# Katharine Jones, Coventry University

UKDS Capturing testimony of the contemporary "migrant crisis", Wivenhoe House Hotel, Colchester

20th November, 2019
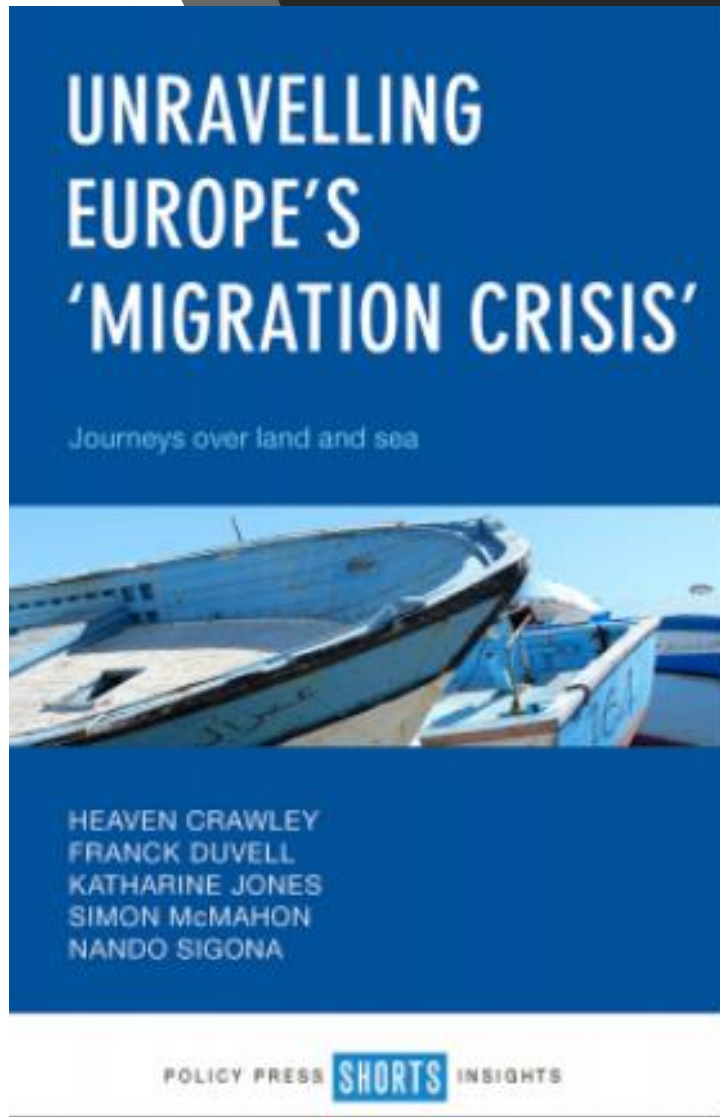
# MEDMIG: Challenges, possibilities and opportunities for sharing migration data for reuse

# What was MEDMIG & what did we do?

- MEDMIG aimed to:
  - Shed light on the dynamics underpinning the recent migration across, and loss of life in, the Mediterranean, mapping the geographies, routes, and journeys of migrants arriving at Europe's Southern border
  - Better understand the decision making processes which influence migrant journeys by uncovering the interaction of migrants with a multitude of state and non-state actors and opportunities and constraints along the way
  - Provide a robust evidence base to inform the development of policy responses by governmental, inter-governmental and non-governmental actors as well as bringing together a network of academics to engage in dialogue on the migration crisis.
  - Condition of the funding was to deposit the data!



UNRAVELLING EUROPE'S 'MIGRATION CRISIS'

Journeys over land and sea

HEAVEN CRAWLEY
FRANCK DUVELL
KATHARINE JONES
SIMON McMAHON
NANDO SIGONA

POLICY PRESS **SHORTS** INSIGHTS

# What kind of data did we **generate**?

Our research methods

- Research methods conducted according to ESRC Framework for Research Ethics and received ethical approval from CTPSR

- 500 semi-structured interviews with migrants who crossed the Mediterranean Sea to Europe during 2015, conducted in Greece (Athens, Lesbos) and Italy, (Sicily, Apulia, Rome, Piedmont, Bologna), Malta and Turkey (Izmir) during Oct 2015 – Jan 2016

- 111 stakeholder interviews across the four countries, including politicians, civil servants, NGO staff, international organisation staff, volunteers, coastguards and naval officers

- Observations at each site

- Analysis of statistical sources and desk-based review

- Team participated in numerous events across the EU and MEDMIG roundtables in Sicily, Rome, Athens, Oxford, Brussels and at the UN Summit on Refugees and Migrants, New York.

The data we stored

- 611 interview transcripts

- Photographs

- Individual observational notes

- Statistics gathered from secondary sources

- Miscellaneous secondary sources (e.g. newspaper articles)

# Which data did we **deposit with** UKDS?

- Interview guides

- Data management plan

- Consent forms (blank)

- Anonymised meta-data (individuals, routes, journeys), coding guide

- Related publications

Safeguarded access

"the data owner considers there to be a risk of disclosure resulting from linkage to other data, such as private databases."

# Anonymised meta-data (individuals)

| Interview name | Gender | Age range | Nationality | Ethnicity | Country of origin | Marital status | Children | Education level | Employment or Education status before journey | Employment or Education status at time of interview |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Greece 001 | F | 30-39 | Stateless | Palestinian | Syria | Widowed | 2 | Secondary | Employed | Unemployed |
| Greece 002 | M | 18-29 | Syria | Syria | Syria | Single | 0 | University* | Education | Unemployed |
| Greece 003 | M | 40-49 | Syria | Kurdish | Syria | Married | 2 | University | Employed | Unemployed |
| Greece 004 | M | 30-39 | Syria | | Syria | Married | 0 | University (postgrad) | Employed | Unemployed |
| Greece 005 | M | 18-29 | Syria | Kurdish | Syria | Single | 0 | Secondary | Employed | Unemployed |
| Greece 006 | F | 18-29 | Syria | Syria | Syria | Married | 1 | University* | Unemployed | Unemployed |
| Greece 007 | F | 40-49 | Syria | Palestinian | Syria | Married | 1 | University | Employed | Unemployed |
| Greece 008 | M | 18-29 | Syria | Syria | Syria | Single | 0 | University* | Employed | Unemployed |
| Greece 009 | M | 50-59 | Afghanistan | Hazara | Afghanistan | Married | 5 | none | Employed | Unemployed |
| Greece 010 | M | 18-29 | Afghanistan | Hazara | Iran | Single | 0 | Primary | Employed | Unemployed |
| Greece 011 | M | 18-29 | Afghanistan | Hazara | Afghanistan | Single | 0 | Secondary | Employed | Unemployed |
| Greece 012 | F | 18-29 | Syria | Syria | Syria | Divorced/Separated | 0 | University | Employed | Unemployed |
| Greece 013 | M | 18-29 | Syria | Syria | Syria | Single | 0 | Secondary | Employed | Unemployed |
| Greece 014 | M | 30-39 | Syria | Palestinian | Syria | Married | 2 | Secondary | Employed | Unemployed |
| Greece 015 | F | 30-39 | Afghanistan | Afghan (Sayyid) | Afghanistan | Married | 7 | none | Employed | Unemployed |
| Greece 016 | M | 18-29 | Afghanistan | Pushtan | Afghanistan | Single | 0 | University* | Employed | Unemployed |
| Greece 017 | M | 50-59 | Afghanistan | Tajik | Afghanistan | Married | 5 | Secondary | Employed | Unemployed |
| Greece 018 | M | 18-29 | Syria | Syria | Syria | Married | 0 | Secondary | Employed | Unemployed |
| Greece 019 | M | 30-39 | Syria | Syria | Syria | Married | 7 | University | Employed | Unemployed |
| Greece 020 | M | 18-29 | Afghanistan | Tajik | Afghanistan | Single | 0 | Primary | Employed | Unemployed |
| Greece 021 | M | 18-29 | Afghanistan | Hazara | Afghanistan | Single | 0 | none | Employed | Unemployed |
| Greece 022 | M | 18-29 | Afghanistan | Hazara | Afghanistan | In a relationship | 0 | none | Employed | Unemployed |
| Greece 023 | M | 18-29 | Syria | Kurdish | Syria | Single | 0 | Primary | Employed | Employed |
| Greece 024 | M | 18-29 | Afghanistan | Hazara | Afghanistan | Single | 0 | none | Employed | Unemployed |
| Greece 025 | M | 18-29 | Afghanistan | Tajik | Iran | Single | 0 | Primary | Employed | Unemployed |
| Greece 026 | M | 18-29 | Afghanistan | Pashtun | Afghanistan | Single | 0 | Primary | Employed | Unemployed |
| Greece 027 | M | 30-39 | Afghanistan | Sayyid | Iran | Divorced/Separated | 0 | Secondary | Employed | Unemployed |

# Anonymised routes data

| Interview name | Co of origin | Co of Interview | Iv location | Route to Europe | from country of origin | Arrival date in interview location | Duration of journey | journey in months | Travelling alone | Travelling with family | Travelling with children | Number of children on the journey |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Greece 001 | Syria | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | | | | 0 | No | Yes | Yes | 1 |
| Greece 002 | Syria | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | Apr-15 | Aug-15 | 4 months | 4 | Yes | No | No | 0 |
| Greece 003 | Syria | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | Jul-15 | Jul-15 | 0 months | 0 | No | Yes | Yes | 2 |
| Greece 004 | Syria | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | May-15 | May-15 | 2 weeks | 0 | No | Yes | No | 0 |
| Greece 005 | Syria | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | Jul-15 | Jul-15 | 3 days | 0 | Yes | No | No | 0 |
| Greece 006 | Syria | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | Nov-14 | Feb-15 | 3 months | 3 | No | Yes | Yes | 1 |
| Greece 007 | Syria | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | Dec-14 | Jan-15 | 1 month | 1 | No | Yes | Yes | 1 |
| Greece 008 | Syria | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | | Aug-15 | 7 years | 84 | Yes | No | No | 0 |
| Greece 009 | Afghanistan | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | Jun-05 | Apr-15 | 10 years | 120 | No | Yes | Yes | 5 |
| Greece 010 | Iran | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | Aug-15 | Sep-15 | 1 month | 1 | No | Yes | No | 0 |
| Greece 011 | Afghanistan | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | Feb-15 | Sep-15 | 7 months | 7 | No | Yes | No | 0 |
| Greece 012 | Syria | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | | | | 0 | No | Yes | No | 0 |
| Greece 013 | Syria | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | Sep-15 | Sep-15 | 1 week | 0 | Yes | No | No | 0 |
| Greece 014 | Syria | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | Jun-15 | Jun-15 | 2 weeks | 0 | Yes | No | No | 0 |
| Greece 015 | Afghanistan | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | Sep-09 | Sep-15 | 6 years | 66 | No | Yes | Yes | 1 |
| Greece 016 | Afghanistan | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | Sep-15 | Sep-15 | 13 days | 0 | No | No | No | 0 |
| Greece 017 | Afghanistan | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | Sep-15 | Sep-15 | 2 weeks | 0 | No | Yes | Yes | 5 |
| Greece 018 | Syria | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | | Sep-15 | 26 years | 312 | Yes | No | No | 0 |
| Greece 019 | Syria | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | Sep-14 | Sep-15 | 12 months | 12 | Yes | No | No | 0 |
| Greece 020 | Afghanistan | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | | Sep-15 | 18 years | 216 | No | Yes | No | 0 |
| Greece 021 | Afghanistan | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | | Sep-15 | 9 years | 108 | No | No | No | 0 |
| Greece 022 | Afghanistan | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | | Sep-15 | 15 years | 180 | No | Yes | No | 0 |
| Greece 023 | Syria | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | May-13 | May-15 | 2 years | 24 | Yes | No | No | 0 |
| Greece 024 | Afghanistan | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | Sep-15 | Sep-15 | 12 days | 0 | No | No | No | 0 |
| Greece 025 | Iran | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | Aug-15 | Sep-15 | 1 month | 1 | No | Yes | No | 0 |
| Greece 026 | Afghanistan | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | Sep-14 | Sep-15 | 12 months | 12 | No | Yes | No | 0 |
| Greece 027 | Iran | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | Sep-15 | Sep-15 | 17 days | 0 | No | Yes | No | 0 |
| Greece 028 | Syria | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | May-15 | Jun-15 | 1 month | 1 | No | Yes | Yes | 2 |
| Greece 029 | Afghanistan | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | | Sep-15 | 10 years | 120 | No | Yes | No | 0 |
| Greece 030 | Iran | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | Sep-15 | Sep-15 | 2 weeks | 0 | No | Yes | Yes | 1 |
| Greece 031 | Afghanistan | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | | Sep-15 | 6 years | 72 | No | Yes | No | 0 |
| Greece 032 | Syria | GREECE | Athens* | Eastern Mediterranean | Dec-14 | Jun-15 | 7 months | 7 | Yes | No | No | 0 |
| Greece 033 | Syria | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | Apr-15 | May-15 | 6 weeks | 1 | No | Yes | No | 0 |
| Greece 034 | Syria | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | | | | | No | Yes | No | 0 |
| Greece 035 | Syria | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | Mar-14 | Sep-15 | 6 months | 6 | Yes | No | No | 0 |
| Greece 036 | Syria | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | Oct-14 | Oct-15 | 1 year | 12 | No | No | No | 0 |
| Greece 037 | Iran | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | Jun-05 | Oct-15 | 15 years | 180 | No | No | No | 0 |
| Greece 038 | Afghanistan | GREECE | Athens | Eastern Mediterranean | | Oct-15 | 16 years | 192 | No | Yes | Yes | 2 |

# Anonymised journeys data

| Interview name | Start_country | Dest_country_1 | Dest_city_2 | Dest_country_2 | Dest_city_3 | Dest_country_3 | Dest_city_4 | Dest_country_4 | Dest_city_5 | Dest_country_5 | Dest_city_6 | Dest_country_6 | Dest_city_7 | Dest_country_7 | Dest_city_8 | Dest_country_8 | Dest_city_9 | Dest_country_9 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Greece 001 | Syria | Syria | Trablous | Lebanon | Mersin | Turkey | Kos | Greece | Athens | Greece | | | | | | | | |
| Greece 002 | Syria | Turkey | Istanbul | Turkey | Mersin | Turkey | Izmir | Turkey | Bodrum | Turkey | Tilos | Greece | Athens | Greece | | | | |
| Greece 003 | Syria | Syria | Akbis | Syria | Izmir | Turkey | Lesvos | Greece | Athens | Greece | | | | | | | | |
| Greece 004 | Syria | Lebanon | Izmir | Turkey | Bodrum | Turkey | Farmakonisi | Greece | Leros | Greece | Athens | Greece | | | | | | |
| Greece 005 | Syria | Turkey | Mytilene | Greece | Athens | Greece | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Greece 006 | Syria | Lebanon | Istanbul | Turkey | Bodrum | Turkey | Marmaris | Turkey | Izmir | Turkey | Bodrum | Turkey | Tilos | Greece | Athens | Greece | | |
| Greece 007 | Syria | Syria | Kilis | Turkey | Istanbul | Turkey | Izmir | Turkey | Bodrum | Turkey | Patmos | Greece | Athens | Greece | | | | |
| Greece 008 | Syria | UAE | Istanbul | Turkey | Bodrum | Turkey | Kos | Greece | Athens | Greece | Ikaria | Greece | Athens | Greece | | | | |
| Greece 009 | Afghanistan | Iran | Malatya | Turkey | Mersin | Turkey | Samos | Greece | Athens | Greece | | | | | | | | |
| Greece 010 | Iran | Iran | Maku | Iran | Doğubeyazıt | Turkey | Istanbul | Turkey | | Turkey | Lesvos | Greece | Athens | Greece | | | | |
| Greece 011 | Afghanistan | Afghanistan | Nimroz | Afghanistan | Zahedan | Iran | Tehran | Iran | Doğubeyazıt | Turkey | Istanbul | Turkey | | Turkey | Lesvos | Greece | Athens | Greece |
| Greece 012 | Syria | Syria | Mersin | Turkey | Istanbul | Turkey | Izmir | Turkey | Leros | Greece | Athens | Greece | | | | | | |
| Greece 013 | Syria | Lebanon | Istanbul | Turkey | Izmir | Turkey | | Turkey | | Turkey | Izmir | Turkey | Lesvos | Greece | Athens | Greece | | |
| Greece 014 | Syria | Syria | Kilis | Turkey | Izmir | Turkey | Samos | Greece | Athens | Greece | | | | | | | | |
| Greece 015 | Afghanistan | Iran | Tehran | Iran | Urmia | Iran | | Turkey | | Greece | Athens | Greece | | | | | | |
| Greece 016 | Afghanistan | Afghanistan | Tehran | Iran | Urmia | Iran | Van | Turkey | Istanbul | Turkey | Izmir | Turkey | | Greece | Athens | Greece | | |
| Greece 017 | Afghanistan | Afghanistan | Balochistan | Pakistan | Kerman | Iran | Shiraz | Iran | Tehran | Iran | Istanbul | Turkey | | Turkey | | Greece | Athens | Greece |
| Greece 018 | Syria | Germany | Dahieh | Lebanon | Qatar | UAE | Dahieh | Lebanon | Beirut | Lebanon | Izmir | Turkey | Samos | Greece | Athens | Greece | | |
| Greece 019 | Syria | Turkey | Gaziantep | Turkey | Istanbul | Turkey | Izmir | Greece | Mytilene | Greece | Athens | Greece | | | | | | |
| Greece 020 | Iran | Iran | | Turkey | Istanbul | Turkey | Izmir | Turkey | Lesvos | Greece | Athens | Greece | | | | | | |
| Greece 021 | Afghanistan | Iran | Tehran | Iran | Urmia | Iran | Van | Turkey | Istanbul | Turkey | Lesvos | Greece | Athens | Greece | | | | |
| Greece 022 | Afghanistan | Iran | Tehran | Iran | Urmia | Iran | | Turkey | Istanbul | Turkey | | Turkey | Mytilene | Greece | Athens | Greece | | |
| Greece 023 | Syria | Turkey | Istanbul | Turkey | Edirne | Turkey | Orestiada | Greece | Athens | Greece | | | | | | | | |
| Greece 024 | Iran | Iran | | Turkey | Istanbul | Turkey | Izmir | Turkey | Lesvos | Greece | Athens | Greece | | | | | | |
| Greece 025 | Iran | Iran | Hakkari | Turkey | Van | Turkey | Ankara | Turkey | Istanbul | Turkey | Lesvos | Greece | Athens | Greece | | | | |
| Greece 026 | Afghanistan | Iran | Urmia | Iran | | Turkey | Van | Turkey | Istanbul | Turkey | Izmir | Turkey | Lesvos | Greece | Athens | Greece | | |

# Our internal debate about what could/should be shared i.e. made public

6 x key issues

1. Lack of explicit consent for sharing meta-data, assurance to participants that they – and their stories – would not be identifiable

2. Identifiable data v universal stories ('do no harm')

3. What and what is not sensitive data

4. What would the transcripts be used for, by whom and for what purpose

5. Bearing witness (voice)

6. Could the anonymised meta-data be sufficient for others to use without the transcripts?

# 1. Consent from participants (and re-consent)

"The information we collect from you will be treated confidentially. We will only disclose information to the authorities if we are concerned about your safety or the safety of others. What you tell us will not influence or inform any decision in your case. We will record the information which you share with us in written form only. Anonymised notes will be stored securely and will only be accessible to the research team. We will ask you for some personal information (for example your age, where you have come from)but we do not need to know your name. **The findings of the research will be published, but you will not be identifiable in our report or any other outputs.**"

CTPSR Ethics Committee & Re-consent

- Ethics Committee explicitly asks for clarity on purpose of data collection and sharing; to use or share the data in a different way from stated on the initial ethics form requires re-consent from participants

- If purpose is left open, then this is difficult to negotiate with participants later on

- However, re-consent is incredibly challenging when people are on the move and / or are traumatized

- This may also put people at risk

- Therefore cost, ethics and time implications of seeking re-consent may render this unfeasible.

# 2. Identifiable versus universal stories

"Kebba was just 16 years old when he left his home in Gambia in April 2014 with his younger sister Loli. Kebba and Loli went first to Senegal "because it was the closest" and stayed there for three weeks in a house with other Gambians. Kebba decided to move on when he couldn't find work and travelled through Mali to Bukina Faso.  Although he managed to find work and was helped by a Gambian woman who looked after Loli, Kebba decided to leave Bukino Faso travelling on to Niger where they stayed for around two weeks before taking a pickup truck with around 30 other Africans. =…"

(Excerpt from a case-study included in our book)

- BUT, if you add the details which you would have in a qualitative transcript perhaps reaching 10 pages, including about family relationships, why they left their country of origin, what job they had and so on, this might make the participant more identifiable

- Although some obvious identifying data can be easily removed, researchers are unlikely to be close enough to know what is identifiable and what isn't

- What feels like a universal story, may be very specific to one person, and perhaps they or others could be identified in it

- Even if it is – what could be considered – a universal story – if a participant recognizes it as their own (even if it is not) then they could be traumatized by it

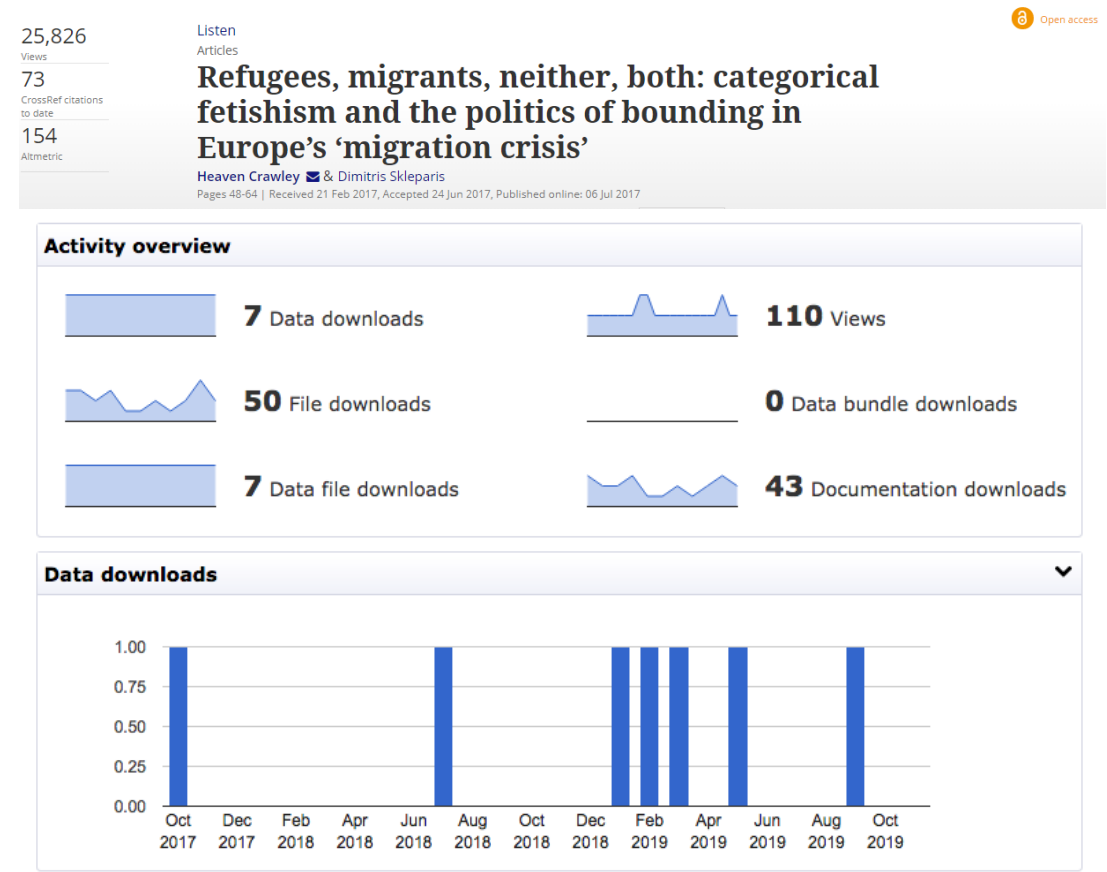- Bottom line is to do no harm! And the risks of sharing these transcripts was deemed to be high.

# 3. What is sensitive data and what is not

Once we had deposited the dataset, UKDS wrote to us noting that data for a few of the questions in the interview guide (for migrants) that were not necessarily sensitive, e.g. decision to leave, hopes and expectations at arrival, knowledge about migration policies, whether had considered applying for a visa, had not been deposited.

- What one person considers "sensitive" data, another may not

- For some members of the team, decision to leave was one of THE most highly sensitive – and identifiable – elements in the interview transcripts

# 4. Who wants to see the full transcripts, why and for what purpose?

- For us this raised the question, why this specific data? Who needs it and why?

- In terms of public accountability, the team had generated numerous outputs

- The specific purpose of this funding was to inform policy. Yet, what use are the transcripts without our analysis for policymakers?
  - Why not ask for the stakeholder transcripts or any other forms of data?
  - In any case, arguably, migration is not an evidence-based policymaking field. Ever.

- Researchers have preferred to access our outputs (including our analysis), largely have not sought to access the raw meta data and have not requested interview transcripts.

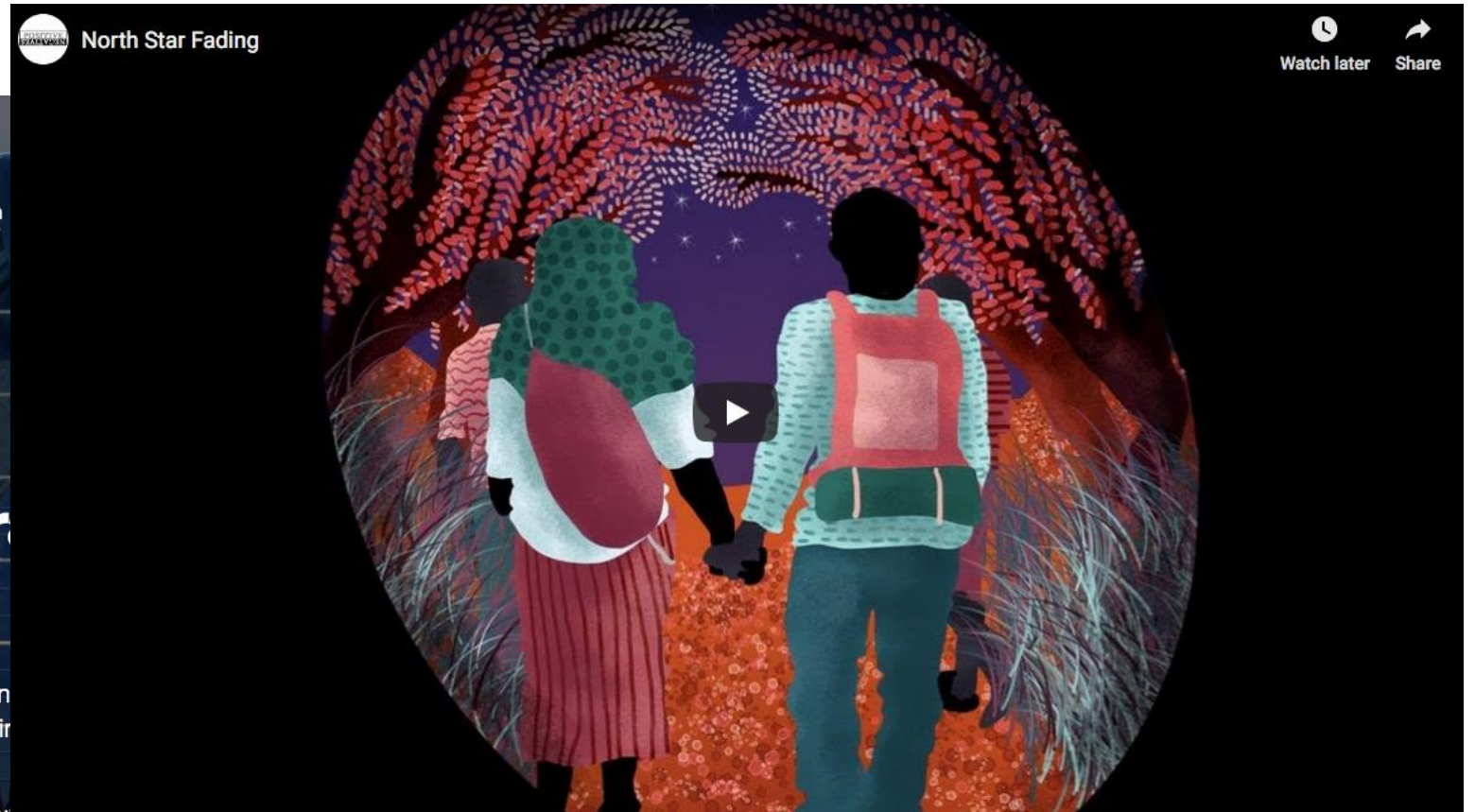# 5. Voice? ("Capturing" testimonies/ bearing witness?)

- Refugees are also academics
- Increasingly NGOs in the UK are led by or involve refugees who can speak for themselves
- Do refugees need academics to amplify their stories?
- Versus bearing witness?



HOME

## Refugee stories could do more harm than good

The pressure of storytelling can leave refugees feeling tokenised and disempowered.

Rifaie Tammas

1 November 2019

A refugee from Afghanistan poses for a photo, at the Eleonas refugee camp, in Athens, Greece in 2017. | PA Images

https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/refugee-stories-could-do-more-harm-good/

# 6. Could the anonymised meta-data be sufficient for others to use without the transcripts?
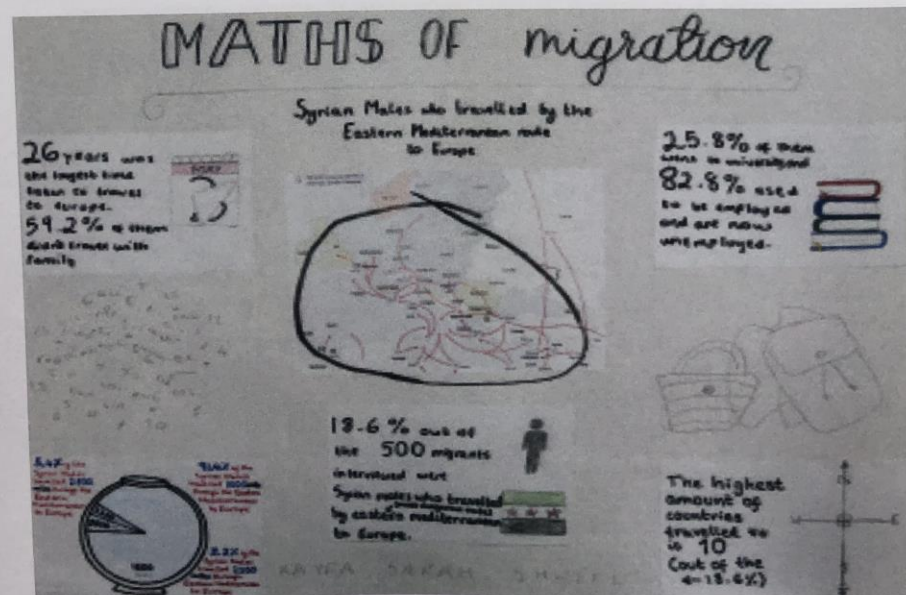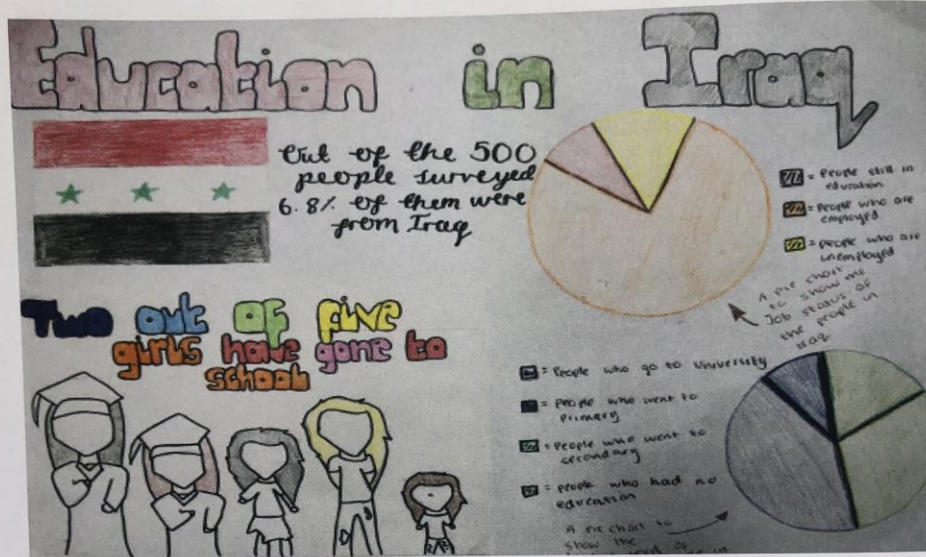
Since I was little e...
Bangladesh?
One day I believe...
only and big ques...
what could be the...
SIT NEXT TO ME"
"My journey starte...
Afghanistan to Iran...
nia to Switzerland...
England."

The only reason w...
better life to us. Aft...
Just because he w...

## Maths Migration posters



Education in Iraq

Out of the 500 people surveyed 6.8% of them were from Iraq

Two out of five girls have gone to school

= People still in education
= People who are employed
= People who are unemployed

A pie chart to show the job status of the people in Iraq

= People who go to University
= People who went to Primary
= People who went to secondary
= People who had no education

A pie chart to show the...



MATHS OF migration

Syrian Males who travelled by the Eastern Mediterranean route to Europe

26 years was the longest time taken to travel to Europe.
59.2% of them don't travel with family.

25.8% of them went to university and
82.8% used to be employed and are now unemployed.

18.6% out of the 500 migrants interviewed went

Syrian males who travelled by eastern mediterranean to Europe.

The highest amount of countries travelled to is 10 (out of the 4=18.6%)

## Migration Performance - Dance, Drama, Poetry reading

# In summary …

- Our internal debate highlighted six significant issues to take into account when considering what data could – and should – be shared. These included:
    1. Explicit informed consent (and re-consent)
    2. Identifiable data v universal stories ('do no harm')
    3. What and what is not sensitive data
    4. What would the transcripts be used for, by whom and for what purpose
    5. Could the anonymised meta-data be sufficient for others to use without the transcripts?
    6. Need to bear witness? Voice?

- Overall, we feel that the balance of risk is substantially higher with the sharing of qualitative data than quantitative data

- For us as a team, the mantra of 'do no harm' is paramount; in terms of ethics this sits above the demands of public accountability for the funding

- We should always ask why the demand to share the full set of transcripts

- Not being able to share the details of people's individual experiences doesn't mean that the data isn't useful to others – as demonstrated by the uses to which this data has been put by others

- We cannot and should not abstract this incredibly useful discussion from wider (evolving) norms about the ethics of migration research, e.g. funding and purpose, how it is conducted and whether in fact it is conducted / funded at all.

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Thanks for listening!