The Centre for London's borough by borough data breakdown helps put this into perspective as it illustrates the pockets of affluence and deprivation which vastly differ across London (Cottell, 2022).

3.2.3 Formation of the group

The participants were recruited through Arman, the founder of the NGO, who had personal connections and experiences with potential participants to form a group that could work together cohesively.

Inclusion criteria:

The participants had to meet the following criteria to be eligible to be involved in the project:

1. Have a refugee or asylum seeker background, coming from the Global South originally but have been forced to leave to escape war, political violence, or persecution
2. Currently living in London
3. Being ages 18-25
4. Interest and ability to work with photography or film

The study focusing of the power imbalances between the metropoles of the Global South and Global North meant that the participants origin country must be situated in this dimension. Both the terminology of what makes someone a refugee or asylum seeker, as well as what the Global South consists of, is outlined at the start of this study. Due to the location of the study and the focus being on lived experiences in London, the participants had to be living in London at the time of data collection. Moreover, the age category was limited as we believed it would lead to a better group dynamic in which the participants could relate to each other, as well as all have similar skillsets when working with technology. For ethical considerations it was a requirement that all participants were over 18-year-olds. Furthermore, since the project worked with visual participatory methods participants had to have an interest and the ability to work with film and photography.

The photography task was completed by seven participants, but the workshops consisted also of six more young people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds (including the collaborators), contributing to group discussions. Some of the participants were familiar with the other participants but they were largely new to one another and therefore, the workshops were their first interactions with this group of people and with me. The participants and collaborators' names have been substituted with a pseudonym to protect their privacy (Heaton, 2021).

Table 1- Participant demographics

Participant name (pseudonym)	Age	Gender	Country of origin	Background
Rida	19	Female	Pakistan	Asylum seeker
Yasmin	20	Female	Iran	Refugee
Hassan	18	Male	Syria	Refugee
Adil	19	Male	Sudan	Refugee
Baraz	19	Male	Iran	Refugee
Cawil	18	Male	Somalia	Refugee
Darius	23	Male	Iran (Kurdish)	Asylum seeker

Before I started fieldwork, the study was approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD, Norsk senter for forskningsdata). Working with research participants I obtained informed consent (Bryman, 2012, p. 138). Consent for this project was voluntary meaning that the participants gave consent without any restrictions on freedom of choice or external pressure. No pressure was exercised on participants and withdrawal of consent was offered at any time and made accessible, with there being no negative consequences if this action was taken. Once consent was received, I did not cease communication about the project with participants and changes over time to the project were always communicated, meaning consent continued throughout the whole project and did not assume sufficiency from having a signature. The channel of communication between myself and the participants was always open via Arman to allow participants to express any concerns, thoughts, or feelings about the

project throughout the whole process. All participation in the project was thereby based on a voluntary basis, though participants were compensated for travel and food costs related to the workshop days. Cautious of this, workshops were tailored around approaches which led to the participants gaining personally through participating in the research, teaching them photography skills they could utilise outside of the project.

3.2.4 Workshops

In collaboration with the NGO, the project ran two full days of workshops. The first workshop acted as an introductory workshop for the participants to learn about the project, gain skills related to photography and to also become familiar with one another. After the first workshop participants spent a week taking photos reflecting on the first workshop and showcasing London through their own eyes. The task set for this week was:

"Create a personalised photo series about your experiences and views of London as a new place you are living, a home away from home. When creating your stories this week you will take around 4-10 images reflecting on your experiences living in London."

The concept of "home away from home" was raised in the first workshop with conservations with the collaborators and participants, as London though was recognised as a new home as in a new place they are living, home was still strongly associated with their country of origin. Thus, this concept was built into the task to explore this complicated relationship with London further.

The second workshop was then dedicated to reflecting on this task. The participants constructed captions for their favourite photos they had taken, reflecting on the meanings behind the images. After the captioning session the participants discussed these images and captions within the group, and everyone reflected on these images collectively.

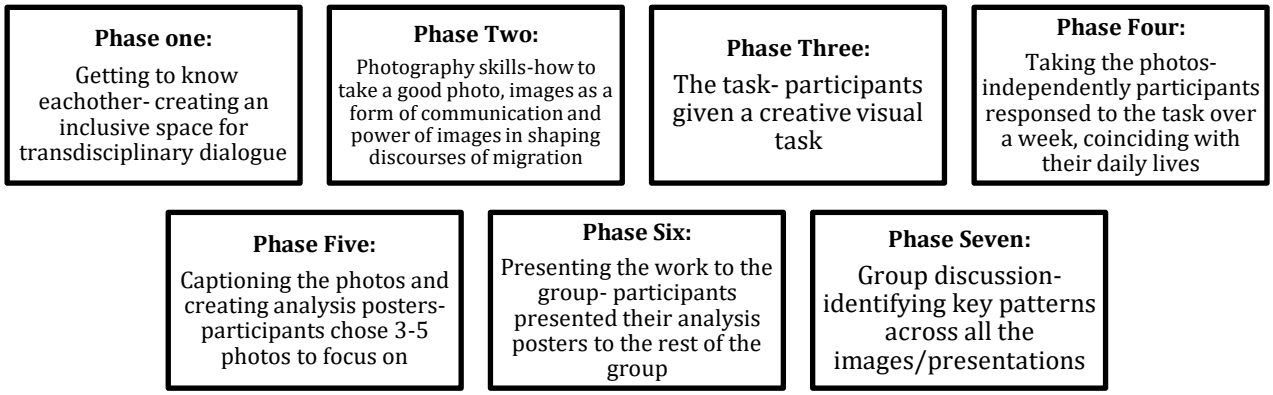
My role within these workshops can be characterised as a facilitator and I worked in collaboration alongside four other people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds to help run the workshops. This collaboration in the workshops was necessary to facilitate collective understandings about the journey from conflict to peace, as it allowed those more proximate to the realities of the participants to shape the workshops. Thereby, the workshops became a dialogic space where participants and facilitators shared experiences of mobility, constructing collective memories and understandings.

Moreover, with some of the participants being familiar with those co-running the workshops already, this helped create a more secure and comfortable environment. Their presence in co-running the workshops undoubtedly helped established a level of trust and security with the participants faster than if I would have run the workshops alone.

Furthermore, my background in photography has been shaped through Western prisms and is therefore entangled in Western presumptions and approaches to this domain. Attempting to balance this I ran this part of the workshops alongside Salim, a photographer and journalist who is currently living in the South of England after claiming asylum in the UK after evacuating Afghanistan in 2021.

The diagram below demonstrates the seven key phases of the workshops.

Figure 1- Breakdown of the phases in the workshops



3.2.5 Data analysis

Over the course of the project the participants took a total of 59 photos and chose to caption and present 31. Photographs, captions of the images and transcriptions of discussions were all investigated in the data analysis. The photographs were seen as a catalyst and alone would not have provided the full information regarding the personal meanings behind the image. Captions allowed for more personal memories of place to be translated through the data.

A thematic analysis was conducted to establish overall findings of the study (Bryman, 2012, pp. 578-581). The participants identified patterns across the data which were later organised into codes within coherent themes to provide answers to the posed research questions. Codes were collectively analysed to allow the participants understandings to be

translated in the analytical framework as well. The stages of analysis, therefore, were not just limited to after data collection. The data collection and data analysis were concurrent to avoid the stage of analysis to be restricted to exclusive paradigms only inhabited by the researcher. Often "the researcher becomes the instrument for analysis" as they are the ones who make the sole judgements about theming, coding, decontextualising and recontextualising the data (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 2). Even within participatory research the stages of data analysis fail to involve the participants and this phase of research is primarily researcher-driven (Switzer & Flicker, 2021). It is important to do more than just broaden the scope of scholarship to incorporate the Global South as a dimension for the global North to study. This must be partnered with new perspectives that are not restricted by Western rationality (Jefferson & Jeffries, 2022, p. 166). Therefore, analysis must break traditional research dogma and include the participants.

The analysis thus happened over three key stages: (1) the participants selecting 3-5 photos most meaningful for them to present and discuss, (2) the discussion at the last workshop of the project in which participants identified potential themes for analysis, highlighting key patterns across the data, (3) captions and photos were analysed exploring these patterns and organised into themes.

3.2.6 Processing the data: Captions and transcripts

A conversational style of discussion led to a comfortable and secure milieu for the participants to present their work and allowed others to give them words of encouragement, feedback and further stories on themes raised. However, this space also meant there were surrounding noises and interruptions. This poses challenges to the fairness and accurateness of the transcript; therefore, audio recordings were used as a helpful tool to listen to the discussions on repeat to determine the participants words clearly as possible. If participants did not use correct grammar, said unnecessary repetitive words or there were misspellings of captions, these were corrected to make the text clearer within this thesis.

3.3 Reflexivity and ethical considerations

3.3.1 Reflexivity and positionality

Critical reflexivity can be characterised as the "labour it will perform upon itself," it is concerned with being personally accountable for one's position within the paradigms of research, aware of the power they exercise (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013, p. 1096). Reflexivity

remains a key element of participatory research, therefore, my positionality as a researcher remained a constant consideration throughout the project. Sultana argues this importance as researchers practicing participatory visual methods must acknowledge their own and the participants' positionality, as well as pay attention to the underlying power relations that are inherent in the research process (Sultana, 2007, p. 382). The recognition of positionality is something that must be consciously considered continuously throughout the research process and beyond as research is not neutral and therefore, following Haraway must be situated (1988).

Researcher's must be aware of the role they play in research, and the power paradigms they create in their research milieu (Yang, 2015). Power imbalances intertwined in the roles of research have been considered in all phases of this research project, and collaborative strategies were employed to attempt to manage these. While the research was carried out in a collaborative manner and the data of the photographs and captions were created by the participants, ultimately as the researcher I frame the data forming an academic narrative. No matter how collaborative this research has attempted to be in its research the data is still mediated by myself. I am a situated observer, and this cannot be escaped. Therefore, I had to be constantly aware of my situatedness and my authorial voice as a researcher when framing this research and being mediator of the data.

Firstly, recognising my paradoxical position to the underlying decolonial stance meant I constantly kept checks and balances of my own thinking throughout the project. It is important to address that I am white and Western, growing up in the UK and later moving to Norway to study. I have an academic background in Film Studies, and I am currently undertaking my masters in Peace and Conflict Transformation, which is the circumstance in which this study is being undertaken. My education is, therefore, undoubtedly influenced by Western knowledge and subsequently, (mostly) unconsciously has had a significant effect on how I interpret the world in general and more specifically how I interpret this research. Moreover, being British was visible to the participants. Within the space of the workshops, I was the only person from Europe and was clearly identifiable as an 'outsider,' yet as pointed out by the participants an 'insider' of British society. An acknowledgement of my position thereby remained core in this work to address the constant power imbalances intertwined in research.

3.3.2 A collaborative approach

Arguably, even reflexivity does not necessarily escape the roots entwined in coloniality if its primary mission is based on self-reflexivity. As Giddens argues reflexivity is an extension of a contemporary Western society, as a space for individuals to reflect on the self and formulate legitimate concepts (cited in Nergiz, 2014, p. 123). Reflexivity has been characterised as an essential practice for qualitative research to legitimise and validate research procedures (Mortari, 2015, p. 1). However, to validate knowledge only according to self poses a dilemma since as a researcher residing in a Western context, no boundaries from Western philosophy are necessarily dissolved. Hence, I believe reflexivity must go beyond the self and others must also be involved in the process. As Fals-Borda argued a key element of participatory research calls for 'symmetrical reciprocity,' and through a commitment to reciprocal reflexivity research could lead to purposeful knowledge (cited in O'Neill et al., 2019, p. 132). The process of collaboration and participatory methods, thus can contribute to a "reflexive community", reinforcing a shared goal of presenting alternatives to dominating representations of migration (Nikielska-Sekula & Desille, 2021).

3.3.2.1 Balancing my positionality with other perspectives

An awareness of my own position as a researcher and the vacuum that Western knowledge creates, therefore, meant I tried to free my assumptions and engage with other perspectives. It is incumbent of researchers situated in Global North paradigms to acknowledge and regard pre-established, but hitherto overlooked work from other paradigms (Jefferson & Jeffries, 2022, p. 167). Subsequently, I have tried to engage with scholarship from the Global South.

Moreover, I attempted to immerse myself in domains that resided outside the traditional milieu of research. This was mainly realised through my engagements with Arman and the participants, as my research surpassed the desk meaning I was embedded in new social paradigms. Through my interactions and conversations with people who were from the Global South I widened my perspectives and exposed myself to new ways of interpretation and ways of seeing. This was complemented with the participatory nature of the project which was injected into the work from the start. As soon as I had contact with Arman the project immediately adopted a collaborative approach, with the space of transdisciplinary dialogue from the start allowing Arman, as a person with a refugee background himself, help discipline the course of the project. Before meeting I had some intentions of what I wanted to do, but at this point the project was fairly unstructured with my main proposal going into the meeting being some form of participatory visual project. It was through our initial meetings I began to

construct new knowledge on the issues and realities that people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds are currently facing in the UK. These conversations, thus, grounded my initial thoughts going into and shaping the fieldwork, creating the prism of viewing the landscape of migration in the UK through Arman's eyes rather than purely based on Western paradigms I would have previously only been exposed to. This helped me to deconstruct and then reconstruct my ways of seeing under new conditions.

3.3.3 Arranged social process

It is also important to be clear of the nature of the project. The methods may disguise themselves as being embedded in natural occurring social situations of participants lives, but the visual content generated by participants and the discussions which form the data were a result of workshops facilitated in this project. The locus of research, therefore, would be more accurately characterised as an arranged social process. The workshops were considered around a structure that complemented the participants typical routines and practices, yet it is important to acknowledge that these workshops would not have taken place if it was not for the research project and therefore, the photographs and discussions are situated in the research.

3.4 Research and ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are paramount in ensuring that research is undertaken in an appropriate manner to protect the well-being and interests of participants (Banks & Brydon-Miller, 2018). This becomes even more significant when the study involves young people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds.

3.4.1 Working with people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds

Researchers must remain attentive to research projects that deal with groups of persons that are understood as marginal (Shaw et al., 2019). There is a dilemma with researchers in participatory projects potentially subjecting participants to a victim role (Grimshaw et al., 1995). Though researchers may have good intentions and strive for social justice, there might be an expectation of participants to focus on the injustices of their marginalisation. This renders participants into a victim position and not a position of agency, making the research hypocritical. Moreover, this might then lead to reproducing stereotypes and create images that are still bound to Western understanding (Hall, 1997). Stereotypes and marginalisation can be attempted to be prevented through a dedication to exploring issues and problems from alternative prisms to discover narratives deeper than stereotypes (Aluwihare-Samaranayake,

2012). Is it, therefore, important to manage participants experiences in a way in which they are humanised and the complexities behind their stories regarded by situating the socio-political context of their experiences. Consequently, this thesis presents personal stories to explore humanity behind stereotypes as well as allow participants to set the agenda of the research and not force them to focus on marginalisation.

3.4.2 Handling personal data

Furthermore, to protect the participants, I took measures to secure anonymity by excluding personal data and anonymising the names of participants. Research can be considered harmful when it lacks respect for participants' privacy, therefore, personal data is anonymised in this thesis to protect individuals' privacy as well as their personal integrity (Bryman, 2012, p. 142). What appears in the thesis does not reveal any personal data which can identify any of the participants. For example, mentions of location are referred to in their broader geographical sense, such as referring to London or boroughs rather than specific street names. Images of people taken by participants are thus also excluded from this thesis. Though for the wider public these participants cannot be recognised, the participants of the project would be able to recognise themselves or co-participants in the work, therefore, it is even more important to make every effort to represent the participants in a respectful manner. The channel of communication remained open to the participants throughout and opportunities to represent self were core to making the work respectful and representing the participants in a way they felt content with.

Furthermore, during the project itself data was also handled sensitivity to protect participants' personal data. Personal data was handled and stored regarding UiT's Management System for Information Security and Privacy.

3.4.3 Considerations on trust

During this project my position as a researcher at some points was harder to negotiate, within the realm of the workshops my researcher role was more obvious, but my contact with participants outside of this more formal setting meant my position became more blurred. In the workshops my role was easier to distinguish, though I also participated in the games we played there was a constant reminder that I was there for the project since these were arranged workshops for this very purpose. However, I also interacted with participants in more informal settings such as having lunch as a group. I recognised that sometimes participants would tell me personal stories in these spaces, interactions treating me more as a peer rather

than a researcher. This shift in dynamic, thus, poses an ethical dilemma to consider in this project. It was important for me to therefore check with participants after if something they told me was ok to be mentioned in the project or not. As I gained a position of trust with the participants it was important to not exploit these relationships. This is where I had to balance between an ethical motive and scientific motive, and to recognise the boundaries when researching people who have kindly let me into their worlds.

3.4.4 Ethics of using photography

It is also important to reflect ethically on the method of using photography. As Turner (1992) warns, many do not acknowledge the possible effects of an "objectifying medium" (p.6) like film or photography on those filmed. Relating to this, Stuart Hall similarly argued that the camera is objectifying as it maintained by the "white eye" which means that dominant observations have continuously produced "essentialist and stereotypical views of racialised others" (cited in Szorenyi, 2009, p. 97). This means that people from the Global South in visual images have been rendered inferior to the objectifying lens of the camera. This thesis, thus, was conscious to not allow the camera to further make participants a subject to the Western gaze, therefore, instead of them being objectified to the lens they assumed control over the lens themselves.

Furthermore, a glorification of methods poses the risk that researchers will use creative methods without regarding participants (Ozkul, 2020, p. 232). Creative methods are sometimes used in participatory research as 'ground-breaking' as they break the conventions of traditional research. However, these methods might not be relevant for the participants and furthermore be unsettling if it does not confine with their typical way of expressing emotions (Ozkul, 2020). If photography is foreign to participants, it might be complicated for them to use and not be helpful for further change in the community if it is not an accessible method to employ beyond the research. Research with people with refugee backgrounds has particularly popularised photography as it can offer the "aesthetic priorities of a particular audience with a fondness for that specific type of art" (Ozkul, 2020, p. 232). Reflecting on this the group was formed based on people who had a particular interest in photography and the workshops provided examples of how to utilise these skills beyond the research, working with the resources available to participants in their everyday lives.

3.4.5 Ethics of participatory research

It would be naïve and dangerous to assume participatory research is holistically good as it raises its own concerns over ethics. It would be a misconception and wrong to suggest that with building participation into a research project, ethical issues of representation and voice are magically resolved (Paris & Winn, 2013, p. 230). Authorising participatory methods to be surpassing traditional research may oxymoronically cause less reflexivity and allow the researcher to dominate the research. Ozkul draws attention to the danger of glorifying methods as it can disguise the potential political and one-sided nature of participatory research (2020, p. 230). Not all levels of engagement and participation can be regarded the same and, therefore, labelling research 'participatory' can become dangerous as it is assumed that all voices were equally considered. Participatory research, thus, can just become a buzz word to be applied to research to make it appear to be collaborative and addressing power imbalances, but hegemonic power plays are still heavily performed by the researcher (Kothari & Cooke, 2001; Ozkul, 2020). Participatory research cannot, therefore, be optimistically assumed to be an equal process for all parties involved and must still reflect on power imbalances.

Furthermore, as Montero-Sierburth (2020) warns, participatory research is physically and emotionally demanding, as well as time-consuming and this may impact the level of participation. Participatory research is demanding for the research but also for the participants. It can be hard to negotiate an ethical balance, as making too time-consuming projects disregards the participants own time, but on the other hand too little time can lead to participants not really having the chance or space in the final work to highlight their voices (Montero-Sieburth, 2020). Time restraints, budget limitations and structural framework conditions are all elements of participatory research that can restrict the participatory component to only certain dimensions of the project. This can raise ethical questions of dropping in and the 'helicopter' effect of researchers (Adame, 2021). To avoid this, contact was assumed as much as possible throughout the project with Arman monthly, so despite the project in London only happening for a couple of weeks, conversations on the project have lasted much longer.

4 Results and analysis

At the core of this research was the objective to examine the lived experiences of young people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds navigating conflict to peace in the space of London. In keeping with a participatory approach, the initial stages of the analysis of data were incorporated into the workshops as the participants identified patterns across their responses. These patterns formed the foundation of the academic narrative curated in this next section. A collaborative approach to analysis thus meant participants' understandings and interpretations remained central in the analysis to keep in check my own biases as a researcher. This ensured a continuation of a kaleidoscopic lens rather than a singular authoritative voice imposed by the researcher. This chapter will explore these patterns raised by participants, developing them into an academic narrative to thematically present the results of the study.

4.1 Selecting and omitting data for analysis

Over the course of the project the participants took a total of 59 photos. In the second workshop they chose around 3-5 photos each to caption and present, resulting in 31 captioned images in total. It is important to recognise the data beyond the visual, as photographs are better understood in a dialectical relationship including the photographer and viewers, as the meanings of images are not necessarily revealed by the literal visual content of the photograph but is assigned by those who discuss it (Rania et al., 2015, p. 384). Who discusses the image is subsequently crucial to how the image is given meaning and therefore, it is important to not only be discussed by the researcher but also by the participants. Taking this into account the analysis transcends a sole binding to the visual, meaning, discussions and captions surrounding the visual are considered essential for the analysis too. Subsequently, these 31 photos are regarded as the focus in analysis rather than the other images not captioned. This, therefore, was the first level of analysis as participants themselves sorted the data, highlighting the most significant images to them.

Naturally, the analysis does not necessarily appear to distribute an equal amount of attention amongst participants. Rida, Adil and Bazar, were more vocal in group discussions due to their stronger personalities; therefore, their responses may appear more often in the analysis. For some of the participants their perspectives and understandings come through mainly via their images and captions as they were not as vocal in the discussions. Therefore,

the analysis does incorporate all the participants' responses, they just appear stronger individually for some and others more collectively.

The analysis thereby looks at all these 31 captioned images and devises them into themes, but some images will be highlighted further as they created deeper discussions within the group and were identified by participants as communicating significant insights related to the posed research questions. Moreover, some of the images directly illustrated what the participants were attempting to demonstrate with there being an obvious association between the image and caption. In these cases, the images will be used directly in the text as they support the participants' point. However, other images purely elicited captions and discussions meaning the image does not necessarily add to the participants argument. In order not to confuse the reader these images are not featured in the main body of the analysis but can be found in the appendix.

4.2 Results

Seven young people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds participated in the photography project, an additional six participated in the discussions. Of the participants partaking in the photography project, they were all aged 18-23, coming from five different countries, five were male and two were female. Due to the nature of the project participants used the space of research in different ways and all had unique responses to the task, yet key themes still emerged in the data. In the discussion at the second workshop participants identified some patterns and wider themes that occurred across the data. Reflecting on these patterns, codes became grounded by participants observations and the data was re-examined closely through these codes to form five key themes demonstrated in the table below.

Table 2- Phenomenological themes and subthemes

Theme	Subthemes
Realities of living in London	Central London versus spaces outside of central London, ideal image reinforced by social media, deprived locations, far out of central London, disappointment
Lack of opportunities	Lack of opportunities due to background, in areas outside of spaces of opportunity
Continued corporeal conflict	Continued conflict mentally, difficult journeys, loneliness, and uncertainty
Third spaces	Nature, sunshine, resilience, hope, galleries
Social networks	Attached meaning to places through people, importance of corporeal encounters in a journey

Photographs are multi-layered in themselves as they hold a public meaning through recognised visual elements, as well as private meanings that have personal and emotional origins embedded within them. The codes, therefore, are multi-layered; they consist of a visual code based on the participants' photographs and a narrative derived code formed through the participants' captions and discussions. *Code A* identifies the patterns of the images to organise the data visually, then *Code B* attaches the patterns that occurred in the discussions and captions concerning these visual categories.

4.2.1 Visual coding

Layer one of the analysis was to identify visual patterns across the photographs. Table 3 below shows the visual codes that occurred in the data. Some images could demonstrate more than one visual code, therefore, the total of images in codes is greater than the total of images.

Table 3- Breakdown of visual data, visual coding of the images

Visual codes	Occurrence in data (all images)	Occurrence in data (captioned/presented)
Iconic London landmarks such as the London Eye, Big Ben, St Paul's Cathedral	12	7
High rise buildings, modern buildings	6	4
Run-down buildings/street/ residential areas	9	5

Crowds of people	4	3
Nature such as parks and fields	10	5
Food	3	1
Empty streets	4	3
Sunrises/sunsets	5	3
People	3	2
Galleries, museums, theatre	2	1
College work	1	1
Transport	2	2

4.2.2 Uniting *Code A* and *Code B*

After code A was established, *Code B* examined the patterns that occurred in the captions and discussions surrounding *Code A*. Table 4 below thus demonstrates the visual code as well as provides the codes participants associated with these visual categories. The examples used are not all that appeared in the data as this thesis does not have the space for this and therefore, highlights the examples which illustrate the point most clearly.

Table 4- Participant associations tied to the visual code

Code A **(Visual code)**	***Code B*** **(Participant associations)**	**Example(s) from *captions* and discussions**	**Theme + subthemes**
Iconic landmarks	Social media/Google Photos Photogenic Typical/ boring	*They see from google picture or social media (A)* *The London Eye looked so pretty in purple. (Y)* "I think we have all seen enough pictures of London, especially London eye- please just do something different" (B)	Realities of living in London- Social media, idealised image
	Memories Friends	*I took this photo when I was with one my important persons in my life, I have very good memories from the night (Y)* *This photo is of a good memory with my friend (B)*	Social networks
High rise buildings (spaces of central London)	Opportunity Affluence Modern	*I like city life because for a young person, cities can provide lots of opportunities and allow you to reach your goals in life. (D)* *This picture reminds me that I'm living in one of the powerful and big cities in the world (Y)* *This photo represents like the new culture of the new buildings of the United Kingdom and basically London (A)*	Realities of living in London- Idealised image
	Imagined Preconceived image of London *before* living there Not reality Social media	"Show them how the real London is, that would be better because London is not central" *(B)* *They see like London in a nice way so they don't see it in the other way (A)* "Everyone you know when they think about the UK, they are like you know we are going come and we are going live in the Shard, but they end up somewhere far outside" (Arman)	Realities of living in London- Idealised image, social media
Run-down buildings/streets	Outside central London Reality/ Everyday	*To show them the real housing that they will be in or even worse than that (A)*	Realities of living in

			London-deprived
Crowds of people	Annoying Busy	*Besides the people come and go- there's also the cars and the noisy sound of them in the air, it can be annoying sometimes when you need a more peaceful environment (D)* *The city is so full (C)*	Challenges
Parks/ fields	Relaxing Peaceful Freedom	*Freedom is a wonderful thing. Shine and shine on your own (C)* *Safe space that is relaxing (H)* *I come here to relax (Y)*	Third places
Food	Lack of resources Lack of food	*I have had that experience as well I have seen many asylum seekers going through that, that when they come to this country they do not have enough resources for food actually, the food they love and they like (R)* *"*Have no food you are used to from your home country*" (B)*	Challenges
Empty streets at night-time	Darkness of journey Lonely	*The journeys we all go through, especially as asylum seekers how normally long and dark our journeys are… it is dark and you feel really alone (R)* *When you can clearly feel the silence and see the peace in the deep part of the quietness no matter how hard you try, you can hear 'the evil' (A)*	Continued corporeal conflict
Sunrises/ sunsets	Resilience Hope Beginnings and endings	*I am literally falling apart but with that I had this thinking that the endings could be beautiful too, because this sunset was something that always gave me some hope (R)* *When there is sunshine, when it is early evening time, I feel very good because I can go for a short walk (D)*	Third places
Transport	Expensive	*Prices are insane, everything is so expensive now (D)* *Expensive trains (H)*	Challenges
Other people	Happy	*These lights are those people that come in our lives and give us some hope as a refugee or asylum seeker*	Social networks

	Hope Help	*and help us actually to go through that journey (R)*	

4.3 Realities of living in London

A key theme that occurred in the data raised by the participants was the difference between the spaces of London as they used the task to communicate their realities of living in London. Dichotomies were highlighted between the spaces of central London and the spaces outside of this region. Central London became tied to an idealised image of London as it was regarded as a space of affluence and opportunity, whereas on the other hand spaces outside of this were considered more authentic and real depictions of London, showing scenes of more deprivation. Central London through these results cannot be just understood in spatial and territorial notions, the participants do not simply regard this region through the boroughs of the inner city but instead it is characterised as spaces of affluence. Central London is considered through the spaces that are considered 'prime' locations in the city's centre, in the spaces which represent the economic and political heart of the capital.

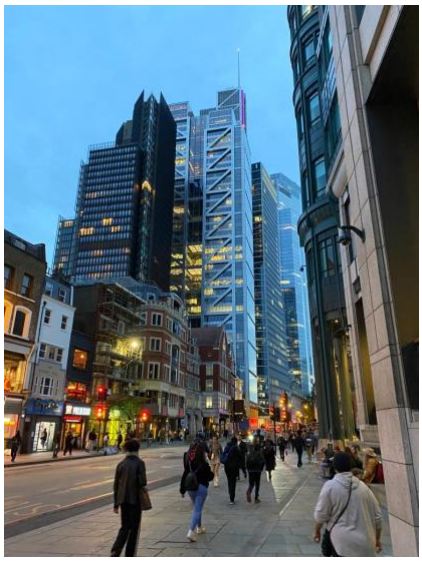
It is important to acknowledge at this point before continuing that this thesis does not want to further make the reasons that produce displacement in the first place invisible by appointing it to a lust to move for economic improvement. The participants did *not* voluntarily move but their mobility was essential as their lives would have been at risk if they had stayed in their home countries.

4.3.1 An ideal central London

The captions and discussions attached to the images of spaces within central London were associated with connotations such as affluence, wealth, being modern and having opportunities. Subsequently, central London became regarded as an idealised space of the city. The results explored two main spaces of central London: firstly, the iconic landscapes of London such as the London Eye, Big Ben, and St. Paul's Cathedral, secondly the newly built high-rise buildings that lie in the heart of the economic centre. The space of central London was thus illustrated as the ideal cosmopolitan city residing in the modern world. For example, Darius presented an image of high-rise buildings in the City of London and captioned his photo: *Living in a city is lively and encouraging to see movement around you. I like city life*

because for a young person, cities can provide you with lots of opportunities and allow you to reach your goals in life.

Figure 2- Darius's Photo of high-rise buildings in central London



Darius presents London as a place that offers a lot of opportunities for young people, reflecting positively on this space. The space he attaches to notions of opportunity is embedded in the affluent looking centre of the city. The location of the image becomes significant as the city life filled with opportunities Darius presents is tied to the space of central London. Darius had taken other images that were representative of a city life in spaces outside of central London, yet he specifically associated opportunities with this presentation of London only. Thus, places of opportunity became synonymous with spaces of central London for the participants.

The spaces of central London also became closely associated with wealth and the centre of power in the city. For Yasmin, the images of spaces in central London represented a superior European modern city. As she presented an image of the City of London, she captioned her image: *This picture reminds me that I am living in one of the most powerful and big cities in the world.*

Figure 3- Yasmin's photo of City of London

The picture shows City of London at night, depicting the landscape of high-rise buildings. The image of the cosmopolitan city becomes the epitome of London's power and affluence.

For most of the participants there was less of an emotional attachment to the contents of the images (unless they were discussing memories), and rather many of the discussions around these photographs revealed how instead they took these photos more for aesthetic reasons rather than emotional. Discussions and captions of central London unless they were tied to a certain memory often seemed emptier of personal meaning as Hassan stated for example "I took this picture of the London Eye, so that it is." Hassan revealed no significance of the London Eye for him on a personal level but saw it as a typical representation of London for others, as the London Eye he said is what people think of London. Instead for this image he revealed how he was proud of how it looked and thought of it as an impressive photograph, making this the main reason to present it to the other participants. When questioned by other participants why he took this photo and what was the significance for him, he simply replied "it looks cool, I was happy with the photo I had taken." The typical landscapes of London, therefore, for most of the participants held more significance in communicating their newly learned photography skills. These spaces in central London, thus, seemed to be pictured more to create appealing or photogenic images of London. Central London was, therefore, shown as visually pleasing and the 'pretty' side of London. But these spaces were not associated with daily life but more as spectacles. These images represented an ideal side of London which many of the participants expressed was impressive or pretty looking in photographs, but as the main significance being to communicate photography skills the images were detached from the participants everyday experiences of London.

4.3.2 Central London an image *before* they lived in London

From the second layer of patterns that were formed from the participants discussions and captions surrounding the photographs, many attached the image of central London to an imagined territory. Central London was presented in an ideal way, but for all but one of the participants (Yasmin), they deemed these representations to inhabit the realm of imagination and it was presented as an image they understood as London before living there. For all the participants London represented a place of power, opportunity, wealth, and affluence before living in London themselves but they expressed how they found the reality to be far from this image of central London. Adil's response to the task can be seen as the most explicit communication of the reality being different to the imagined, as his storyboard presented an image of a space in central London directly next to his everyday reality, showing residential areas he believed to be a more accurate image for people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds to experience.

Figure 4- Adil's Image (1) of Liverpool Street

Figure 5- Adil's Image (2) of local street

When he presented these images, he stated the following:

"The first photo I had taken was in Liverpool Street and this photo represents the new culture, the new buildings of the United Kingdom and basically London… I took it for a reason, the reason for the second photo is that there are some refugees or some asylum seekers that when they come from outside the country, when they see images from google pictures or social media, they see London in a nice way, so they don't see it in the other way. So, they think that

they are going to live in these houses or these buildings when they come for the first time to the country (figure 4), so I took the second picture (figure 5) of a random house close to my house to show them the real housing that they will be in or even worse than that."

Adil presents how through social media the image of central London characterised by modern high-rise buildings and iconic landmarks becomes the image people living outside of London or the UK attach to this space. Adil's presentation shows how participants formed and determined imaginations of London through images circulated by social media and that these images present an affluent central London. Adil depicts how images that are presented through social media of the urban spaces of the city are an imagined idealisation and presented in a seductive way. Social media and central London, therefore, presented by the participants became unanimous. Central London became situated into the paradigms of social media. Caught in these paradigms, prisms inflicted by social media sell London as modern and affluent. These are the images that participants are exposed to before living in London themselves. Therefore, preconceptions of London are embedded through understandings created by the visualisations engendered by social media.

Through the discussion and feedback that occurred after Adil's presentation, the other participants disclosed how they also had a similar visualisation of London that was centred around these dominating narratives of an affluent and superior European space. Kamran, from Iran who participated in the discussion praised Adil's work as he stated, "it was exactly like that for me, and I thought that it would be exactly like that one" referring to Adil's image of Liverpool Street (figure 4). As Kamran says this he laughs along with the other participants, as he states how the thought of this being his experience of London had now become a joke to him as his reality, he argues in far from this. Arman responding to this, jokingly remarked: "Everyone you know when they are thinking about the UK, they are like we are going to come and we are going to live in the Shard, but they end up somewhere far outside and far from this." Arman argues that people before living in London may only know London through the images they see through social media, therefore, they are under the impression that this is a universal experience of London. The results suggest that the participants all have an imagined visualisation of London *before* living there which is characterised by the spaces of central London, as their image of London was largely formed through social media.

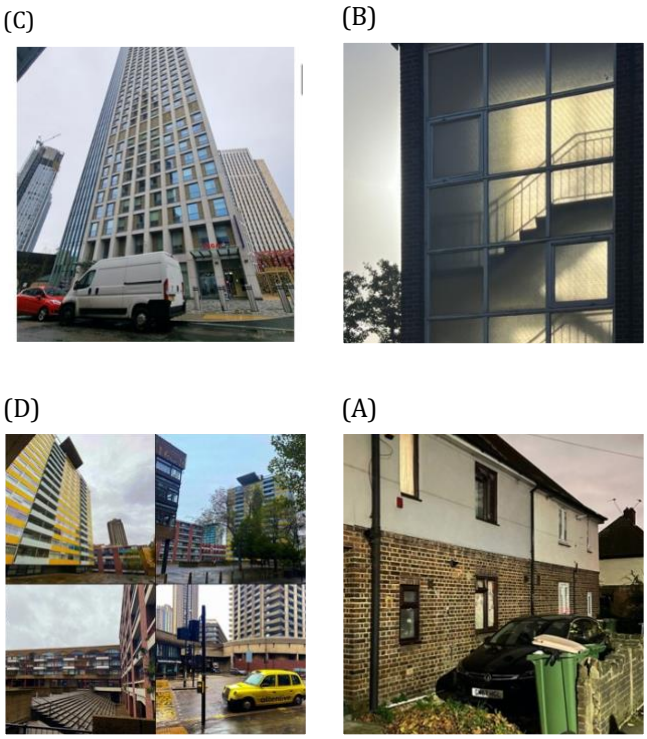
A friendly teasing dynamic inhabiting the discussions created a running joke in which images of London that represented central London or iconic landmarks were responded with

remarks such as "*did you steal that from Google*". For example, when Hassan presented his photo of the London Eye, Adil, who was his close friend, teased him saying *"I think it is from Google man.*" Adil and the other participants' jokes of images of central London being from Google, demonstrate how these associations of London reflect the images they believe social media circulates. The spaces of central London and iconic landscapes we can see through these jokes were rendered to ideal imaginations situated in the dimensions of social media. From these results we gain a sense of the image of London that is presented to those outside of London, through iconic landscapes and spaces of central London.

It was, thus, highlighted that images of central London and the iconic landmarks were associated with an imagined or ideal universe embedded in the realms of social media and therefore, did not reflect the everyday realities of most of the participants lives in London. Images of central London such as the London Eye and Big Ben as well as the high-rise buildings and affluent looking locations of London, in the final discussion became scrutinised by most of the participants coining this presentation of London as an idealised version. Instead, they warned future refugee and asylum seekers when moving to London that they would be let down by these imaginations of London as the realities for them would differ vastly. Baraz stated that we should "show them how the real London is, that would be better because London is not central." Or as Baraz recognised, as well as many of the other participants, the space of central London exists but for many these were spaces of spectacle rather than everyday reality as their backgrounds prohibited them from inhabiting these paradigms daily. Many of the participants revealed that they had an imagined idealised version of London painted through social media and images before, but for most since living in London their vision had rescinded further away from this phantom state of central London and towards a lot less ideal reality. The dominant image of London that is entwined and engendered by coloniality manifests as an expectation of reality which many of the participants revealed led to a disappointment since their reality of London did not meet this expectation. As Baraz summarised when we identified this theme: "before we come here, we have this kind of picture in our mind of London, but when we came here we got very disappointed." This then led to participants reassessing and deconstructing the photos of London being visualised through iconic landmarks and central to fall under the category of an imagined, mythical London. A reality of London for the participants, thus, depicted a more disappointing image of deprivation rather than opportunity.

This idealised vision of London was deconstructed by the participants and the space of the task allowed them to present counter images of London. The results of the workshops, thus, presented a reimagination of the space of London from a new prism. The participants presented an alternative image of London, depicting their everyday realities of run-down and deprived areas. Adil presented his imagined version of London which he translates through the visualisations of an affluent London, being modern and 'new'. But this modern ideal image of London he regards as a myth or as an imagined ideal version of London. To highlight his point, he compares it directly to his reality of living in London (referring to figure 4 and 5), taking a picture of a more deprived, significantly less affluent space to illustrate the 'real' experiences he feels people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds face. This is a space he indicates he occupies in everyday life and thus presents this image (figure 5) as his reality. The results help us to understand that London is not just an ideal place as shaped by the lens driven by the West, but the spaces the participants tend to experience are pockets of deprivation and a more disappointing reality. The photos related to the participants' more everyday realities and routines, such as on their route to college, their street or local shop depicted a London that could not be represented by the same visualisations of the affluent central paradigms, as they presented run-down and old looking spaces.

Figure 6- Images of everyday locations



These images, therefore, presented spaces outside of typical readings of London showing overlooked spaces revealing a less seductive side of London which shows deprivation and poor housing. As Adil states he uses the photographs to communicate the "real housing" for what he thinks is more realistic for those with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds. These images, thus, breakdown the seductive and ideal image of London that is focused on central London and reimagines these spaces that do not represent affluence or power but deprivation.

The results, therefore, demonstrate how London occupies different paradigms depending on who presents and gives meaning to it. Thereby, through opening this space to those with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds, London is explored through new prisms, and we see London is not necessarily as it seems through social media. As Hassan reflected on all the photos, he stated how it was nice to see London through new perspectives outside of the typical depictions of London: "I think there are different types of pictures from different parts of London, which is a nice change to see, not to always see the one nice side of London." From the results we thereby can understand that London cannot be represented by one homogenic image and that different makers of images and knowledge construct different perspectives of what London is. London through the participants perspectives thus cannot just be reflected by what images social media projects, but their responses to the task reimagines the space of London, exposing the darker side of the city.

4.3.3 Living outside of central London

As illustrated above through social media, central London for many of the participants became their only familiar image of London before they moved there. However, their everyday realities represented through their response to the task and discussions demonstrated how many participants did not necessarily inhabit these spaces and instead London for them could not be translated through representations of the affluent central London. The participants thus pinpointed a clear difference between their imagined image of London and reality being that their everyday lives were situated in spaces outside of central London. As Bazar stated for him and for other people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds "London is not central. London is not just about central, Buckingham Palace, the London eye. Not for us." For Bazar pictures of central London had little relevance to his own personal experiences of London and thereby for him London could not be represented solely by images of these spaces. Adil responded joking to Bazar: "*Yeah come to Brixton, Brixton's*

real." Reality thus became understood as these spaces outside of central London and in boroughs outside of this characterised affluent central domain.

As the participants responded to the identified theme of realities of living in London, they argued that many people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds think they are going to live in central London because they have only seen images of these spaces before but dismiss this as a false pretence. They instead state that they end up somewhere far outside of central London, therefore the reality is also far from what they expected. As Arman argued they end up 'far outside' of boundaries imagined by social media's visualisations. The results of the project present how the participants experience London through alternative spaces to the ideal central London, inhabiting more deprived and run-down spaces in contrast. All the photos of the ideal or central London were taken at some sort of event or in transit and were not images necessarily representative of the participants everyday lives. Instead, the images of everyday mundane movements capturing their routes home from college for example, depicted spaces outside of central London, these included spaces such as Brixton, Waltham Forest, and Hackney. The contrast in images of central London and other spaces of London, thus highlight that the realities for the participants cannot be represented through generic visualisations of London we see in social media.

4.4 Limited access to opportunities

Another key theme that occurred in the results was that the participants faced unique challenges to opportunities in London. The space of London, therefore, did not present an automatic paradigm of peace for all the participants and they revealed significant conflicts they faced in their everyday lives as their backgrounds inhabited them from certain paradigms.

4.4.1 Restricted from central London

From the participants response to the task and discussions we can understand that certain pockets of London like the spaces of central London posed as places of opportunities, but some of the participants revealed these opportunities were not accessible to them due to their resources. As Darius stated "cities can provide you with lots of opportunities and allow you to reach your goals in life" which was attached to an image in central London. But other participants retaliated this through their own responses and discussions arguing the opportunities of the city are exclusive and not as easily reached by people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds. As Adil and Bazar argued for them "London is not central" and

thus these pockets of opportunity were not necessarily easy for them to access since they were not spaces they inhabited in everyday life. As presented above they demonstrated how their reality of London resided outside of central London and therefore, also outside of all the opportunities these pockets of affluence offer. There is a physical distance from these participants to the opportunities, which participants highlighted became even greater when paired with less resources and experiences of economic instability.

Rida highlighted how asylum seekers have little money and resources as they are unable to work themselves having to rely on limited financial support from the Home Office. She states that as an asylum seeker, "the home office provides you only with very basic stuff and a very basic amount of money that you can do your groceries and stuff. I think that almost all asylum seekers and refugees go through that time where they do not have enough resources." For participants then they expressed that travelling within the city was sometimes hard as they had little money to use public transport. Darius took a picture of a bus and as presented his photo stated that "prices are insane, everything is so expensive now." As participants reflected on this, they discussed the high prices for travel within the city.

Arman stated that the increasing prices in London paired with the little resourced provided by the Home Office, travelling within the city had become a lot more difficult, thereby the participants often were confined to the areas they lived. Thereby, opportunities in the city we can understand through the results that, though they exist they are often a lot more challenging for the participants to access as these opportunities are more likely to be available in the spaces of central London. As central London is presented above as detached from the everyday lives of most of the participants, the results indicate how the participants also become distanced from the opportunities embedded in these spaces.

4.4.2 Lack of opportunities due to background

The results above indicated that spaces of opportunities were harder to reach physically, but the participants also revealed how for some of them distance was not the only damaging factor as their own background posed further limitations to opportunities. Patterns occurred across the data that highlighted struggles to opportunities due to being constrained to the identity of a refugee or asylum seeker. Rida's response to the task is a clear example of this as she explicitly used the space of research to raise the issue of lack of opportunities for people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds due to their position in society. One of her images she titled *Desire to be on the peak* and stated the following in her presentation:

"I was thinking that we all want to go on that peak and that top in our lives to achieve something extraordinary but most of the times as an asylum seeker or refugee we see a lot of closed windows and doors. A lot of opportunity but seeing it behind a wall. We want to achieve those opportunities that are in front of us but there are sometimes transparent walls and sometimes there are actual walls that do not let us get to those opportunities. We are very restricted to get opportunities like other people, like other citizens."

Rida's response to the task illustrates that though these opportunities may exist within pockets of London, people with refugee or asylum seeker backgrounds tend to be restricted from these paradigms. She argues they face more boundaries than citizens purely based on their backgrounds. A lot of the participants resonated closely with Rida's struggles and challenges when striving for opportunities in London with this image stirring up a lot of emotions for them as they related closely to this experience. With Maryam, one of the collaborators, stating that "we all have this same experience, no doubt." For Karman he felt this truly "showed us the whole story of being a refugee" as he stated, "I was about to cry seriously." Adil stated that Rida's response to the task "has spoken about the refugee and asylum seeker experience basically from A to Z." As the participants reflected collectively it thus became apparent that restrictions to opportunities became a significant challenge that all the participants had experienced at one point.

They discussed how they could see opportunities in the spaces of London acknowledging their existence, but then appointed them to being often out of reach to people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds or at least harder to access than British citizens. As Bazar argued the identity that became attached to them as refugees or asylum seekers made these opportunities hard to negotiate as he stated that "the picture of refugees and asylum seekers in this country is very negative." The participants recognised how they are preconceived through negative narratives attached to categories of refugees or asylum seekers. A hostile environment recognised through the discussions, thus indicates how the participants face further conflict and challenges in the space of London due to their backgrounds.

4.5 Continued corporeal conflict

Another theme identified was the notion of mental health as the memories of past journeys still haunted the everyday lives of some of the participants.

4.5.1 Memories from the journey

The participants used images of dark empty streets to reflect on memories of conflict that continued to inhabit spaces in the city. The results revealed how participants found the journey and navigation from conflict to peace as dark, challenging, and miserable, and for many of the participants they felt like the journey was still happening as they had not reached the end goal of peace yet. Patterns of continued conflict and mental struggle were attached to images of empty spaces in London, as the participants revealed even in spaces of silence or apparent peace their memories and thoughts of the past remained loud. For example, in Rida's response she presented an image of an empty street at night-time titling it *The Journey.*

Figure 7- Rida's image of empty street

Under this image she wrote: *The darkness and loneliness in a journey that takes us away from the people we love and those who could die for us. Things and luxuries that we lose in a journey of achieving something bigger and extraordinary.*

Rida shows how the journey to peace is challenging as it is dark and lonely, but it is also not linear as she shows this continued darkness in an empty street of London. We can see that the darkness acts as a reflection of the traumatic journeys to paradigms that are deemed more peaceful, but mentally those memories of conflict are still apparent. Memories of those she had loved that are still in spaces of conflict continue to haunt her, as she appears in a perceived domain of peace there is a constant reminder that these people's lives remain in danger. The space of London is, therefore, not all positive and bright, but is inhabited by loneliness and darkness, as well as a constant fear for loved ones left behind.

Arman reflecting on this response spoke about the issue of mental health that young people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds face even in considered spaces of peace.

He stated that mental health issues are one of the biggest challenges facing people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds as the journeys they go through can find them in spaces where "they have no friends, no family around them, no one from their culture." Just as Rida expressed through her image of the journey, Arman describes the journey from conflict to peace as lonely and isolating, which he expresses as mentally challenging.

Adil also tied an image of an empty street at night with the mental conflicts associated with navigating conflict to peace. Under his photo of the street at night (figure 5) he wrote: *When you can clearly feel the silence and see the peace in the deep part of the quietness but no matter how hard you try, you can hear 'the evil.'* Adil's experience highlights a corporeal side of conflict as he shows how mentally memories of conflict continue to thrive. We can see through Adil's captions even in spaces of peace 'the evil,' which he uses as an analogy for the trauma of conflict, still exists in the spaces of London. Moreover, the image captioned was taken close to his own home which reflects further how conflict continues in the places he inhabits the most. "Home away from home," thus becomes riddled with memories from the past making conflict hard to escape as it haunts the participants even in peaceful spaces.

These results revealed how mentally conflict continued in these empty spaces, attaching images that appear peaceful or calm to actually be embedded with memories from the past, creating challenges such as loneliness, feeling overwhelmed and being miserable in the present space of London. Memories of conflict, thus, follow the participants and pose as challenges to finding peace within the city.

4.5.2 Uncertainty

Moreover, the uncertainty the participants faced was also attributed to mental health challenges. Arman argued that uncertainty inflicts further challenges on mental health as he states that many people are suffering from depression as they are "just sitting in one room, unable to work and just waiting to hear about their status, waiting so long." Arman thereby suggests that waiting and uncertainty creates an insecurity which impacts people's mental health. The struggle of uncertainty causing internal corporeal conflict mirrors Rida's image of *The Journey* (figure 7) as she also uses this image to communicate a recommendation to make the journey easier in her presentation:

"The other thing, the idea of this is picture is, if we had some organised plan to go to our destination and we had an organised plan and had organised hopes and dreams, that could

make our journey better. I know it is dark and I know it is really lonely, but still organisation, how we organise our plans and hopes it actually can make our journey better."

Arman and Rida, highlight that uncertainty and insecurity make the journey from conflict to peace more challenging. Rida suggests instead by having more secure plans, this would mitigate the challenges of the journey making her feel more secure. Uncertainty, therefore, is raised as a way in which conflict continues for the participants as it affects their mental health, causing stress, anxiety, and depression from the insecurity they face.

4.6 Third places

Though the participants presented challenges of going from conflict to peace as explored above, they also presented how they manage these conflicts. The photography project results highlighted glimpses into liminal spaces of the city in which the participants used to negotiate spaces for peace. The results demonstrated the participants as agents for peacebuilding as they actively presented ways in which they could create peace within the city. When the participants assessed and reflected on all the photos side by side, they identified certain places to be associated with spaces of peace, relaxation, and escape. A key theme thereby emerged in which 'third places,' spaces outside of the home or work, presented spaces for opportunities of peace and offered a therapeutic space. These images appeared mundane, but the narratives participants assigned to them reveal a lot about how they negotiated spaces of peace to cope with the challenges presented above.

4.6.1 Spaces of nature

Peacebuilding presented through these results is a multi-sited terrain, the use of liminal spaces reflects how peacebuilding is not only restricted to formal spaces but can also be made in informal spaces. As demonstrated above some of the participants used the space of the project to highlight the challenges they face in the city, demonstrating very little physical or mental space for relaxation and peace. Many of the images of London highlighted busy crowds of people, which had captions which associated these spaces as annoying and noisy. As Darius captioned one of his images, he represents the chaos of city life: "It represents the city with everything looking busy and moving non-stop. Besides the people come and go, there is also the cars and the noisy sound of them in the air, it can be annoying sometimes when you need a more peaceful environment." The results indicated how participants, therefore, instead found liminal spaces within London in which they could navigate the chaos of the city. The results showed the spaces of peace the participants found within the city through parks,

galleries, empty streets, and fields. From the results we can see how the participants use the liminal spaces of the city as a place to negotiate moments of peace within the city, attaching associations to these images such as “peace” “freedom” and “relax.”

Almost all the participants communicated at least one space in which they found peace from the busy streets of London as well as a space they mentally could escape from their own corporeal conflicts temporarily. These spaces thereby made up an important part of their “home away from home” and they communicated these spaces as significant to finding peace. Most of these spaces were outside of the overwhelming buzz of London and instead were found in spaces of nature, but none of these spaces were found inside of participants homes. For many of the participants this peaceful environment was established in nature and secluded spaces within London. For some these outdoor spaces of parks, or sights of nature were articulated as temporary spaces of peace from the everyday conflicts they faced and sometimes even gave them hope and motivation to navigate these traumas. For Rida sunrises and sunsets bought her peace as she negotiated particularly hard points in her life:

“Every sunset and sunrise I would see I knew I would be ok, this time will go, and I will have better days. I am in a time where I am literally falling apart but with that, I had this thought that the endings could be beautiful too, because this sunset was something that always gave me some hope. Like I had a very bad day or very bad night and then there was still something that would give me that hope that endings could be beautiful, so we just need to have that hope that this will pass.”

Photos of sunsets and sunrises occurred frequently in the responses and just like highlighted above with Rida’s response, many of the participants attached the image of the sun to hope and resilience. The sun thus became a symbol of hope as it acted as a reminder for participants that peace could be achieved.

For Hassan he presented a photo of a sunset in a park in which he captioned *A place I go to relax* communicating it as a place for him that he could find some peace. For him he reflected on this place as a “safe environment” in which he could feel a sense of security. Cawil’s response also heavily focused on moments of peace with his storyboard mainly consisting of nature through images of parks, fields, and plants. For him these places were “charming” and reflected a sense of freedom as he captioned his photo of an open field: *Freedom is a wonderful thing. Shine and shine on your own.* These informal spaces of liminal spots in the city within nature, thus became embedded with meanings of freedom,

peace and escape which was communicated as a significant aspect to participants everyday lives in London.

Moreover, the participants revealed an even more significant attachment to these places in nature as they offered spaces of peace that were easily accessible and free. Some participants, therefore, reflected on how these spaces became important within their daily routines as they offered activities that were not costly and for some, like Rida revealed this was all that she had to find some form of hope. The results reflect, therefore, how mundane acts of peace through nature and peaceful environments become a significant source of peace in the participants everyday lives. Outdoor spaces thereby are communicated by the participants as a keyway in which the participants navigate new unfamiliar places and help balance their corporeal conflicts, such as managing mental health.

4.7 Social networks

Along with peace being explored through third places in the city, peace through a sense of belonging, security, and happiness, was presented in the results to be found through corporeal encounters. The participants identified the final key theme to relate to personal memories that become attached to a place and help to build a sense of home within that place. "Home away from home" became for many of the participants not necessarily limited to a specific territory or space represented by physical entities, but places became embedded with meanings through corporeal encounters and memories of people. The results of the study suggest the significance of other people as positive reflections of London were often formed through associations of places to friends or family.

4.7.1 Attached meanings to place

As Darius stated photography was not only simply a tool of communication but as well as "taking a picture is also like documenting memories." For some of the participants the photography project gave them an opportunity to capture and reflect on some of their happy and significant memories attached to places in London. In the images of London, the captions and discussions did not necessarily inject any significance or meaning to specific places regarding the buildings associated with London, but instead personal memories became attached to places. This can be reflected in the results as though only three photos of people were featured in the presentations, other images of different spaces in London elicited captions and discussions surrounding the participants' memories of friends. Thereby, place became understood and significant for participants when personal memories were embedded

in the place. Subsequently, feelings of belonging, peace and happiness within London were not regarded often in terms of nation state territories or formal spaces but were formed through the relationships and social networks that the participants had established within these places. Associations such as "happy" and "important" became attached to images of or about people. Thereby, home or sense of a place was linked to corporeal encounters.

The importance of different stories and memories behind places was identified as a theme by the participants in the final discussion. For some, such as Bazar the London Eye had become a "boring" image that through his own experiences had no relation to people living with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds in the UK, stating: "I think we have all seen enough pictures of London, especially London Eye, please just do something different." Rida replied disagreeing with his statement, stating instead:

> "The thing is most of the people took pictures of the London Eye, but everyone has a different story behind it and that was so beautiful, she (Yasmin) told a story of the London Eye, and it was totally different. Everyone had different reasons behind it. It is so beautiful how one thing relates to us in a different way and how we see those things."

The participants thus identified that spaces in London are made significant through personal attachments of meaning. Though Bazar did not find any meaningfulness behind images of the London Eye, for Yasmin this visualisation represents a sense of security and peace through a memory of her friend. For Yasmin the reasoning behind capturing the London Eye was a way to communicate the importance of her memory with her friend and not the significance of the London Eye itself. As she presented it, she stated: "I took this photo when I was with one of my important persons in my life and I had very good memories from the night. This picture reminds me of that happy memory." For Yasmin, the image of the London Eye, therefore, departs from the typical readings of it being a symbol for London but instead is invested with its own personal meaning. A sense of home is, thus, constructed in Yasmin's response to the task through places that she formed personal attachments to due to her memories of friends and loved ones. Her storyboard, therefore, though it reflected typical images of London the meaning she embedded into these photographs through the captions and discussions revealed her experience of London was made significant through her social network.

For Bazar instead, though the London Eye had no significance to him personally and therefore did not feature on his storyboard, the space of the ice rink held significance for him as that was a place which held memories of his friends. All the images that featured memories of people or images of people were noted as significant moments of happiness in their experience of London, creating the strongest sense of attachment not to physical places but the memories behind them.

4.7.2 People and the journey

Moreover, the response to the task and discussions revealed the importance of these people to support the participants as they navigate their journeys from conflict to peace. Corporeal encounters were expressed as significant for helping participants build a sense of security in their journey from conflict to peace, and other people became symbols of hope for participants. Rida directly addresses this in one of her photos as she presents people as key to helping her negotiate the difficult journey to peace.

> "It is about the journeys we all go through, especially as an asylum seeker, how normally long and dark our journeys are. But with that we obviously have some hope in us, some light that we are going to be ok someday. These lights according to my imagination are those people that come into our lives and give us some hope as a refugee or asylum seeker and help us to go through that journey."

Rida communicates the importance of people and how these encounters can install moments of hope that can help those with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds navigate the path to peace easier. Peace is expressed as more achievable through the support of a secure social network. The journey is underlined with a sense of uncertainty, but people can make those making the journey feel more safe and secure.

4.7.3 More positive relations to London with stronger social networks

Though Rida communicated the importance of having support of others throughout the journey, her journey compared to Yasmin's for example was a lot lonelier. If we look at their stories comparatively, we can see how Rida communicates more challenges in London when responding to the task, whereas Yasmin presents more positive attachments to spaces in London. Rida uses one of the images she titles *The Fall* reflecting on a difficult point in her life and that she was "totally alone, no friends, no family, no one at all." For her when she was alone the challenges and conflict in her life became emphasised and she appoints these

moments of loneliness to the lowest points of her experiences in London. Periods of loneliness thus become simultaneous with the idea of "the fall" to low points. Thereby, we can see how difficult times and streams of conflict become even more challenging and harder to negotiate when the journey is lonely. The results, therefore, suggest that supportive corporeal encounters make it easier for participants to navigate a new space moving from conflict to peace. This can be drawn from the responses featuring and alluding to strong social networks also presenting an overall more positive attachment of London. Yasmin's response to the task shared London in a more positive light and in comparison to Rida, she expressed a stronger support system around her, talking more about her significant memories with her friends.

4.7.4 Group dynamics: empowering voices through collective reflections

The importance of social networks can also be reflected in the group dynamics that formed in the workshops. As the participants became more familiar with each other and built a stronger social dynamic they supported each other with engaging in dialogue.

The social network formed by the workshops became supportive for participants to voice their issues and experiences, with the support of other people making them feel more comfortable to share their stories. The results of the project in which we see the visual codes sometimes not reflecting the personal meanings behind the photos can reflect this. A clear example of this was Bazar's response to the workshops as he originally represented the space of London in his storyboard in mostly a typical manner, only raising personal meanings around images of friends. At first, he seemed hesitant to show his true feelings of disappointment in London but after he heard Adil talk about his own experiences, he became a lot more comfortable to reflect on London as not reaching his expectations. When he spoke on his disappointment, he looked for reassurance amongst other participants before he continued: "We have this picture of London in our mind before we came here but when we came here, we were disappointed (hesitates) not disappointed, but" Then Rida interrupts agreeing and then Bazar confidently continues, "yes actually, it did not reach our expectations." Bazar was hesitant at first to make the claim of disappointment as he later said he did not want to come across as ungrateful, but as he gained support from other participants agreeing with him he became more comfortable voicing his true feelings.

The results of a developing discussion through navigating social dynamics of the group, thus, shows us the significance other people have on the participants socially, to feel

more comfortable to reflect on subjects that might be deemed taboo. As the participants reflected on the importance of each other Maryam argued, “We are all the voice; we are powerful when we are together. When we come together, we can make a change.” The results on the project, therefore, suggest that social networks are not only important for helping the participants to negotiate peace to form a sense of home and belonging, but also a strong support system around them can make them stronger in their own voices.

5 Discussion

This chapter presents the main themes and discusses them in relation to the body of literature and conceptual framework presented earlier in the thesis. This section of the thesis aims to assess how the participants navigated the space of London, presenting the conflicts they face in the city as well as their approaches to construct moments of peace. The second half of this discussion will then assess these results and suggest recommendations that can help inform future peacebuilding initiatives and migration policy in the UK, grounded by the accounts of lived experiences presented by the participants.

The purpose of this study was to facilitate a space for transdisciplinary dialogue, to understand the lived experiences of the participants. This thesis recognised how young people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds are not consulted as agents of peace nor normally have any role in decision-making that affects their lives. The underlying objective of this project was, therefore, to explore multiple perspectives and understandings of peace in the space of London to close the gap between academic and societal paradigms. Using a participatory visual approach, the dogma of roles in research were disseminated, with distinctions between the researcher and researched becoming blurred. Researcher as a singular voice is transcended in this project and the lens applied to research becomes kaleidoscopic rather than concentrated on one singular prism. The intent of this project was, therefore, fuelled by wanting to explore more proximate understandings to migration issues in the UK, making the perspectives of the participants central to the research. The participatory approach, thereby, was core to exploring how participants regarded the place of London and to learn how they navigate conflict to peace within this space.

The participants set the agenda of the research and the results of the study revealed what they felt were significant challenges to peace as well as possible solutions to achieve peace. The key findings of the present research were (1) the reality of London for most participants differs from visualisations of central London presented through social media, (2) the participants felt limited from opportunities due to their background, (3) the participants revealed mental challenges tied to their migration journey, (4) the participants used third spaces as therapeutic spaces to escape and find peace in their everyday lives, (5) social networks became important for the participants to create a sense of security.

5.1 Conflict in the city: challenges to peace

5.1.1 Colonial image of London- reconstructing the realities of London

The idea of a "seductive" mirage of a superior European culture articulated by Quijano (2007) and presented within the conceptual framework is reflected in the results of the study. Through the results we can decipher key images and presentations of London that coincide with the "seductive" side of London which is entangled in the images weaved by the webs of coloniality of knowledge.

Piemontese found through his own visual participatory study, mentioned previously in the literature review, that researchers cannot assume that the self-representation of marginalised people will necessarily counter and oppose the hegemonic images produced by the Global North (Nikielska-Sekula & Desille, 2021, p. 181) Participants when the space of research is extended to them, therefore, will not automatically present alternative narratives. It is important to recognise the power behind hegemonic images, as it becomes corollary of hierarchies produced by coloniality, hegemonic images "take hold over those presented as superiors *and* those deemed inferiors" (Nikielska-Sekula & Desille, 2021, p. 243). Coloniality is thus entangled so deeply through dominant visual grammars and norms, that prisms residing outside of this dimension are extremely difficult to articulate. The idea of a strong colonial image of London was clearly reflected in the results as the participants revealed their preconceptions of London were of a seductive side of the city presented by dominating Western narratives secured in social media. The groundings of cultural Europeanisation are still alive amongst the participants who presented central London as an affluent space of opportunity and to be visually pleasing. The façade of an affluent London, thus, remains in operation and hegemonic hierarchies are demonstrated through social media to sell London in a seductive nature as a place of opportunity and wealth.

The results show how the Global North through coloniality of knowledge constructs and controls the image of London, shaping how it is presented to and regarded by the outside world. With all the participants having a preconceived visualisation of London fuelled by the colonial images projected onto them through social media, shows the prominence of this colonial image as well as its dangerous impact to represent London in a way which distorts reality. Hegemonic hierarchies are thus shown to be established and maintained through the images the Global North distributes through social media. Coloniality of knowledge embedded in powerful images thus can project an image of a superior and affluent London

and for all the participants this idealised image only fell under scrutiny once they had experienced London themselves.

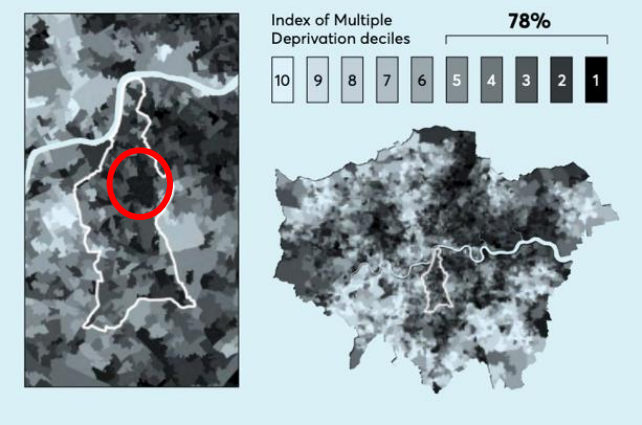
Just how Quijano (2007) presents the "seductive" image of European cities as a myth and a mirage employed by the Global North to maintain power, this image of London was also reassessed by the participants and the results demonstrated counter imaginations. By facilitating a more open environment for research the participants could reimagine representations and they debunked the myths behind this colonial image. The results offered counter-hegemonic images which deconstructed and reconstructed images representing London, offering a more realistic illustration of experiences. As Hassan said the project was a good way to see "different types of pictures from different parts of London which is a nice change to see." The research thus allowed participants to show London through alternative prisms. Images of London thereby became reassessed, and the photographs drew attention to more deprived pockets within the city which represented a more real side of London for the participants. The camera, thus acted as a tool to construct new knowledge, allowing participants to counter this "colonial gaze" and present alternative images of London outside of the seductive spaces of central London (Nikielska-Sekula & Desille, 2021, p. 44)

5.1.2 Conflict as a catalyst: continued insecurity and deprived locations

The findings of the study reflect on how the participants continued to experience insecurity and economic instability, as they had to live with little resources and inhabited deprived areas, mirroring Selimovic's (2022) articulations of corporeal conflict facing migrant bodies. The results show how participants are more likely to end up in pockets of deprivation in London as they reimagined the spaces of London showing run-down buildings compared to the spaces of the affluent central London. Following concepts outlined by Selimovic (2022) and Dempsey (2020) conflict is reframed as a catalyst, meaning conflict cannot be constricted to a vacuum but instead people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds continue to experience insecurity within perceived peaceful dimensions. The participants highlighted spaces of central London as being out of reach and that instead their everyday lives resided in spaces which were more deprived. The participants presented spaces such as Brixton, Waltham Forest, and Hackney as 'real' and everyday spaces within their experiences of London. Centre for London's study of *Levelling up London: borough by borough data breakdown* (Cottell, 2022) highlights different spaces of London experiencing different levels of deprivation. The spaces recognised by the participants as more real through the prism of

this data highlights how participants were more likely to inhabit deprived areas. Waltham Forest was mentioned by participants as one of the spaces they resided in and according to Centre of London's study, 83% of areas in Waltham Forest among the most deprived 50% of areas in England. Hackney was another place mentioned as a space experienced in the more everyday routines of some of the participants, and 92% of areas in Hackney are among the most deprived 50% of areas in England. Lambeth which participants directly refer to through Brixton as being a more realistic space for everyday lives for participants as Adil stated, "Come to Brixton, Brixton's real," has 78% of its area residing in the most 50% deprived areas. And as figure 8 below highlights Brixton and Herne Hill are marked the darkest point within the borough illustrating the concentration of deprivation in this region. The red circle has been added to highlight the area of Brixton.

Figure 8- Map of borough of Lambeth deprivation level (Cottell, 2022)



Spaces that were presented as imagined by participants surrounded visualisations of central London, such as spaces in Westminster. These spaces in comparison experience a lot less deprivation as only 53% of areas in Westminster are among the most deprived 50% of areas in England.

The results from this study alongside supporting data suggest that the participants are more likely to live in areas that are pockets of deprivation within London, rather than spaces of central London. This means that the participants reside in more concentrated spaces of low-income and therefore, places lacking in opportunities, reflecting on the notion of conflict as a catalyst for further insecurity and economic instability.

5.1.3 Corporeal conflict

Participants also continue to face insecurity as they had to navigate corporeal conflicts. The results of this study mirrored concepts surrounding the notion of corporeal conflicts as the participants demonstrated that despite inhabiting a territory of so-called peace, conflict was not necessarily resolved (Dempsey 2020; Selimovic, 2022). The journey from conflict to peace was not presented as a linear process for the participants as conflict also became entwined into spaces of perceived peace within London. The results show how conflict cannot be restricted to a vacuum of territory as conflict travelled with participants as memories of the past haunt their reflections of empty streets at night. We see through Adil, Rida and Arman's reflections of a traumatic journey, darkness from these memories are not easily forgotten and as Adil articulates even in spaces of peace "the evil," which refers to this internal conflict, still exists.

Moreover, the participants showed how challenges became attached to their bodies through their backgrounds as they expressed how they faced more boundaries to opportunities compared to other people in London, both physically and socially. Conflict, therefore, in the results cannot be subjected to a vacuum but instead suggests conflict should be considered as a catalyst as it attaches to migrant bodies. Conflict just as Selimovic (2022) and Dempsey (2020) articulate cannot be bound to one specific place or time, and therefore cannot be assumed to be automatically resolved when crossing the border. Conflict and its consequences are present in the results and thus still inhabit the everyday lives of the participants even in the perceived affluent world of the European city. Though conflict might not appear visibly, mentally conflict continues to haunt the participants in the space of London.

5.2 Finding peace in the city

Yet, despite the participants outlining challenges they face within the space of London they also illustrated the ways they navigate these conflicts and increase their own sense of security in a new place away from home. Just as Selimovic suggested, participants developed expertise to counter conflicts and presented potential pathways to peace (Selimovic, 2022, p. 595).

5.2.1 Third places

The results of the project suggest the importance of exploring the mundane and everyday acts of peace that can be found within informal spaces. The results depart from the large-scale spaces of peace and instead draw attention to everyday and mundane spaces of peace which

are the reality of the participants. These pockets are embedded in the everyday but are often bypassed in wider communications of peace as they do not contain necessarily any formal or bureaucratic makings of peace. Instead, the results suggest that peace can be found and constructed in informal spaces, established through the participants themselves.

These results, thus question the 'abyssal line' (Grosfoguel et al., 2015), which renders those underneath to be seen as Smith (1999) states 'irrational' as conflict naturally inhabits them. Conflict becomes assigned to people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds falsely from colonial frameworks, but from the results of the photography project we can see how the participants find and create peaceful environments in their everyday lives. Dominant narratives of refugees and asylum seekers renders them as either threats or victims (Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2017). Therefore, authorities' response to groups of young people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds residing in urban outdoor spaces such as parks are often negative, tied to violence and crime. But how the participants use these spaces we can see the paradoxical effects. Peace and freedom are their ultimate goals and the spaces they look for in the city depart significantly from the colonial outlook that instead imply this goal is conflict. Not only do these results depart from the characterisations of being a threat but they also disseminate notions of being a victim. The participants actively sought-after places to picture to demonstrate methods they employ to find and construct spaces of peace within the city. From this we can understand the participants not as passive victims but as agents of peacebuilding.

The results from the present study parallel Biglin's photovoice study which found participants to use 'third spaces,' such as parks, for creating therapeutic spaces, transforming moments of nature into hope. Interestingly despite the task exploring spaces of the "home away from home" not a single participant took a photo from within their home. The physical home, therefore, was not necessarily a significant place for participants to find any peace and instead 'third places' such as parks offered more relaxation and sense of security for the participants. These spaces, therefore, became more significant for the participants in negotiating peace over any other space.

These results show us that opportunities of peace can occur in informal spheres that do not fall under the same controls that shape many formal technocratic projects of peacebuilding (Mac Ginty, 2014, p. 551). By listening to emic constructions of peace from the bottom-up in everyday contexts, peacebuilding is no longer restricted to top-down

technocratic and standardised approaches to peace. This reflects how peacebuilding should not be restrained by marked borderlines, peace can be recognised in liminal and informal spaces. Retheorising the notions of peace and conflict presented in the conceptual framework, building on the concepts of Väyrynen (2019), Selimovic (2022), and Richmond and Mac Ginty (2019) peace can be found on mundane levels and established by 'ordinary' people through everyday practices. The results demonstrated how conflict is navigated by the participants in their everyday lives through these third spaces outside of formal domains.

Moreover, the results support Pink's assertion (2007) that visual methodology can be an effective approach to represent experiences of everyday worlds. Utilising cameras for communication, the participants could reveal spaces of their everyday lives in London, showing the mundane acts that create a sense of peace. Since the cameras were a tool that could be carried around and become an extension into everyday lives explored, the photographs provided insights into spaces which are often informal spaces not necessarily regarded in peacebuilding. This allowed me as the researcher into more intimate spaces to learn how participants form peace.

5.2.2 Corporeal encounters: the importance of social networks

As explored in the conceptual framework, places become embedded with meanings and emotions, aligning place and body (Väyrynen, 2019). The participants, thus, access streams of peace and construct a sense of security through positive corporeal encounters. The positive attachments to place with memories of friends and family communicates the importance of corporeal encounters as hope is created through acts and points of everyday contact between bodies, as Väyrynen argues it is a way in which peace is articulated and takes place (2019, p.156). We can see this through the results as participants attached memories of people behind places in London, such as Yasmin with the London Eye or Bazar with the ice rink. For them these places in London are thus embedded with personal meanings, aligning place and the body.

Moreover, the results demonstrated how fractured agency of those undertaking this difficult journey of migration can be strengthened in encounters with supportive people along the way, which mirrors the findings of Selimovic's study which also placed an importance on corporeal encounters on migrants' experiences (2022, p. 593). Rida directly in her response to the task drew attention to the significance of having people along the journey to install hope to reach a better end. For Rida corporeal encounters, therefore, can make the journey of

migration easier. As well, the difference in responses to the task from Rida and Yasmin, highlights how support and positive corporeal encounters can shape the ideas of place, shifting the streams of conflict to peace. We can see for Yasmin it was maybe easier to reposition herself in new spatialised relationships and networks than Rida since she is embedded in a university network studying. Therefore, Yasmin's reflections on the places of London were a lot more positive. Whereas Rida due to her background as an asylum seeker found it harder to establish the same social networks as Yasmin, facing more uncertainty about the future. Her social network being weaker she was also more detached to the places of London than Yasmin, presenting more challenges and negative sides of the city. We can thus understand from the results, just as presented in the conceptual framework, social networks are significant in building a sense of security for people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds. For the participants it thereby reigned true that "human networks are the most important form of protection" as all sense of security was attached to their corporeal experiences (Selimovic, 2022, p. 593).

5.3 Why a participatory approach?

The results of the study support the argument that visual participatory approaches to research can offer unique advantages in forming emic understandings that regard participants as agents for peace. This project allowed me to reflect on and explore the disciplinary implications and the theoretical influence of applying visual participatory methods. As recognised previously in the thesis, participatory research possesses some limitations due to the nature of its character, being more time consuming and requiring more funding than other paths of research. It should be questioned then if these findings could have been reached by other qualitative methods or if the findings were more unique to the approach employed. Reflecting on the findings of this study, I believe the research accessed a level of emic understanding that would have been harder to facilitate through other approaches such as interviews. This is not to say that the same findings could not be found through interviews, but I think a collective action in research facilitated a space in which participants felt comfortable to share their stories and significant topics could be explored that might have been overlooked by a researcher blindsided by Western understandings.

A group dynamic created a crutch for participants to lean on each other meaning that subjects that might have been shied away from in a more formal one-on-one setting, could instead be explored more collectively. The social network formed became an important grounding for the participants to reflect on each other's ideas as well as address more taboo

subjects that only some participants felt comfortable discussing once knowing other participants also had experienced similar things. This was most notable in the subject of a disappointing feeling of London as it did not reach expectations set by the colonial image presented by social media. This was met with some hesitation to present in front of myself as the researcher at first by some of the participants as they did not want to come across as ungrateful, but as they became more comfortable as a group, they became more prepared to scrutinise the ideal image of central London and render it into the realm of imagination. This reflects Piemontese's study which also noted the importance of shared experiences and collective memories formed through the dynamics of participants as it meant taboo subjects could be explored, whereas by the researcher more likely to be overlooked or avoided.

It is important, therefore, to not undermine the participants impact on each other and over credit the researcher curated participatory approach. It is critical to recognise that engaged responses constructing alternative narratives were not purely attached to the participatory approach but established through the participants' reflecting on collective experience. Participants' voices were not empowered by the research, but by each other. It is important to not overstate the significance of a participatory approach because the power of this project does not necessarily lie in these dimensions, but through the participants being able to engage collectively in a dialogue with others with similar experiences. As Rida stated it was a good experience to share stories with those who could relate, saying "the stories of all of us are different, but somehow the same." Being able to relate to others, participants became more confident in their own voices. Mimicking the sentiment raised by Maryam as she stated, "we are all the voice; we are powerful when we are together. When we come together, we can make a change."

5.4 Recommendations for utilising the key findings

The overall aim of this project was to examine how might a participatory approach to research help us learn from more proximate experiences and use this new knowledge to shape future peacebuilding initiatives and inform migration policies. This next section will, therefore, highlight how the key findings from the results can be interpreted to help suggest ways to help young people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds navigate conflict to peace within spaces in London.

5.4.1 Social networks

A key finding demonstrated in the results highlights the importance of a social network and corporeal encounters for the participants. Interpreting the difference between the responses of the tasks of Yasmin and Rida can suggest the extra challenges participants face when their experience is embedded with uncertainty and weak social networks. Yasmin's response to the task communicates more positive attachments to places in London as she shared the significance of places made by memories of her friends. Yasmin arguably had one of the strongest social networks amongst the participants and thereby also had the most positive reflections of London. Rida on the other hand, used the camera as a tool to communicate the significant challenges she faced, and her storyboard presented the most conflict living in London. Rida revealed she had a significantly weaker social network and attributed many of her challenges because of or made worse by loneliness, having little to no family and friends around her.

Rida also revealed due to her background as an asylum seeker she faced more uncertainty as well as more restrictions to social paradigms. Through Rida and Arman's communications of struggles of insecurity due to not having fixed plans, they revealed how hard it is to establish secure roots. One way in which initiatives in the UK are currently working in an opposing direction to this issue is the use of temporary accommodation. Rida makes a recommendation stating that "If we had an organised plan and had organised hopes and dreams, that will make our journey better." She argues that organisation is a significant way in creating the path to peace easier. These results, thereby suggest to us the importance of regarding social networks to help young people mediate their conflicts and feel secure in a new city. Yet technical and bureaucratic measures of accommodation focus more on short-term, quick-fix solutions to accommodation where asylum seekers are given temporary solutions to housing such as hotels. At the end of 2021 26,380 people were living in temporary hotel accommodation in the UK (Refugee Council). This means that it becomes harder for people to establish strong roots and a secure social network since they are not guaranteed to stay in the same location for an extended period, living with the constant uncertainty and fear of relocation. Having more long-term plans for accommodation, therefore, can help create more security and certainty to build social networks. Thus, it is important to not underestimate the significance of positive corporeal encounters that seep into the mundane as they can create important streams of peace for the participants. Effective approaches to peacebuilding regarding migration thereby should harbour spaces where social networks are recognised as an essential component to consider, therefore, avoiding moving

people suddenly away from these networks should be made a priority. Since the project took place in November, three of the participants have been moved to new spaces outside of London being taken away from the social networks they created and one of the collaborators of the project is currently appealing being relocated. Rida is one of these participants and thus all the social networks she had started to create through this research are now lost and have to be remade elsewhere.

Moreover, policies that restrict people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds from certain paradigms that harbour the potential for social networks create further challenges for people trying to establish secure roots in a new city. Asylum seekers not having the right to work are excluded from these spaces that can create social networks that can help them not only economically but socially. More applicable for the age group concerning the participants, those seeking asylum cannot access student finance for university like those with refugee backgrounds. As Arman expressed their lives become confined to waiting in one room. Not having the opportunity to work or go to university means they have a very limited pool of spaces in which they can construct social networks. Through Yasmin we can see the importance these studying environments created for her to establish strong social networks, but for Rida these spaces were harder to reach.

Additionally, the recent policies to deter refugees coming to the UK by giving them fewer rights outlined by the provisions of the Nationality and Borders Act of 2022, involve removing support from networks. Restricting refugees' rights to settle in the UK and reunite with family prevent individuals from having established social networks that in the long term helps them to secure themselves socially and economically. This study suggests that these social networks are essential for the participants to establish peace, yet the policies act paradoxically making these social networks more difficult to form.

Furthermore, with the spaces in which social networks can be constructed often being inaccessible or difficult to negotiate socially, economically, and physically for the participants, we can understand the significance of peacebuilding initiatives that can provide this social space. Thereby, NGOs like the one I collaborated with on this project can help provide essential spaces where social networks are formed and subsequently make masses of difference for young people navigating conflict to peace to become more grounded economically and socially. The results of the project demonstrated how establishing social networks can make participants feel more confident in their own voices helping further their agency in peacebuilding, as well as provide spaces where they can relate their experiences to others who have faced similar journeys. But it is important when looking to construct these

spaces that can facilitate social networks, to regard location of these hubs to make them accessible to all young people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds. These spaces, therefore, must exist not just in central London but also in locations easily accessible for those in boroughs further out of the city to create inclusive opportunities to achieve social networks.

5.4.2 Failings of deterrent policies

The UK reproduces an oxymoronic narrative which can be translated through the results; (1) a seductive European city which offers opportunities, (2) a space that is not open to all. The UK over the last years has introduced numerous policies that make seeking asylum in the UK less attractive fuelled by deterrence. These policies have notably escalated from 2021 to 2023. However, the deterrent effect of these policies tends to be very small at targeting streams of mobility and largely insignificant. The results of this can reach the conclusion of these policies having little effect because of two main reasons. Firstly, as the results indicate the journey is not voluntarily and is described as miserable, overwhelming, lonely, dark, and characterised by loss. The participants revealed how before they had luxuries as well as loved ones they have had to lose on the way, therefore, this journey was not a choice but a necessity due to conflicts and political violence. Policies, thereby, are not necessarily regarded by people making the journey to the UK as they have no choice to give up their rights as they fear their own safety.

Secondly, the participants were not aware of the policies before living in London. We can understand from the results of the project that the participants view on London before they lived there was associated with the colonial produced image of the "seductive" European city rather than deterring policies. The participants revealed before having to seek safety in London they had constructed an ideal image of London in their heads based on social media. This idealised visualisation did not incorporate these deterrence policies, demonstrating that these policies do not reach headlines outside of the UK. This means that they have little effect in changing the streams of migration to the UK, but also make those who do end up in the UK feel further alienated and isolated when do they arrive regardless, as they find themselves in a hostile environment they did not necessarily expect. Therefore, the UK misleadingly sells this image of an ideal London which distorts the reality and only leads to disappointment.

Furthermore, these policies only work to make those already in the UK face more uncertainty as they face fear of relocation. Uncertainty presented in the analysis makes it harder for people to establish social networks, but also chronic uncertainty attached to not knowing the trajectory of your journey can exacerbate the trauma the participants face. The

results, therefore, urge us to reconsider policies centred around deterrence as they not only fail to make any significant changes to flows of migration and are inefficient, but they also harbour a hostile space which demonises those seeking safety and subjects them to further challenges to peace through rendering them into a realm of uncertainty. These legislative actions, therefore, make very little difference to the movements across borders to the UK and simply force migratory movements to be irregular, more hazardous, traumatic, and more expensive. This only hinders the UK as those who must make these irregular journeys will only need more support economically and socially as a result when they arrive regardless.

5.4.3 Agents for peace

The results suggest that young people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds have important experiences and stories to communicate. The participants engaged with the research and shared important insights concerning their everyday lives in London which are often overlooked by more formal bodies of peacebuilding. The results raise significances into the opposite direction in which Governments and wider research explores, clearly depicting how top-down approaches are looking into wrong direction. The participants demonstrated how they can create spaces of peace, as well as make recommendations for peace which can make significant changes if paid attention to.

5.5 Limitations of the study

It would be naïve and misleading to not acknowledge the limitations of this study, so this next section will act with a sense of transparency.

A key limitation that inhabits this research is the time restraints and limited budget which ultimately affected the level of participation. Limited budget, time and respect of participants own schedules meant the fieldwork was conducted over a relatively short amount of time. This raises empirical limitations of the work since to create more "meaningful participation" longer time frames are better (Nikielska-Sekula & Desille, 2021, p. 243). Aware of this problem I communicated with the participants through the NGO as much as possible after the workshops giving them chances to reflect on their work after time had passed and continued to offer a space for dialogue. However, due to the unpredictable nature of the participants lives this communication was difficult to always maintain. With three of the participants being moved during the writing process of this research it was harder to keep in contact with these individuals.

Moreover, though strong collaboration dynamics were attempted to be embedded across all phases of the research, the later stages of the research did not create as much engagement. For the participants the workshops were a lot easier to engage in since they were more exciting, sociable, and fun. Yet the later stages of constructing an academic narrative was harder for the participants to engage with in the same way. As a researcher becoming the mediator of data, this can subsequently pose a potential limitation to the project, as the academic architecture of this work was ultimately constructed by myself as the researcher. The interpretation of results thus can harbour the potential for bias.

Furthermore, in relation to a restricted time frame it was arguably harder to reach mundane spaces that could be achieved over longer periods of fieldwork. The participants were eager to impress the other participants and had an interest in demonstrating their newly learned photography skills. This could mean that maybe some mundane events and locations were overlooked by some of the participants to avoid presenting what they perceived as boring images of their everyday life. Some participants were keen to show off their photography skills and favoured presenting moments of spectacle. The process being relatively short meant that they did not necessarily represent typical weeks in their lives, but due to their involvement in the project used the week to partake in more impressive or photogenic activities.

5.6 Implications of the study

Despite these limitations, the results and knowledge constructed from this project suggests several significant theoretical and practical implications.

Firstly, this project has encouraged disciplinary implications through exploring a methodology that seeks to close the gap between academic and non-academic paradigms. A participatory project has demonstrated that when young people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds can be part of research they engage actively and communicate significances in their life worlds which can offer important insights into the workings of migration systems in the UK and London in particular. This thereby allowed transdisciplinary dialogue to take place, and the research communicates the understandings of those much more proximate to the research problem presented. Arguably, the implications of this means that the suggestions above of how to apply the results and key findings to peacebuilding initiatives can create more relevant and therefore, arguably more efficient approaches to peacebuilding since they are grounded by proximate understandings.

Secondly, beyond academic implications this project also impacts participants as well as the communities it inhabits. Throughout the project conscious steps were taken to ensure the research created positive implications for the participants. The most significant implication which lied at heart of this project was providing a space in which participants felt they could voice their own experiences and narratives, and more importantly be heard. This thesis intends to act as a vessel for these stories and emic perspectives to be shared, facilitating a space in which to listen to these often-unheard narratives. For Rida this facilitation of space was conceived as a significant platform, stating:

"It would be a big opportunity for us if you could share these stories with people…so obviously that would be a great chance and opportunity for us to be heard and the problems and all the challenges we go through, nobody even knows about those, nobody even cares about those."

For the participants there was a general feeling that they do not often have opportunities to share their stories with people and are not regarded or heard by those who can make changes in migration or considered themselves to be able to make these changes. The space facilitated by the research, therefore, gave the participants a sense of empowerment as they gained a sense of ownership of spaces in the city as well as their own stories.

Moreover, by engaging in the workshops, the participants also learnt photography skills as well as how to communicate stories that are important to them to wider audiences and to continue to utilise these skills outside of the project. Skills of photography, film and editing were focused on in the workshops to teach participants ways in which they can construct their own platforms and use media to voice their narratives beyond the research. Salim who collaboratively ran the photography skills session, showed them his own examples of using media as someone with an asylum seeker background and gave them advice if they were interested in pursuing this further. The participants are still in contact with Salim who is helping those interested find their own paths into journalism or photography. Photography itself is a fairly accessible tool for communication as all of the participants had smartphones, therefore the workshops were tailored around cheap and easy ways to take, edit and share images. The research thus helped participants explore new methods of communication and provided them with information and contacts to ground them in continuing to share their stories beyond the scope of the project.

Furthermore, participants also made new friends and met other people who had experienced similar things to themselves. Many of the participants had not met each other

before, the project subsequently introduced participants to new people, acting not only as an important site for research but also a space for participants to establish new social networks. As well, the NGO being fairly new itself and these workshops being some of their first workshops, it helped introduce participants to the organisation. Since the project many of the participants have continued to go to other workshops ran by the NGO who have continued to focus on aspects of storytelling and art. This also meant the organisation could form more of a grounding to run workshops as Arman in our reflection of the project thanked me saying that this project was an important part of getting their own workshops off the ground. Since the project they have run 10 independent workshops and reached out to over 40 participants. A significant implication of this project, therefore, was establishing a social network that the participants and organisation could utilise beyond the boundaries of the research.

Though attention of the results has been shared in the light of informing top-down approaches through aiding knowledge on future policies and peacebuilding initiatives, the bottom-up implications that shape the workings within the community should not be overlooked. Within the research the participants did not just talk about addressing the authorities to tell their stories but also stated a wish to share their experiences with future refugees and asylum seekers living in London to help prepare them for the challenges, as well as show them hope and potential paths to peace. As Bazar stated it would be good to address this project to represent London through their own experiences so future refugees and asylum seekers finding themselves in London could not feel as alone in the journey. The participants, therefore, wanted to show them "how the real London is" to make differences from the bottom-up. To do this, collaboratively with the participants we decided to make a book for the NGO consisting of the images and captions to show those newly arrived in London. The book illustrates the space of London through the participants own understandings of the city. The intention is that this book will act as a source for new people arriving to London with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds to understand some challenges they might face in London as well as potential ways to find peace in the city.

Moreover, the participants and the NGO are currently looking into organising an exhibition to share their work to a wider audience, sharing their stories to the communities as well as other people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds living in London. The sharing of stories, therefore, is not just restrained to the realm of the research but the participants are utilising the results and the skills learnt to continue the process within their community. As Noam Chomsky (1967) argued, "it is a moral imperative to find out and tell

the truth as best one can, about things that matter, to the right audience" (cited in Nikielska-Sekula & Desille, 2021, p. 218). We must draw attention to the *right* audience which often becomes restricted to elitist paradigms and top-down circles, but participatory visual research can transcend these boundaries to make the results engage with bottom-up dimensions in the community. The audience, therefore, should not just work to appeal to top-down dimensions such as policy change but also pay attention to the important changes happening at local levels, letting those most proximate to the issue help those also facing this issue.

6 Conclusion

6.1 Future research

There are several avenues for future research that stem from this project. Embedding pluralist conceptions into the notions of making peace researchable, accounts of peace are always 'unfinished' (McMullin, 2022, p. 534). Research "can only take us to resting points that are not endings but openings to new issues that require continuous working through" (Das et al., cited in McMullin, 2022, p. 534). Peace in this thesis is not considered as a rational deliberational in which rational actors or problem-solving orientated external intervention can create fixed answers (Väyrynen, 2013, p. 156). Peace is an "open-ended, fluid political process" (Shinko, 2008, 475). Subsequently, the task at hand is infinite, but equally its importance cannot be undermined. Efforts of research paradigms enabling an inclusive transdisciplinary environment is essential to deepening our understandings of lived experiences of conflict to peace, thereby future research is essential to gain further perspectives from multiple prisms.

This study, therefore, can be regarded as just an opening of new issues that need to be regarded by future research. There could be an extension of this project running more workshops with young people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds in London to gain more perspectives and understandings. My communication continues with the organisation who have shared their interest in continuing this collaboration after this project to run more workshops and to continue the research.

Moreover, the city has proven to be an important site of study, assessing the journeys and lived experiences of conflict to peace in these urban spaces, but there are other spaces that also deserve further attention. Different spaces are likely to hold unique experiences for people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds so it would be interesting to investigate these spaces further, such as conducting a study in more rural spaces across the UK. These spaces ultimately could be looked at comparatively.

Furthermore, another potential approach to this research would be to frame it through the prism of methodology making this the core focus of the study. This thesis does delve into methodological implications but the whole thesis could be shaped around this agenda with future researchers designing the study with the aim of participants providing reflections about their participation in the project. As part of this study the research could revisit the

participants and their communities to assess if positive implications of participatory research continue after the initial research period.

6.2 Concluding remarks

This project intended to construct new knowledge and understandings orientated by proximate perspectives of those who have lived experiences of navigating conflict to peace. The study set out to facilitate a space for transdisciplinary dialogue to flourish, to learn how young people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds experience London. Seeking to close the gap between research and communities, this research has put the understandings of those most proximate to the research problem at the heart of the study. Utilising a participatory visual approach has acted as a route for everyday realities to be translated in the bigger picture of migration issues in the UK.

The camera was a tool that acknowledged participants as being active agents of peace who could offer important understandings and knowledge about negotiating conflict to peace in the space of London. The bottom-up constructed knowledge created insights into lived experiences which are often overlooked as they do not necessarily conform to hegemonic models inflicted by the Global North onto the praxis of peacebuilding. The findings of this study, therefore, support the need for the shift of power from the researcher to researched as the results suggest that policies informed by top-down understandings are looking in the wrong direction. The participants suggest conflict continues in their lives in London, posing challenges to establishing security in this new place. Yet, despite the challenges, participants managed to also pose potential paths to peace, making the space of London into a "home away from home" through social networks and third places.

Though this research is a start to exploring spaces of transdisciplinary dialogue in peace and conflict research, the endeavour remains unfinished. It is important for research to continue the academic and societal pursuit to facilitate a space for and *listen* to the voices of those who have experienced the motions of conflict to peace. People with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds have valuable knowledge and understandings to contribute to the praxis of peace and conflict. Opening the space of research can, therefore, make the invisible visible, the unknown known and the unheard heard. As Rida stated:

"The problems and all the challenges we go through, nobody knows about those, nobody even cares about those, so having this space can help us share our voice so *we* can make a change."

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Appendix A

The task given to participants

The brief

The task is to create a personalised photo series about your experiences and views of London as a new place you are living, a home away from home.

When creating your stories, this week you will take around 4-10 images reflecting on your experiences being a refugee or asylum seeker living in the UK. The photos are an opportunity to share your perspectives on the issues of migration and you have full creative freedom to represent this in any way you would like. It is important to remember throughout that your perspective is important, and we all have a story to tell no matter how big or small.

The images can be connected to each other, or they can each tell their own individual stories.

At the next workshop you will caption your photos and reflect on why you took those particular pictures and what they mean to you, so it is a good idea to start to think of your motivations while taking the photos and what you want people to acknowledge and learn through your pictures.

Task: **take 4-10 images in reflection to your experiences living in London.**

(If you would also like to experiment with film or voice clips this is allowed)

In our next workshop your photos will be printed out and we will make collages in which you will caption the photos (write 1-3 sentences explaining the image), then we will reflect on your photos as a group.

Appendix B

Information letter

Are you interested in taking part in a participatory visual project about living in London?

This is an inquiry about participation in a research project where the main purpose is to gain understandings about the experiences of living in London from the perspective of young people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds. In this letter we will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

Purpose of the project
The purpose of the project is to research the potential of participatory visual methods having the ability to create space for refugee/asylum seeker voices in the dimension of migration issues in the UK. The aim of the study is to facilitate a space in which participants can have the space to express their experiences of their lives in London in regard to their refugee or asylum seeker background.
The project's main objectives are:

4. To create a space through a collaborative and participatory approach in which young people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds can express their lived experiences of conflict to peace in the space of London.
5. See what the participants choose to communicate about their experiences of living in, using photography as a tool of communication and to elicit collective understandings.
6. Assess what participants choose to communicate to understand challenges to peace and potential pathways to peace

The project is a student project for a master's thesis. The purpose of the data collected by participant produced images and transcripts of discussions will be to analyse and assess the use of participatory visual methods to widen the narratives of migration.

Who is responsible for the research project?
UiT Norges Arktiske Universitet Fakultet for humaniora, samfunnsvitenskap og lærerutdanning / Senter for fredsstudier (Centre of Peace Studies) the institution responsible for the project.

Why are you being asked to participate?
As a refugee/asylum seeker originally from the outside of Europe and now currently residing in the London you have been selected to collaborate in this project to give your insight of issues of migration and express your own narratives of your everyday lives.

What does the participation involve?
If you choose to take part in the project, this will involve two interviews, two full day workshops on film/photography and ethics and then a week of filming independently. The project will run over the course of two weeks, with the interviews being 45 minutes each, the workshops being two full days and the independent filming will be dictated by yourself. The information that will be collected in the interviews will be on your background, such as where you are from, when you arrived in the UK and your self-identified racial or ethnic origin- you have the right to share as much or as little as you wish. As for the information recorded in the visual project, what this consists of will be for you to determine, you may be set a few pointers of what to focus on, but it is your choice on how you respond to these and what you wish to show on camera. You will be able to delete footage and data that you do not wat to be shared with the researcher.

Participation is voluntary
Participation in the project is voluntary. If you choose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you choose not to participate or later decide to withdraw as your personal data will not be connected to the project.
If you are awaiting residency in the UK, your participation will not affect this process as no personal data will be shared, this means it will not attribute to the process of residency in the UK. Participation in this project will, therefore, not give any advantages in the process for residency is any way, nor will it create any disadvantages. This project is independent from any bodies making decisions about residency meaning this project will not contribute to the process of residency is any way.
Information of how you arrived to the UK also will not be shared with anyone outside the project
Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data

We will only use your personal data for the purposes specified in this information letter. We will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act).

- The only people with access to all personal data will be the supervisor of the project, the student carrying out the project and you. No one other than these people will see any of the visual recordings with personal data unless you wish to share them. Therefore, in any published work you will not be recognisable or be able to be identified in the project as no visual data which contains personal data will be published alongside the paper.
- All personal data will be stored on an encrypted memory stick which will be kept securely in a locked cabinet. This personal data of the recordings will only be kept for the duration of the project and therefore in July 2023 will be deleted.
- Your name will not be included in the project and instead be replaced with a code name. Any personal details which can identify you will be stored separately from the rest of the collected data so no personal details other than your image can be associated to the visual material. All the personal data will be anonymised in the published paper and any visual material containing personal data will not be shown in the paper

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?
The project is scheduled to end July 2023. After this date all personal data will be deleted including the visual content that contains personal data and any personal data will be anonymised in the final paper.

Your rights

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

What gives us the right to process your personal data?
We will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with *UiT Norges Arktiske UniversitetFakultet for humaniora, samfunnsvitenskap og lærerutdanning / Senter for fredsstudier (CPS),* data Protection Services has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?
If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:

- *UiT Norges Arktiske UniversitetFakultet for humaniora, samfunnsvitenskap og lærerutdanning / Senter for fredsstudier (CPS)* via Charlotte Rose Doggett (project leader) and/or Marcela Douglas (project supervisor).
- Project Leader details: email- cdo016@uit.no
- Project Supervisor details: email- marcela.douglas@uit.no

- Data Protection Services, by email: (personverntjenester@sikt.no) or by telephone: +47 53 21 15 00.

Yours sincerely,

Charlotte Rose Doggett (Researcher/student)

Marcela Douglas (Project supervisor)

Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project "participatory visual methodologies to explore young people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds experiences of living in London" and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

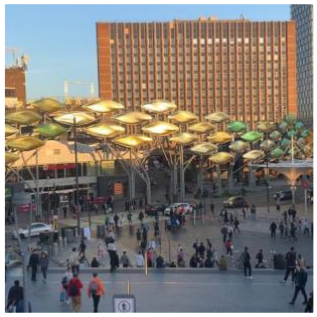
- ☐ to participate in interviews both before and after the participatory visual data collection process
- ☐ to be recorded during interviews and group discussions
- ☐ to participate in group workshops on visual methodology and film/photography ethics- this participation will be reflected on in the final research project
- ☐ to participate in creating a visual essay over the course of several days independently
- ☐ for my image to be used in the visual data I produce for the sole purpose of analysis for research
- ☐ to understand that my participation in this project will not affect my application for residency in the UK, either positively or negatively

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approx. July 2023.

(Signed by participant, date)

Appendix C

Participants photographs used in the analysis (excluding images containing personal data).



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