'I'm Going to be Director of a Charity!'

What Are the Apparent Rationales for Involvement of Women Aged 18-35 in the UK When Volunteering at Local Charities?

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

i.   Chapter Introduction

Recently in the news media, the prominence of refugees and asylums seekers has been noticeable, and when approaching my research, it was difficult to ignore this topic, which is both current and relevant. When looking at the background to this topic, it was surprising to find that little material existed, and there was a total dearth of research within the area of volunteers in refugee charities. Having searched through different means such as Google scholar and library sources, little directly relevant material was to be found. As a result, it felt worthwhile to explore this area, which has garnered much less analysis than expected, and where it will be subsequently possible to make an original contribution to the field. Understanding the motives and reasons behind why individuals take part is a pertinent, and as yet unanswered question that this research project will seek to begin a conversation on.

The objective of this research will be to explore the motivations behind volunteers' sacrifices of their time to be a part of helping new refugees and asylum seekers in the UK. Alongside this, it will be considered to what extent Borderlands, where this study was conducted, is a 'normal' case so that it does not skew results more than would be otherwise expected. The results will further be considered in relation to the theories of postcolonialism and neoliberalism, in order to fully utilise the conducted interviews through different theoretical frameworks. Ultimately, being able to provide an overview of the reasons volunteers take part, and to form a general profile of whom the modern young volunteer is, will be a key overall aim of this paper.

ii. Research Question and Sub-Questions

Throughout this thesis, the primary question as referred to in the title shall be:

• 'What Are the Apparent Rationales for Involvement of Women Aged 18-35 in the UK When Volunteering at Local Charities?'

In addition, this question was intended to provide the possibility for further questioning. As such, there will be three sub-questions addressed:

• 'Do women take part in refugee charity volunteering to a greater extent, and why may this be?'
• 'To what extent is the rationale of respondents neoliberal in nature?'
• 'To what extent can Orientalism be used in relation to respondent's answers?'

iii. Primary Definitions

It is of importance to look at meanings and definitions that will be central to my research, and most importantly to clarify the word 'rationale' within the title and research question. At its core in this case, I am referring to the reasons as to why individuals have chosen to volunteer, in this case, with refugees. These include both 'conscious' reasons that the individuals have related to me through interviews, along with the three core groups identified, which are presented in the results section. Central to this will be understanding why the volunteers give their time, based on their response to the question as to why they took part.

Central to one of the sub-questions listed above will be the theory of neoliberalism and theories which stem from it. The definition of neoliberal used will be provided by Smith (2012: No Page) who defines it as asserting 'that rationality, individuality, and self-interest guide all actions… [and which] often views itself as a global social science capable of explaining all human behaviour since all behaviour is thought to be directed by logical, individualistic, and selfish goals.' Societally, this has been a theory made prominent through, in particular, 1970's political movements led by Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, in the UK and USA respectively. This aspect will be returned to in the theoretical and background reading section, but at the core is a wide theory which expands into many different aspects of sociological and political thought. In this case, neoliberalism will be brought forward in the sense of individual behaviour, and working in a 'rational' or 'selfish' sense, and driven by the need to increase utility. This idea of utility can be anything which

the individual views as beneficial or desirable, from something firm and physical like money, to something less visible such as influence or experience. This ties into the idea of Marx's idea of 'use-value', understood to be a 'substance which satisfies human needs' as defined by Mehrotra (1991: 72). This can be a physical or, in this particular case, a non-physical aspect which provides some value to the user upon consumption. It is this idea which will play an important role in one aspect of this study, which is of particular interest and will later be explained.

Also important to clarify before continuing is the idea of Orientalism. This will also be further discussed within the theoretical and readings section, but to provide a short description, this will use the idea which was developed by Edward Said, which regards at the most basic level the idea of Western domination of the 'Orient'. The definition is primarily that Orientalism is 'a Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient' (2003: 3).

First, however, it is important to contextualise why this research is important, and why we should consider and care about the questions at hand, and the subsequent findings.

iv. Why Does This Research Matter?

Regarding volunteering, there exists the connotation of altruism and doing good for its own sake. There exists, however, no literature to actually suggest the validity of these assumptions either way. This thesis poses several questions and ultimately provides the first image of what the modern refugee volunteer is like. When asking the primary questions of why a volunteer takes part in volunteering, there are further questions which stem from this: What does volunteering mean to them? Why do they take part? Do they view themselves as altruistic?

What this thesis will set out to do is challenge the assumption that volunteers are inherently selfless individuals, and instead operate to at least some extent within the bounds of neoliberalism. This is not to say it is necessarily negative that young people are volunteering for this reason, but it is important to understand why young volunteers are approaching these kinds of organisations to give their time and effort for free.

The reason this is worthwhile is ultimately for two reasons. Firstly, challenging assumptions is a key way to explore new ground, and this has been found to be an area of particular personal interest when going against preconceptions. Being able to either confirm a previously unconfirmed assumption, or better yet, to suggest that our societal assumptions are wrong, is an interesting prospect. Secondly, this thesis will ideally provide refugee organisations (and organisations with similar aims) information about who their volunteers are and why they come to them. In this regard, better understanding of their volunteers will allow them to better pitch themselves to future young people in order to increase interest, and angle themselves in a way in which will generate most enthusiasm. Extending this rationale further, it would then in theory provide charities with a larger number of individuals to choose from. This will be covered later in the analysis, but provides direction as to the usefulness of this data.

Chapter 2 - Theoretical and Literature Review

i. Chapter Introduction

A primary reason for completing this project in this particular area was the lack of specific material that focuses on volunteers within the sector of refugee volunteering, and their reasons for taking part. This dearth was a primary motivation to contribute original material to the subject. Despite this trend, however, I was able to find a reasonably large body of material that ultimately helped to direct and shape my findings and understandings. The aim of this chapter will be to provide an overview of readings found during this process whilst also incorporating theoretical outlines and definitions, which will both serve to place this thesis within the current academic landscape, and also to utilise previous ideas, theories and findings in order to better inform my analysis of the data sourced at Borderlands.

ii. Background Reading on Volunteering

Initially, it was important to investigate how the current landscape of volunteering looks in terms of gender demographics. When considering volunteers in this regard, results from country-to-country can vary quite starkly. While statistics from the United States, for instance, suggest that women volunteer more than men, with 27.8% of women volunteering, compared with 21.8% of men (Bureau of Labour Statistics, 2015: No Page), recent United Kingdom findings suggest that there is a more equal split in volunteering, where the divide is almost equal with 41% of women volunteering and 40% of men (NCVO, 2015). Also of note is the higher rate of volunteering for both genders in the UK compared to that of the United States. The first consideration in light of this difference in country statistics is that some statistics might not be suitable for use, given the varying statistics in each country as we see here, and how demographically different they can be. As a result, I discovered it would be best to focus my use of volunteering statistics to those solely produced in the UK, so as not to have misinformed research. The second, however, was another question that moves beyond this, and considers whether these equal

statistics played out in practice. From my initial week at Borderlands, it was clear to me that more women volunteered than men, yet this seemed to go against the statistics produced by NCVO which appeared reliable. This is an aspect which will return in my results and discussion section, when considering the gender dynamics of Borderlands itself.

Reading further, it became apparent that these statistics cover all of volunteering, but there are quite noticeable fluctuations between different strands of volunteering in terms of gender. Whilst men tend to go for more physical roles, women tend to go for more 'caring' and less physical roles, be it caring for others, or working in admin or with wildlife (CASE, 2011). From these texts, they provide a good basis to my research and contextualise it within the current situation of volunteering in the UK. These findings are important to consider in relation to Borderlands, to find out if it is a unique case, or a typical one in terms of demographics. These statistics tend to provide the initial assumption that, based on the charity type, Borderlands would be expected to have more female volunteers than male. This is a point which will be later considered in relation the research conducted at Borderlands.

iii. Neoliberalism

What is referred to as 'neoliberal rationale' within both my question and throughout this paper is intended to bridge neoliberal theory, to reasoning that individuals may have for participating within volunteering. This reasoning may be both 'conscious', in which the individual is self-aware of their 'selfish' reason for taking part, or 'subconscious', in which the individual is less overt in the 'selfish' reasoning. It should also be noted that in this instance, the word 'selfish' is not viewed in a negative context, but simply in place of other words such as 'self-serving' or 'self-interested'. When an individual is referred to as taking part for 'selfish' means, the individual is not being judged in place of those that did not, this is simply a turn of phrase to denote one group from another.

To continue on from the idea of neoliberalism provided in the introduction, relevant writing on the subject of good use here is provided by Wendy Brown (2015: 17) who discusses the idea that neoliberalism is not just relevant in terms of economics, but has encroached

upon other areas as well. She writes that 'my argument is not merely that markets and money are corrupting or degrading democracy… Rather, neoliberal reason, ubiquitous today in statecraft and the workplace, in jurisprudence, education, culture, and a vast range of quotidian activity, is converting the distinctly political character, meaning, and operation of democracy's constituent elements into economic ones. Liberal democratic institutions, practices and habits may not survive this conversion'.

There are two aspects to unpack here which are of use throughout this thesis. Firstly, when referring to 'neoliberalism' throughout, it is important to clarify that it is in this case synonymous with 'neoliberal reason' as Brown describes, which is this idea of a mindset altered by the rational, economic-driven models of this particular system. Secondly, when Brown considers the conversion of political character converted into economic character, it is reasonable to expand this slightly from politics to include charities as well, the focus of this paper. Furthermore, we may suggest that with charities, the idea of 'volunteering' brings up the imagery of selflessness, altruism and caring for your fellow man. Brown's analysis, however, provides a different means of considering institutions. Under her framework, there has been a conversion towards the economic model that is so central to neoliberalism as an economic system. The emerging question which this thesis seeks to at least begin to answer is, has this conversion already taken place in the area of volunteering?

This idea of conversion towards the economic model is provided by Ulrich Beck (2009: 21) in his consideration on 'risk society', that the modern world has increasingly become a calculated way of existing and navigating based on constantly managing risks. Beck explains that 'risk may be defined as a systematic way of dealing with hazards and insecurities induced and introduced in modernisation itself'. In this sense, and to follow on from the work of Brown, both suggest that modern life has become increasingly about calculation and the economic model, going beyond the traditional field of economics itself, and entering the social world. Under this line of thinking, man is becoming ever closer to the idea of 'homo economicus', or 'economic man', where decisions are rational and based on selfish gain. It becomes an interesting question to consider, then, as to what role volunteering plays within this context, and if it too has been tinged with neoliberalism as Brown suggests so many other institutions have been. This thesis will hope to begin to answer this question in the results section.

In the influential set of essays entitled *The Economic Approach to Human Behaviour* (1990: 5-6), Becker begins by explaining the idea of preferences branching into individual and group choice. 'The preferences that are assumed to be stable do not refer to market goods or services… These underlying preferences are defined over fundamental aspects of life, such as health, prestige, sensual pleasure, benevolence, or envy, that do not always bear a stable relation to market goods and services'. In short, Becker writes, 'the economic approach is clearly not restricted to material goods and wants, nor even to the market sector'. This idea, whilst coming from a different approach and starting point, is much the same to Brown, and suggests to us that volunteering may too extend to this idea of neoliberalism. As shall be demonstrated in the results, this was one aspect which was found to be highly interesting when collecting data.

Some theorists, such as Mananzala and Spade (2008: 54-55), would argue that neoliberalism has already worked its influence into charities specifically to a large extent already, writing about 'neo-liberalism's co-optation of social justice work', and ultimately how 'social movements have had to adopt neoliberalism'. They do note, however, that this same theory is often responsible for much of the social justice work which brings about needed progression. They focus within this article primarily on the economics behind charities, from their competition to receive funding to corporate executives holding increasing power because they have become the dominant providers. What this thesis will look demonstrate, however, is that neoliberalism may not have only influenced the upper echelons of charitable organisations, but also at the ground-level, and how neoliberal ideology has influenced even the volunteers who take part seemingly selflessly.

iv. Orientalism

Orientalism is a theory rooted within the much larger field of postcolonialism, which Young (2003: 6) describes as 'concerned with developing the driving ideas of a political practice morally committed to transforming the conditions of exploitation and poverty in which large sections of the world's population live out their daily lives'.

'Orientalism' itself, furthered most prominently by Edward Said, as mentioned in the introduction, describes the theory at its core as 'a Western style for dominating,

restructuring and having authority over the Orient' (2003: 3). To go further, 'Orientalism depends for its strategy on the flexible positional superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relevant upper hand' (2003: 7). In this sense it becomes the fundamentals of a theory about a power relationship which places the West above the East. This is conducted through various means, from the media and culture as with plays like *The Mikado* and the press having a negative perception on 'the other' (a point which will elaborated on later), to linguistics and turns of phrase, such as the former British Prime Minister David Cameron's comment on refugees as a 'swarm' (Elgot and Taylor, 2015: No Page), bringing connotations of insects. Each serve to dehumanise an entire homogenised 'other'. The importance of this theory, which will be further examined in the next chapter, will highlight why it remains relevant to this question.

At other points, Said directly refers to Western treatment of those of Arab ethnicity as being treated poorly, which links in ways to the modern refugee situation, such as where he writes:

> The life of an Arab Palestinian in the West, particularly in America, is disheartening. There exists here an almost unanimous consensus that politically he does not exist, and when it is allowed that he does, it is either as a nuisance or an Oriental. The web of racism, cultural stereotypes, political imperialism, dehumanising ideology holding in the Arab or Muslim is very strong indeed, and it is this web which every Palestinian has come to feel as his uniquely punishing destiny' (2003: 27).

Interesting to note here is 'Neo-Orientalism', which goes beyond this idea of classic Orientalism and purely seeks to affirm the superiority of the West as a reason to specifically avoid helping. As described by Bayat (2015: No Page) 'in this current *neo-Orientalist* imagination, the Muslim Orientals are not only trapped by archaic traditions, a frozen history and irrational behaviour; they are, far from being exotic or benign, *dangerous* (original emphasis)'. It is this neo-Orientalist perspective which is most visible from the UK domestically, through aspects such as the media which has heightened negative coverage towards refugee and immigrants, which plays a significant role in this area. Article 19 (2003: 15) found that in news coverage of refugees and asylum seekers, 31% of headlines, and 53% on content was negative in nature, whilst 'less than 10% of items were considered to have predominantly positive or sympathetic language'. As the

charity Oxfam (2001: 4) further note in their reporting on the matter, 80% of the population have an inflated view of the support refugees get in terms of state benefits. Oxfam add that misconceptions surrounding the idea that refugees are 'stealing' jobs and resources, have led to increased harassment of them in the UK. There are parallels with 'classic' Orientalism in that there is a need to push an overarching understanding onto the 'other', and to dominate and place the West within a position of superiority. The difference is that, rather than the old guise of helping which was the defence of empire, there is no will to offer assistance in any way. Texts such as those above provide grounding to this idea of neo-Orientalistic views currently within society regarding the refugee crisis, and the harmful and incorrect beliefs it has the potential to create.

Even when not being critical or sublimating the 'Orient' in a direct form, well-meaning groups and individuals can often cause harm as well. One example of this is through 'voluntourism', where individuals go on holiday to work on projects in, typically, developing countries. This idea is touched upon by the documentary The Voluntourist (Sanguinetti, 2013). As one respondent who was part of a volunteering-holiday and featured in the documentary said, 'Volunteering is such an oxymoron of selflessness and selfishness, it's hard to know how much you want to derive for yourself, because obviously that's a large part of it.' This in particular is an interesting observation, and runs consistent with the theme of the documentary, where the selfish extent of volunteering is questioned, and where the idea of neoliberal rationale and Orientalism become quite intertwined. Additional research in this area can be found from the work of Roberts (2004: 43) who conducted a study looking at individuals who volunteer in Ghana on volunteering-holidays. Whilst in his study of ten respondents, he notes that 'every volunteer interviewed agreed that they had benefitted tremendously from the experience', at the same time, 'the evidence suggests that volunteers do play a role in continuing the legacy of colonialism, and help to reinforce the dependency of developing countries on the West' (2004: 58). Roberts closes by adding that in terms of voluntourism companies, 'it is essential that agencies consider the impact of volunteers on host communities with the same degree of significance as the personal development of the volunteer' (2004: 58). Of course, voluntourism isn't exactly the same as volunteering with a local refugee shelter, but it becomes fundamentally quite similar. Ultimately, the power relations produced within the refugee centre become replicated in an Imperial fashion, with predominantly white volunteers caring for and having control over the predominantly Middle Eastern and African refugees (in terms of rules and schedules). Almost accidentally, then, a power structure is produced whereby it looks almost imperial

in nature, where well-meaning Westerners, interested by Oriental culture, take part and seek to improve others under their own interpretation, whilst ultimately holding the idea of power in this situation and mostly benefitting themselves and their own prospects. This is important to consider because just as neo-Orientalism is to be critiqued in terms of its harmlessness, we cannot overlook the well-meaning but potentially problematic idea of this Western 'saviour' idea either. This, too, will be interesting to consider within the results.

v. Constructivism

Constructivism, which is also important to add here in advance of the findings, is the theory that behaviour is influenced and constructed by that which is around us, from social interactions, to media or other sources. These ideas used in relation to feminist thought are most notable through the work of de Beauvoir in The Second Sex (1997: 295), which features the famous line 'one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman'. In this sense, de Beauvoir is making the point that ideas surrounding femininity are constructed, and are not 'innate'. Chambers (2003: 14) explains this idea, noting that 'Beauvoir suggests that the very category of 'woman' as a human subject is not a natural one that precedes that subject's entry into culture and language; rather, 'woman' as subject is produced by culture, society, and various 'myths of femininity''. To follow on from this, 'subjectivity and hence agency are the outcome of a process of construction'. Butler (1986: 35) in a consideration of de Beauvoir's work explains the significance, noting that 'it is no longer possible to attribute the values or social functions of women to biological necessity, and neither can we refer meaningfully to natural or unnatural gendered behaviour'. When we consider these ideas in relation to the statistics from the NCVO (2015: No Page) as noted previously which describe how gender differences emerge in volunteering, this does then appear to be one such example of where we find evidence of early constructions shaping what happens in later life.

To look at how this may begin to form, texts such as 'The Egg and the Sperm' by Emily Martin (1991: 486) are important to consider how this socialisation takes place. Martin explains through a discussion of the scientific wording and descriptions of the reproductive process, a gendered approach is present. One such example she mentions is a text which

'sees menstruation as a failed production employs a sort of breathless prose when it describes the maturation of sperm'. She continues, referring to another text that talks about how the woman 'sheds' an egg, whilst the man will 'produce' sperm. It is this kind of dualism which the whole article highlights in other works on the topic as well, and which she highlights as harmful in their subconscious power.

What this kind of wording serves to do is both reemphasise the 'masculinity' of these subjects, and make these environments seem like they are not so female-friendly. This process begins even earlier as Walkerdine (1998: 63-64) notes, by using the example of a classroom study they conducted, where both young boys and girls took part in constructive tasks. When both boys and girls played with Lego, they equally made complex structures to roughly the same level, which went against the assumptions of the teachers prior to the study that the girls would be less able at the task, given the assumption that girls don't play with constructive toys and are not interested in them. Beliefs that these teachers had in the classroom experiment follow on throughout much of the socialisation process girls come into contact with in general, in that they are angled away from constructive and more physical toys, even when they are just as capable. Ultimately, this leads to angling towards 'caring' based toys, like dolls, and subsequently gender divisions in later life stem quite reasonably back to this developmental process which streams by gender into constructive and caring. The early developmental process which may have an effect on development and future direction as constructivists would suggest, this idea of directing girls towards dolls and other such toys may be one of these 'myths of femininity' which Chambers discusses, as mentioned above. Importantly, this kind of background suggests that the idea of altruism is a gendered construct, and also demonstrates how this is formulated.

Should the findings indicate that Borderlands is not a unique case, but rather is a typical example when it comes to other 'caring'-based roles in regards to higher female participation, it would support this constructivist idea of women being socialised to go towards 'caring' roles, and ultimately being directed as a result of this, despite gender as being constructed, and 'caring' roles not being the 'default' female stream. Questions about the backgrounds of participants will look at this suggestion, questioning if the participants were also more likely to take part in the subjects featuring more of a female majority, such as the humanities and social sciences. Whilst this won't prove the idea of constructivism, they will go some way to suggesting this is at play, along with adding to the existing body of knowledge.

vi. Chapter Conclusion

As explained above, searching for specific writings on the topic of refugee volunteering within local charities is difficult, given the lack of content in this area in any format. Nonetheless, the writings mentioned provide a solid overview and grounding to understand the context, both as to issues that can arise with volunteering to help vulnerable people, and the idea of Orientalism, which seeks to suppress and maintain the idea of Western supremacy by asserting control over knowledge and not listening to the other side. To best understand the research below, it is important first to understand the context in which these findings are being placed.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

i. Chapter Introduction

In order to research this area, appropriate methodological choices were required. Ultimately, I decided that unstructured interviews would yield the best results for the question at hand, and I will explain now why this is the case.

King and Horricks (2010: 2-3) note that interviewing tends to be a more popular option when undergoing research through data collection, where the general layout tends to contain a 'flexible and open-ended style' and which focuses on 'actual experiences more than general beliefs and opinions'. Considering these arguments, along with those for other methods, it ultimately led to the decision to use semi-structured interviews, which appeared to be the best fit for the project. It is argued by Benney and Hughes (in Oakley, 1997: 31) a large amount of present sociology may be thought of as 'the science of the interview', given it's wide use in different projects. Importantly, however, Oakley (1997: 31) considers that 'few sociologists who employ interview data actually bother to describe in detail the process of interviewing itself'. Whilst using the comments of other sociologists and their cases in favour of interviewing as a research method, I also wish to take Oakley's consideration into account, and to not simply take the method for granted and use it without much detail or elaboration. As such, I will explain in detail how the interviewing process was completed, so as to enable full understanding on the part of the reader, and also make clear the process so that replication is possible with minimal alteration.

ii. Unstructured Interviews

When considering how to conduct feminist research in this area, Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2007: 114) provided a clear explanation of interviewing, where they note that:

> Interviewing is a particularly valuable research method feminist researchers can use
> to gain insight into the world of their respondents. It is a method used by feminists

who are in a range of social and natural science disciplines, from an anthropology where the researcher conducts field work within a given culture, to a sociology where the feminist researcher wants to gain a new perspective on the lives of respondents living in a particular community or society…

The interviews conducted were of a semi-structured basis and featured the same core questions, such as 'Why are you volunteering with Borderlands?', 'Have you volunteered at another charity?' and 'If so, what were the demographics of that charity?'. This format was useful in terms of information provided, and allowed for a more conversational atmosphere, which was in keeping with the relationship built throughout my time working alongside the respondents.

Indeed, working alongside the participants was a key strength of this study's methodology overall. Given the possibility to build up rapport with individuals beforehand, it allowed for a higher degree of honesty and understanding. In order to get the best results possible, and to allow for a useful process, I looked at books such as that by Dr Catherine Dawson (2009: 73-75) who considers different research methods and how to best use them. In the case of unstructured interviews, she describes how it is useful to talk to the interviewee sitting side-on, as opposed to face-on, and how eye contact and body language can also be important. This kind of information is important, as whilst looking disinterested may make the interviewee talk less, showing that one takes an interest in the answers will lead to be a better quality interview and fuller answers. Asking follow-up questions to clarify or continue a line of conversation was also useful to remember. It is advice such this which I took on board when interviewing. Ultimately, this turned out to work well, and whilst rapport and the extent to which I got more honest answers than I might have otherwise received is hard to quantify or measure, some of the answers provided were not the 'right' answer one would expect to find (such as the comment which became part of the thesis title as the primary motivation), yet it was provided given the trust that existed. For instance, when asking the question 'What do you hope to get out of your time volunteering?', participants would either say directly their 'selfish' reason if they had one, or would very quickly reveal it after a follow-up question. The right answer which may be provided to a study conductor with less rapport, such as 'I want to help because I feel I ought to' is elaborated upon, and in no case did the respondent simply leave it at this kind of answer, but provided depth and detail.

iii. Important Considerations

When considering conducting research in this kind of environment, where ongoing services are helping sometimes quite vulnerable people, ethical considerations were at the top of my mind. Importantly, it was to be ensured that full permission was provided for every step of the process, given a desire to not want to impede the work of the charity in any way, or to do something which individuals would feel uncomfortable with. In order to gain this permission, the 'gatekeeper' at Borderlands was the manager who was present most days, and I received this permission to ask volunteers the questions relevant to my research. In addition, I also wanted the participants to feel comfortable in the process as well, and so asked them if they were happy to take part, and that if they weren't, it was no problem. I also requested permission from each interviewee to record the interviews on my phone so that they could be transcribed later, in order to more clearly gather together the results and identify patterns. These aspects did not pose an issue at any point during the research, but it was still important to ensure that all involved were content with the process, fully aware of what I was doing, and that I was not doing anything to the detriment of the charity or individuals.

Additionally, as Best (2003: 896) notes, an important discussion is 'the connection between the position of the researcher as one of power within the field'. In this sense, considering my position and placement within the context of the interviews was important. As a white male, I considered how this may affect the data, and if this would pose any problems. I knew this would certainly be a problematic position if interviewing refugees themselves, but for female volunteers, the experience between myself and them at Borderlands was more shared, at least within this specific context and line of questioning. Participants appeared at ease and open, and as a result, I do not see any serious issues which arose which linked to my own profile as an interviewer.

The only consideration of note which is worth mentioned stems from Borderlands and the smaller number of volunteers there. Of the volunteers who fit the research participant profile, each took part in this study. However, whilst the number of eight respondents provides some insight and is varied enough to begin to identify patterns, a higher number of responses would be desirable. and provide an extra level of reliability. Given time and

location constraints, this was not possible to address in this project, though the in-depth responses provided will allow for at least a solid initial look at this area.

iv. Participant Profile

The profile of interviewees was female, and under-35. The reason for this specific age limit is that it would provide a perspective from individuals who were still of a younger working-age and were in a point where they would still be in the process of developing for future working life. Additionally, this tended to be the upper age limit of volunteers who were younger, with other volunteers typically being 60 or over. As found from informal conversations, the reasons that volunteers over 60 took part was quite different, and as such the under-35 limit on this study felt appropriate to avoid skewing results. Upon finding individuals who fit this criteria, the same consistent questions would be asked, including how they found out about Borderlands the charity, and what they hoped to gain from their experience. Through unstructured interviews, the answers provided were of suitable depth and enabled me to pick up upon passing comments, and to have a fuller conversation which could be developed should further interesting points arise, providing further insight into some answers than I had originally expected. Additionally, it enabled the chance to develop further rapport with individuals, and to put them at ease when talking, to enable more honest answers.

An additional participant profile required was that the individual was volunteering locally, without a high degree of commitment required to get to the organisation. This requirement emerged throughout the research stage itself, when after talking to one individual who had volunteered to help at Calais on two occasions. From this conversation, I found the reasoning and determination to be starkly different. The individual in question, who has not been added to the findings, provided quotes throughout such as:

Just as you'd expect anyone to, who's living a lovely life in a safe country. And has a bit of extra time on their hands. Not even extra time, you take time out for it. It didn't occur to me that I would be there for anyone other than them. The point of me being there was to help others, not myself.

Throughout the interview, the participant also indicated that her feelings on the matter were shared by those she worked with in Calais. It was through this interview that I realised those who volunteer when the organisation is closer to their house, and when volunteering doesn't require as large of a commitment may have different reasons and motivations to those who make a larger effort to go closer to the source, and take time out of regular life commitments to do so. Under this consideration, the 'local' profile was introduced as well.

By following these clear methods and rules, it is hoped that the research was conducted to the highest possible standard, and is free from major issues which would negatively affect results.

Chapter 4 - Results

i. Chapter Introduction

The following chapter will lay out the results as found from interviews provided at Borderlands in Bristol, conducted according to the methodology section explained above. First provided will be the results regarding the similar experiences at other charities, to establish whether or not Borderlands is a 'typical' case or not. After this, results regarding reasoning itself, both aspects of raw data and that which has been formatted after analysis will be provided. This is to present, in a clear way, how individuals responded and how conclusions were drawn which will be analysed in greater detail in the following discussion chapter.

ii. Is Borderlands a Typical Case?

First to establish the nature of Borderlands as a typical case, I asked respondents if they had volunteered at another organisation, and if so, what the gender balance was like. This was important to place Borderlands within the perspective of other charities, and ensure that it was not a unique case in having a higher level of women, and therefore was not at risk of skewing my results or being unrepresentative of what would be expected to be the typical case. The individuals who answered that they had volunteered before are indicated below. Those who volunteered in either previous refugee or 'caring' roles, are volunteers number 1, 4 and 8. Volunteers 6 and 7 had volunteered in other areas, but are included here for completion. Volunteer 6 had participated with a local voluntary farm cooperative, whilst volunteer 7 had helped with a development charity working with individuals in Nepal and Bangladesh. The full comments relevant to this question are provided in Fig. 1 below.

Volunteer Number	Comment
#1	The office, African Initiatives I work with, we've got two guys, and the rest is eight women, including volunteers.
#4	There are men that are like lawyers for the really, really tough things, like going out underground. There's more men there, I don't know why… The men go out more, and the women are more with the refugees in the office.
#6	Windmill Hill City Farm, I would say that's quite mixed, but probably more volunteers there are women.
#7	Not necessarily more women than men, but more women compared to in other sectors.
#8	More female, but not of large percent. You know what I mean? Like not big, noticeably. I think it depends. Stereotypically, if you think of a soup kitchen and dishing out meals, I think men, because of the stereotype that attached to food serving and things like that, it does tend to be more women volunteering.

Fig. 1

iii. Why Do Individuals Volunteer?

The findings of my core study can be found in Fig. 2, which categorises how the answers provided by participants fell into three primary groupings. These categories were formed based on analysis of interviews provided, in order to arrange the responses appropriately, and I will explain these momentarily. The numbers on the side of the chart correspond to the eight individuals who responded, and an 'X' corresponds with an individual who provided an answer which could be considered as falling into this category. I shall elaborate on these responses subsequently to explain what these results mean in more detail, and further in the discussion chapter below.

|	Employability	Social	Personal
#1	X		
#2	X		X
#3		X	X
#4			X
#5	X		X
#6		X	
#7	X		
#8	X		

Fig. 2

The three categories of 'employability', 'social' and 'personal' reasons were chosen as all answers provided appeared to fall into one of these three groupings, with no comments or remarks in particular going beyond these broad categories. The most distinct group was that of 'employability', which combines answers from one participant who said that 'I need to start building up my work profile and CV, so that's kind of a bit of a cold hard truth!', along with another who indicated that the reason they were taking part was as part of an internship with their university studies in the area of development. Both are indeed unique answers to the same question, but with a consistent theme of participating with the idea of future prospects at the forefront, be they either in academia or the charity sector. All answers in this category were either from individuals providing a reason for getting involved to further experience in the area and to get a future job, or to pursue studies in the area which will aid their future.

It is important to add here, however, that it is not to be assumed categorising in this way takes account of every nuance from the answers collected. Whilst these are broad categories and the reasons falls broadly in line with them, there were differences within the categories which I have mentioned. For example, under the category referred to as 'social', this includes both an individual who had seasonal work and did not work in the winter, along with an individual who worked in a small office setting with only two others. Both told me that, in regards to their particular situation, they wanted a way to meet new people, and volunteering provided the means to do this, but it is important to highlight this nuance. Even though broad themes may apply, it is important to not generalise too quickly.

Another aspect is perhaps the most encompassing category of three, 'personal' reasons. In this sense, it refers to an individual having a reason based on lived experience which made them feel compelled in some way to volunteer with a refugee organisation. For one individual, this was because they came from a family where they played a caring role, and after travelling abroad, brought these two lived experiences together to focus on refugees and global development. Another two individuals came from families with refugee backgrounds, and felt a desire to get involved because of this. The 'personal' category could as easily be referred to as 'other' given its large range of responses. Given, however, that this is a collection of reasons which appear to us as wholly unselfish as a result of lived experience 'personal' appears the most appropriate. Having said this, despite the three broad categories which the responses came down to, it would indeed be possible, and for certain questions preferable, to divide down the reasons further. Given the focus of the questions in this paper, however, this is not entirely necessary.

Another important point to note from the results is that in three cases, the participants were assigned to two factors. This was because in these instances, two reasons simultaneously were responsible for the person volunteering in this area. To attempt to separate these out, or prioritise one, would do disservice to the individual and skew the results based on my own feelings or a hunch. During this research, it is very important to be careful to not push forward opinion or bias, but to let the individuals speak for themselves within the open frameworks of the research. Individuals may fall into any number of categories in order to build up more appropriate data, rather than trying to choose only one reason, or attempt to identify the 'main' reason.
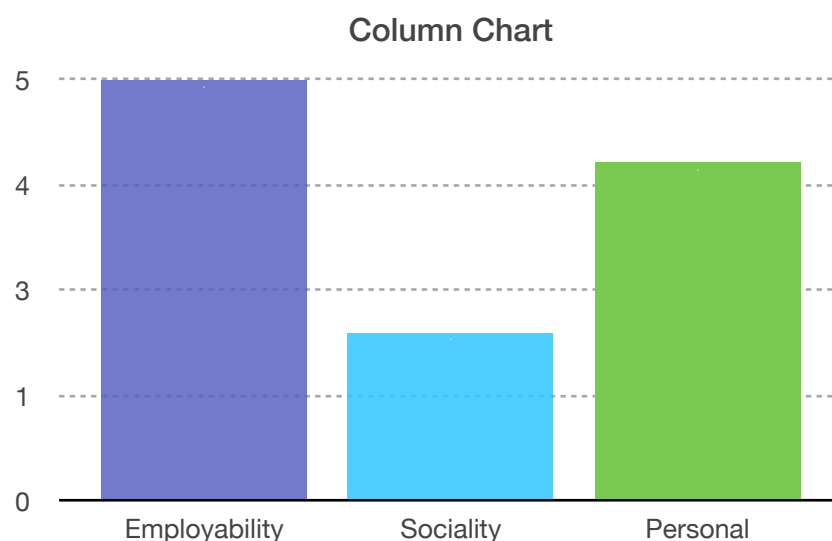

Fig. 3

These results show that employability-related reasons form the broad basis for volunteers taking part within the refugee volunteering sector. This becomes clearer when the data is formatted accordingly, as shown in fig. 3 above.

iv. To What Extent Did Neoliberalism Play a Role?

To link to the sub-question regarding neoliberal rationale, we may elaborate that employability reasons surely do link into this idea. The other areas are more complex, however. In this sense, I would reason that personal reasons are broadly free from this neoliberal element, whilst social reasons still hold a neoliberal aspect, given that the individual is pursuing this volunteering opportunity out of something which they may gain for themselves. I do not suggest this is a negative reason or a bad reason for doing so, but it is reasonable to suggest this reasoning is of a 'selfish' nature along the lines of neoliberal thought, given that the individual participates as a result of getting something back from their time and effort. I will elaborate on this further in the discussion section, but will lastly provide one other chart related to the study. This, rather than based on category, follows on from this assumption that 'employability' and 'sociality' reasons are both neoliberal reasonings. Fig. 4 demonstrates the proportion of individuals who provided neoliberal answers at any point, be they followed up by a non-neoliberal reason or not. These results demonstrate that out of eight responses, only one responded with no 'neoliberal' reasons affecting their decision to volunteer.

Legend: ● Neoliberal Reasons Mentioned ● Neoliberal Reasons Not Mentioned

13%

88%
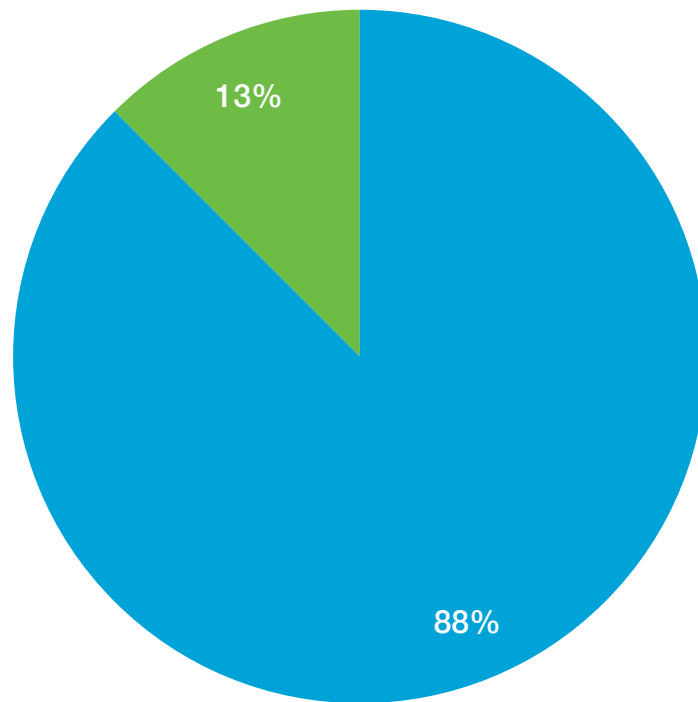
Fig. 4

To follow on from these findings, I will now analyse them in greater detail below, whilst considering the results both in relation to the main question, and the sub-questions.

Chapter 5 - Discussion

i. Chapter Introduction

When looking at the data at hand, it is surprising to see the extent to which neoliberal, job-based or social-based rationale played a role in individuals volunteering. When approaching this topic, it was not expected that the figures would suggest such a relatively high level of a neoliberal response. As a result, there are two very interesting perspectives to be gained from both fig. 3 and fig. 5. The former demonstrates the assortment of reasons as to why individuals volunteer, which are complex and diverse. This will be elaborated on this soon, but at its core, the overall rationale is wholly diverse, though personal reasons and employment reasons stand out. The sub-question of real use in regards to this data is that of neoliberal rationale, whereby the individual has volunteered for a 'selfish' reason, with the aim of benefitting themselves in some way. That seven out of eight respondents indicated that this was the case was a figure certainly not expected, and proved to be the surprising finding, and perhaps the most notable from this research overall. As respondent 2 mentioned in their interview, given that a family member had previously suffered from cancer when they were growing up, they developed a sense of 'caring' roles as being more useful and important than one purely for the sake of money at a large corporation, which is something they said they actively did not want to pursue. Ultimately, it was through having time out of work and meeting others around the world who were displaced not through choice that made her consider these issues more deeply, and want to pursue a future career within development. Without this time out travelling, they indicated to me that they would likely not have been volunteering at Borderlands, given what they themselves called a 'selfish' reason to pursue experience in the field of development. This is very interesting to explore, particularly how two other volunteers also mentioned the word 'selfish' in relation to their reasons for volunteering. First, however, it is important to turn to the question of how typical Borderlands and its members are of the wider volunteering landscape.

ii. Is Borderlands a Typical Case?

Before looking further in-depth in this area, it felt important to consider through my questioning to what extent Borderlands seemed to be an exception or not, along with the reasons for this. As made clear by fig. 1 in the results section, there are indeed gender divisions present in this kind of work.

For the three individuals who mentioned that they had been part of a charity which performed a similar function, they replied that the organisations had more women than men volunteering to at least some degree. Given the smaller sample size, there are of course limitations here, but the findings support what was thought to be expected from the background readings. After receiving these responses, it is with more confidence that Borderlands in turn can be thought of as representative of the area more widely, given that it was not skewed or a unique case to begin with and is what one could consider a 'typical' case in the area.

iii. Do women take part in refugee charity volunteering to a greater extent, and why may this be?

What was noticed at the beginning of my time with Borderlands was the gender balance present, which was the equivalent of approximately 1:6 men to women. After discovering that this was the case, I decided to go back to my results, and identify consistencies within responses which would indicate to me any reasons as to why this might be. Thinking back to the theory of constructivism, it appears that this could be attributed to course background, which is linked to gendered societal expectations. The oft-repeated quote by de Beauvoir which says 'one is not born a woman, but rather, becomes one' (1997: 295) is exploring this idea of constructed femininity. It also links to what one of the respondents who had previously helped in a homeless shelter told me, saying that 'because of the stereotype that attached to food serving and things like that, it does tend to be more women volunteering.' Food distribution, it is important to note, was a key aspect of Borderlands efforts to help refugees and asylum seekers, so there seems to be a consistency that these 'caring' roles feature a more female presence.

To continue this constructivist theme further, in regards to the background of those taking part, all but two were from the background of a non-science or non-practical subject, these being individuals 3 and 6, who have a background in environmental science and graphic design, respectively.

Whilst it is of course not possible to exhaustively answer this element of my research due to it not being the project focus, my interviews do point in this direction of constructivism as linking to the areas in which individuals may volunteer in. As noted above, the NCVO (2015) found that volunteering is broadly equal within the UK, with 41% women and 40% men volunteering, yet the roles both genders perform as skewed, with men focusing on more labour intensive or physical roles, and women focusing more on 'caring'-oriented roles.

As noted, six out of eight respondents in this case came from a background linked to the social sciences or humanities. In this sense, it may be suggested that volunteering at least links in part to educational and interest background. As the readings covered above, volunteering tends to be divided along the lines of caring and physical roles, and this was alluded to through the interview with respondent 6, who indicated that during their time with a more physical Bristol-based charity which focused on gardening and DIY skills, many more men took part, and were a majority in this instance. In regards to the 'Wildlife Action Group' which she was part of, she describes how 'they would just be like a lot of retired men that wanted to come and do the work', where this work involved that of a nature which was quite physical like building fences and making a fire and chopping down trees'. A future study could look at this in more detail, but here we can begin to formulate the argument that educational background and socialisation, along with societal expectations, can link to where one ultimately ends up volunteering.

What this study suggests, however, is that constructivism may well have played a role here. Before going into the results, under a constructivist framework, it was expected that the (predominantly female) volunteers would come from a background which is in turn considered more 'female' orientated. Ultimately, this assumption turned out to be correct in this instance. Whilst a smaller study such as this cannot prove or disprove constructivism at play, it can provide another small amount of evidence that indeed it does.

iv. What Are the Apparent Rationales for Involvement of Women Aged 18-35 in the UK When Volunteering at Local Charities?

In approaching this study, the main question, before considering the responses in relation to theoretical standpoints, was why volunteers wished to give their time in their own words. The results of this line of questioning can be found in fig. 2.

Rationale which respondents provided to me was, as may be expected, complex and detailed. In particular, it was diverse, and no reasons were identical to the next. It was listening to these varied responses in particular which confirmed to me that conducting this research through interviews which allowed respondents to speak in their own words was the best way of going about it. In order to provide comparable data which could be best analysed, three distinct categories stemmed from what respondents told me, and these went on to form the basis of this study. In each reason that appeared, they all fell into the category of 'employment', 'social' or 'personal' reasons, the rationale for this is explained above. Whilst these categories enable us to consider the data more easily, it should not be forgotten that these are individuals providing their own individual reasons for taking part. As such, fig. 5 below indicates a selection of comments provided during the interview process from each interviewee, which serves to provide how they frame their taking part in their own words. It is from comments such as these that the three reason groups which underpin this paper were formulated.

Respondent Number	Respondent Answer
1	I think realistically, I am only volunteering because it provides me work experience for my CV.
2	I'm going to go study development studies and I need to start building up my work profile and CV, so that's kind of a bit of a cold hard truth!
3	So, it was finding some of the rhetoric in the media quite difficult to handle and I just felt like I wanted something positive.
4	I come from Lebanon - we have over 1 million refugees in Lebanon now. I think it's time to help.
5	I have to do an internship as part of my course.

Respondent Number	Respondent Answer
6	For enjoyment and fulfilment, which I don't really get from my other job.
7	I think it's just something that I'm interested in and kind of keen to work in anyway, and now it's also my job.
8	I think I want to work in development, in international development obviously, because of my masters.

Fig. 5

As can be found, there are a wide range of reasons, but also a consistent pattern which emerges. When considering these responses in more depth, I was struck by the fact that work-related responses appeared to be quite common. This was the reason for my next sub-question, and the direction which this research began to take.

Whilst these responses are in themselves interesting, the more useful findings stem from specific questions arising from these results.

The most prominent at the beginning of this study which came to the fore was future employment-related reasons, and it is here where the data becomes especially useful and interesting. In turn, this is where the primary question becomes quite interlinked with the sub-question discussing neoliberalism.

v. To what extent is the rationale of respondents neoliberal in nature?

Having considered this general aspect of why individuals take part, it is important to progress to the question of neoliberalism. When approaching this thesis, neoliberalism was in my mind as an interesting point to consider. Before talking to the participants, I felt it was likely that it would be difficult to get this information. When asking the question of why individuals were taking part, I expected to be provided with a response that tried to use pure altruism as a reason, or at least an answer which would avoid a neoliberal aspect, which would be the more socially unacceptable. I was surprised, then, to find respondents

not feeling shy about revealing their reasons for taking part were because they wanted a job in the area.

What I found was that the data which I sourced through my time at Borderlands enables me to confidently make the argument that neoliberal reasoning plays an important role in the participation within refugee organisations. When considering this argument, it is important to not fall foul of one major flaw with neoliberal arguments, in that they remove agency from the individual. It is not only this report that mentions 'selfishness' in regards to some of the participants, however. Indeed, out of the eight respondents, three referred to their reasons for taking part as 'selfish'. In other cases, respondents would tell me in a more matter-of-fact sense that they understand that whilst they took part with good intentions, and wish to continue this on, they recognise that they are also taking part for some kind of benefit to themselves as well. This kind of response was provided by individuals 1, 2 and 3, who used the word 'selfish' in relation to their own reasons. Respondent 1, for example, replied in relation to why they volunteered with refugees by saying 'when I came back I realised that I could actually use my Arabic to communicate with refugees and asylum seekers and it was, selfishly, like a way of me practicing my Arabic as well as teaching them.' Respondent 2, likewise, said how 'I'm going to go study development studies and I need to start building up my work profile and CV, so that's kind of a bit of a cold hard truth! That would be my selfish motivation for it'. Lastly, respondent 3 described how 'It's quite a selfish thing really, I'm a bit of a volunteering addict, and it makes me feel really positive about myself'. Similar reasoning where individuals considered their reasoning to stem from personal interest came forward as well, and it was being provided with these kind of responses which led to a focus on neoliberal rationale for taking part, particularly given these strong responses hinting at this direction provided early on in the study.

It is here, with these results that somewhat surprised me, and that my sub-question began to develop due to the extent to which neoliberal logic was at play. Before beginning, it was assumed that this aspect would raise itself perhaps fairly frequently, yet the results were surprising in the extent to which neoliberalism was referenced by interviewees themselves. Along with this self-recognised 'selfish' nature, as can be found from fig. 5, all but one interviewee responded with reasons for taking part that were not in any way related to developing the self, or gaining something in exchange for time volunteered.

Within the categories shown in fig. 2, it is here where some element of subjectivity lies, but I argue it is not too hard to find these results as self-serving to some extent. For those individuals who were participating for reasons of employment or research, volunteering was of course for reasons of pursuing personal goals. Personal reasons were found to be more muddled, and I would argue in this case, the individual does not necessarily gain anything for taking part in research because of a familial connection to the refugee experience, and so this would not fall into this neoliberal reasoning. The interesting case is that of social reasons, which I argue does indeed count as neoliberal in nature. This reason encompasses those who work jobs with odd-hours or those who work in an environment with not many other people, and so volunteer in order to be around like-minded people whilst doing good. In this case, at least one of the driving forces is a need to be around and interact with others, which itself is a reason which self-serves. In the results, then, I encompass those who indicated a reason mentioning either employment or social reasons, and through this, found that all but one individual had a 'selfish' reason for taking part with Borderlands.

This matters because it allows us to better understand volunteers who give their time, and most interestingly in this study, find that individuals are not shy about revealing that they are taking part for their own interests. This is a particularly noteworthy aspect of the study, given that it subverts the very assumptions we hold about volunteering, and continues the idea provided by Wendy Brown in the theoretical section of this thesis that neoliberalism has emerged into not only the business and economic landscape, but also the social. This instance in volunteering which has been uncovered by this study suggests that volunteering may be one more area where neoliberalism now plays a role, and in this case, to quite a large extent.

vi. To what extent can Orientalism be used in relation to respondent's answers?

It is also important here to consider the role of Orientalism in terms of volunteering, as this provides a more uplifting note to contrast against the findings in regards to neoliberalism. As Loomba (2000: 203) notes, 'European nationalism was discredited over the course of the twentieth century by its association with fascism and colonialism', whilst in the contemporary world, Europeans and Americans typically view nationalism as an

'exclusively 'Third World problem'' The important contrast with the volunteers interviewed, however, was that this was not the perspective any of them held. Whilst specific responses can be found, by the very fact that they are assisting at a refugee charity. This is as opposed to helping with another charity or not volunteering at all, which demonstrates a willingness to break away from this view which can be found, for instance, within media as referred to in the discussion section, which puts forward the alternative narrative that this is an issue for others to deal with. In each case, the participants expressed empathy towards others, and even those taking part for reason to benefit themselves, being able to directly work with people on the 'frontline' or services was due to a desire to help in a more visible way.

There is, however, potential to be critical here, as considered in the readings chapter in regards to the 'saviour' idea individuals may have in regards to volunteering. Ultimately, there is an issue present regarding the power dynamics at play within the setting of the refugee centre, emulating a globally perceived dependency of the developing world on the developed world. Regardless of the age or background of individuals present, the younger Western volunteers are caring for the displaced refugees from a range of different backgrounds. The implications are that, whilst ultimately well-meaning and making a positive difference to the lives of the refugees involved, it does perpetuate an understanding and impression of one aspect of the world as being reliant on another. The question remains for a larger project to examine why exactly participants want to take part specifically with refugees as opposed to another area of volunteering. Is there a paternalistic sense of helping the displaced, where the volunteers become, in a sense, well-meaning orientalists, perpetuating a system of Western superiority despite the intention of making a positive difference?

This question can only be answered to a limited extent based on the interviews conducted. What can be said based on these findings are that refugee volunteers are free from the neo-Orientalism which can be found so frequently in the media. Used in conjunction with the above question on neoliberalism, however, is where we find most use in this postcolonial sense, and where we find an intertwined dual-reasoning. On the one hand, the majority of these younger women wanted to pursue skills for themselves in order to better their life chances, yet helping in an area such as this demonstrates a desire to help the less fortunate who are written off by others in society as a problem for another country to deal with. There is an interesting blend of empathy and selfishness at play, where there

exists both a desire to go against the neo-Orientalism within present society, but doing so because it is ultimately beneficial to their own ends as well.

vii. How May This Data Be Used In Future?

An important consideration we may ask is why this data is useful, and how it may be used in future. As Reinharz (1992: 251) notes, 'much feminist research is connected with social change and social policy questions', and it is this direction in which this thesis has been shaped. The study was conducted with this thought in mind, and how the data may affect policy decisions and recruitment by refugee organisations, or possibly others which have a similar outlook, when targeting younger people. Ultimately, it is fair to say that future employability-related reasons were the largest factor for individuals taking part, and as such, it would be suggested that this element should be encouraged and amplified when providing talks. Suggesting to younger people how a time spent volunteering with the organisation could benefit them in future job searches, whether they are wishing to work in the charity sector or not. Additionally, unpaid internships have been reasonably popular amongst younger people in order to develop contacts and skills which can then be used for other roles in future. To pitch volunteering in this way may also yield benefits, and demonstrate that volunteering at a charity can have positive benefits. By utilising this message, it would be expected that more young people would in turn wish to pursue this route, and provide a greater selection and range of skills available to local charities. Further research in this area would be recommended, but this is where early findings would indicate success lies, and how this paper may be utilised outside of academia.

Another consideration which may be added here, albeit more hesitantly given the project's focus, could be the suggestion that charities carefully consider their demographics, and when presenting, appeal with this in mind. Improving a gender balance within charities, particularly in STEM-related areas, is an area which has not been developed particularly in terms of strategies, and this data provides an initial look into how charity participation is divided on gender-based grounds.

For example, a student of engineering who is more likely to be male would be more likely, it may be suggested, to volunteer with physical tasks such as getting people involved with

science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM). I use this example specifically given that, having informally talked with one engineering student from the University of Bristol, the same city as where this study is based, I was told about a project in which students would go to local schools and seek to interest pupils in STEM subjects, through practical experiments and demonstrations to interest them. As expected from previous studies as noted above, and prior assumptions based on subject demographics, the same followed for this project, with an approximate ratio of 1:2, as female students taking part to male. It is important to note that this aspect has not been looked at to the same extent as the core element of this study, but brief consideration in this area has provided a slightly more rounded view of results. More research should be conducted, but this specific example follows both assumptions made before looking in this area, and follows on from the data as considered above, demonstrating that whilst women do not necessarily volunteer more than men, they volunteer to a greater extent in less practical-based roles.

By taking these points into consideration, charity organisations can use the findings in one of two ways. First, they would be best placed to target those young people who would be most likely join them given their background, and charities could put themselves forward in a way which would generate the greatest level of interest. Ultimately, by following these recommendations it would be expected that volunteering numbers and quality would increase.

At the same time, they could also use this data to highlight a gender imbalance based on the role the charity performed. In areas such as getting young people involved with STEM subjects, having a gender balance may be of use to show young people that all genders can succeed in the area, and so this data may provide a springboard to future analysis into how this gap can be overcome.

viii. Do Any Future Research Possibilities Arise?

The last consideration to come from this research is what direction future projects in this area could take. One possible theme which became apparent during my time with Borderlands would be a future comparison which could link this thesis with responses from those who are older, to investigate their reasons for taking part as well.

From conversations with older volunteers, the reasons they suggested seemed to contrast with the answers of the younger volunteers in the final findings. For instance, some appeared to be volunteering because they had developed skills in working life and were finding a new way to pass these on to help others, whilst other older volunteers seemed to be simply wanting to help others in any way they could with the free time available to them. Given, however, that I had not recorded or fully interviewed any of the older volunteers in the way which I conducted with younger volunteers, I was not able to bring this area towards this paper in an appropriate way. To consider whether or not older volunteers, for example, have neoliberal reasons for volunteering in relation to younger people would be an interesting consideration. Breaking the age groups from 18 to 35, mid-30 up to retirement age (which appeared to be clearly the demographically smallest of these three age groupings at Borderlands), and then post-retirement might indicate whether or not motivations shift over time, or whether the current younger generation is uncharacteristically more 'selfish' than others. To go further still, we could ask why this may be, and bring in ideas of a more neoliberal world since the 1980s and the Western world being influenced heavily by the policies of Reagan and Thatcher. There is a lot of potential with this question, and it appears to go very deep.

A further area of interest is Orientalism, which was not the overall focus of the study, but yielded some interesting findings and considerations. A future study could consider the extent to which societal neo-Orientalism played a role in individuals participating. Were society to be less hostile, or to help refugees to a greater extent, would the young people surveyed feel less of a conviction to help in this particular area? Furthermore, does the topical nature of this area lead to more young people wishing to take part than otherwise may be the case? Comments from a few interviews suggested that the news focus on refugees led them towards this path of volunteering, but a wider study would yield potentially interesting results.

Whilst producing findings to support some theories, and uncover new ideas, this paper has also uncovered other questions which would be of value to explore and look at in depth. It is with hope that further exploration of these themes will continue in order to expand our understanding in this area.

Chapter 6 - Conclusions

i. Concluding Remarks

This project set out to examine the reasons why younger women volunteer in local refugee charity organisations, which was in part motivated by the lack of specific material in this area. The project as a whole has proved successful in terms of minimal problems arising throughout the process, and results which appear to be sincere and enlightening as to why younger women volunteer with refugee organisations.

The initial central question of why women aged 18-35 volunteer with refugees has been covered in the results and discussion section, and explains how the results were decidedly mixed, and each individual had their own reason for taking part. However, there were patterns which emerged, and these formed the basis of the sub-questions which were brought forward, particularly:

• 'To what extent is the rationale of respondents neoliberal in nature?'
• 'To what extent can Orientalism be used in relation to respondent's answers?'

The findings suggest that individuals primarily seek to take part in volunteering particularly when there is something which can also be gained by the individual. Of course, these results are open to interpretation to some extent, but from what was provided as demonstrated above, it is reasonable to make this argument. The honesty with which the responses were given suggests that volunteering may not be as altruistic as we may first have societally assumed, which is one of the major points to take away from this study. In regards to the Wendy Brown literature mentioned in the reading section, this research additionally may suggest that her analysis on neoliberal elements creeping into every facet of life and culture has also done so with volunteering.

Additionally important to consider is how ideas of Orientalism come into play, and how volunteers appear to subvert the overall neo-Oriental societal trend found within the media, which seeks to demonise refugees and make them appear sub-human. This suggests that whilst these younger people may think more in terms of neoliberal rationale,

which links to the current society in which they live, they also subvert ideas of borders and closed-mindedness. At the same time, it is also hard to avoid considering the problematic power relations at play within the environment of the refugee centre, and the potential for a 'saviour' aspect within the minds of those taking part. These two theories are interesting to consider alongside each other, particularly given that the majority of volunteers fit this profile of neoliberalism, is association with a desire to subvert neo-Orientalism.

In terms of my other sub-question, considering whether or not women volunteer more than men in this area and why this may be, it can be initially suggested that this is indeed the case. Whilst it would of course be useful to have a project which considers this area to a greater extent, and which covers many different charities as opposed to a focus on one (a project which I was unable to pursue given time constraints), this project was able to integrate aspects of this question into the interviewing process. Given the respondents answers as shown in fig. 5, five respondents had volunteered in similar areas before, and each confirmed this idea that women volunteer more, to at least some extent. Exploring why this may be, it appears that the work of constructivist theories point us in the direction of how the roles of women are shaped in society. All but two interviewees came from a background of humanities or social sciences, which tend to be more female-dominated, and it may be argued that even though volunteering is roughly equal for both genders as noted above, the areas in which individuals volunteer may be skewed due to early societal constructions, and it is here where the theory of constructivism could possibly be found.

Future studies may find a fair degree of questions which stem from this thesis. Looking at older volunteers in relation to younger volunteers would be useful, as would a study on male volunteers to find if their rationale may be different. Whilst this study was female-focused for reasons mentioned above, analysing a gender aspect within the area could prove useful. Looking at the extent to which subverting neo-Orientalism and the extent of the current affairs nature of the refugee crisis played a role in motivation could also be useful to further provide information to charities recruiting in future.

As this paper concludes, refugee charities would be advised to consider this neoliberal understanding of younger volunteers who take part with them, and they should provide a structure for any recruitment drives which target younger people. Emphasising areas of meeting new like-minded people and the skills which can be gained would be a way to maximise the awareness of other young people who may be seeking for a way to get

these opportunities. In this regard, a neoliberal outlook could be something that charities 'play along' with, in a sense, in order to maximise their return in terms of quality of volunteers. As much as this may be viewed traditionally within the social sciences as a negative, for charities on a day-to-day level, it may prove useful in the short term to at least use this to their benefit.

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