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Refugee and asylum-seeking children and their families: exploring processes of 'integration' within a dispersal area.

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PHD

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University of Northumbria at Newcastle for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Abstract

Refugee and asylum-seeking children and their families: exploring processes of 'integration' within a dispersal area.

The dispersal of asylum seekers to locations outside of the South East of England was an outcome of the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act. This thesis examines the barriers and opportunities for refugee and asylum seeker children aged 6- 10 years and their families to achieve social, cultural, and economic inclusion into a North East town. The starting point of this thesis was to focus upon children, but this was expanded to include the experiences and perceptions of their parents who influence and can shape how children experience of settlement into the locality.

There is a volume of research on refugees and asylum seekers 'integration' into the UK, however, these tend to be in located in multicultural spaces. This study presents an original contribution to research as it focuses upon children's and their family's experiences of 'settlement' in a socially disadvantaged and predominantly white working-class town within the North of England.

This research coincided with an emerging political and policy landscape of an anti-immigration and hostile environment that was reflected in the results of the EU referendum. This research captures some of these tensions that impact upon recent patterns of forms of interactions. However, this study deconstructs the vague concept of 'integration' from the experiences of the refugees and asylum seekers in this study and offers an alternative notion of 'settlement' as a process of 'home making' and the beginning of new life in a new country.

The processes of settlement are interrogated through use of the theoretical tools of Bourdieu's habitus, fields, and capitals, together with Putnam's notions of social capital and Goffman's 'presentation of self'.

The fieldwork was carried out between 2015 and 2018. This included semi structured interviews with children using the medium of their own drawings to prompt discussion. Parents were also interviewed separately or alongside their children. Data was also gathered through the researcher's observer/participant role at a Refugee and Asylum Seeker Drop-In Service.

A reflexive approach to research was applied so to be responsive to the ethical challenges of research with children, and their families. This was needed to negotiate the complex cultural and family practices that shaped opportunities and barriers to forms of a sense of belonging and settlement.

The study found that refugee and asylum seeker families have educational values and aspirations that are reflective of other British middle-class families. This was explored in the biographical aspects of cultural capital that they brought from their country of origin. For examples interviewees adopted a long-term, strategic approach to their children's education despite their temporal status as non-UK citizens.

Refugee and Asylum seeker children developed relationships exclusively with local working-class children through school settings. Whilst parents were more likely to develop friendships and contacts with middle class volunteers of mostly Christian denomination. This study found that refugee and asylum seeker adult's contact and interactions with working class adult neighbours was complex including examples of individual acts of support and care, but also examples of racially motivated symbolic and physical violence.

The work concludes that despite the traumatic experiences of forced migration the refugee and asylum seeker families maintained high aspirations and optimism for their children's future in the UK. Furthermore, the study found that children are adaptable and perform and develop multiple identities to gain acceptance from their peers. The middle class orientated cultural capital and optimism of refugees and asylum seekers families should be of interest to policy makers, however, the hostile anti-immigration policy environment, both within the locality and wider society,

remains a stubborn barrier to social, cultural, and economic forms of belonging and settlement.

Acknowledgement

The completion of this thesis has been a long road with many twists and turns along the way, some very positive, and some very testing. Although this thesis bears my name, there are many people who have supported and encouraged me beyond what I ever expected.

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The families in this study have taught me much about life and resilience and helped shape me as a person and as an academic. Hopefully, I can bring these experiences and passion to my teaching and writing such as informing others of the difficult challenges of being a refugee or asylum seeker in a strange, unequal, and hostile world.

I particularly want to thank the Refugee and Asylum seeker Drop-In Committee Members, who granted me access and were always available to offer advice and information when asked and continued to support my work.

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I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. I also confirm that this work fully acknowledges opinions, ideas and contributions from the work of others. Ethical clearance for the research presented in this thesis has been approved. Approval has been sought and granted by the Faculty Ethics Committee on 05/10/2015

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Refugees are mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, children, with the same hopes and ambitions as us—except that a twist of fate has bound their lives to a global refugee crisis on an unprecedented scale.”

— *Khaled Hossein*

1.1. Introduction

This thesis offers an analysis of the ‘integration’ of refugee and asylum seeker children and their families drawing from empirical research conducted in an English North East town. This research is informed by a Bourdieusian theoretical perspective of ‘theory of practice’, with reference to Putnam’s theory of social capital and Goffman’s dramaturgy of the ‘presentation of self’. This facilitated the analysis of the complex dynamics and processes of ‘settlement’ for refugees and asylum seekers.

This chapter sets out the rationale for this thesis and introduces the policy and social context. Central to the thesis is the policy developments associated with the UK government’s ‘hostile environment’ towards migrants. This is reflected in the context of anti-refugee and asylum seeker sentiment that has become prominent in the EU Referendum and emerging populist politics. This chapter will then set out the different legal definitions of ‘refugee’ and ‘asylum seeker’ whereby each status imposes different boundaries upon everyday existence.

Most of existing research on the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers tend to be sited within multi-cultural inner-city locations. However, this study contributes towards filling this gap as the demographic profile of place of this study is located in a post-industrial town with high levels of social deprivation and a limited history of immigration.

This chapter introduces the design and methodology of the thesis including the position of the researcher in ethnographic studies. The methodological design is underpinned by a sensitive and ethical approach to protect the anonymity of the participants the location will be referred to as 'The Town'. Finally, the chapter sets out the structure of this thesis.

1.2. Rationale

It is my experience as an education practitioner that motivated me to undertake this research. Prior to this study I have worked with children and their families for over 14 years in two asylum seeker dispersal areas within the North East of England. Hence, this led to my interest in refugee and asylum seeker family experiences of living in an unfamiliar white working-class environment. I was also conscious in my practice that refugee and asylum seeker children lived across parallel worlds; their home life that reflected a family cultural existence and a school life which reflected the local culture in which their new friends inhabited. Furthermore, I wanted to further explore my 'practice' observations that refugee and asylum seeker children were resourceful and adaptable to change, and participative research would help identify a voice that are otherwise mostly unheard.

My work as an education practitioner included having responsibility for leading a primary school's 'community cohesion' strategy¹ in a refugee and asylum seeker dispersal area that maintained a strong local working-class identity. There was little government clarity or guidance to implement a community cohesion policy, and therefore I had to establish what I now recognise as 'a social imagination'² that reflected my subjective view of 'what 'community cohesion' looks like in a primary

¹ 'Community Cohesion' was a term promoted by Ted Cantle's reports into riots in northern towns (Cantle 2001, 2004) which resulted in statutory requirements for all schools to produce and implement a community cohesion policy relative to their school population and location. However, this was suspended by the Coalition Government in 2010.

² 'Social imagination' is an attempt to articulate the ambition of a world in which humans exercise domination over nature without exercising domination over each other (Fuller 2007, p 9).

school and in a locality. This prompted me to consider sociological questions about this strategy including the relevance of contact between local working-class families and refugee and asylum seeker families and how this would bring about positive attitudes, reduce prejudice, and build lasting friendships (Cantle 2012 p 145). This motivated me further to examine these experiences, and therefore this study is a product that has emerged from this practice.

1.3. Policy: 'settlement' or 'integration'?

As I developed my research it became apparent that use of the term 'integration' is problematic in the evaluation of policy. The term 'integration' is regularly used in international and domestic policy (Casey 2016; UNICEF 2016, HM Government; 2018³; UNCHR 2018; Ndofar-Tah et al 2019; Phillimore and Reyes, 2019). Yet it is argued that this is a vague, ambiguous, chaotic, and contested term making it difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of 'integration' policies (Robinson, 1998; Castles, et al, 2002, p 12; Kovacs 2015, p15; Mulvey, 2015, p 357).

Cantle (2012, p113) argued that there had been no serious attempt to define 'integration' at a conceptual or policy level, and there is little evidence this has been addressed since. The Casey Review (2016) which is a review into integration on behalf of the UK government, acknowledges that there is no one definition of integration, nor attempts to provide a definition within its recommendations for future policy. Similarly, the government's 'Integrated Communities Plan' defines integrated communities as 'where people, whatever their background, live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities, and opportunities' (HM Government 2018). Similarly, the report of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Social Integration (2017) define, 'social integration', of the extent to which strong social ties, maintained through a web of relationships and interactions, inspire bonds of trust, reciprocity and solidarity (or how well communities and societies hang

together)'. However, these policies tend to be focused on addressing the difficulties of multiculturalism, rather than direct immigration.

I argue that the above parliamentary and policy definitions do not consider the structural conditions of 'place', access to resources, or even a desire that refugees want to develop social relations in the location they are restricted to. Throughout policy and policy reports there is an insistence that integration is a two-way process (All Party Parliamentary Group on Refugees, 2017; Government 2019). The assumption behind this, is that immigrant destination neighbourhoods are homogenous 'communities', yet literature has informed us that this is 'an imaginary' concept that ignores that there has been a steady erosion of neighbourhood ties, and with 'competitive individualism' at the core of culture whereby attachments continually broken and not always easily remade (Putnam 2000: Bauman 2001: Laurence, 2013, p 256, Somerville, 2016, p 263). This is further developed by Winlow and Hall, (2013, p 171) who argue that in post-industrial working-class neighbourhoods a sense of community life has disintegrated, whereby 'people are more likely to 'keep others at a safe distance.' Furthermore, Laurence (2016) concludes that social capital in working class populations is more likely to be developed with others outside of their neighbourhood thus weakening neighbourhood connections. All of which points to limited integrated populations within dispersal areas that is before the consideration of the presence of refugees and asylum seekers.

Although I critique integration as a policy goal, there is much literature and research that specifically examines integration. For example, across literature there is a sense that 'integration' is an umbrella term for a sense of belonging and identity or the reduction of disparities between the outcomes of different groups (Kovacs 2015). However, Robinson (1998) argues that 'integration', like settlement, is an individualised experience but within the social, cultural, political, and geographical context in which refugees and asylum seekers are placed. Ratna (2014) argued that everyone belongs in some ways and fails to do in others, whether this is gender, age, ethnicity, race, faith, or participant in an interest such as sport. Whilst I contest this research there are still aspects of this analysis that I have found useful to this study. For example, I also draw from NdoFar-Tah et al (2019) who argues that social

'integration' can be achieved through the development of 'bonds', 'bridges' and 'links'. This is strongly related to Putnam's notion of bonding, bridging, and linking social capital which I use a theoretical framework to interrogate the 'settlement' of the children and families in this study. Therefore, I do not reject all literature and research on 'integration' but adapt ideas and these findings to examine the 'settlement' of refugees and asylum seekers. However, throughout this study I will set out how the term 'settlement' is an alternative paradigm to that of 'integration' and therefore this research will make a contribution to this argument.

My study draws upon the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers in this research whereby the term 'settlement' is a more appropriate reflection of migrants process of 'home making' which is the aim of most refugee and asylum maker families and the 'beginning of new possibilities' in a new country (Archambault, 2012, p 36). For refugee and asylum seeker families, the settlement marks the beginning of new possibilities, such as the acquisition of refugee status and the end of a difficult experience of war or persecution (Archambault 2012 p 36).

Throughout this study I also apply the notion of 'belonging' as part of the settlement process. Yuval-Davis (2006) refers to the politics of 'belonging', as about inclusion and exclusion and membership. Yuval-Davis also draws from Ignatieff (2001) who states that 'belonging is about emotional attachment, about feeling at home', and therefore reaffirms the notion of settlement. Healey (2018, p 3) states that the need to 'belong' is based upon an evolutionary basis for survival purposes; that is, to align oneself with a group of familiar cooperative people whilst holding identify forming expectations and bonding. James, Jenks and Prout (1998 p 76) argue that the need for children to have a sense of belonging is a cultural condition rather than a psychological cause. Healy frames this as a 'perceived belonging' as there can be a hierarchy of belonging, as the level of 'belonging' is not always reciprocated by the group in question (Back, Sinha and Bryan, 2012; Healy 2018, p 7). Therefore, throughout the study I refer to the refugees and asylum seekers notion of 'sense of belongings' as an individualised and perceived experience.

A related term is 'assimilation' which is an expectation that migrants acquire all aspects of the local culture which would lead to the decline of ethnic difference

(Bartram et al, 2014, p 15; Kearns & Whitley, 2015, p 2107). Assimilation is described by Strang et al (2017, p 2) as a one-way process of a newcomer replicating the culture and identity of the existing homogeneous group. Bartram et al (2014, p 18) argue that in disadvantaged areas, such as the dispersal areas in The Town, assimilation could mean downward social mobility for some refugees and asylum seekers particularly those with professional backgrounds as they move from a middle-class background into a working class disadvantaged area. Hence there is a mismatch between the cultural capital between refugees and asylum seekers and others in the locality. This is a key area that I explore in this thesis.

I found that the second problematic term in literature and policy is 'host' as in 'host community' or 'host population' to which refugees and asylum seekers are located. Hynie (2018) states that the 'host community' have the power to shape the conditions for refugees and asylum seekers such as determining what spaces are available for 'newcomers'. However, the term 'host community' can be a misleading firstly as 'community' gives a sense of a world where 'everyone can count on each other' that is not available to us in a postmodern world (Bauman 2001). Furthermore, 'community' is laden with symbolic boundaries that differentiate between 'insiders and outsiders' (Cohen, 1985; Elias 1994). Thus, new arrivals such as asylum seekers to the area face barriers of being outsiders in attempting to establish a sense of belonging and of acceptance by others.

Furthermore, the term 'host' has been a common descriptor across research to represent the existing heterogeneous populations in asylum seeker dispersal areas (Beirens *et al.*, 2007; Carling, Erdal and Ezzati, 2014; Ndofar-Tah *et al.*, 2019). However, I argue that if the term 'host' represents the existing population in the dispersal area, then this places refugees and asylum seekers as 'guests' thus emphasising the symbolic power in this relationship which places either a moral obligation or a burden upon the 'hosts' (Korvac, 2015, p 23). Furthermore, I suggest that the term 'guest' reinforces the temporariness of refugees and asylum seekers. Thus, this analysis raises further questions such as 'when' or 'can' the guests become embedded and accepted as 'hosts' by the wider population. This is a central question to be examined in this study.

My research focus on refugees and asylum seekers and their experiences reflects the consequences of wider social, cultural and policy changes in the UK in the last 20 years. This begins with 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act set out the dispersal of asylum seekers⁴ to locations outside of London as they await Home Office decisions on their claims for refugee status. This was designed 'to relieve the burden of provision in London, where the majority of asylum seekers were concentrated' (HM Government, 1998). I investigate the weaknesses of this policy of how it shapes opportunities and barriers to foster relationships between refugees and asylum seekers and the population within the dispersal area in The Town. Hence, I argue that policy does not address the range of needs and well-being of refugees and asylum seekers, in terms of cultural orientation and emotional well-being, whilst reinforcing their alienation from local populations and social networks.

The focus of the Immigration and Asylum Act (1999) was: a compulsory 'no choice' dispersal of asylum seekers to locations throughout the country; and remove asylum seekers from mainstream welfare benefits with payments at 30% below the unemployment benefits for British Citizens.⁵ Cohen, Humphries and Mynott (2002) argue that the Act was an attempt at a managed system of induction and accommodation. Mulvey (2011, p1480) suggests that the 'no-choice' dispersal around the UK and restrictions on welfare benefits was instrumental in government thinking to remove 'pull factors' for potential asylum seekers. Furthermore, Jones *et al.*, (2017, p 89) argue that the UK government applies a punitive policy that undermines a sense of security for refugees and asylum seekers. The Labour government claimed at the time that the new system met international obligations and that 'genuine' refugees would be prepared to undergo a temporary period of hardship until their claim was established (Hynes and Sales, 2010, p 42).

Asylum seekers are likely to be accommodated in mostly poor quality housing in areas with surplus low-value housing (Spicer, 2008). Consequently, many asylum seekers are dispersed in urban disadvantaged neighbourhoods throughout the UK including predominantly white working-class neighbourhoods such as The Town that

have had little experiences of inward migration (Bloch and Schuster, 2005, p 507). This includes places, such as the Town, that are often labelled as 'left behind 'problem communities' that are post-industrial, with working-class precarious employment, downward social mobility, social insecurity, and stigmatisation (Wacquant 2008; Silver and Hussain 2014; Khan & Shaheen 2017).

1.4. 'Taking back control of our borders'; the toxic mix of a 'hostile environment' and the politics of Brexit

I draw on literature to argue that a narrative of hostility and racism towards refugees and asylum seekers has been intensified during the timeline of this research shaping the political climate and symbolic violence that includes:

- the 'hostile environment', a phrase used by Theresa May as the then Home Secretary that underpins the 2016 Immigration Act.
- and followed by the EU Referendum which has exposed and galvanised a higher profile right wing populism targeted against migrants including refugees and asylum seekers.

The Centre for Hate Studies (2017) argues that the period leading up to the EU referendum produced a divisive xenophobic and anti-immigrant rhetoric that seeped into mainstream politics across the UK. This is reflected in a prominent campaign poster by UKIP to leave the European Union (Figure 1) showing refugees crossing the Croatia-Slovenia border with the words:

"BREAKING POINT -: We must break free of the EU and take back control of our borders."

Burrell et al (2019) state that this poster was deliberate attempt to link the EU membership with the fear of asylum seekers 'marching' towards Britain as though it were an invasion. The Brexit campaign had prominence in The Town which gained a national profile as a 'leave town' and argued by political commentators that reflects a

disenfranchised industrial white working-class population that has been ignored and 'left behind' (Goodwin and Heath, 2016; Mckenzie, 2017). Furthermore, it is argued that the 'leave' vote is a reaction against 'identity politics' and a nostalgic longing towards a lost sense of power and empire (Bhambra, 2017; Virdee and McGeever, 2018; Dorling and Tomlinson, 2019). The emergence of 'identity politics' has resulted in the marginalisation of a white working social class voice that was experienced before the EU referendum (Winlow, Hall and Treadwell, 2017).

This thesis does not attempt to apply an in-depth analysis to understand the constantly dynamic changes in UK voting patterns of the EU referendum and consequent national and local elections. However, it does recognise the political environment in which refugees and asylum seekers find themselves.

Figure 1: UKIP Campaign Poster



1.5. The Town - Demographics of a Dispersal Area

The Town became a dispersal area in 2006 initially accommodating a small number of asylum seekers, and since then the refugee and asylum seeker population has

increased. The Chairperson of the town's Asylum seeker and Refugee weekly Drop-in estimated that in 2017 there are near to a hundred asylum seekers in the town the majority of whom are families.⁶

The Town has a population of 92,700 with less than 2% identified as Black, Minority and Refugee 2% are non-British born (The Local Authority, 2016). The Town is within the top ten of local authorities in the UK with the highest deprivation whilst the local neighbourhood in which most asylum seekers are accommodated is ranked as 155 out of 32,844 for deprivation (Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government, 2019). It is estimated that child poverty for The Town is estimated at 35% against a national average of 19% (End Child Poverty, 2019).

1.6. Distinctions and Rights: The difference between refugees and asylum seekers

In this section I set out the difference between refugees and asylum seekers. For example, the UK makes the distinction between the rights of refugees and their families and that of asylum seekers and their families. This is further developed throughout this study, in particularly Chapter 3 argues that the UK government's growing protectionist policies that reflect a reluctance to accept asylum seekers. Thus, the UK government policies are designed to reduce opportunities for refugee 'integration' and are aimed to prevent asylum seekers 'integration'. For example, Stewart and Mulvey (2014, p 166) argue that the temporary status available to refugees can undermine their settlement into the UK

The UK government recognises Article 1 of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees that states a refugee is someone who:

⁶ The number of refugees and asylum seekers asylum seekers is difficult to quantify at one time given the fluidity of arrivals and those who leave such as those who are moved to accommodation in other areas, relocation on attaining refugee status, or the conclusion of an unsuccessful claim for refugee status.

'owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.' (UNHCR, 1967, p 13)

Hence this 'fear' associated with persecution can increase the risk of ongoing mental health difficulties despite reaching a country of refuge as refugees have also to adapt to a new life in a different culture. Hence, Mitschke and Kelly (2017, p 589) state that refugees have higher rates of mental illness than those in the general population due to pre-arrival and post-arrival stressors such as anxiety, depression and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. This is considered in Chapter 2 through examining Bourdieu's notion of hysteresis which represents the challenging and alienating effect of adapting to new cultural settings and the indifference in policy to recognise or support refuge and asylum seekers through these difficulties (Friedman, 2016, p 131). These new challenges include the levels of poverty within the dispersal neighbourhood and the sometimes chaotic and multiple issues associated with poverty. This is a key theme in this research and elaborated further in Chapter 12.

If a decision is made to grant a person and their family refugee status it is usually for an initial period of 5 years after which they can apply for 'indefinite leave to remain'. Dependents (family) are also granted refugee status in line with the main claimant. Refugees can take paid employment, can apply for welfare benefits and are not restricted by policy as to where they live (Gov UK, 2019). Hence, this offers access to economic capital in comparison to the limited resources available to asylum seekers.

It is argued by the North East Child Poverty Commission (2013) that asylum seekers in the UK are effectively 'trapped' in poverty. The financial support to asylum seekers managed by NASS (National Asylum Support Service) and is set at £37.75 per person in the family per week,⁷ which makes it £5.39 a day for food, sanitation and

⁷ This allowance was increased to £39.60 per person per week as from 15th June 2020.

clothing⁸ (Gov.UK, no date). Furthermore, asylum seekers are prevented by law to from undertaking paid employment to supplement or replace this allowance.

Therefore, refugees and asylum seekers each have a different set of economic conditions to that of refugees.

An asylum seeker is someone who applies to become a refugee and is awaiting a decision from the Home Office, hence this usually means they are located to a dispersal area, such as to The Town, to await the decision.^{9 10} Furthermore, asylum seekers can also be moved to different accommodations and locations without choice whilst waiting a decision. Hence this can provide notions of ‘temporariness’ and associated insecurities in which asylum seekers may resist investing emotionally and culturally in the neighbourhood as a temporary residence.

However, asylum seekers can appeal decisions if they are refused, and around 30% of decisions to refuse asylum are overturned. Therefore, the time between making an application for refugee status and the final decision can vary between 3 months and up to 5 years or longer (House of Commons, Home Affairs Committee, 2017, p 14). For example, one family in this research had waited 7 years and their wait is ongoing. The notion of time in relation to a developing a sense of settlement is considered in the empirical chapters.

There is a further category of a failed asylum seekers and any dependent children if there is a genuine obstacle that prevents them from leaving the UK at the point their appeal rights are exhausted (The Home Office, 2018). However, there are no persons in this research that fits within this category.

⁸ A further £5 a week is given to pregnant women or a mother of a child under 3. Asylum seekers can apply for a one off £300 maternity payment if a baby is due in 8 weeks or less, or the baby is under 6 weeks old (The Children’s Society, 2013)

⁹ There are circumstances whereby asylum seekers, including children are held in detention centres. In 2018 63 children were held in detention (Silverman and Griffiths, 2019).

¹⁰ Persons seeking asylum need to apply for support, if they are homeless and without money (Gov.UK, no date) Therefore some may have their own resources or support from others such as a place to stay and therefore avoid dispersal. However, most asylum seekers arrive as destitute or with very limited economic resources.

1.7. Methods

This research applies qualitative methods to sensitively explore the experiences of refugee and asylum seeker children and family's settlement in The Town that was conducted between 2015 and 2018. This research employs age-appropriate methods to engage with children of primary school age, using art to introduce children to the subject areas that were considered in 9 semi-structured interviews. There are further semi structured interviews with 5 of the children's parents. This is a small sample that reflects the challenges of identifying children that fit the research criteria, of being primary school children who have lived in the town for at least one year. However, I also applied an ethnological approach as an observer/participant in 49 visits to the town's Refugee and Asylum Seeker Drop-In service.

The research is underpinned by a commitment to ethical practice, including a duty of care for all research participants. particularly given the sensitive nature of inquiry that considers the agency and informed consent of both children's and adult refugee and asylum seekers. Furthermore, given my position and status as a white, middle class male researcher and as a British citizen through birth, the need for a reflexive approach to this research is further discussed in Chapter 6. Ethical approval for this research was obtained from Northumbria University Department of Social Science Ethics Committee.

1.8. Gaps in literature

Bourdieu's Theory of Practice (such as habitus and forms of capital) is a useful tool to interrogate the intersectionality of the multiple issues of policy, children's agency, race, ethnicity, gender, identity, poverty, neighbourhood, and social class. Whilst there is much literature on these different areas this research attempts to tie these

areas together to interrogate the complexities of settlement within an economically disadvantaged working-class location.

There is emerging volume of literature on qualitative research methods to engage children and address the associated ethical complexities (Christenson and Prout 2002; White *et al.*, 2010; Lomax 2012; Mand, 2012; Block *et al.*, 2013). However, there is limited empirical research on forms of settlement and belonging for primary school refugee and asylum seeker children aged between 6 and 11 years. For example, Pritchard's *et al.*'s (2019) review of the settlement of refugee children in English and German literature found that most studies focused on children and youth between 12 and 19 years.

This research draws from the experience of primary school aged children that examines friendships between refugee and asylum seeker children and friends from the locality. There is emerging literature on friendships across ethnicities with primary school aged children's (Iqbal, Neal and Vincent, 2017; Neal, Vincent and Iqbal, 2016; Vincent, Neal and Iqbal, 2015). However, whilst this body of research builds upon Connolly's (1998; 2000; 2006) work to explore inter-cultural friendships, they omit the specific experiences of the refugee and asylum seeker children.

These examples from Vincent and Connolly are located within inner-city multicultural and superdiverse¹¹ areas; this is also evident as much of the literature on refugee and asylum seeker's settlement which also tend to be located in such areas (Strang, Baillot and Mignard, 2017). However, this research adds to the limited literature that considers immigration into predominantly white local populations.

There is much critical research on the policy response to 'unaccompanied children' that highlights the 'rights of the child' and their vulnerability (The Children's Society, 2012; Crawley, 2010; Hopkins, 2008). This thesis does engage with the policy dimensions of the 'right of the child' 'vulnerability' and 'agency' however, the focus is upon children and their families as they negotiate the fields of settlement and belonging.

¹¹ The term superdiversity was made prominent by Steven Vertovec to describe the dynamic interplay of populations in an area that is reflected in local identities of ethnicity, language, religious, cultural values and practices (Vertovec, 2007, p 3).

1.9. Structure of the thesis

Chapter 2 provides a rationale for adopting a mostly Bourdieusian theoretical framework for this work, including clarifying key terms associated with Bourdieu's Theory of Practice and signposting where these are addressed in the main body of this work.

Chapter 3 draws upon relevant literature to critically analyse the UK policies on refugees and asylum seekers. I argue that complexities of the settlement of refugees are ignored by policy and purposely restricts asylum seeker's ability to settle. Although children have access school and social networks in school, it is more by default than design, I further argue that conditions to support settlement are multifaceted in terms of social, cultural and economics and largely ignored across social and immigration policies.

This includes analysis of the 1999 Immigration Act that sets barriers that prevent vulnerable asylum seekers from settlement. Furthermore, this chapter provides a focus on the local political landscape of The Town, including a rise in support for the UK leaving the EU and complex mixed messages regarding the support of refugees and asylum seekers in the town.

There is a review of literature on the tools and opportunities to facilitate children's settlement in Chapter 4. This examines the relationships between the sample group and other local children that are developed in school. Chapter 5 examines the changing dynamics of families including children's development of self-identity.

Chapter 6 examines the research design for this study which is a qualitative approach that reflects Bourdieu's theoretical rationale and preference for reflexive research. Thus, the chapter examines the processes of data collection and the ethical and reflexive role of the researcher.

Chapters 7 to 12 report the empirical findings of this study. This includes Chapter 7 that considers the links between friendship and the accumulation of children's social

and cultural capital as tools for developing social networks towards achieving a sense of belonging.’ Chapter 8 considers the dynamics of cultural capital and education and how this is applied to the processes of settlement and belonging. Chapter 9 pulls together the different strands that impacts upon refugee and asylum seeker children’s emerging and complex identities. Chapter 10 analyses the role of religiosity both from refugees and asylum seekers perspectives and in the motivations and the work of Christian organisations, and volunteers. Chapter 11 considers the notion of neighbourhood and leisure and its interplay with participation and social inclusion. Chapter 12 considers neighbourhood relationships and dynamics of settlement in the context of poverty and social class. Chapter 13 provides a conclusion including recommendations for policy and practice. This recognises that the refugee and asylum seekers families in this study are mostly concerned with establishing a settled existence; and possess aspirations and cultural capital so that they can contribute to the UK economy rather than they endure a policy of social exclusion that has been implemented by successive governments.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

My qualitative research allows me to examine the everyday experiences of refugee and asylum seeker children and their families in their settlement into The Town. Engaging with the theoretical approaches of Bourdieu, Putnam and Goffman, provided me with a sociological and critical analysis of government policy in everyday practice and experiences.

This chapter sets out the theoretical framework for this thesis which will be used to help explain and analyse the complexities of refugees and asylum seekers settlement in The Town. Whilst this thesis is critical of the governments term 'integration' as used as a 'one size fits all' approach, there are aspects of 'integration' in literature and reports that are useful in examining the settlement of refugees and asylum seekers

Erel (2010, p 646) argues that in migration studies Putnam's theorizing of social capital has been more influential than Bourdieu's work; however, Bourdieu's theory enables a thicker description as it engages with how economic, cultural, social, and symbolic forms of capital interact. Furthermore, Bourdieu (1986) and Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) argue that social capital is implicated in social and ethnic inequalities. Additionally, there are critiques of Putnam's theory that suggests it does not adequately consider the link between social capital and the impact of economic inequality and national history (Gesthuizen, Van Der Meer and Scheepers, 2009; Allard, 2005, p 65). Yet on the study of 'settlement' it is economic inequality and national history that is so important to the study of migrants in the UK. Bourdieu defines symbolic capital whereby individuals project their cultural capital. In Goffman's theoretical approach of the 'presentation of self in everyday life' (1959) he argues that identities can be 'performed' rather than reflect a true reflection of self. Therefore, Goffman offers a further dimension to understand the ways in which

refugees and asylum seekers project an identity as a strategy to 'fit in' within the social fields they inhabit. Indeed, Bourdieu's theoretical ideas were influenced by Goffman's 'presentation of self' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 2013).

2.2. Research aims and objectives

This research aims to identify the structural, social and cultural factors that impact upon the settlement of refugee and asylum seeker primary school aged children and their parents into white working-class environments. To achieve this, I set out to:

1. Explore children's forms of 'capital' and its significance for a sense of belonging and settlement.
2. Explore children's forms of 'capital' in negotiating their multi-layered identities such as peer group status, ethnicity, and faith.
3. Explore the influences of parent's and carer's capital and how it enables and restricts children's settlement.
4. Identify and explore 'excluding' and 'including' factors for the parents of refugee and asylum seeker children. This includes the macro sense of UK refugee policies and the micro dynamics of neighbourhood.
5. Analyse and critique the Home Office understanding of 'integration'.

2.3. Policy discourse as symbolic and state violence

Throughout this study I engage with immigration policies and how they can be absorbed and recycled to apply symbolic and state violence towards refugees and asylum seekers in The Town. For example, Wieviorka (2014, p 639) argues that political debates present an image of 'integration' whereby society is a victim of external elements whereby cultural integrity and white hegemony is threatened by

'outsiders'. Hence, I was sensitive to these factors, and this provided a further focus in my research to explore how this is experienced from the participants in this research.

Chapter 3 argues that immigration policy can function as a form of symbolic violence towards refugees and asylum seekers as it fosters an exclusionary approach to the Government's notion of 'integration'. I explore the subtleness of this as Bourdieu provides a useful concept to identify symbolic violence as a gentle, invisible form of oppression whereby destructive behaviour and actions against people are often unrecognised (Bourdieu, 1997, p 192). However, I argue that the symbolic violence can develop into physical violence or 'state violence' (Jones *et al.*, (2017)). In Chapter 3 I argue that the hostile immigration policies and the politics of the EU referendum fuelled an increase in racist violence and stigmatised 'foreigners' including refugees and asylum seekers who felt threatened. Hence the EU referendum exposed attitudes and political ideological barriers that are problematic to the settlement of refugees and asylum seekers.

2.4. Theory of practice.

I apply Bourdieu's 'theory of practice' in this study to help make sense of social phenomena that influence and shape the complex dynamics of 'belonging and settlement'. Thus, I bring together the three key concepts of 'theory of practice' of 'habitus', 'field', and 'forms of capital'. These concepts are useful to examine the exclusiveness, exclusions and struggles of social life (Murphy 2013, p 123) which is central to examining the social, cultural, and economic dynamics between refugees and asylum seekers in this study and others in the locality.

Habitus can be summarised as a process of an individual's cultural conditioning through a combination of their psychological, historical and sociological embodiment (Bonilla-Silva, Goar and Embrick, 2006, p 247; Silva, 2016a). Therefore, habitus is a useful theoretical tool to help analyse the multiple cultural factors that impact upon the lived experiences of the refugees and asylum seekers in this study and to the

people and groups they interact with. Furthermore, Menell (1994, p 177) argues that 'identity' that is a higher awareness of 'habitus' as individuals have perceptions of who they are, which is an important aspect of a sense of settlement and belonging for refugees and asylum seekers. Whilst this applies to both parents and children's experiences, this study also follows James, Jenks and Prout (1998) and Connolly (2006) who apply the notion of an ongoing changing habitus through 'children's' interactions with others.

Reay (1998, p 527) defines familial habitus as the deeply ingrained system of perspectives, experiences, and predispositions that family members share. Atkinson argues that there is a problematic understanding of familial habitus, by placing all members of the family together as one unit does not reflect the practice of internal dynamics, struggles within the family such as gender as a division among parents, and a division between siblings (Atkinson, 2014, p 228; Atkinson, 2011, p 338). Like Atkinson (2016, p 7) I develop the notion of 'field' is a useful analytical tool for this study in order to explore different experiences of settlement within family members rather than a collective familial habitus. I argue that the number of fields that refugees and asylum seekers inhabit differ between children and their parents. Children have an advantage of attending schools in the locality and therefore the opportunity in engaging with other local children. However, the parents, particularly asylum seeker parents in this study are more likely to have an isolated existence due to restrictions formed by policy and social and cultural differences to that of most of the local population.

I also draw from Thomson (2012, p 65) who states that 'field' is inclusive of specific historical and local, national and international and relational context and therefore is a useful tool to investigate forms and spaces of settlement. A social field is not insular but is influenced by the interaction with other social fields and the wider society (Rawolle and Lingard, 2013, p 126; Forchtner and Schneickert, 2016, p 294). Hence, it is important to see each social field in this study can be influenced by local and national political fields in relation to Brexit and policies of hostile environment.

Bourdieu's notion of 'field', is a social space in which interactions, transactions and events occur (Thomson (2012, p 65). Each field has a unique form that are structured by inequalities and are a space of competition over forms of capital

(Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Rawolle and Lingard, 2013, p 124). This is reflected by Wacquant (1996) who states that 'field' is a space of conflict and competition, a site in which individuals vie to establish monopoly over forms of capital and establish forms of authority within that "field".

Thomson (2012, p 65) uses the analogy of field as a 'sports field', with each shaped differently according to the game that is played on them that 'they have their own rules, histories, whereby each player needs to learn the skills needed to participate. This analogy of a sports field and its rules and histories is relevant to Bourdieu's notion of 'doxa'. Bourdieu defines doxa as a set of fundamental and unconscious beliefs that are self-evident and intimately linked to field (Deer, 2012, p 155; Robertson, 2013, p 372). Furthermore, Wallace, (2018, p 476) adds to this by asserting that doxa refers to taken-for-granted assumptions that influence the dispositions and relations within social fields'. I apply the notion of doxa in this study mostly through reflections of my observations as the taken for granted assumptions are mostly unspoken, such as gender behaviours and interactions in the family, that I argue are pivotable in the nexus of social inclusion and exclusion.

Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) proposed that cultural capital is the accumulation of knowledge, behaviours, and skills that a person can mobilise to establish one's cultural competence and social status. Therefore, for refugees and asylum seekers to gain status or acceptance with the neighbourhood it would be useful to demonstrate shared cultural competence.

Bourdieu (1986) refers to the notion of an embodied cultural capital in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body. This includes embedded dispositions of knowledge, behaviours, and skills, including competency in language that can either support or provide barriers to settlement. Bourdieu states symbolic capital is a symbolic form of cultural capital with a value that is recognised within a social field (Hess, 2011; Grenfell 2014. p 88). I draw upon Bourdieu's notion of symbolic capital and how it relates to Goffman's notion of 'performance' to examine the actions of refugees and asylum seekers as a way to seek belonging and acceptance in the social fields of The Town (Blommaert, 2015). Goffman's refers to this to dramaturgical analysis of symbolic interactionism, whereby people present

themselves differently in different social situations to gain acceptance in different social networks (Goffman, 1959). Furthermore, Schneider and Lang (2014) argue that migrants often need to project socio-cultural competence within different social fields as a need to survive. This is a useful theoretical analysis given that refugee and asylum seeker families may find themselves excluded from local social and cultural norms and practices as I discuss further in 2.5 which discusses the challenges of cultural upheaval

I also draw upon from Putnam's theoretical approach of social capital who defines social capital as the social networks that have mutual value between individuals. (2000, p 19). Putnam makes the distinction between 'bonding' capital and 'bridging' capital. I apply these distinctions in the analysis of friendships and contact that refugees and asylum seekers develop, particularly amongst children who have the greater range of social contacts via education. Putnam (2000, p 23) argues that social bonding creates strong loyalty between people equivalent to a kind of sociological 'super-glue' and tends to reinforce exclusive identities.

'Linking social capital' is a term that is added to Putnam's analysis which represent the links to those who are entirely outside of the day to day spaces that people share but can be a leverage a wider range of resources (Field, 2017, p 25). Ndofo-Tah *et al.*, (2019) defines social links to institutions such as local and central government services. In terms of The Town this is equated to access to police and other public services and politicians which I discussed in Chapter 12. Indeed, Putnam dedicates much of his work to recognising that social capital links to civic life. This is addressed in Chapter 10 that draws from Putnam to examine the link between religiosity and the civic duty of volunteers in supporting refugees and asylum seeker's settlement into local neighbourhoods.

However, Putnam (2007) argues that immigration and diversity tends to reduce neighbourhood social capital as people tend to distrust people belonging to other ethnicities (Putnam, 2007).¹² However, Gesthuizen, Van Der Meer and Scheepers, (2009) challenge this with pan European research and concludes that it is not ethnic

diversity but economic inequality which is more important. This argument has relevance to the polemic politics of Brexit and nationalism in which I discussed in Chapter 3.

However, I place value in Morrow's argument that Putnam gives limited consideration to children's relationships (Morrow, 1999, p 752). Furthermore, Anthias, (2007, p 791) argues that Putnam does not adequately address gender in the processes of forming social capital. Therefore, I apply analysis of this throughout the empirical chapters in making sense of both children's and a gendered social networks and experiences of settlement.

I argue that the main restriction to developing social and cultural capital and the means to establish settlement is the poverty experienced by refugee and asylum seeker families. Morrow (1999, p 755) argues that Bourdieu places economic capital is at the root of all other types of capital that produce social inequalities. Hence economic capital can determine the opportunities to be converted into other forms of capital. This is represented in the empirical chapters whereby the lack of economic resources means asylum seekers mostly have no or little resources to obtain accommodation and subsistence, hence they are then dispersed to areas of no choice. Children's participation in activities with friends can be restricted due to lack of money and therefore impacts on their ability to develop social capital with friends.

2.5. Hysteresis and mental health

Throughout my study I was conscious that for many refugees and asylum seekers that there may be clear or underlying poor mental health conditions as a product of war or other traumatic reasons for displacement along with the demands of adjustment to a new environment in an alien country (Frykman, 2009, p 91).

Bourdieu argues that habitus changes constantly in response to new experiences which varies according to the individual's degree of flexibility or rigidity and therefore is a lifelong forming process (Bourdieu, 2000 p 161; Freidman 2015, p 131).

Furthermore, Friedman (2016) draws from Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) to identify

the notion of 'hysteresis' in which a sharp and wholesale cultural change, for example moving between countries, as experienced by asylum seekers, can provide emotional trauma with an impact upon their mental health. Bourdieu states that 'hysteresis' denotes change when there is a mismatch between one's primary habitus and the habitus of a new field which can have an alienating effect (Hardy 2008, p 132; The emotional-affective aspects associated with hysteresis play a very important role in immigration as a transformation experience (Resnyansky, 2016, p 2062). The section considers the link between hysteresis and the prevalence of mental health of refugees and asylum seekers.¹³

Simandan (2013 p 392) argues that international migration, can be a process of developing 'wisdom' through an embodied experience that can build resilience through gaining knowledge for dealing with life's problems. However, this sudden change of lived experience from, for example, an Asian or African country to a western country will create an emotional challenge (Friedman, 2016 p 131).

Hysteresis in refugees and asylum seekers may also be a results of sudden downward social mobility due to a loss of professional status. (Schuster and Majidi, 2013; Schuster and Majidi, 2015).¹⁴ Reay (2017, p 109) provides an example of this downward social mobility, as University educated refugees and asylum seekers from Somalia, Eritrea, Nigeria and Uganda find their institutional capital is not transferable to the UK where there is no recognition of their academic qualifications.

It is proposed that refugee women are more seriously affected by displacement and are more likely to report poor health and depression than men (Burnett and Peel, 2001; Phillimore, et al 2007, p 6). However, Shimoni & Clark (2003, p 555) suggests that refugee and asylum seeker fathers face multiple interrelated stressors of underemployment or unemployment. The loss of self-esteem for fathers can also place further pressure upon them as they strive to maintain their image of a

¹³ There is a high prevalence of mental health in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods are linked to a high level of insecurity because of low pay, precarious employment and long-term unemployment (Phillimore et al 2007: Trilling, 2014 p 41; Fitzsimons et al., 2017).

¹⁴ Schuster and Majidi (2015) recognise the cultural re-adaptation of returning refugees to their country of origin can also cause traumatic re acclimatisation to cultural norms with experience of both symbolic and physical violence from others, in an example of this Schuster and Majidi a respondent stated: "they all bother me because I went to the UK. They say I lost my culture, became a kafir ...all sorts of insults".

traditional masculinity and of being a successful adult to their children. This gendered divide provides a range of empirical questions in terms of different experiences and barriers to a feeling of settlement.

The cultural upheaval associated with seeking asylum and the nature of the refugee experience brings with it particular psychological problems for both adults and children (Ager and Strang, 2004 p 8; Phillimore et al 2007; Manyena and Brady 2007 p 20; The Children's Society, 2013a p 21). Research in the USA demonstrated that refugees suffered significantly more mental health problems than their non-refugee's counterparts (Phillimore et al 2007, p 5).

Sleijpen, et al (2016 p 158) states that cultural displacement can place young refugees at serious risk of developing adverse mental health conditions including post-traumatic stress disorder. Furthermore, Quinn, (2014) who also found that there is a stigma associated with mental health difficulties from both host population and from within different cultural beliefs of refugee and asylum seeker.

Putnam (2000) makes links between good mental health and high levels of social capital. Furthermore, Mitschke & Kelly (2017) draw from Teodorescu et al. (2012) who found that post-migration stressors such as having a weak social network is significantly associated with mental illness. Whilst Jeanotte (2003, p 38) argues that social cultural and economic capital are all instrumental in promoting well-being. Therefore, social, cultural and economic capital is likely to improve well-being and mental health and the ability to settle in anew environment.

2.6. Conclusion

Bourdieu's Theory of Practice, Putnam's notion of social capital and Goffman's notion of dramaturgy are a useful framework to explore empirical questions about the capacity for refugees and asylum seekers to develop social networks and forms of settlement. Bourdieu's Theory of Practice is a useful tool to investigate the accumulation of social capital, that takes time to accrue, and its conversion to cultural and economic capital (Field, 2017, p 4). This is important given that refugees

and asylum seekers arrive in The Town with very little, if any, capital that has relevance to a new place and to new social fields. Therefore, the ways that refugee and asylum families and individuals navigate the interrelated dynamics of capital is a prominent area to explore in the empirical chapters of this study. Whilst Goffman's notion of 'performance' allows us to understand how participants adapt towards gaining a sense of social inclusion. Furthermore, this is a useful theoretical tool to explore if the government's notion of 'integration' is a clear and realistic proposition given the complex 'social fields' of refugees and asylum seekers lives and that of their neighbours.

The Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 determine that asylum seekers are mostly excluded from or have limited access to means to settle. However, asylum seeker children rather than their parents do have the advantage of attending school which can be a powerful means of settlement through the social contact with their peers who also share the same neighbourhood.

Bourdieu's Theory of Practice this can offer the appropriate theoretical tools to address the aims of the thesis. Children are social actors and therefore, the structural, social, and cultural factors that Bourdieu examines, will impact upon the refugee and asylum seeker children in this study and their settlement into the locality. Thus, Bourdieu's theory has helped to shape the objectives of this research which considers the form of capital, habitus and 'field'.

Chapter 3

Policy Background

3.1. Introduction

Laws and policies not only 'manage migration', but also are critical to the very production of social relations. They interact with how people imagine both themselves and immigrants (Allen et al., 2018, p 4).

Crisp (2018) reinforces Allen et al's, quote by recognising that states and international organizations play important roles in determining how refugees are treated within international treaties but further argues that local authorities and local communities also play important roles in managing the displacement of refugees. In this Chapter I argue that despite the international obligations towards asylum seekers the key UK policies are constructed to exclude and marginalise asylum seekers from participation in society. I examine this through drawing upon the macro trends of global and UK refugee policies and how this is reflected in the micro dynamics of The Town. The focus of this chapter is to interrogate the impact of policy on the refugee and asylum seeker families in this study, whilst the following chapter 4 will specifically focus upon policy and the settlement of refugee and asylum seeker children.

In 1998, Nick Hardwick of the Refugee Council wrote in The Guardian that the proposed dispersal policy was a 'nightmare' whereby asylum seekers are to be scattered across the country and isolated on 'sink estates' in monocultural areas (Mallinson, 2006). This critical theme has continued since, with concern about stigmatising economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods with the settlement of socially isolated asylum seekers at risk of working class racism and hostility

(Robinson, 2003; Mulvey, 2011; Hudson, 2014, p 54; Kearns and Whitley, 2015, p 2123).

At the same time there are strands of literature that explores the impact of social policy on the structural and symbolic violence and territorial stigma that impacts upon working class populations in such working class locations (Wacquant, 2008; Shildrick and MacDonald, 2013; Tyler, 2015; McKenzie, 2017; Reay, 2017; Winlow, Hall and Treadwell, 2017; Shildrick, 2018).

This chapter explore aspects of social policy that set the context for the experiences of the refugees and asylum seekers in this research. I analyse how dispersal is a process for change for both newly arrived migrants and the local population (Kirkwood, McKinlay and McVittie, 2015; Platts-Fowler and Robinson, 2015). To examine this, I make the distinction between refugees who have access to employment and welfare resources and asylum seekers who are heavily restricted as they undergo the process of claiming asylum (as previously discussed in Chapter 1.6). Refugees can undertake employment and access to public services and benefits. Thus, in theory, refugees have opportunities to access employment and the associated economic, cultural, and social capital (Ndofar-Tah *et al.* 2019). However, as I show in the empirical data, refugees may experience multiple barriers that increase the risk of unemployment and underemployment (Phillimore and Goodson, 2006; Stewart and Mulvey, 2014). Thus a lack of economic capital for both refugees and asylum seekers can hinder access to other capital (Bourdieu, Wacquant and Farage, 2012) such as social capital which is an important to reduce isolation and promote better wellbeing through a sense of belonging (Strang, Baillot and Mignard, 2017).

This Chapter examines UK policy beginning with the pivotal 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act that sets out the dispersal of asylum seekers which brought the issue of asylum to a local level for the first time in Britain (Finney and Robinson, 2008, p 397). The policy of dispersal places asylum seekers into areas of social and economic deprivation including predominantly white working-class areas such as The Town.

The chapter then is developed by providing a close examination of the main themes of settling into predominantly white working-class dispersal areas. Thus, providing a comparative perspective of perceptions of an undeserving working class to that the notion of underserving refugees and asylum seekers. The work examines the spatial context of dispersal whereby marginal local populations share spaces alongside refugees and asylum seekers and suffer different degrees of political and symbolic violence. This includes the notion of territorial stigma of dispersal areas by use of racial and poverty coded language such as 'ghettoization'. Hence the mix of a stigmatised host 'and' refugee and asylum seekers adds complex dimensions to social relations in these localities.

This chapter further argues that due to government measures of austerity the local authority has become mostly impotent in the allocation of resources to support the settlement of refugees and asylum seekers. However, the chapter considers the emerging symbolic and polemic narratives between traditional Labour Party support for refugees and asylum seekers and the significant growth of right, and far right, anti-immigration politics in The Town that has become more visible during the EU referendum.

The chapter closes by providing an example of the closure of a local proactive voluntary agency and the efforts of volunteerism in church organisations to support refugees and asylum seekers on a range of needs. Thus, this acts out the concept of volunteerism and the community sponsorship of refugees that fits within the then government agenda of the then 'The Big Society' through promoting a culture of volunteering to tackle social problems.

3.2. A hostile environment

It is argued that the humanitarian objective of global social policy is at risk as it has to be applied in the context of increasingly populist anti-immigration and nationalist ideology (Foner and Simon, 2015; Flemmen and Savage, 2017, p S233). In this section I examine this populist ideology and its emerging focus on the preservation

of the UK borders, particularly in a post Brexit protectionist political environment. I consider how this emerging hostile policy and environment is negotiated by the refugee and asylum seeker participants in this research. Hence this study explores how a sense of 'identity and belonging' is negotiated by refugee and asylum seeker families as they attempt to settle in The Town.

This section begins by setting out the notion of national identity as 'political' 'imaginary' and 'exclusionist' (Anderson, 1991). This will always place refugees and asylum seekers as interlopers into an imagined world (Schinkel, 2013). Hence, I identify policies that aims to systematically remove the capacity for asylum seekers to gain a sense of settlement, whilst applying symbolic violence upon refugees in what Goffman would refer to as a process to discredited identities (Goffman, 1963).

The Labour government introduced the Asylum and Immigration Act in 1999 at the time when asylum applications and the accompanying moral panic were at their height (Mulvey, 2011, p 40; Robinson, 2003, p 170). Robinson argues that the panic was two-fold, firstly, that it was perceived and endorsed by media that the UK had no control of its borders, but also the 'panic' towards defending neighbourhood spaces whereby your neighbour may not speak the same language, have different cultural codes of conduct, and possibly threatening criminal tendencies. In short, Robinson refers to the moral panic whereby refugees and asylum seekers are portrayed as the threat to the existing purity of space (Robinson, 2003, p 170).

It is argued that compulsory dispersal is the formally structured social exclusion of refugees and separates asylum seekers from mainstream society (Hynes, 2003 p 2). Cohen, Humphries and Mynott (2002) suggest that the Act was based upon the presumption that most applications will be refused. Indeed, around 30% of decisions to refuse asylum are overturned, when people have 'found a good lawyer to represent them' (House of Commons, Home Affairs Committee, 2017, p 14: Tonkiss, 2018, p 10). Therefore, the time between making an application for refugee status and the final decision can vary between 3 months and up to 5 years or longer (Home Affairs Committee, 2017, p 14). Consequently, the term 'asylum seeker' is excluded from any government policy and papers on any discussion of 'integration strategies.'

The term 'hostile environment' was presented as a government policy in 2013 by Theresa May the then Home Secretary, including stating "we can deport first and hear appeals later," in reference to those who may be exploiting or abusing immigration rules (Peat, 2018). From 2013 onwards The Home Office reinforced the hostile environment through a raft of policies and initiatives that have legitimised xenophobia and racism towards immigrants (Burnett, 2016, p 10; Yuval-Davis, Wemyss and Cassidy, 2017; Jones *et al.*, 2017, p 155). This includes The 2014 Immigration Act, and the following Immigration Act 2016 which contained further hostile measures which increased surveillance of asylum seekers that are argued to be examples of oppressive and symbolic and spatial violence (Yuval-Davis, Wemyss and Cassidy, 2017).

The policy agenda of creating the hostile environment is to reduce the 'pull factors' of the UK (Dorling, 2013, p 3; Mayblin, 2017). Furthermore, sections of the media use the language of spatial metaphors such as 'swamped', 'soaring', 'waves', 'masses' and 'flooding in' to exaggerate the numbers of people seeking refuge in the UK (Smart *et al.*, 2005; Valentine, 2010, p 531; Philo, Briant and Donald, 2013, p 33; Parker, 2015). At the time of this study The Town had around 100 asylum seekers, including children and adults, in a population of over 92,000 which is far from the notion of the above metaphors.¹⁵ The local newspaper became a useful source to consider if the national media and populist ideas and language are reflected in the local newspaper in The Town.

3.3. Local authority policy: the complexities of the left and right-wing Politics

As my research developed, I began to explore the links between the anti-immigration politics and the impact this may have on the sense of safety and belonging of the refugees and asylum seekers in my study. This was in response to the fast changing and complex political landscape of The Town and the implications this has for the

¹⁵ As discussed in Chapter 1.5.

acceptance of refugees and asylum seekers. During the timescale of my fieldwork there was a complex pattern of Labour politician's support for refugees and asylum seekers through endorsing the work of the Drop-In. However, there was also an increasing public presence a of right-wing anti-immigration political movements such as UKIP in The Town who were concerned with the reduction in immigration (Winlow, Hall and Treadwell, 2017, p 76). These are often expressed by examples of symbolic and physical violence (which is covered in further detail in the empirical chapters of this study).

The Labour Party lost its majority in The Town in May 2019 to a coalition of right learning Independent councillors and Conservative Councillors. This council election also elected one UKIP councillor and a right-wing party councillor representing 'For Britain Movement' (Marko, 2019). The council's move to the political right was confirmed four months later whereby 10 of the Independent councillors joined the Brexit party, whose manifesto presents an anti-immigration stance (The Brexit Party, 2020). A Brexit Councillor was later expelled from the party after allegedly making extreme Islamophobic and racial comments on film to an undercover reporter (Fallon, 2019).¹⁶

The arrival of a far right 'For Britain Movement', and the continuous presence of the UKIP represents a risk of symbolic violence, and physical violence towards refugees and asylum seekers in The Town. It is argued that the emergence of right wing politics enables people to be comfortable to express their racism as the Brexit result was a call to expel black and brown citizens and white European migrants, which in their eyes, were all outsiders (Virdee and McGeever, 2018, p 1808). During the time of the EU referendum, in which 70 % of the vote in the Town voted to leave, there was a spike in race hate crimes in The Town (Payne, 2016).¹⁷

¹⁶ This includes boasting of how he tried to bury a pig's head into the foundations of the Ahmadiyya Mosque film (Fallon 2019).

¹⁷ However, Safer Town Partnership said the increase in incidents was a positive sign as one of its key aims is to encourage victims to come forward and report it, which is encouraged by the Drop In as discussed in Chapter 12

Arguably, the presence of the Brexit Party in The Town Council is largely symbolic, since the privatisation of asylum seeker accommodation¹⁸ and the 'council mandate' to support refugees and asylum seekers has largely been removed (Darling, 2016 b, p 494). Furthermore, funding for local authorities is steadily being removed, including loss of support to community groups, including the loss of local authority staff who may have had expertise and experience of supporting refugee and asylum seeker groups (Darling, 2016 a).

The privatisation of asylum seeker accommodation has removed the decision making from elected local authorities. Hence the emerging right wing politics that are seen as a response to the growing disaffection from the policy making processes (Winlow, Hall and Treadwell, 2017). The dispersal policy was a strand of The Asylum and Immigration Act in 1999 which brought the issue of asylum to a local level for the first time in Britain (Finney and Robinson, 2008). Thus, applying a form of global to local debate into The Town which, which has previously been stated, had been left behind in the increasing globalised world. Hence refugees and asylum seekers have become casualties of this political situation, placing them as bystanders and scapegoats in the process.

It is widely argued that in the unstable social disadvantaged localities of dispersal it is often asylum seekers who are then blamed by working-class populations for their communities social decline. Waite, Valentine and Lewis (2014, p 316) draw from Cohen (1972) to argue that asylum seekers and refugees have become a classic 'folk devils' which blamed as a cause of hurt. Waite, Valentine and Lewis (2014, p 325) further argue that this hurt experienced by local populations reflect personal insecurities including: 'psychological hurt (fear of being cheated), material hurt (unjust allocation of resources), spatial hurt (threat of change to communities)'. I link this analysis to the levels of racism experiences by the refugees and asylum seekers in this study in Chapter 12.

¹⁸ In 2012 the Home Office implemented COMPASS to transfer asylum seeker accommodation contracts from local authorities to private contractors (Darling, 2016 p 230). COMPASS (Commercial and Operating Managers Procuring Asylum Support).

3.4. Dispersal

The dispersal policy results in many asylum seekers being accommodated in communities where they face social isolation (Phillimore and Goodson, 2006; Spicer, 2008; Phillimore, 2011b; Netto, 2011, p 138). I argue how the dispersal of asylum seekers is problematic as it is a mechanism of marginalisation and social exclusion that removes the opportunities refugees and asylum seekers have to engage with others in the local population (Hek, 2005, p 9; Spicer, 2008; Stewart, 2012, p 26).

I begin by examining the impact of the Labour Government's Asylum and Immigration Act 1999, that increases refugee and asylum seeker's isolation and reduces access to social capital. This is followed by examining the notion that mixing diasporic groups of refugees and asylum seekers with poor working-class populations will result in the 'ghettoization' of places. Thus, producing spaces that simultaneously stigmatises poverty, reinforces class inequality and stigmatises refugees and asylum seekers.

Thus, no choice dispersal limits opportunities in geographical areas whereby asylum seekers have no connection with or initial knowledge of supportive community-based resources (Beirens *et al.*, 2007, p 224; Grzymala-Kazłowska and Phillimore, 2017). Furthermore, placing asylum seekers in a dispersal area is not necessarily permanent as they may also experience compulsory multiple moves between dispersal areas as experienced by asylum seeker families in this study. The impact of multiple moves upon asylum seekers is a neglected topic in the academic literature other than Stewart and Shaffer (2015) who recognise that no choice multiple moves require asylum seeker to periodically reacclimatise and make new starts.

Nearly 80% of the initial dispersal locations in England were in the 88 most multiply deprived districts identified by the Social Inclusion Unit in 2000 (Hynes and Sales, 2010) p 46). This typifies the dispersal area within The Town that suffers from high levels of deprivation and access to low quality housing (see Chapter 1.5).

It is argued that poor deprived neighbourhoods such as dispersal areas, suffer stigmatisation leading 'others' to disassociate from such localities (Shildrick, 2018; Slater 2018). Furthermore, Reay *et al.* (2007 p 1049) for example, refers to Bourdieu (1993) that a moral stigma is frequently attached to those who are worst-off in class terms. Therefore, the notion of moral stigma that is attached to people in the dispersal area such as The Town whereby the perceived deviant behaviour of the working class generates hostility and contempt from those above (Goffman, 1963, p 146; Reay, 2009, p 11).

Wacquant, (2007) critiques Goffman's (1963) seminal analysis of stigma that excludes 'the blemish of place' that can disqualify residents from acceptance by others. However, Bourdieu (1993) argues that there are stigmatised neighbourhoods that symbolically degrades those who live in them. Wacquant (2007) adds to this by using the term 'territorial stigma'. Waite, Valentine and Lewis (2014, P 325) identified these such areas have vulnerable populations whereby this stigmatisation has become a device to justify punitive welfare policies directed at those who are at the bottom of the class structure.

The empirical evidence in this study is used to interrogate how refugee and asylum seeker families develop strategies to support the social mobility of their children. For example, I consider the human capital that refugees and asylum seekers in this study can bring to their children and wider society as many have experience of higher or technical education and professional expertise and experience that could be useful to dispersal localities (Finney and Robinson, 2008; Morrice, 2012; Platts-Fowler and Robinson, 2015; Piętka-Nykaza, 2015).

Significantly, Algan, Bisin and Verdier (2012, p 29) research found that many immigrants attended higher education prior to immigration. Many of the adults in refugee and asylum seeker families have adults who embody values associated with British 'middle-classness' through being professional, and likely to be university educated (embodied in habitus). Hence, I consider if refugees and asylum seekers apply middle class values that counters the deficit working class stigma associated with such locations.

3.5. White working-class hostility

I was eager to test if the arguments proposed in the literature that dispersal policies expose refugees and asylum seekers to 'white working-class hostility'. Hence this was an important strand to this research as it relates to refugee and asylum seeker family's sense of being 'outsiders' vulnerable to symbolic and physical violence in the predominantly white working-class dispersal areas of The Town.

Much of the literature follows a narrative that refugees and asylum seeker settlement into working class areas face barriers due to the government's policy of hostile environment coupled with the racism of local populations such as The Town. Valentine's (2010, p 525) research suggest that working class people were significantly more likely to express prejudice against minority ethnic groups than 'middle class' people.¹⁹ Valentine (2010, p 528) continues that well before the analysis of the 2016 European Referendum that minority groups serve as a lightning-rod for 'working class' people's own sense of frustration and economic disenfranchisement.

However, there is some research that shows how positive interaction with neighbours can significantly influence new immigrants' perception of being welcomed into local societies (Hebbani, Colic-Peisker and Mackinnon, 2018). Whilst the literature is overwhelmingly concerned with hostility towards refugees and asylum seekers from white working-class neighbours; on closer inspection there are examples that offer more nuanced findings. For example, research of asylum seekers interactions in Scotland acknowledged that at local level resentment and hostility existed alongside welcome and support (Bowes, Ferguson and Sim, 2009, p 41). Whilst Dwyer's (2012, p 8) research of refugees and asylum seekers found that negative relationships with neighbours slightly outnumbered positive ones. Further research produces examples of refugees and asylum seekers who experienced positive relationships with neighbours (Franks, 2006, p 17; Hussain and Silver, 2014,

¹⁹ Although Flemmen and Savage, (2017) argue that expressions of white racism is not exclusively working class, for example, they discusses the prominence of racism amongst middle class Britons.

p 58; Sim, 2014, p 11). Therefore, these nuanced and contrasting narratives is an area that generated questions for my empirical study.

There is a volume of literature that proclaims the failure of multiculturalism (Cantle, 2012; Thomas *et al.*, 2017). It is argued that multiculturalism is perceived as both imaginary and threatens the white working class economic position and their cultural values (Valentine, 2010, p 534). This includes perceptions of white working class feeling of disenfranchisement whereby positive discrimination and celebration of ethnic diversity equals preferential treatment in the allocation of resources (Wren, 2007; Garner, 2012, p 453; Thomas *et al.*, 2017; Winlow, Hall and Treadwell, 2017). Therefore, given the cultural and ethnic mix of newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers in The Town an exploration of these arguments are reflected in the empirical chapters.

Robertson (2013, p 376) views neighbourhood as a 'field' as a space of conflict and competition. Given that most refugees and asylum seekers in The Town live physically next door to white working-class neighbours this a key area to explore in understanding of refugees and asylum seekers everyday experiences of relationships with their closest neighbours.

As previous discussed across this chapter, the policy of hostile environment is concerned with British citizenship that produces exclusionary welfare and legal conditions for immigrants. Bauder (2008, p 320) argues that formally recognised citizenship is an endorsement of membership of a national community and a tool of collective inclusion and exclusion. Yet, the possession of the legal status of citizenship brings to an individual a form of 'institutional capital' is an area that is under explored in sociological literature.²⁰ Bauder (2008, p 315) argues that citizenship is a strategically produced form of capital, which manifests itself in the bureaucratic formal legal and institutional fields. However, the Casey Report into 'integration' widens this argument by stating that British Citizenship has cultural and symbolic value (Casey, 2016, p 168).

²⁰ The Windrush Scandal is a stark example of how citizenship is a valuable commodity in the eyes of the both the victims and of the State apparatus.

Therefore, the symbolic capital of citizenship as a form of belonging has the potential to manifest itself in day to day lives in the relationship between refugees and asylum seekers and members of the local population. For example, rhetorical proclamations such as 'go home', 'bogus asylum seekers', and 'you don't belong here', by neighbours who are UK citizens (Spicer, 2008; Platts-Fowler and Robinson, 2015; Jones *et al.*, 2017).

However, there is overwhelming evidence that this racist rhetoric is directed at 'non-white' people irrespective of their citizenship status, particularly in relation to the result of the EU referendum (Burnett, 2017; Miah, 2018; Virdee and McGeever, 2018). However, neighbours who indulge in the symbolic violence of such rhetoric reinforces their own position as insiders' who 'belong' whilst reinforcing the precarious status of refugees and asylum seekers as 'non-citizens' and 'outsiders'.

Bonilla-Silva, Goar and Embrick (2006, p 247) suggest that 'white habitus' creates a sense of racial solidarity ("we whites") and cultural conditioning that the white lifestyle is the correct and "normal" way; thus perpetuating and recycling whites' racialized attitudes and prejudice toward other ethnicities and race. Putnam (2000) argues that there is a 'dark side' of social capital that reinforces the network of insiders and can reinforce intolerance and excludes outsiders.

3.6. The precarity of accommodation in dispersal areas: commonality between refugees and asylum seekers and the working-class

The local housing market can impact on individual's experience of settlement (Ndofar-Tah *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, I wished to explore the impact of frequent moving and the precarity of accommodation for refugees and asylum seekers and the precarity of other residents who are tenants of private landlords. This has the potential to undermine the local stability that is needed to support refugee and asylum seeker's settlement and development of reciprocal social relations (Platts-Fowler and Robinson, 2015).

In 2012 the Home Office marked a significant shift in policy by transferring asylum seeker accommodation contracts from local authorities to private contractors (Darling, 2016a p 230).²¹ Similarly, most councils have used the 1988 Housing Act²² to transferred ownership of council housing stock to external social housing providers who tend to have more stringent tenancy conditions to reduce and eliminate anti-social behaviour. Therefore excluding people and families who have history of anti- social behaviour or rent arrears (Shelter, no date).

Thus, the private sector is having a 'residual' role in accommodating low income households for those who are unable to access social housing and include disproportionate households who are living in poverty (Kemp, 2011, p 1020).

Consequently, there are 4.3 million people in the private rented sector that contains a third of all people in poverty (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2015). Conditions in these locations dominated by the private market can be characterised as "chaotic" and tenanted by people whose lifestyle or resources mean that this accommodation is all that they can generally obtain (Wadhams, 2011 p 23). Many of these tenants whose poverty and associated, anti-social behaviour, drug misuse results in some households making frequent moves with complex housing careers (Wadhams, 2011 p 23; Perry, 2012, p 16).²³ Furthermore, Clarke *et al.*(2017,p 24) identifies a growing sense of precarity for tenants in the private sector as evictions both forced and through a complexity of other reasons such as physical and mental illness or losing a job, or reduction in income (Clarke *et al.*, 2017). Housing in dispersal locations are becoming dominated by private landlords that is inclusive of poor-quality, badly managed lettings, as evident in The Town, that inevitably has repercussions for the neighbourhood (Perry, 2012, p 16).

Wacquant (2014, p 1668) identifies that the growing trend towards private accommodation is reflective of the fragmentation of the working-class. The growth of poverty in areas dominated by the private housing sector fits with Wacquant's notion

²¹ As discussed in Chapter 3.5

²² The 1988 Housing Act which provides the legislative framework for the transfer of local authority rented housing stock to newly formed social housing companies.

²³ Rhodes (2011) research into the BNP identify a white working class and lower working-class membership which distances itself from such 'scruffy' neighbourhoods.

of the 'form of territorial stigmatization'(Wacquant, 2008). This supports Powell's (2015, p 8) argument that this current housing trend produces a process of marginalizing already stigmatized households and social groups contained within an "area of relegation.'

Thus, urban housing policy and asylum seeker policy brings together marginalised refugees and asylum seekers alongside marginalised working-class tenants in which both may have significant complex issues. Therefore, in the empirical chapters Chapter 12 considers if neighbours social problems and behaviour causes anxiety to refugees and asylum seekers. For example, between 2016 and 2017 there were 4 major criminal incidents in streets that are occupied by asylum seekers in The Town. This includes three victims of murder, all three were from the locality and acknowledged as vulnerable people.

Bowes, Ferguson and Sim, (2009) argue that the deprivation in the localities in which where asylum seekers are placed has made the processes of developing relationship with neighbours more difficult. This undermines the stability that is needed to facilitate long term settlement.

A study for the Department for Communities and Local Government showed, frequent movers suffer several disadvantages, such as not feeling part of the community, having poorer access to services such as doctors and schools, and feeling unsettled and isolated (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2006). Therefore, the residential precarity of frequent movers suggest that they have limited opportunity to build allegiance, or long-term commitment or social investment in such neighbourhoods.

Lewis et al. (2015, p 581) uses the term 'hyper-precarity' in relation to the immigration and employment. However, given the temporal and instability of asylum seekers status, hyper-precarity is an appropriate term to describe their position which undermines the stability needed to integrate into society.

Whilst asylum seekers have no choice in their accommodation, those who achieve refugee status have 28 days to vacate accommodation and continue overwhelming to use the private rented sector. Therefore, those with newly acquired refugee status

need to quickly move on or become homeless. Furthermore, the lack of economic capital, limits choice to the low-cost housing in private tenancies within the existing dispersal area.

In the years immediately after the dispersal policy was implemented Robinson, (2003) cited by Stewart and Shaffer (2015, p 21) found approximately 20% of asylum seekers on gaining refugee status migrated to London, Birmingham and Manchester. Robinson found that the reasons given for leaving dispersal sites included racism, and harassment and isolation as well as a sense of vulnerability and a desire to live in locations perceived as more tolerant and multicultural (Stewart and Shisheva, 2015).

The length of time that it takes to establish refugee status may have an impact upon the decision process to stay with The Town or move on. The Home Office suggests that the process within six months with more complex cases should take longer (Casey, 2016, p 33), however, the longer it takes can either provide some sense of continuity and stability or even a sense of belonging to a locality (Netto, 2011 p 137;

Stewart and Shaffer (2015, p 37) argues that the presence of children in families may impact upon the parents decision to settle or move on (Stewart and Shaffer, 2015, p 82; Wilding 2018). Furthermore, Spicer's research (2008, pp 492- 507) indicate that places may become sites of refugee and asylum seeker children's attachment or belonging such as schools whereby they felt safe and happy and had friends. Lind (2016, p 37) identifies how after several years a child roots are put down, personal identities are developed, friendships are formed, and links are made with the community outside the family unit. This is reflected in the finding of the interview sample of this study, as discussed in Chapter 7, whereby providing stability for children who have begun the steps towards obtaining a sense of belonging into the locality and the school networks.

Murphy and Vieten (2016, p 54) highlight that frequent moving for local residents and refugee and asylum seeker families is detrimental to children's well-being as they have to adjust to yet another place to live, another school, as each locality presents its own challenges. Coleman (2010, p 113) argues that each time the family move constitutes a break down in social capital and recognises this disproportionately

affects parents as children can begin accumulating capital through participation in school.

Compared with other residents, refugees and other new migrants, are more than twice as likely to be frequent movers: nearly a quarter had made three or more moves in five years. Such moves may have been involuntary because of the use of relatively insecure private lettings (Thomas *et al.*, 2017). Whilst Wadhams (2011, p 15) states that refugees continue to experience insecurity of accommodation with refugees struggling to maintain, and in some cases losing, their place in the housing system and becoming homeless.

The shift to private providers signifies the growth of neoliberalism in social policy that includes the transfer of state responsibilities of the delivery of services to the private sector. Naomi Klein offers a crude definition of neoliberalism as the "holy trinity" of privatization, deregulation, and cuts to social spending (2008). Klein's summary fits with housing and asylum seeker policy through cuts to social spending through subsistence payments to asylum seekers below that of welfare benefits and reducing accommodation costs through the process of competitive tendering through the private sector.

Darling (2016b p 496) reinforces this argument that the delivery of asylum seeker accommodation, reflects the neoliberal approach to reduced social spending that demands austerity for housing 'the unwanted'. Powell, (2015, p 339) draws upon Wacquant notion of the neo-liberal state crafting whereby the state retreats and cedes control to the market, which applies to both asylum seekers accommodation and marginalised local population to whom many are dependent upon private landlords.

Therefore, the neoliberal policies have ceded control to the private sector for the accommodation of refugees and asylum seekers and for many of their neighbours who struggle to obtain social housing due to their challenging poverty laden conditions. This policy does not support the social conditions for refugees and asylum seekers to settle and develop social contact with others in the locality. Furthermore, neoliberal social policies have also reduced the support that refugees and asylum seekers may obtain due to cuts in spending on local authority spending

which also supported local projects aimed at refugees and asylum seekers and other vulnerable people in the localities.

3.7. Austerity and the reduced capacity to support the settlement of refugees and asylum seekers.

Clayton, Donovan and Merchant (2016) argue that cuts to local authorities are disproportionately applied by government towards North East local authorities that has a disproportionate effect upon marginal social groups (such as refugees and asylum seekers). Mayblin and James (2018) argues that government cuts is hitting local authorities' capacity to support neighbourhood projects as most Third Sector organisations receive funding from local authorities.

The work of voluntary local organisations can facilitate the development of bridging capital that can promote local networks that can support settlement. Furthermore, Phillimore, McCabe and Taylor (2010) suggest that voluntary agencies can bring advocacy, build social justice, and contribute to community cohesion and cultural identities. The Town Council also identified the importance of community organisations to enhance, 'community engagement and participation, increasing social capital and community cohesion, helping to build stronger communities through volunteer activity' (The Town Council, 2017). Furthermore, Strang and Ager (2010, p 598) state that local organizations can be effective for developing bridging between ethnic communities and promote wider social connection.

Mort and Morris (2020) found that many voluntary agencies, who actively support migrant groups settle into localities were experiencing precarious funding issues and so were living month to month. Therefore, the closure of voluntary agencies is likely to hinder the local capacity to provide activities to support the settlement of refugees and asylum seekers.

In 2015, English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) funding was cut as part of the £450 million in savings that the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills were asked to find by the Treasury (Evans, 2015). Furthermore, Refugee Action

(2017) found that there has been significant reduction in government funding for English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) since 2010 with an estimated cuts in government funding of 60% from 2010 to 2016.^{24 25}

Refugee Action (2017) found that a lack of English language skills was the biggest obstacle to adult's settlement. Court (2017) argues that ESOL classes contributed both to confidence in English and a sense of settlement amongst refugee learners. Morrice (2007) states that English language skills also offers non-verbal skills such as way to learn the cultural codes and social etiquette of an unfamiliar society. Competencies in English language will help support asylum seekers to understand and to engage in welfare services and prepare them for future employment should they be successful in gaining refugees status (Morrice, 2007; Phillimore, 2011a; Allsopp, Sigona and Phillimore, 2014).

Childcare was found to be a major hurdle for parents to access ESOL (Atfield, Brahmhatt and O'Toole, 2007). However, this disproportionately impacted upon mothers who culturally have greater responsibility for childcare than fathers (Atfield, Brahmhatt and O'Toole, 2007). Not only does this impact upon mother's own access to new cultural capital, but also excludes them from their children's emerging world as parents were concerned that they could not help their children with homework (Refugee Action, 2017, p 4).

The importance of ESOL as a means of 'integration' is recognised by Government. This is apparent as in September 2016, the Home Office announced an additional £10 million funding for English language tuition specifically for Syrian refugees who have arrived through the Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme. Stephen Hale from Refugee Action when reporting the All Party Parliamentary Group on Refugees (2017 p 30) raised concerns about this funding being targeting only on resettled Syrian refugees, rather than including refugees arriving through other routes; arguing

²⁴ Cuts in funding for ESOL was part of the £450 million in savings in the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (Evans, 2015).

²⁵ Until 2011 asylum seekers could attend free language classes and further education courses, although provision was poor and waiting lists lengthy (Phillimore, 2011a). Furthermore, Phillimore (2011a) argues that the standard of ESOL provision was poorly monitored and many courses were ineffective in delivering English language.

that it is an exclusionary policy that eliminates other refugees, including Syrian refugees who arrive in the UK via other means and routes.

The withdrawal of provision of some non-statutory services by local authorities creates gaps in provision that charities were sometimes expected or felt obliged to fill (Finnegan, 2016, p 6). Kisby (2010, p 488) critiques that it is a dangerous belief that charities and volunteers can provide services as effective than the state.

3.8. Christian responses to austerity; supporting the settlement of refugees and asylum seekers.

The policies that are shaped by neoliberalism and austerity have shifted provision to support the settlement of refugees and asylum seekers from government departments and local authorities to volunteers from local voluntary organisations and to church congregations. Faith groups have raised the level of support for refugees and asylum seekers as the role of the state diminishes (Dwyer and Brown, 2005, p 378; Mayblin and James 2018, p 7). Furthermore, Murphy and Vieten, (2016) research of refugee and asylum seeker's settlement in Northern Ireland similarly concluded that wherever the location of dispersal it is likely that there will be at least one charity or a faith group that supports them.

In 2016 the Home Secretary with the Archbishop of Canterbury launched a 'full community sponsorship scheme', the aim of this scheme is concerned with: 'empowering and enabling community groups to welcome and support a refugee family resettled in the UK' (HM Government 2016). The strap lines of this announcement are misleading, as it is not immediately apparent that the scheme is exclusive to the Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (VPRS) for Syrian refugees (HM Government, 2016)²⁶ and therefore excluding refugees and asylum seekers who

²⁶ The VPRS refugee families arrive with refugee status and each community sponsor needs to find £9,000 based on two adults in a family to cover housing, over items such as interpreting services, public transport, furnishings (HM Government, 2016). The report also states that no figure is applied to children because they will receive most of their support through the education system. Initial research on the Community Sponsor has identified the benefits for refugees and asylum seekers and volunteers, but this concludes that much

have sought refuge through different means such as the sample group in this study. The presence of the Archbishop of Canterbury signifies encouragement for Christian organisations to participate, and for example the Salvation Army was an earlier sponsor in supporting refugee families (Saltmarsh, 2017).

Wren (2007, p 403) states that faith-based voluntarism is a long-standing UK tradition. Mayblin and James (2018, p 5) further argues that Refugee Third Sector Organisations are heavily dependent upon volunteers, many are either faith based or rely on churches for service provision support often located in asylum dispersal areas. This reflects the trend for faith-based organisations (FBOs) becoming increasingly prominent in welfare provision and political activism in the UK (Williams, Cloke and Thomas, 2012 p 1479).

In The Town informal welfare support for refugees and asylum seekers is mostly delivered by Christian churches and Christian volunteers. However, research of faith based voluntarism tends not to consider the class basis of volunteers or of their motivation in what Askins (2016) defines as emotional citizenry. Putnam (2000, p 78) found that within the USA those involved with faith organisations are more likely to develop high levels of social capital and more likely to possess good levels of education (but he fails to directly link this to social class).²⁷

Localised organisations involved in the VPRS are mostly Christian, this is apparent by exploration of the website of Reset.²⁸ However, given the prevalence of Muslim refugees and asylum seekers in the UK, and the population of Muslims in the UK raises questions as why the VPRS scheme is significantly dominated by Christian groups. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Qasmiyeh (2010, p 311) argue that further engagement from the Muslim community in Britain is needed to support the settlement of refugees and asylum seekers, however, there is little research to examine why this is not the case.

further research is required how this can impact upon 'social cohesion' in the locations in which they are settled (Phillimore and Reyes, 2019).

²⁸ Reset is funded by The Home Office provide an infrastructure for refugee community sponsorship.

However, research from Sweden argues that social work carried out by the Church is often performed by salaried clerics whilst Muslim congregations rarely have this type of personnel resource. Only 27 per cent of the congregations have a full-time employed Imam who are constantly torn between their traditional religious role and the new social and cultural demands placed on them that is dealing with problems of segregation and unemployment (Borell and Gerdner, 2011, p 974).

Therefore, this narrative expose further questions about the possible low public profile of Islamic support given to refugees and asylum seekers in comparison to profile afforded by Christian leadership and evangelical approach. It also poses theological question such as if the social work of Islam can be understood in a Christian centric understanding of faith.

3.9. Conclusion

This chapter reflects the problematic policy environment that does much to deter the settlement of refugees and asylum seekers. I argue that examples of successful settlement, in its various forms, in the UK is achieved despite policy, rather than because of it. This is despite the political rhetoric that the UK has a 'proud history of providing protection for refugees' (The Home Office, 2016; The Home Office, 2017).

The UK government have made a deliberate a calculated hostile policy approach as a way of deterring refugees from entering the UK. This includes placing families in poverty and in the isolation in mostly white working-class dispersal areas. However, the causes of economic disadvantage in dispersal areas are deflected by right wing attempts to apportion blame on the visible 'outsiders' of refugees and asylum seekers.

The dispersal areas such as The Town have become symbolic battlegrounds between the emerging right such as the anti-immigration Brexit Party and the humanitarian stance of Labour politicians. Yet there is an irony to this localised supportive Labour response, is it is the Labour Government who were architects of a hostile asylum policy in the 1999 Asylum and Immigration Act. However, many

refugees and asylum seekers lack relevant local knowledge and political literacy to understand the complexities of political narratives. Therefore, in a local sense refugees and asylum seekers are both bystanders and victims to the political process, as represented in the increase racist and Islamophobic hostility and violence towards them.

This complex political landscape in the UK and in The Town is not a conducive environment to encourage settlement. Yet there are examples in academic research that provide a more nuanced perspective that identifies positive interactions between refugees and asylum seekers and local residents. This is also reflected in the voluntary nature of church groups and sponsorships, which is a way for the government to outsource compassion for refugees and asylum seekers. Thus, the government is endorsing individual acts of humanitarian practices, such as the Community Sponsorships Scheme but ensuring this is restricted to the margins of mainstream society.

The shifting reliance upon community and faith groups reflects neoliberalism and austerity driven policies. Thus, applying a frugal approach to reduce spending on supporting local authorities to fund and support refugee and asylum seeker settlement. The classic case of reducing support for ESOL classes is a prime example of taking away a key service that supports settlement. This reflects the government attempts to reduce incentives for refugees to seek asylum in the UK, unless by the officially supported route of the VPRS.

Outside of the school environment, refugee and asylum seeker policy impacts upon children as much as their parents. However, children of school age do have the advantage over their parents by day-to-day interaction with other children. School attendance is compulsory through the UK's commitment to the United Convention for the Rights of the Child (article 28; children have a right to education).²⁹ Given that this legislation gives a protected status to children, there remains policy barriers to children's settlement that is examined in the following chapter.

²⁹ The UNCRC requires countries to endorse the aims and spirit of the Convention through applying it to domestic legislation, this was one aspect of the UK Children's Act 1989.

3.10. Postscript: policy developments

At the time of writing the Conclusion of this thesis the proposed Nationality and Borders Bill was published that sets out to criminalise asylum seekers who entering the UK without permission, with up to 4 years in prison (Refugee Council 2021). The UNHCR UK (2021) argue that this Bill undermines the 1951 Refugee Convention. The Bill leaves further questions of what would happen to families who arrive in the UK without permission, and in particular, what will happen to children (such as those children in this research) if their parents are imprisoned?

Had this Bill been become law before I began my research, this would have drastically limited the scope of this thesis to a fewer number of families who had already obtained UK refugee status via 'legal' routes. Furthermore, I have further concern as The Guardian referred to leaked reports that the Government were considering that asylum seekers to be processed in offshore locations such as Ascension Island, disused ferries and abandoned oil rigs for people seeking asylum in the UK (O'Carroll, 2021).

What these policy developments demonstrate is the increase in punitive immigration policies and is likely to be 'unsettling' for existing refugee and asylum seekers families in the UK as they view this concerning policy direction.

Chapter 4

Refugee and Asylum Seeker Children and Policy

4.1. Introduction

In the exploration of refugee and asylum seeker's settlement in The Town I needed to differentiate the experiences of children to that of their parents in order to consider if the principle that all children are regarded in UK policy as a vulnerable group and in need of protection (McLaughlin, 2018). For example, children continue to be the focal point of global humanitarian narrative (Poretti *et al.*, 2014). However, there is evidence that refugee and asylum seeker children are identified in policy as migrants first and children second thus at odds with the rhetoric of global social policy in which vulnerable children are subject to humanitarian rights.

There is a catalogue of Government actions and policies that has attracted criticism that these ignore child rights through the poor treatment of refugee and asylum seeker children (Taylor, DeBelle and Modi, 2016; Agerholm, 2017; Jones *et al.*, 2017, p 161). Further criticism includes the 2014 UNCRC Review of the UK policies, whereby asylum seeker children continue to be held in immigration detention centres in the UK (Poretti *et al.*, 2014; Grierson, 2020; The Migration Observatory, 2020). Furthermore, The Independent newspaper claimed the UK Government has stopped accepting disabled child refugees in the programmes to resettle Syrian refugees because the UK cannot cope with their needs (Agerholm, 2017). This reinforces the perception of child refugees, including those with a disability, as being burdens to the UK (Quinn, 2014; Valentine and Harris, 2014). A further policy that excludes British born refugee and asylum seeker children is the 1981 Nationality Act that sets out a criteria for citizenship, although aimed at children of colonial citizens, it also applies to the children who are in this research sample, and therefore provides an institutional gap between themselves and most, if not all, of their peers. In essence

to have British citizenship is a form of institutional capital and a formally accredited sense of belonging (Tyler 2010).

This chapter provides a foundation to explore such experiences of children in this sample within this context of a hostile environment alongside the practices, friendships and relationships developed in schools. This chapter draws together the literature from the perspective of children's rights and migration to make the links to barriers to settlement in the neighbourhood. It argues that although refugee and asylum seeker children access to education provides a good opportunity to build relationships with local children; the wider policy landscape of a 'hostile environment' continues to regard children as migrants first and children second.

4.2. Unsettling policies: walking the tightrope between inclusion and exclusion

I wished to examine if aspects of education policy create barriers to refugee and asylum seeker children and their family's settlement. Hence, whether such policies may impact upon the experiences of children in this sample as they negotiate an identity towards a sense of belonging and inclusion in peer group social relationships. This is set against the hostile environment, Islamophobia, and pressure on schools to promote 'British Values' to all pupils.

There are policy tensions for schools to negotiate to ensure that refugees and asylum seekers, along with non-white children and 'Muslim pupils', feel a sense of belonging to the wider society. This includes difficulties for schools in promoting social inclusion whilst implementing the statutory requirement to promote British Values and duties under the Prevent Strategy.

Some have argued that the Prevent Duty stigmatises whole communities, causes mistrust and evokes a moral panic towards Muslims who have been demonised in the public sphere as terrorists (Burnett, 2016 p 8; Bhopal, 2018, p 75). Thus, the Prevent Strategy has the potential to add further layers of stigmatisation for Muslim

refugees and asylum seekers to develop social interactions with non-Muslims in the locality.

The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 Act also requires schools to embed the teaching of British Values (Department for Education, 2015 p 5).^{30 31} 'British Values' which are a set of 5 statements, is problematic as it implies that migrants need to adopt British Values as a process of acquiring a British identity (HM Government, 2018, p 25). Healy (2018, p 3) argues that the promotion of British Values to children is described as a political 'rallying cry' towards an embodiment of loyalty to the country and a rejection of extremism.³²

Schlee (2017, p 6) argues that this is reflective of 'integration' being mistaken for 'assimilation' whereby immigrants accept these core values and a patriotism that transcends cultures and religions. Dame Louise Casey led the government review of 'integration' which draws much focus upon British values and states within a conclusion that cultural and religious practices in communities run contrary to British values and sometimes our laws (Casey 2016).³³

Critics of the Casey Report include the Runnymede Trust who suggest that this report depicts immigration policy as a tool to combat terrorism (Khan and Finney, 2016). Bhopal draws from a 2016 National Union of Teachers (NUT) conference to argue that many teachers feel uncomfortable in teaching British values as it is a form of 'cultural supremacism'. The conference passed a motion to replace British values

³¹ It was Alan Johnson, the then Labour Secretary of State for Education in 2007 who had proposed that schools should focus on core British values of justice and tolerance (Kwan, 2008, p 94), cited by Forrester and Garrat (2016, p 32).

³² The requirement to promote British Values was the outcome of The Trojan Horse affair, with allegations that Muslims were becoming school governors towards taking control over schools in Birmingham with a view of teaching children fundamental radical Muslim values. However a subsequent investigation it was found that apart from one incident in one school, there was no evidence of extremism or radicalisation in the schools concerned (Bhopal, 2018).

³³ The fundamental British Values are democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs' (DfE Nov 2014: 5).

with one that focuses on 'International rights' that welcomes migrants and refugees into Britain (Bhopal, 2018).

It is argued that an itemised list of British Values reflects a political struggle to reconceptualise British identity in a time of growing diversity (Healy, 2019, p 423; Stronach and Frankham, 2020). In a further critical perspective Richardson (2015, p 39) argues that the requirement to teach British Values in schools is political response to address the muddle of turbulent anxieties and uncertainties around national identity. Richardson (2015 p 37) further adds that 'The British', have no clear idea about who they are, where they are, or what they are. Therefore, children may struggle with the notion of their national identity as discussed in Chapter 9.

4.3. The role of schools in the settlement of refugee and asylum seeker children

Schools are often the only statutory agency involved with and offering formal support to refugee and asylum seeker children (Bowes, Ferguson and Sim, 2009, p 40; Block et al., 2014; Sim, 2014). Furthermore, it is argued that schools can support the cultural adaptation of refugee and asylum seeker children (Rutter, 2003; Hek, 2005b; Whiteman, 2005; Moskal, 2016). I draw together aspects of education policy that shapes the context for settlement. Therefore, I explore the literature that suggests that primary schools are a place to provide opportunities for refugee and asylum seeker children to build social capital to aid their settlement into the locality.

I was also keen to explore if there are any further opportunities to develop social capital and reinforce a sense of belonging in other spaces outside of the school. For example. Sedano (2012 p 381) argues that migrant children employ their own strategies to develop social capital when outside of school, for example, during weekends, school holidays and after the school day.³⁴ Therefore, participation in

³⁴ In state schools there are 12 weeks of school holidays a year including 6 weeks summer holidays.

after school activities, leisure and sports can be a means to develop social capital through group interactions (Harper, 2002, p 5; Cain and Trussell, 2019, p 304).

Under UK law, every child has the right to compulsory education irrespective of immigration status, and is reflective of article 28 of the UNCRC (1989):

Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child.

Section 14 of the Education Act 1996 also obliges English LEAs to provide a full-time education to all children resident within the LEA (Rutter, 2003). Refugee and asylum seeker children aged 5-16 have the same entitlement to full-time education as other children in the UK (The Children's Society, no date).³⁵

Thus, children have no priority in the UK regarding rights and treatment than any other migrant.³⁶ However, once asylum seeker children arrived within a dispersal area, the local authorities ensure that the statutory duty under the Children's Act (1989) is met. Thus, newly arrived asylum-seeking children in the Town will have parity of access to statutory services with local children, through access to education, free school meals, free health care and accommodation. However, questions are posed if the access to UK education is a 'pull factor' that needs to be reviewed. For example, in 2015 Nicky Morgan, the then Education Secretary, questioned whether immigration levels are linked to "education tourism" within state schools (Ross, 2015). Therefore, the environment of suspicion placed on refugees and asylum seekers permeates into education that questions refugees and asylum seekers families with children are in 'genuine' need of refuge or motivated by the 'pull factor' of the UK education system.

Reynolds (2007, p 384) suggests that what constitutes as friendship closely matches the values associated with social capital, such as trust, reciprocity, emotional

³⁵ However, this is not guaranteed for asylum seekers or some refugees depending upon circumstances in undertaking further and higher education (The Children's Society, no date)

³⁶ Heidbrink, (2020) discusses a hierarchy of asylum seekers through a classification of vulnerability. Whilst states such as Italy adopt this and places children at the top of the hierarchy, the state then waits for them to reach 18 years old to deport them as an adult. The same applies to asylum seekers who turn 18 in the UK.

support, community and identity. Putnam (2000, p 362) suggests that neighbourhood schools may provide 'unique sites for building social capital – friendship, habits of co-operation, solidarity. This is particularly relevant in primary schools whereby the development of bonding and bridging social capital is facilitated by the day to day practices through consistent clear statements of school's values towards inclusion (Smyth et al. 2012. p 42).

Schools offer opportunities to refugee and asylum seeker children who may have no pre-established networks within the locality, but more often possess the ability, in different degrees, to make new friends (Weller 2007, p 348). Schools can play the most obvious role in facilitating friendships between refugees and asylum seeker children and other children whereby bonding social capital can be seen in classroom practices (Hek, 2005b; Smyth et al. 2012). Weller (2007) further argues that schools are a primary arena where children develop social capital that is independent of their parents.

Whiteman's (2005) study in the North East of England, identifies how schools can be effective in addressing barriers to settlement such as language and communication. Hek (2005b) suggest that schools also provide structure and a routine which can support the emotional well-being of children which is an important factor given the sense of precarity and uncertainty associated with being a refugee or an asylum seeker. These factors collectively supports the settlement of refugee and asylum seeker children in developing their wider social connections and mixing with others to facilitate language learning and cultural exchange (Ndofar-Tah *et al.*, 2019, p 30).

Putnam (2000, p 362) argues that bridging and social capital can facilitate racial integration within schools. This is supported by Thomas et al. (2017, p 14) who state that schools provide the opportunities for cross-ethnic relationships to flourish. Furthermore, Manyena & Brady (2007, p 8) found in research across a range of primary schools that there was no distinction in relationships between refugee and non-refugee children.

Candappa (2002, p.229) argued that schools serve refugee and asylum seeker children as a second security base outside of the home, or perhaps their only security base'. Franks (2006, p 22) found that refugee and asylum seeker parents confined their children to the home because they do not feel able to let them play

outside for fear of harassment or bullying. This is significant given more recent events such as the policy of hostile environment and Brexit and the associated increase in reported 'street level' race hate crimes (Burrell *et al.*, 2019). This is an area that is further investigated in the empirical chapters of this study.

Given the above focus upon schools as a space in supporting children's ability to develop social capital. I therefore, I investigate through empirical data how this may be reflected in leisure time, both within and outside the household. Leisure activities can help individuals learn more about the culture of a local area establishing social connections (Sime & Fox, 2015; Ndofar-Tah, 2019, p 38). Nevertheless, research highlighted that there was little holiday or after school provision to meet the needs of refugee and asylum seeker children (Rutter 2003, p 31; Beirens *et al.*, 2007). There is no evidence that this has changed since this research other than voluntary groups attempts to partly address this need through sporadic activities during random weeks of the holiday (Allsopp *et al.* 2015, p 175; Ali *et al.* 2017, p 6).

Many children across disadvantaged dispersal areas lack opportunities to develop social capital and relationships due to cuts in holiday provision of leisure and youth services. The Children's Commissioner (2018) states that in 2010 the Coalition government dropped the national play strategy and cancelled funding for play provision that between 2014 and 2018 nearly 400 playgrounds have been closed because of cuts to local authority budgets. Thus children may face isolation during the school holidays and weekends due to lack of affordable activities (Graham *et al.*, 2016; Lambie-Mumford and Sims, 2018).

Furthermore, many refugee and asylum seeker families, along with other families facing food insecurity and 'holiday hunger'.³⁷ There are comparisons between refugee and asylum seeker parents who feel ashamed that they cannot provide for their children (Murphy & Vieten 2016, p 88) along with families who feel ashamed for using Food Banks particularly during school holidays (Garthwaite, 2016). This

³⁷ This was relevant to the time frame of this study before more recent government interventions.

³⁸reinforces Hek's (2005a) argument that refugee and asylum seeker families share similar poverty related issues to that of host families.

Hence the hours outside of school can be further challenges for families in this study, including access to affordable leisure pursuits, that limits social contacts and the opportunities to reinforce social and cultural capital that will support a sense of settlement. The lack of affordability is reinforced by the need to provide a daily meal that is available in the school terms through free school meals.

4.5. Conclusion

The hostile environment permeates into the of immigration practices towards refugee and asylum seeker children. Hence, the notion of 'migrants first' and 'children second' is firmly embedded into UK policy.

As the UK are signatories of the UNCRC, in which refugee and asylum seeker children enjoy access to education. It is only through access to schools that offers consistent opportunities for refugee and asylum seeker children's engagement with local children. Hence there is much evidence that schools offer sites for refugee and asylum seeker children to develop friendships with other local children. Therefore, schools are spaces to develop bonding and bridging social capital, that can contribute to children's sense of belonging and settlement into the locality.

Chapter 5

Family, Friendship, and Gender in Emerging Social Identities

5.1. Introduction

Childhood is a critical time whereby children's identity is fluid as they develop a sense of self and other people in their lives (James, Jenks and Prout, 1998, p 202). However, Lawler (2008, p 143) argues that 'identity' is agreed collectively and validated by others. Whilst Stets & Burke (2016) state that understanding of 'identity' is a person's knowledge that he or she belongs to a social category or group.

Literature provides a useful starting point to help investigate if the sample of children in this study develop a sense of identity and belonging through their interactions with other children in the place they inhabit (Asghari-Fard & Hossain; 2017, p 141; May, 2017, p 1; Sanderson & Thomas 2014, p 1169). Therefore, I wish to explore this further to understand if a developing sense of identity amongst children in this study either supports or inhibits their sense of belonging and settlement.

I wanted to explore children's identity in terms of 'race', faith, gender, and social class that are constituent aspects of habitus that can influence their ability to settle alongside 'other' children in the locality. To do this I draw from Goffman and Bourdieu throughout the empirical chapters to explore if children 'act out' an image as a way to gain 'symbolic capital' and therefore acceptance from other local children. In particular, I wished to understand if gendered 'identity' is performed as suggest by Goffman (1959) to fit in and to be accepted by other children of the same gender.

5.2. Construction of identity

I consider the notion of 'identity' on how this may impact upon refugee and asylum seeker children's emerging sense of self but within the social groups they interact with. Burke defines a social group as a set of individuals who hold a common social identification or view of themselves as members of the same social category (in-group), in comparison to others (out-group). Therefore, the analysis of the 'in group/out group' juncture is pivotal in understanding the settlement of refugee and asylum seeker children in the Town.

It is argued that children move to a stage where they discover themselves and begin to seek others approval (Pellandini-Simányi, 2014). Hence, like all children, refugee and asylum seeker children will experience an ever-changing sense of their own identity that shifts between each social context (Goffman, 1959, Bauman, 2001; Paat & Pellebon 2012p 129; Schneider & Lang, 2014, p 103). Furthermore, it is argued that establishing a sense of self and identity is something to hold onto at a time of change for refugee and asylum seeker children (Hek 2005, p 39-41; Manz & Panayi 2012, p 128; Paat & Pellebon 2012, p 131).

It is proposed that prominent writers on social capital such as Putnam have been described as 'ethnocentric' and 'gender blind' (Holland, Reynolds & Weller 2007, p 99). Nevertheless, Cheung & Phillimore (2017, p 228) argue that gender and identity is a central but under researched, element of the multi-dimensional nature of 'settlement'. Furthermore, Cheung and Phillimore (2017, p 213) argue that much of the research of refugees and asylum seekers that has been undertaken in the UK has been gender-blind to the settlement of women refugees. Similarly, there is little analysis of the settlement of refugee and asylum seeker girls. Therefore, I was interested in exploring the gendered experiences of children's sense of identity and settlement.

I was curious to find if the claims on children's gendered friendships across ethnicity race and social class in literature are reflected in the empirical chapters in this study. Connolly's (2006) research of 5 and 6-year-old boys within a primary school found that boys are actively concerned with developing, maintaining, and reproducing their

gender identities that is mediated by experiences in school and in the locality. It is further argued that the type of dominant masculinity is the product of economically poor urban areas (Mac an Ghail, 1994; Renold, 2004; Connolly, 2006). Given the location of this research in a predominantly white economically poor working-class area; refugee and asylum seeker boys may develop an emerging sense of identity that is influenced by a localised sense of masculinity (Mac an Ghail, 1994; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Haywood & Mac an Ghail 2012).

One of the questions that I sought in this study was how refugee and asylum seeker children negotiate working-class notions of gendered friendships. For example, literature informs us that there is a tendency for working-class boys to include aggressive behaviours and act out 'tough' play (Connolly, 2006, p 140; Woods, 2009, p 234; Vincent, Neal and Iqbal, 2015). Meanwhile, George and Browne (2000, p 299) found that friendships between girls are underpinned by group loyalty that can turn destructive if girls collude with teachers. In similar findings boys tend to avoid being perceived as academic (Mac an Ghail, 1994; Renold, 2001, p 376). Thus, in the empirical chapters of this study I explore if refugee and asylum seeker children seek friendships towards avoiding peer group exclusion. I further explore if a sense of gendered 'identity' is a 'front-stage' performance (Goffman 1959, p 32) in front of a 'particular set of observers' such as their friends and peers to 'fit-in' and be accepted.

Weller (2007, p 349) argues that 'most' children are resilient, and able to adapt and develop friendships in new circumstances and are better equipped than adults to adapt and develop friendships. Vincent, Neal and Iqbal (2015, p 6) state that children's (8- to 9-year-olds) friendships are often understood by adults as fluctuating and temporary. However, Vincent, Neal and Iqbal also found friendships were stable and an important part of the children's lives and therefore offers a sense of belonging and security.

Field (2017, p10) suggests that social capital is of value for children, not only in the acquisition of credentials with their peers but also towards securing a self-identity. Reynolds (2007, p384) states that social capital is viewed as an important social resource in this process of ethnic identity formation and the maintenance of kinship

bonds. Therefore, the social interactions of accumulating capital could be critical in refugee and asylum seekers children's sense of belonging.

Therborn (2012, p 9) argues that traditional family models continue to be reproduced in regions around the world such as South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa to which most families in this study have originated from. Whilst the traditional model of family is associated with hierarchy, gender inequality and conservatism (Wilding, 2018, p 161) the western concept of family life has become less traditional and more democratic with an ongoing negotiation between parents and children (Giddens, 1998; Lansdown 2005 p 58). Whilst it is argued that there is a resistance from immigrant families to adapt to and replicate the family structure and values of the locality to reinforce traditional family values and protect their cultural identity (Voicu, 2016; Pritchard et al., 2019). For example, Paat & Pellebon (2012, p 132) study found that parental practices shape immigrant children's ethnic identity through instilling pride and teaching children their native language and customs.

Bloch & Hirsch (2016) observes that in many UK refugee families their own languages were spoken almost exclusively in private spaces of the home. Therefore, refugee and asylum seeker children who see English as their first language (as all the children in this research sample) may also perceive themselves as having a British identity. For example, research suggests that immigrant children who have English as a first language, as with most of the children in this study, experience a blurred and uncertain identity when living with parents who strongly retain their language and cultural heritage (Fillmore, 2000; Bloch and Hirsch, 2016, p 12).

5.3. Children as cultural brokers

Children have the benefit of attending school and developing their competencies in English language and develop cultural understandings of the locality. Consequently, children often learn the local language faster than their parents do as they can have better access to native speakers via schools (Resnyansky 2016 p 2053). I wished to explore if a child's competencies in language can unlock knowledge and

understanding of local cultural life to support parents coping with the difficulties of everyday life (Wyness, 2018, p 186). Hence to determine if children in this study can become a facilitator of their parent's settlement into the locality, particularly for parents who have limited skills in the English language.

Perry (2014, p 316) states that the translation process is a form of cultural brokering, and that even very young children can act as language brokers for parents, despite their own emergent literacy development. This process of children acting as cultural brokers is recognised by Lewis (2015, p 52) who noted a tendency for children to adopt new cultural forms more quickly than their parents. Therefore, parents may need to rely upon their children to act as interpreters and translators between themselves and the world outside their family (Whiteman, 2005; Estrada 2013, p 53; Perry, 2014; Sime & Fox 2015, p 531; Bloch & Hirsch, 2016, p 12; Crafter et al., 2017).

There is limited research that indicates how fathers in refugee and asylum seeker families rely on their children to support their settlement in the locality. However, it is suggested that fathers are unlikely to rely upon their children given their role in a patriarchal family model that is common to the cultures in which refugee and asylum seeker families in this study originate from (Therborn, 2012, p 9). Therefore, fathers may want to preserve the image of a successful adult that is not dependent upon their children (Shimoni, Este and Clark (2003, p 555).

It is useful to consider research on mother's experiences of learning from their children to support their settlement. It is argued that in traditional patriarchal families, mothers are solely responsible for childcare and domestic roles that reduces opportunities and expectations upon them to learn English (Murphy & Vieten (2016, p 47; Vatsa, 2016, p 65; Cheung and Phillimore, 2017, p 215). Therefore, in the empirical chapters I explore if mothers are more likely to be recipients of children's role as cultural brokers.

5.4. Children, faith, and identity

The sample families interviewed in this research have Muslim or Hindu faith, whilst The Town is regarded as mostly Christian. Therefore, I wish to understand how faith may be perceived within the 'insider/outside' dynamic between the children in this sample group and their peers. Therefore, I further draw upon the notion of Goffman's (1959) notion of 'back stage' and 'front stage' performances to explore if refugee and asylum seeker children consciously negotiate belonging to their between family faith and that of their peers.

The 2011 Census found that Christianity was the overwhelming dominant faith in The Town despite a decline in Christian congregations in the North East of England (Goodhew & Barward-Symmons 2015 p 7). The highest proportion of asylum seekers in the Town come from Muslim dominated countries including Iran, Pakistan Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan with the added prevalence of Sri Lankan (Hindu) families. However, it is also evident in the research, and in this study, that Iranian families in the UK seek asylum because they are persecuted Christians or have undergone conversion to Christianity (Sherwood and Oltermann, 2016).

There is a volume of literature that state that religion is a basic source of social, cultural, and political identification that is transmitted through family (Kim and Wilcox, 2013; Brubaker, 2013, p 3; Franceschelli and O'Brien, 2014; Voicu, 2016, p 5). For example, it is argued that religion is seen as a significant resource used by parents to exercise control, instil a sense of morality, and reinforce their influence on their children's future life chances (Dustmann, Fabbri and Preston, 2005; Franceschelli & O'Brien, 2014). Consequently, research found that younger people saw their religion as the main source of self-identification, that is often reflected in their name and often more important than their ethnic and national identities (Franceschelli & O'Brien's, 2014, p 8; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Qasmiyeh, 2010, p 302).

Algan, Bisin, Manning et al (2012, p 42) suggests that religion can sometimes determines the slowest rate of settlement due to the embedded religious habitus that families bring with them. It would be interesting to understand in the longer term if the children in this sample, have a choice as adults to undertake inter-faith

partnerships or marriage, as this is regarded as the 'gold standard' success indicator of what literature refers to as 'integration' (Castles et al., 2002, p 144; Saggar et al., 2012; Algan, Bisin, Manning et al, 2012, p 303; Reitz 2016, p 2340).

5.5. Conclusion

In this discussion I have addressed the link between refugee and asylum seeker children's identity to the sense of belonging, settlement, and inclusion with their peers. However, identity is a complex area that is formed from a myriad of experiences of gender and religion influenced by peers and family. For example, family and cultural experiences and heritage has a strong influence in reinforcing gender roles and obligations (Straubharr & Portes 2016). Nevertheless, there is further literature to suggest that shared interests and personality (including attitude towards school) is a key factor in developing friendships and group identities rather than either religion or ethnicity (Barker and Weller, 2003; Weller 2010, p 880; Sedano 2012, p 382; Askins 2016. p 521). This is an area that is explored in the empirical chapters.

Furthermore, literature in this chapter informs us that refugee and asylum seeker children may ascribe to localised symbolic masculine and feminine behaviours and identity as a way of being validated and accepted. Hence, versions of gender in disadvantaged working-class areas, such as The Town, may be formed, for example, in attitudes and actions towards education.

Chapter 6

Methodology

6.1. Introduction

In this chapter I provide detail of the methodological tools used in this study to capture refugee and asylum seeker family's experiences and understanding of settlement. This includes finding the voices of young refugee and asylum seeker children who are each negotiating their emerging identities that shape their everyday experiences of settlement. Hence the methods of data collection were chosen in relation to my research aims and the following objectives as set out in Chapter 2.2:

1. Explore children's forms of 'capital' and its significance with sense of belonging and settlement.
2. Explore children's forms of 'capital' in negotiating their multi-layered identities such as peer group status, ethnicity, and faith.
3. Explore the influences of parent's and carer's capital and how it enables and restricts children's settlement.
4. Identify and explore 'excluding' and 'including' factors for the parents of refugee and asylum seeker children. This includes the macro sense of UK refugee policies and the micro dynamics of neighbourhood.
5. Analyse and critique the Home Office understanding of 'integration'.

Furthermore, the research design was to be able to accommodate the unique circumstances of this research within the context of 'capital' and 'settlement' in the physical spaces and social fields that families inhabit and experience in this locality. Thus, the methodological approach was aimed to conceptualise the fluid

understanding of settlement and its interlinking fields and the emerging 'identities' of refugees and asylum seekers.

The data is gathered through a qualitative approach including semi structured interviews with children and families and an ethnological approach as an observer/participant within the Refugees and Asylum Seekers Drop-In Centre.³⁹ The methods of data collection is malleable and sensitive to the need to address the complex ethical issues of children's agency, the challenging experiences of refugees and asylum seekers, and the dynamics of the researcher/researched nexus.

The chosen location is in the North East of England to reflect my interest in the settlement of refugees and asylum seekers into post-industrial white working-class dispersal areas, which I argue is neglected in other research (Chapter 1.1.). The Town has a history of low inward immigration with a high proportion of white British with less than 2% of the population are identified as Black, Minority and Refugee (The Local Authority, 2016) as discussed in Chapter 1.5. The Town is regarded as a traditional post-industrial area and targeted by right wing political parties as a place they could gain support.

The majority of asylum seeker accommodation in The Town is suitable for families which reflects my interest in family experiences of settlement. Furthermore, the dispersal area within The Town is within a clear identifiable and manageable geographical location for this research of approximately one square mile in which there is little variation of social and economic conditions. This is helpful as it enabled me to be focused on an area of settlement with little demographic variables of social class and housing conditions.

The choice of fieldwork location was influenced by the presence of the Refugee and Asylum Seeker Drop-In which is a weekly event for refugee and asylum seekers in The Town.⁴⁰ I met with the Chairperson and The Secretary of the Drop-In Committee who consented to support the study and for me to have access to meet refugee and

⁴⁰ As discussed in Chapter 2

asylum seekers and volunteers. Consequently, a remit of my research within The Drop-In was produced and agreed by the Committee.

The data collection method is a three-pronged approach of semi structured interviews including children and parents, an ethnological approach through attending the Refugee and Asylum Seekers Drop-In as a participant observer and collecting secondary data from statutory and voluntary agencies and the local media.

My work began by focusing on ethnological participant observation through attending the weekly drop-in sessions. Throughout my research I attended 49 sessions between November 2015 and June 2018. This takes place for two hours, one day a week, and provides a social outlet for refugee and asylum seekers and to distribute donated items such as: used clothes, bakery products and domestic goods. The Drop-In also offers support and advice through volunteers and workers from one or two charities. My attendance at the Drop-In also introduced me to a volunteer who ran another weekly drop-in project at a different venue (the Wesleyan Methodist Church), but on a smaller scale and aimed at addressing health-related activities which I attended this 4 times. I also attended a council organised multi-cultural day, a workshop for asylum seekers seeking status, and attended a multi-faith conference in the town.

Qualitative research is a complex process when studying refugees and asylum seekers as the result of their messy reality (Crozier, 2003, p 92; Lomax, 2012, p 110; Crawley & Skleparis, 2017, p 3; Jones , et al, 2017). Furthermore, Sieber (2009, p 2) argues that research on refugee populations poses some of the most difficult ethical and methodological challenges in the field of human research. The development of this study is reflective of these messy challenges which resulted in changes to the original research design. For example, the numbers of families involved in the interview sample was lower than anticipated and there was concern, particularly at the lack of girls in the sample families. There for a snowball approach was attempted to increase the number of girls in a hope to locate families who did not attend the Drop-In. However, one contact did not want to be involved, whilst a Sri Lankan family was suggested and the father agreed to participate, only to find that the children,

including a girl were teenagers. However, this interview went I gained useful data on the notion of patriarchal families and how it may shape the settlement of families. (see figure 2).

Changes made to the research design included reducing the planned sample size for the semi-structured interviews and providing more focus upon the ethnological observer/participator role in the Drop-In to engage with a wider range of children and parents to increase opportunities to gain an insight of the experiences of those who attended, the refugee and asylum seekers, and the volunteers.

Rawolle & Lingard (2013, p 117) summarises Bourdieu's view that research is social arrangement of seeing social phenomena in relation to their location and to others in the field. This study includes the use of habitus as a tool to understand the formation of refugee and asylum seekers lives; Wacquant (2014) states that habitus is amenable to empirical inquiry, that it is malleable, and a resource for knowing about social life.

These qualitative methods were chosen as the most appropriate tools to capture the emerging habitus and social and cultural capital of refugees and asylum seekers in this study (Costa et al., 2018, p 3). Furthermore, semi structured interviews are the most widely used research method with young people whereby the researcher can be responsive, sensitive and reflexive to the ethical issues and apply a duty of care (Heath et al., 2009).

I applied an observer/participative approach to attendance at the Drop-In which reflects Bourdieu's ethnological bias in his volume of work to capture dynamic and change-oriented habitus where the complex macro of policy and micro of day to day experiences coincide (Blommaert, 2012, p 9; Franceschelli & O'Brien, 2014, p 6; Forchtner & Schneickert, 2016). Hence it is the macro of global and national policies that impact upon the micro of everyday interactions in the dispersal area of The Town. Therefore, the everyday lives of refugees and asylum seekers could be captured by an ethnological approach to add to and verify the findings from the interviews.

Working within a multi-cultural and family context directs methodology to be concerned with continuous vigilance of micro-ethical moments that require 'reflexivity' whilst applying a duty of care to participants (Renold et al., 2008, p 438; Lomax 2015). The chapter begins by examining the position of my identity as a white, middle class, male, British citizen researcher within the context of the researcher-researched nexus. This is followed by examining the ethical approach of participatory researching 'with' children that considers notions of age and agency.

The chapter then examines the more detailed approach in data gathering through the qualitative methods in this research. This includes semi structured interviews with children and how this is facilitated by using 'art activities' as a prop to generate discussion and data whilst art was also used to engage with a wider range of children and their parents in the Drop-In sessions. This chapter then analyses the use of ethnography, which became a significant method in generating data for this study. The chapter finally looks at the use of secondary sources of data, that adds rigour to the study by making links between the empirical experiences to that of demographic trends of migration, poverty, and crime in the dispersal area. The chapter concludes by acknowledging the mapping of community and public amenities that Putnam (2000) argues are places to generate social capital in fields outside of the household or school.

6.2. Reflexivity

I adopted a reflexive approach from the outset as I was aware of my 'privilege' when compared to the refugee and asylum seeker families in this study. My 'privilege' in the context of this study is socially constructed through unequal structural power relationships of social class, age, gender, race, and citizenship. I am aware that my social position shapes the way I understand the social experiences of others which may impact upon directing the research outcomes (Berger, 2015). Hence, I need to self-reflect upon my own habitus, practice and place in this research (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p 36; England, 1994, p 82; Costa et al., 2018, p 8). Furthermore

Bourdieu (2003) states that the personal experience of the researcher is an irreplaceable analytic resource in the production of knowledge on condition that it is subject to sociological control. Thus, I needed to be mindful that I produce a valid and realistic understanding of refugee and asylum seekers perceptions and experiences towards their settlement in the findings of this study.

Bourdieu (2004, p 89) suggest that research becomes as much about the researcher than those they are researching. Nordstrom (2018, p 222) argues that the researcher's habitus influences what, how and with whom relationships are formed, the nature of those relationships and subsequently also the outcome of the study. My approach to the fieldwork was underpinned by my previous 25 years of experience as a youth worker, in which my practice was and remains embedded in democratic participation and fostering supportive relationships with young people (Smith 2002, Buchroth & Parkin 2010).⁴¹ ⁴² I apply this same approach to research that is aimed to upholding democratic relations between myself and the research participants (Hall, 1996, p 29: cited by Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p 239).

I accepted that my 'outsider' position in the study of migration which is sometimes referred to as white hegemonic with colonial connotations, as 'white research on black lives' (Carling, Erdal and Ezzati, 2014, p 38). Hynes (2003, p 14) suggests that the researcher as an 'outsider' must be aware of the boundless areas of mistrust due to refugee and asylum seekers traumatic experiences that generate mistrust of strangers and those perceived to be in authority. This rationale shaped my decision to undertake longer term field work in the Drop-In (49 sessions within 3 years) as a way towards establishing trust.

I became aware of the interchangeable position of outsider and insider in ethnographic research and attempted to bridge this through identifying

⁴¹ Most of this time my work as an informal educator was with children and young people, including street based (detached) work with those on the margins of society with issues such as homelessness, drug misuse, crime, and exclusion from school.

⁴² Youth work draws upon the theoretical of Freire who proposes the liberation of pedagogy through dialogue that does not involve one person acting on another, but rather people working with each other (Smith 2002, Buchroth & Parkin 2010)

commonalities between my own family circumstances and that of the research participants. For example, I am a person with multiple identities: male, middle-aged, white, British, academic, father, husband and football fan (Nave 2018). Therefore, there is commonality across with others in this research, as the terms of 'father' and 'husband' as 'socially realised facts'⁴³ of family is a normative structure embedded within most society's values and cultural norms (Burke et al., 2013, p176). This is reflected by Crozier (2003, p 80) who as a white researcher engaging with black mothers began to place herself as a 'mother' in their exchanges. I was continually asked by both children and adults if I was married and had any children. I explained that I was married and a father which was enough to gain credibility, both with the children and with the adults which 'signalled the willingness to share something from my own life' (Carling, Erdal and Ezzati, 2014, p 48). Consequently, what constitutes as 'us' and 'them' changes from one context to another (Carling, Erdal and Ezzati, 2014, p 41). Furthermore, Collet (2008, p 78-80) identifies that there is an unavoidable position of the researcher being an 'outsider' in transnational research such as migration studies.

England (1994, p 82) offers a useful understanding of 'reflexivity' as the self-critical and self-conscious analytical scrutiny of the self a researcher'. In relation to feminist research, England (1994, p 247) quotes Bondi (1990, p 163):

Research as a "new kind of gender tourism, whereby male theorists are able to take package trips into the world of femininity," in which they "get a bit of the other" in the knowledge that they have return tickets to the safe, familiar and, above all, empowering terrain of masculinity (Bondi, 1990, p163).

In a parallel way this places me as a refugee and asylum seeker tourist safe in the knowledge that I have return tickets home to my life outside of this research. England (1994, p 248) cites Warren (1988, p 7) who argues that objectivity in research "is completely mythical" as we all have different personal histories and lived

⁴³ Durkheim referred to this as 'social facts' that are socially constructed whilst having an empirical reality (Rawolle and Lingard 2013, p 138),

experiences, of gender, personality, or historical location (*habitus*). It is argued that reflexive thought enables researchers to 'gain glimpses' to groups you would not normally access whilst recognising our limitations and barriers (Barker & Weller, 2003b, p 223; O'Reilly, 2018).

Bourdieu (2004, p 89) argues that reflexivity is a process of epistemological vigilance against biased research and further encourages critical understandings of social realities in both the researcher and the researched. Block et al. (2013, p 84) further argues that failure to implement reflexivity is likely to result in superficial understanding of lives that are very different from our own.

Christensen & Prout (2002, p 149) argue that research with children needs to engage with ethical questions through a reflexive practice. Theoretical approaches to childhood proposes that there is no such thing as a universal child as childhood is socially constructed within different cultural frameworks (James et al., 1998, p 27). For example, researchers in the Global North need to be aware of ethnocentric assumptions on 'childhood' that does not recognise that immigrant children are shaped by different cultural practices, rights, and obligations. Therefore, refugee and asylum seeker children in the UK may have different cultural understandings of themselves and their position and place in society (Cregan & Cuthbert, 2014, p 71). This is something that may pose further questions in my research in how this may impact upon family's settlement.

The important factor in the research-researcher nexus is the unequal and multiple power relationships that are implicit between me and the refugee and asylum seekers. Therefore, I approached this research from a reflexive standpoint as I was conscious on how difference and unequal relationships may impact upon my interactions in the drop-in and in the interviews and affect the validity of my research findings.

6.3. Ethical research with children and their families

This research acknowledges ERIC - the Ethical Research Involving Children Compendium (Graham *et al.*, 2013) which aims to assist researchers in understanding ethical conduct involving children in different geographical, social and cultural contexts. Whilst the UNCRC does not directly specify any research rights for children ERIC suggests that researchers have obligations to consider, respect and protect children's rights in any given context (Graham *et al.*, 2013, p 27). For example, my research into children's sense of settlement and belonging into The Town is conducted within the complex inequalities in terms of migration status, social class, gender, and the political context of a hostile environment. Therefore, I was mindful to uphold the rights of both children and adult participants in this research given the difficult social fields and the potential for the researcher to inflict symbolic violence including potential insensitivity to cultural differences (Bourdieu 1990; Crozier and Davies 2008 p 298)

I developed my ethical approach based upon the approach suggested by Lomas (2015, p 497) who advocates the need for researchers to be fully aware of their 'own moral framework'. My own moral framework was informed by my 'duty of care' to all research participants in which Lomas (2015) suggests is concerned with the researcher's attentiveness and reflexivity as a basis for navigating ethical and moral complexities. This is crucial in this research given the vulnerability of refugee and asylum seeker children and their parents (Pritchard *et al.*, 2019, p 197).

Participants provided consent through the University standardised consent and information forms. states that constructing consent as an on-going process. Each child was given a child friendly information sheet about the research. However, not all the children possessed the literacy skills to read this, therefore, I gave a verbal summary to each child at the beginning of the interviews. Furthermore, I gave repeated assurance that participation is entirely their decision. Therefore consent was ongoing rather than a single event of signing a consent form (Mcdowell & Mackenzie, 2007, p 310; Block, Warr, Gibbs, & Riggs, 2013 p 73).

The 'Statement of Ethical Practice' of the British Sociological Association (BSA 2017) and the Ethical Guidelines of the Social Research Association (SRA 2003) were consulted and formal ethical approval was obtained from the University Ethics Committee to ensure professionally agreed standards. Furthermore, a DBS⁴⁴ was also completed and obtained as a statutory requirement to work with children.

Bourdieu (1996, p 20) recognises the conditions that may exert symbolic violence when a researcher sets their own agenda without preliminary negotiations. I conducted preliminary discussions with each child's parent and gained formal permission via a parent consent and information forms. Hopkins (2008, p 39) suggests that refugee and asylum seekers parents need to protect children from trauma and psychological harm and reduce chances of children asking them questions beyond their 'age of innocence'. For example, the younger children's parents had said that their children were not aware of the terms of 'refugee' or 'asylum seeker' and its relevance to them. Therefore, for younger children I framed my introduction and questions around that I was wanting to understand friendships of children whose families came from another country which satisfied the parents.

I made the decision to not ask parents about the reasons they needed to seek refugee or of the journey to the UK either in the interviews or in discussions in the Drop-In. Yet, these experiences could be an important factor in shaping their settlement as these experiences inform parent's habitus in the shape of cultural conditioning (Silva, 2016a) as discussed in Chapter 2.4. However, from an ethical perspective I regarded this as a potential to inflict symbolic violence in the relationship between myself as a researcher and the research participants. I did not wish them to re-live traumatic experiences, or to engender a deficit identity of 'victim' to be pitied (Arnott 2009, p 254; Allen et al., 2018). Nevertheless, I would suggest that aspects of refugees and asylum seekers parent's habitus, could be represented

⁴⁴ DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service). All practitioners and organisations have a responsibility for keeping children safe. Government Guidance means that if any child or young person discloses something to the researcher which the research judges that places a child in risk of harm then the researcher must refer this to the designated safeguarding officer in the voluntary agency (H M Government 2015) Therefore, the researcher cannot promise confidentiality to children in such cases.

in data through an understanding of their previous employment and educational background.

6.4. Consent and young people's agency

As I have previously identified in 6.2. I approached my research from a democratic practice between practitioner and young person was informed by my previous experience as a practitioner in working with children and young people. This implies that the young person or child had the 'agency' to act autonomously from external conditions whereby children's actions are not determined by adults' actions (James et al., 1998; Crozier et al., 2008; Baraldi & Cockburn, 2018, p 9). Therefore, this proposes that children, as social actors are competent to speak for themselves and of their experiences and perspectives on the social world in which they live (James et al., 1998; Prout, 2002; Barker & Weller, 2003, p 208).

However, researchers acknowledge that children's agency can be impaired because their developmental immaturity; and whose actions and choices are constrained by their dependence on adults (Valentine, 2011, p 351; Kraftl, 2013, p 14).

Nevertheless, in the promotion of children's agency it is adults who are facilitators in which 'both children and adults are co-constructors of knowledge and expertise' (Hill et al., 2004). Therefore, I was reliant upon my years of working with children and young people to ensure that children's understanding of their experiences of were co-constructed through 'open' and 'reflexive' and participative approach' and space for children to think about the subject areas (Heath et al 2009). Hence, I was adopting what Lomax (2015, p 487) argues is a 'moral framework' that was based upon a professional practice of attentiveness, responsiveness, and a responsibility of care.

Safeguards were imposed from the onset in the process of identifying children for the sample group, such as active observation and assessment in my work with children

in the Drop-In, and engagement with parents to ensure they understood and were comfortable with their own and their child's participation, as children's choice to participate is subordinated to adults approval (Baraldi & Cockburn, 2018, p 10).

Each child was given a child friendly information sheet about the research (see Appendix 4) however, I did not assume the competencies of English literacy skills of each child and therefore, a verbal summary was given before the interviews and a repeated assurance that participation is entirely their own decision.

6.5. Semi structured interviews and sampling

The messiness of research with refugees and asylum seekers was reflected in identifying and recruiting participants for the interview process. My original plan was to conduct 16 semi-structured interviews, 8 with children (4 girls and 4 boys) and a separate interview with their parents to attain a balanced approach to the study. However, the size of the refugee and asylum seeker population is constantly fluid, with asylum seekers moved on to another location by The Home Office or are deported, or those who obtain refugee status often move onto another location. Furthermore, my criteria to research children within the 6-11 age group years and the requirement to have lived in The Town for one year made the original number difficult to achieve. Furthermore, as refugee and asylum seeker families became less dependent upon attending the Drop-In it made it more difficult to maintain contact with potential families (as discussed in 10.6).

Consequently, 9 children and 5 parents were interviewed in their homes in a mixture of individual and joint interviews with siblings or parents and children together. The gender balance was 3 girls and 6 boys, 7 parents were interviewed consisting of 3 fathers and 4 mothers (See Figure 2).

The purpose of the semi-structured interview with children was to, firstly, identify their cross-cultural friendships and to consider how this reflects social 'bonding' and 'bridging' capital that can be reflected in their social field of 'friendships'; and secondly, to consider how these friendships may frame their perceptions of identity and belonging (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

The interviews were preceded earlier in the week by asking children to draw pictures to identify their friends, or a friendship spider gram (see Chapter 7.3). It was important to follow up the requests for a drawing with five days as not to lose momentum and so that the notion of friendships was fresh on their minds. This would also provide time to spend on their drawing and allow space for thought.

I also asked the children at this point to think of another name to use to replace their real name to protect anonymity. This choice of name became a significant indicator as to the interests of the children, and a good starting point for the conversation at the start of the actual interview. Furthermore, through asking children to consider a research name also reinforced the means for children to recognise they were active participants in the research.

Visual methods such as drawing is a way in which children can represent experiences that is unconfined by language and literacy (White *et al.*, 2010). Furthermore, O'Neill (2008) states that the use of 'art' is a useful participative method for research with refugees and asylum seekers, whereby the images produced by the children for these interviews are a social product and a reflective space that makes experiences into a visible form.

Morrow & Richards (1996, p 100) highlight that talking with children about the meanings they themselves attribute to their artwork allows children to engage more productively with our research questions using the talents which children possess. Thus, the use of children's own drawing is a 'participative technique such as facilitating communication on children's own terms' (White, *et al.*, 2010, p 153; Mand, 2012, p 157). Furthermore, Blaisdell *et al.* (2019) argues that the use of arts-based research, such as the use of drawings, alter the power dynamics between researcher and children by putting the child at ease, thus increasing the quality and validity of data. Blaisdell *et al.* add that art children created in research can give a voice to children who otherwise may have been 'unheard.'

Aylan, and Hannah were both 11 years old and the oldest boy and joint oldest girl in the sample, they each did not want to draw a picture but wanted to participate in the research, therefore, they applied their own terms for the research. They gave no reason for this; however, it may be because they were older and viewed the exercise

as 'childish' (Mand, 2012, p 155) and because they felt they had the maturity (agency) to engage with the interview in a more sophisticated way (Gallacher and Gallagher, 2008).

The drawings were then used as a basis to discuss their friendship networks, in what White et al., (2010, p 146) describe as a 'draw and talk' approach, involving a dialogue with the children about the drawing. It is argued that his method can be sensitive to a child's competencies and can enable a child to feel at ease with researchers which, in turn, can lead to better quality research data (White, et al 2010; White, et al., 2011, p 144; Vincent, Neal and Iqbal, 2015). Furthermore, it is argued that the use of drawings may be appropriate at younger ages that respect children's competencies (Morrow & Richards, 1996, p 100). Despite this, I applied a sensitive approach in introducing this method as I also sensitive to the argument that what adults perceive as children friendly and empowering for children may be seen by children as adult centred and an imposition (Barker and Weller 2003, p 36).

Interviews were carried with children first, with parents present or in the vicinity, and then followed with an interview at a different time with the parent, or both parents when this was possible. Interviews with children could last between 30 minutes to an hour, and when relevant I returned to interview parents at a later day.

The interviews with parents, like the children's, were conducted in their home. Significantly, in two of the three interviews in which both parents are living at home, it was fathers who put themselves individually for the interview, whilst one couple were jointly interviewed. Therefore, parent participation in the two interviews was heavily influenced from a patriarchal family structure. However, informal discussion with both mothers took place in the Drop-In, nevertheless, this did not reflect the depth and thick data that was achieved in the formal interviews.

Figure 2

Interview Sample

| Country of origin | Child and Gender | Age | Parent Interviews |
|--|---------------------|---------------|---|
| Sri Lankan | 2 male siblings | 6 and 8 | Father -interviewed separately from children. |
| Sri Lankan | Male | 7 | Father and Mother - interviewed together but separately from child. |
| Nigerian | Male | 9 | Mother and Father had both declined an interview. |
| Nigeria | 2 x female siblings | 9 and 10 | Mother alongside children |
| Pakistan | Male | 10 | Father - interviewed separately from child. |
| Pakistani | Female | 10 | Mother and older 14-year-old sister alongside child. |
| Iraqi (Kurd) | Male | 10 | Mother alongside child |
| | Total: 9 children | Average age 9 | Total: 7 parents |
| I also interviewed another family (below); however, their children were 13 and 15 years old and therefore older than the age criteria. The circumstances for this are previously explained in page 79. | | | |
| Sri Lankan | male female | 15 13 | Father |

Therefore, the data on these mother's perspectives and experiences of settlement was limited. Had I had access to a female researcher, or ideally a female researcher from the same religion or country to conduct separate interviews with these mothers may have allowed further depth to this study. This may have overcome gendered

hierarchy and be more appropriate to cultural and religious norms by allowing participation in semi structured interviews without a male presence (Bloch, 2007; Shinozaki 2012, p 1820). However, Ryan (2015) adds caution by stating that even with shared gender that is no guarantee that the researcher would be accepted given different nuanced cultural differences despite sharing the same faith or diaspora.

The semi structured questions were used with parents to gauge their levels of social bonding and bridging capital in relation to means to settle in the locality and what sorts of cultural, social events, and routines might this involve (Ndofar-Tah *et al.*, 2019). The questions also considered parent's perceptions of their children's happiness of living in The Town and the UK and was also aimed at assessing the validity of children's responses in their interviews. The questions also linked to longer-term aspirations parents had for their children, and the strategic decisions and actions that they made towards establishing their children's future in the UK.

All interviews were audio recorded on the agreement of participants and transcribed. A copy of each transcription was sent to interviewees to validate and to confirm that they were happy with the content. The transcriptions were produced in was formatted to be clear and accessible as possible. Transcriptions were then coded to identify key themes.

Language proficiency was not a problem with the children, as their competencies were highly developed through school and interaction with their peers. This was also an advantage of interviewing children who had lived in The Town for at least one year. However, language was problematic in two interviews when their mother was the only adult present. On both occasions their English skills were limited but good enough for them to understand that a translator could be organised to attend and translate interviews and to read the consent and information forms. However, on both occasions, the mothers refused the option of a translator, as both indicated that they saw the interview as part of opportunities to help them develop their own English skills, and secondly, that they wanted their children to act as interpreters. The children themselves were also keen to fulfil this role.

It has been suggested that family interpreters, children and adults, may add bias or restrict discussion, such as parents only discussing what they wanted their children

to hear, or what children wanted their parents to hear, or things that they consider to reflect badly on their family (Edwards, 1998, p 200; Kabranian-Melkonian, 2015, p 177). In this situation children become gatekeepers of the information that they select to share with the researcher.

Hek (2005, p 23) references Lynch & Cuninghame (2000) who suggest that interpreters should be recruited from the same cultural, religious and political background as those they are interpreting for, and that they are able to act as advocates for them. However, given the relatively small refugee and asylum seeker population in The Town and its isolation from larger diverse conurbations, meant that access to formally trained interpreters was limited.

Kabranian-Melkonian (2015, p 177) suggests that using translators can sometimes create more ethical issues. For example, the gender of the interpreter can be important, including an opposite gender not being acceptable in some cultures (Edwards, 1998). Furthermore, another male present in the interviews, such as myself and another adult male, may provide a further gender and child/adult imbalance of power that is uncomfortable for others (Bloch, 2007).

Research with a refugee community can constitute many unforeseen problems; often people who speak the same language fail to understand cultural nuances and sensitivities which creates ethical issues (Edwards, 1998, p 204; Kabranian-Melkonian, 2015, p 177). This can depend upon the background of the translator and given that they are likely to be from outside the geographical area of this research, they may not understand some of the cultural nuances and sensitivities relating to the specific context of living in the Town. Furthermore, Kabranian-Melkonian (2015, p 717) states that translators from the same country or area as the respondent risks transgressing political, social, or economic fault lines of which the researcher may not be aware but could contain underlying tensions.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ For example, in The Town there were Sri Lankan Tamil families and a Sri Lankan Sinhalese family, both from different sides of a cultural divide that is underpinned by a historical civil war and ongoing political conflict and hostility. However, in the Drop-In this was not an issue as both Tamil and a Sinhalese families socialised in the same group.

6.6. Drawing and making paper aeroplanes

My participant observer role at the Drop-In included delivering art activities for children during school holidays. The use of artwork as a tool for engaging children in this study was strongly influenced by existing research (Findley, 2008; O'Neill, 2008; Dreby & Adkins, 2012; Mand, 2012; Iqbal et al., 2017). Throughout the school holidays my involvement in the Drop-In focused on working with children to engage with creating drawings. At the beginning of each Drop-In session, I set up designated tables with materials, the activity was informal and voluntary, and children drew items of their own choice with children opting in and out at various points. These sessions focused on children and engaged children from early years to primary school age (3 to 11 years old). These activities also became an attraction to newly arrived children, for example two Nigerian sisters, who later took part in interviews had commented that I was the first 'local' person that they had spoken to in The Town. Just over a year later the girls took part in a semi-structured interview.

These drawing activities occasionally evolved into a slightly different activities such as making paper aeroplanes that resulted in me overseeing a competition between boys on who could throw them the furthest. This also gained interest from adult males in the Drop-in who helped the boys with the designs and construction. Hence, increasing my profile amongst adults.

A further unplanned benefit of the art activities was that parents often participated with their children; these were mostly mothers. Some mothers had limited or no English language skills, but this activity provided space for them to interact through the concept of art, both with their children, and with me. This provided another opportunity to assess the viability of engaging certain parents in the sample interviews, for example, one family fulfilled the criteria for the age of the children and the length of time they had lived in the town, but the parent never spoke had displayed significant anxiety and confidence issues. Furthermore, her two children did not speak very often to other children. Therefore, I felt it may cause distress by asking the parent and her family to be involved in the research. Hence invoking

ethical issues of symbolic violence. Furthermore, this is an example whereby I was not comfortable in engaging with the family as it potentially compromised by 'duty of care' towards the wider refugee and asylum seeker population in which the research was located (Lomax, 2015, p 495)

The drawing activity with children in the Drop-In was designed only for the purpose of developing constructive relationships with children so they can gain some familiarity with me as a researcher (Morrow & Richards (1996, p 110). Nevertheless, it became apparent that what the children drew and how it was used to engage others in the room raised interesting questions about gendered identity which is discussed across Chapters 7 and 9. For example, I was curious to explore if the images they draw reflect their interests and identity that they use as a resource to develop social and cultural capital and therefore a sense of belonging and settlement with other local children outside of the Drop-in setting?

6.7. Observer participation

The aims of participant observation were to develop relationships of trust with refugee and asylum seeker adults and their children through conversation and to identify potential families as participants to undertake interviews. Thus, all interview respondents, adults and children were directly recruited from the Drop-In.

During this research I carried out 49 ethnological observer/participant sessions at the Refugee and Asylum Seeker Drop-In between November 2015 to June 2018. The sessions occur once a week for 2 hours therefore there was approximately 110⁴⁶ hours of observer/participation fieldwork. Digital recordings were made immediately after each session and then transcribed later in the day. Each recording was coded to identify themes. These recordings identified: key activities of the session, a

⁴⁶ This includes attendance at the Wesleyan Church Drop-In, a Multicultural Community Day and an Interfaith conference.

reflection of my different conversations and who was involved, my observations of the social interactions and networks that occurred, initial analytical thoughts of the sessions and identify any specific interactions are I needed to focus upon in my next session. I include a copy of a transcribed recording in Appendix 2.

The aim of these sessions included to initiate and develop trusting relationships with refugee and asylum seekers. The importance of this is reflected earlier in (6.2) as Hynes (2003) suggest that on arrival, an asylum seeker may mistrust everyone, including other refugee and asylum seekers. Therefore, my priority was to make a familiar and unthreatening presence. I needed to replicate my previous skills as a detached youth worker, working with young people on the street and other public places, whereby initial approaches to marginal young people meant I had to present an unthreatening, cautious, and sensitive approach in the early contacts with them (Tiffany, 2007).

I made a conscious decision from the outset that I would be 'participating' rather than just observing. It is also argued that participant observation can be a tense process as it involves gaining access, adopting an insider role, gaining rapport, becoming accepted, building relationships, even sometimes making friends (O'Reilly, 2018; Nordstrom, 2018, p 222). The aim of my participant observation was to work towards softening the in-out boundaries and establishing my credentials with attendees and volunteers (Hynes 2003; Bloch. 2007, p 236; Carling, Erdal and Ezzati, 2014, p 39).

Thus a 'brief encounter' in research with a new contact one week, could be developed with this person in more depth over the following weeks (Baker 2006, p176). However, Baker adds that much patience is needed in this process, this is particularly relevant to this study as the Drop-In lasted for only 2 hours per week whereby it is not guaranteed that regular participants could attend each week. Indeed, there was periods of time during the research whereby I was unable to attend due to my university teaching timetable. Therefore, consistency of attendance was an area that prolonged the field work

My participation as an observer/volunteer enabled me to be involved in informal discussions with a broader cohort of refugee and asylum seekers and volunteers. Although there was a fluidity in the number of refugees and asylum seekers in the Drop-In due to a variety of reasons such as: asylum seekers being moved onto a different town without choice, a final rejection of their application for refugee status or moving on once refugee status is granted. Furthermore, some refugees and asylum seekers, reduced their dependence upon the Drop-in (as discussed in Chapter 10.6).

Figure 3 is a table that gives an overview of the nationalities of my most prominent and sustained contacts I had with families in the Drop-In. The aim of including this table is to provide a context and an overview of the most prominent connections I made with individuals who were present across most of the time of my fieldwork at the Drop-in. The criteria I use are those who I would have greeted and/or engaged in conversation with during their attendance.

I set out the functions of the Drop-In in Chapter 1.1, which are to distribute donated items such as: used clothes, bakery products and domestic goods and offers support and advice through volunteers and workers from one or two charities. One of the most important functions of the drop-in was to provide a social space for to meet. This was an important as it helped address the isolation that dispersal brings (Hagstrom, 2009 p166) by connecting to other refugee and asylum seeker adults and maintain links with others who have similar cultural and diaspora identities. Figure 4 sets out the main social groups who met within the Drop-in over the course of my fieldwork. The membership of the groups was fluid as members moved in and out of the town.

Figure 3 does not reflect the other sustained contacts that were time limited depending upon circumstances that prevented attendance such as moving out the area or the Drop-in no longer meetings their needs as they become more dependent. However, this excludes the sample of families I interviewed in Figure 2.

Figure 3: An overview of the nationalities of the most prominent and sustained contacts I had with families across the time of my field work in the Drop-In.

| Country of Origin | Gender | Religion | Status |
|--------------------------------|----------------|-----------|---|
| Afghanistan | Male | Muslim | Asylum seeker |
| Albania | Female | not known | Asylum seeker |
| Honduras | Female | not known | Refugee |
| Iran Mother and daughter | Female | Christian | Obtained refugee status during my fieldwork |
| Iran | Male | Christian | Obtained refugee status during my fieldwork |
| Nigeria | Female | Muslim | Asylum seeker |
| Nigeria | Female | Muslim | Asylum seeker |
| Pakistan | Female | Christian | Refugee |
| Somalia | Male | unknown | Refugee |
| Sri Lanka Husband and wife | Male Female | Hindu | Refugee |
| Sudan | Male | Muslim | Asylum seeker |
| Zimbabwe | Male | Christian | Refugee |

Figure 4 (next page) gives an overview of the social groups that attended most of the Drop-In Sessions. At the earlier stages of my research, I considered gain introducing myself and my research to these groups. However, my observations suggested that they were deep in conversation, and in their language, and therefore I judged it could have been intrusive, and threatening, particularly to the women's group, and to be culturally inappropriate. I was an outsider without the linguistic or cultural skills that facilitate access and interaction with group members (Carling, Erdal and Ezzati (2104, p 38).

Figure 4: Informal social groups in the Drop-in

| Informal social groups at the Drop-In Sessions. | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iranian family's group • Pakistani women's group • Pakistani, Iranian, and Afghanistan women's group⁴⁷ • Nigerian women's group. • Sri Lankan family's group • Syrian men's group | <p>The numbers in these groups fluctuated between 5-15 adults. The women's groups included parents who had pre-school children with them.</p> |

In their analysis of researching social capital Devine & Roberts, (2003, p 98) argue that observing people engaged in action is a way of studying the cultural dimensions of social capital. Bryman (2014, p 432) argues that ethnography is a research method when the researcher is immersed in a group for an extended period of time, observing behaviour, listening to what is said, and develops an understanding of the people's behaviour within the context of the 'field'. My participant observations involved helping with on-going tasks such as identifying and welcoming new attendees who had just arrived in the Town. The work also involved occasionally accompanying different adult asylum seekers to specific places to support them with conversing with staff at the Train Station and Post Office.

Nordstrom, (2018, p 222) argues that participant observation is a fluid, messy form of data collection. This is reflected in the emergence of 'car-driving' ethnological research, such as taking asylum seekers home if they had acquired items from the

⁴⁷ I asked Aleeza a Pakistani volunteers how the group communicated to each other given they were from different countries. Aleeza explained that as the countries bordered each other, they had enough knowledge of each language to communicate with each other.

drop-in that otherwise they would have had great difficulty with carrying home. I was 'unprepared' for the first time I was asked but as Nordstrom (2018, p 215) states ethnography is unpredictable and I needed to react on the spot, to be reflexive and as a way towards develop trustful relationships.

These 5-minute car journeys to refugee and asylum seekers houses, also gave the opportunity for me to ask them about their experiences of living in The Town.⁴⁸

Given that I was talking and listening whilst driving, without the intensity of face to face discussions or interviews, including limited eye contact, there was often 'thick' descriptions and expressions.⁴⁹ This may be explained by Hynes (2003) who states that asylum seekers may be intimidated by formal research interviews as their previous experiences of interviews are often hostile towards them both in their country and with the Home Office. Therefore, they were more at ease in such an informal and less direct environment that interviews may evoke amongst refugees and asylum seekers. During these times I saw the outsides of refugee and asylum seeker's homes and was able to consider questions about the use of spaces for social interactions in the street.

These experiences provided me with further questions and a line of inquiry on refugee and asylum seeker's accommodation and of wider housing policy (which was addressed in Chapter 3.6). These experiences also enabled me to consider the type of secondary data that was needed to support and validate the qualitative data I had accumulated through observations and interviews.

⁴⁸ In terms of good ethical and safeguarding practice, I was never alone with an individual refugee and asylum seeker in the car, either a child or/and a friend were always present.

⁴⁹ The discussions in the car journeys were recorded via a Dictaphone immediately after the event and written up later. I re-affirmed to all refugees and asylum seekers in these journeys that I was in attendance as a researcher.

6.8. Data analysis

I applied a thematic analysis of research data through a systematic process of audio recordings, and transcribing them verbatim, and applied a process of thematic coding. This was applied to semi-structured interviews and to observer/participant fieldwork recordings of the Drop-In and other events in the town such as a workshop for asylum seekers a multicultural celebration day and a multi-faith conference.

The thematic analysis approach allowed for the identification of emerging and comparative themes across my research (Braun and Clarke, 2006). To manage this process, I applied a three-layer system of coding to the semi-structured interview transcriptions. Coding was undertaken manually, despite an initial desire to use analytical software to complete this part of the research process.

In the analysis of childrens interviews, the first layer identified themes through looking for similar patterns of experiences between as articulated in the interviews. The use of each child's drawings was a way to instigate discussion and act as an initial product for data analysis (White et al., 2010, p 146). The second layer was to identify themes in relation to my research question through focusing upon the sense of settlement and belonging through friendships and physical and social fields they inhabit. The third layer identified key theories such as habitus, field, forms as of capital including symbolic capital and 'identity performance' which is in keeping with Bourdieu's theoretical work which was essentially a "theory of research practice" (Bourdieu, 1990b, Kelly and Lusic, 2006, Forchtner and Schneickert, 2016). The data analysis of parent interviews followed the same pattern, without the stimuli of drawings to instigate discussion

The participant/observation fieldwork followed the same processes, with audio fieldwork recording made soon after the sessions and transcribed as verbatim. This includes a both a factual account of events and a more reflexive approach to make meanings out of observations (Hopkins, 2008, p 45; Morrice 2012, p 259).

The final process of thematic coding was bringing together a collective overlay of both interview and participant observation to produce an overall picture of the data.

This reflects the high level of engagement and involvement of thematic analysis that is needed from the researcher in qualitative research (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

However, there are limitations on drawing from both interview and ethnological data. This thematic approach identified the wide range of racism experienced by refugees and asylum seekers, however, there was no reports in the Drop-In or interviews of Brexit related racism or hate crime. This suggests that these methods can highlight the micro experiences of refugee and asylum seekers but on its own does not provide the macro story or changing context (Shinozaki, 2012. p 1816). For example, the impact of Brexit that may inhibit refugee and asylum seeker's sense of settlement in the Town was analysed through secondary data such as examining local newspaper reports and its link to anti-immigration rhetoric published in the town's newspaper.

6.9. Mapping and secondary research

The mapping of the dispersal area through secondary data illustrates the high levels of poverty and environmental conditions frames the context that refugee and asylum seekers experience as they settle into the locality. Furthermore, this exercise reinforces the challenges for the wider local population.

Chapter 3 analyses the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Seeker Act that places most dispersal areas in poor social and economic localities. This was confirmed by my ethnological observations of the dispersal area in The Town in which there is visual evidence of social deprivation such as boarded up shops, the presence of charity shops, and poorly maintained housing. This can be attributed to the notion of 'place poverty' through the poor physical condition of housing and the environment and high levels of crime (Pinoncely (2016).

Blommaert (2015, p 227) argues that ethnographic observation can be corroborated by statistical analysis. To validate and provide a context to the empirical data I collected further evidence of demographic and economic trends from local and regional authorities and through national campaign groups such as End Child

Poverty Now. I also carried out a mapping exercise to identify local and voluntary agencies aimed at addressing social and welfare needs. The location of a Food Bank and that the local Children Centre has remained open in the area despite closures of other Children's Centres across the town are evidence of social need.

Data on the levels of crime, including a rise in hate crime was obtained from the area Crime Commissioner. I paid attention to the reporting of crime in the local newspaper, with addresses of the perpetrators and crime locations were checked against a street map to determine if the crime took place in the dispersal area. However, this is not a scientific analysis, as it is dependent upon what the newspaper deems to report rather than an audit of all crime. The newspaper was a main public source of local information and therefore given the high instance of crimes reported in the dispersal area reinforces the notion of territorial stigma of 'place' as discussed in Chapter 3.1.

The local newspaper was a source of information and understanding of the political climate in the Town, this included changes in the composition of members of The Town Council and emerging trend towards populist right-wing politics. This was further demonstrated by the decision of the newspaper to publish reader's comments include anti-immigration and racist sentiment toward the presence of refugees and asylum seekers in The Town (see Appendix 3).

The mapping of community groups, sports organisations, and public amenities in the area was carried out through on-line research and discussion with voluntary sector workers. Campbell (2017, p 20) identifies these organisations as community structures for community engagement. Putnam (2000) defines such organisations as places to facilitate social capital. The purpose of this mapping exercise was to gain an understanding of public space (Porter et al., 2020) whereby the dynamics of children's interactions can be different from school grounds. Whilst this study is mostly qualitative empirical basis, the choice of secondary data has helped established validity, and context of the research.

6.10. Conclusion

This chapter has set out research methods in this study. The methodological design sits with Bourdieu's sociological approach that seeks an understanding of the situated, experienced and practised (Blommaert, 2012, p 227; Blommaer, 2015, p 2). Thus, the qualitative data collection in this study has attempted to capture and make sense of the complex experiences of settlement through access to forms capital that is interwoven with multi layered and fluid identities.

Bourdieu emphasis a need to be reflexive to acknowledge our role in data collection towards achieving better social science (Rawolle and Lingard, 2013, p 128). This is shared by Quraishi and Philburn (2015, p 46) who argue that reflexivity should be central to any research into racism and race. Whereas James, Jenks and Prout, (1998, p 28, 203) argue that there is a need to be reflexive in our understanding of childhood and in child's journey into forming their identity.

The reflective focus of my research practice has been a conscious of the structural power differential between my position as a social actor and researcher and those I researched. I am also mindful of Bourdieu's position that rejects any claim of epistemological innocence (Rawolle and Lingard, 2013, p 128). I adopted practice and a moral framework based on 'duty of care' of research participants that recognises and attempts to reduce this risk towards symbolic violence.

The time available to conduct observer participation and initiate interview contacts was restricted to Drop-In 2 hours per week. Thus, from a logistical approach this meant that I would need a substantial number of weeks to develop meaningful and productive contacts. Furthermore, it is argued that ethnological approaches such as observer participation is a long- term process to have a greater depth of understanding of participants experiences (Bryman 2012 p 464) towards the researcher becoming a 'trusted guest' (Christensen and Prout 2002, 487).

The use of children's drawing was used as a tool to engage with children in the interviews to facilitate their voice. However, the art activities in the Drop-In produced unplanned outcomes such as analysis of pictures in terms of gathering data on

gendered identity and to engage with parents and thus increasing my level of familiarity with parents.

This chapter set out the context and questions that are addressed in the empirical chapters to inform the practices and barriers to a sense of belonging and settlement.

Chapter 7

Friendship as the Basis for Children's Social Capital.

7.1. Introduction

This chapter draws from the experiences of the refugee and asylum seeker children in this study to explore how friendships as help develop social capital and with it a sense of settlement and belonging. This is within the context of the dispersal policy that results in children's need to develop cross cultural friendships in a predominantly white working-class location dispersal area. To develop this, I consider age related stages of child development in relation to children's understanding of ethnicity and race.

In this chapter I include the pictures that children produced to facilitate the semi structured interviews with children as discussed in chapter 6.5 that helped to inform the data used in the Table of friendship (Figure 5). This helped to explore the notion of friendship as an aspect of social capital that is primarily developed with schools that provide the space to facilitate social interactions. I differentiate between bonding and bridging social capital by examining how this may manifested in the quantity and quality of friendships. Furthermore, I consider gendered habitus and how this shapes social capital through friendships and the social activities in which children choose to participate within.

7.2. Schools as a space for children's developing social capital and friendships

I examine 'friendship' as a vehicle for developing social capital and its relevance to refugees and asylum seekers children's settlement and sense of belonging. It breaks down the quality and quality of friendships whereby I explore the time that the sample group have lived in The Town and its impacts upon social and cultural

competencies needed to establish a space to make friends. I follow this by examining the gendered approach to friendships, settlement, belonging and identity.

The interview sample group of children are aged between 6 and 11 years old; this fits within the children's development stage whereby they begin to be able to put themselves in other people's shoes (Pahl, 2000, p 100). Pahl further states that by this age children take in a second person's perspective as peers begin to exchange ideas and gradually develop friendship based on discussion, reciprocity and mutual respect as they come to understand that equality is the most critical element of fairness (Pahl, 2000, p 99).

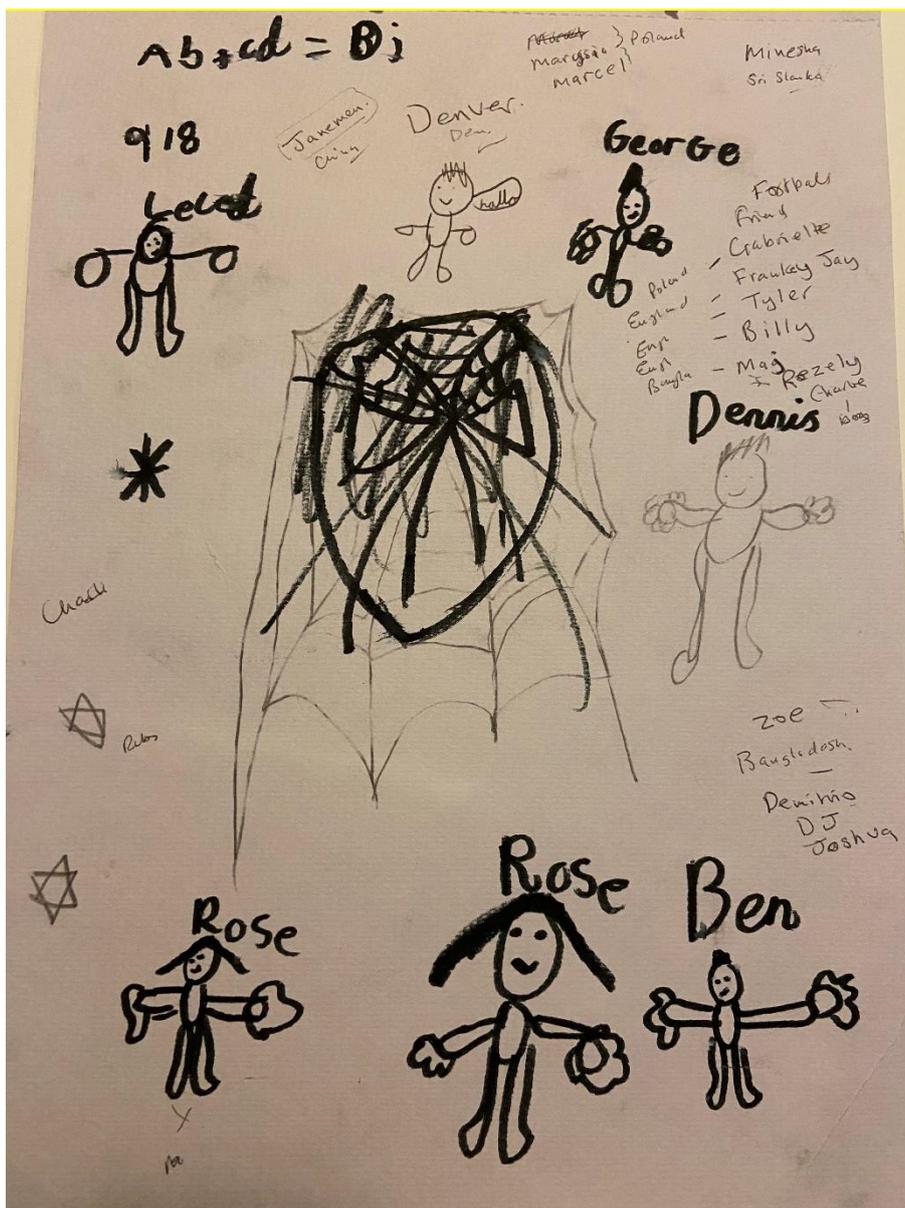
Barron (2011) argues that theoretical stages of child development are too simplistic to understand differentiations of individual children, particularly in their negotiation of their own identity, ethnicity and friendships.⁵⁰ Bruegel (2006, p 2) further argues that young children are not highly conscious of racial differences and largely unaware of the religion of their friends. This is highly contested by Iqbal, Neal and Vincent, (2017, p 2) who argue that primary school friendships are often the first occasions in which children begin to develop understandings of social and ethnicity as well as individual difference. The findings from this research reflect Iqbal, Neal and Vincent's (2017, p 2) argument as all the children in the interviews displayed an understanding between different races. For example: all children across the ages of the sample group in this study confidently identified ethnic differences when discussing the drawings that they produced for the interviews.

7.3 Children's Drawings

The next six pages are drawing made by the children in the sample, these helped to inform that date for Figure 5 which identifies each of the children in the sample and who they regarded as important friends including their nationality, ethnicity, and gender.

⁵⁰ Child development theory is complex and contested. For example, the most prominent child development theorists Piaget, advocates that children experience specific chronological periods of cognitive development. This contrasts to with theorist such as Vygotsky and Bronfenbrenner who argue that it is the environment factors that impact upon child's development and understanding of the world (Lansdown, 2005, p 23; Wyness, 2018, p 41)

7.3.1. Ben



7.3.2. Adele



7.3.3. Samesh



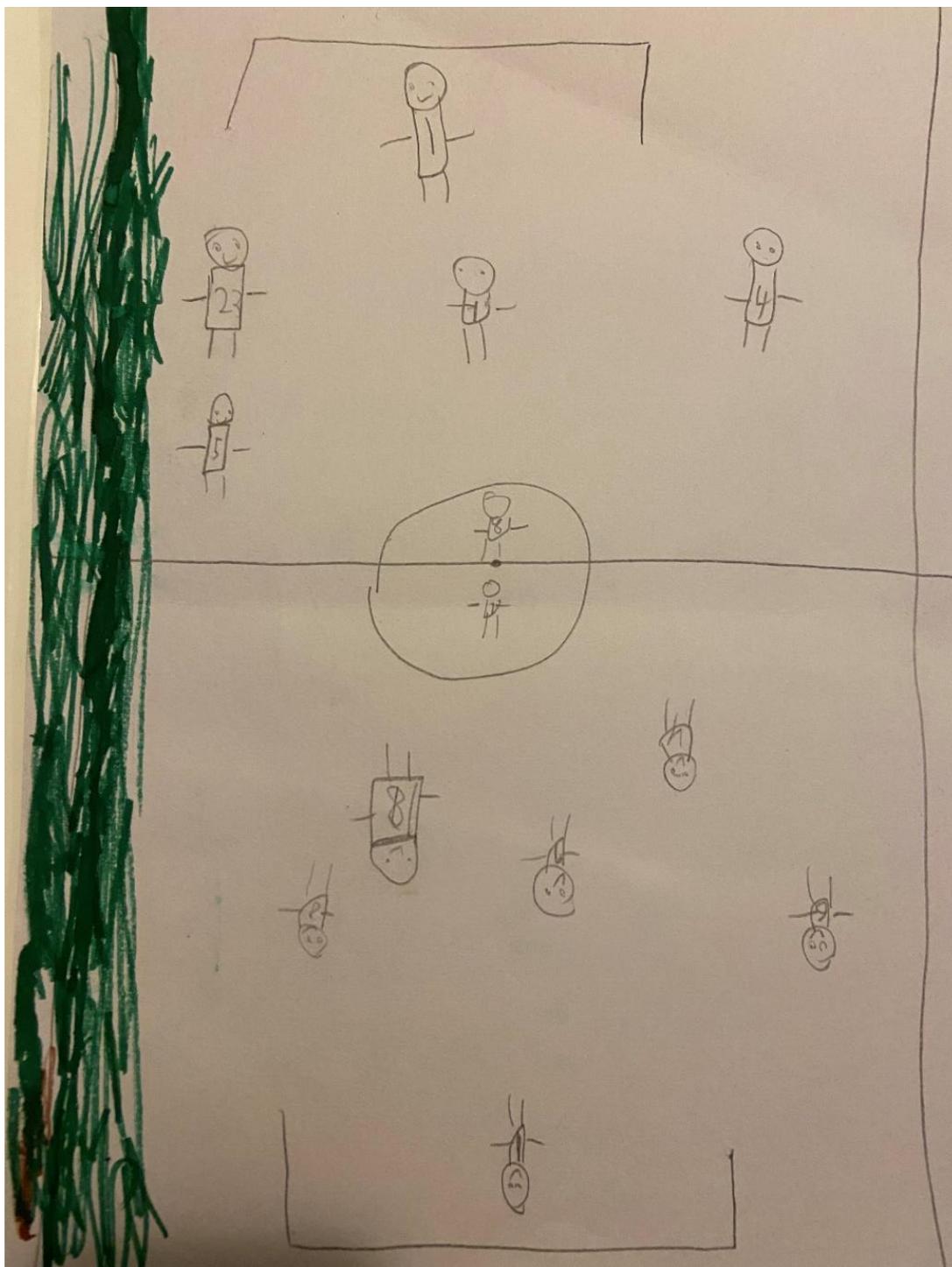
7.3.4. Kevan



7.3.5. Ron



7.3.6. James



Note:

As discussed in Chapter 6.5. two older children opted not to make a drawing, a further child Hannah, decided to keep her picture (hence it is not available here).

Figure 5: Analysis of in-school friendship in order of their years at their school.

| Name | Gender | Age | Country of Origin | Years in the school | Friends Non-White British | Friends - White British | Friends Polish White | Male Friends | Female Friends | Total no of friends |
|---------|--------|-----|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|--------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Adele | F | 11 | Pakistan | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Tiffany | F | 10 | Nigeria | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 5 |
| Hannah | F | 11 | Nigeria | 1 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| Aylan | M | 11 | Iraq | 2 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| Samesh | M | 6 | Sri Lanka | 2 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| James | M | 7 | Nigeria | 3 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| Kavin | M | 8 | Sri Lanka | 3 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| Ben | M | 7 | Sri Lanka | 3 | 5 | 9 | 3 | 12 | 5 | 17 |
| Ron | M | 10 | Pakistan | 4 | 5 | 10 | 0 | 15 | 0 | 15 |

The data in Figure 5 provides a starting point to help understand friendship networks of the sample group. The data identified social patterns of ethnicity, gender, the number of friends and the numbers of years that each child has been attending their existing school. These help to identify children's who they constitute as friends, which provide indicators of their social networks within the school and therefore the locality.

Bourdieu (1986, p15) states that capital in all its forms takes time to accumulate. The number of years children have spent at their school reflects this argument whereby the acquirement of social capital and the processes of settlement can be time dependent (Atfield, Brahmhatt and O'Toole, 2007; Carling, Erdal and Ezzati, 2014, p 43; Grzymala-Kazlowska and Phillimore, 2017). The total number of

identified 'friends' in this study tends to increase the longer they have been at the school.

This table demonstrates that most of the sample group developed cross cultural friendships with children including friends who are identified as white British. This corresponds to other research on cross cultural children's friendships (Pahl and Spencer 1997; Bruegel, 2006; George, 2007; Iqbal, Neal and Vincent, 2017). For example, Bruegel (2006) surveyed six hundred 10-11-year-old children across a mixture of ethnically diverse and non-diverse 12 primary schools. Bruegel concluded that day to day contact in primary schools breaks down division of ethnicity and faith wherever children have an opportunity to make friends from different backgrounds. Furthermore, Iqbal, Neal and Vincent, (2017) observed that friendship practices amongst 8 and 9-year olds in school settings involved interactions across 'difference'.

The interviews with Ben and then Adele offer a comparative analysis of social competencies and the capacity to develop friendships. Thus, my starting position for this analysis was to explore if it is the social competences of children that impact upon their ability to socially engage with their school peers. Furthermore, by drawing from Ben and Adele's data may also provide an indicator if gender impacts upon developing friendships.

Ben (see Figure 6) identified a total of seventeen friends from across ethnicities. When I was engaging with Ben and observing his interactions with other children in the Drop-In sessions; he was always sociable, talkative, attentive, with an outgoing personality. In short, he possesses a range of social competencies. Adele identified just two friends in the interview which was reflected in her drawing (see 7.3.2 p 109. for Adele's drawing).

During the interview with Adele in the Drop-In she came across very quiet and during her visits to the Drop-In she did not verbally engage with anyone, including her mother (Shanaz) and the other adult women she sat with. Furthermore, my observational recordings note that Adele rarely engaged with other refugee children, and she did not take part in children's art activities in the Drop-In.

Cheong *et al.* (2007, p 38) argue that there is an assumption that immigrants begin with a 'clean slate' for developing social capital with others with no consideration to the 'harsh realities' of immigration. However, Adele and Ben have different influences that have formed their habitus, for example, Atkinson, 2013 (p185) identifies habitus as an individual's meeting point of life experiences from multiple fields and spaces. There are a range of different experiences and influences that may impact upon Adele and Ben's capacities and competencies to develop social capital.

Ben came to the UK when he was two years old and spent most of his life in The Town and attended one school. Adele had lived in The Town for just one year but has lived in the UK for four years in which she had been moved with her family between four different towns and four different schools throughout the North of England. Therefore, Adele has had to frequently leave behind school friends and establish new friendships that in her experience as an asylum seeker that may be temporary (Williams ,2006, p 876; Friedman, 2016, p 131). The need for Adele to continually renegotiate new social fields can undermine her ability and confidence to develop relationships and emotional well-being (Sporton and Valentine, 2007, p 15; Hynes, 2009, p 111; Stewart and Shaffer, 2015, p 20; Murphy and Vieten, 2016, p 54).

Reay (1998, p 521) states that habitus includes a set of complex and diverse predispositions. Adele and Ben's contrasting predispositions and experiences will have different long-term impacts upon each of their lives as the crucial aspects of habitus embodiment take place in childhood (James, Jenks and Prout, 1998, p 161; Pahl, 2000).

Adele has experienced the upheaval of forced immigration as a seven-year-old followed by continual upheaval in the UK. Therefore, Adele has had substantial disadvantage in comparison to Ben by the lack of space and time in acquiring the social competencies. Hence the capacity to develop social relationships is more challenging to children who like Adele have been forcibly displaced prior to their arrival in the UK and then experienced ongoing forcible movement within the UK.

A further difference to consider in the comparison between Ben and Adele is the role of siblings. Ben is an only child, so therefore arguably relies on his ability to build social contacts with friends to avoid isolation. However, Adele and her older sister Iqra both stated that spend much time together and is reflective of Shih's (1998, p 231) notion of 'physical and psychological proximity' which can support the sense of security and belonging. Bergnehr, Aronson and Enell, (2020, p 538) adds to this by suggesting that siblings can offer similar functions as friends. Similarly, Kavin (8 years old) and Samesh (6 years old) as brothers spend much time together, and my interactions and observations of Hannah (11 years old) and Tiffany (10 years old) indicate that they are emotionally close to each other. However given the notion that family provides a function of the reproduction of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986, p 17) may reinforce embedded habitus as an obstacle to relating to other children in the locality and the desire to make new friends. For example, the reluctance to make a range of new friends was evident in the discussions with Tiffany and Hannah.

It was evident in the children's sample that gendered identities shaped children's social relationships. For example, the means to maintain friendships with other children were focused on gendered activities. The small sample of girls in this research focused more upon building bonding social capital and therefore establish meaningful friendships through the meeting of minds and interests which is identified as 'emotional capital' (Morrow, 1999, p 755). Reay, (2004) draws from Nowotny (1981) who regard's emotional capital as a variant of social capital but within the confinements of private rather than in public space.

Playtimes and lunch times provide opportunities for children to develop the social skills necessary to interact with peers in a positive way, and on their own terms (Connolly, 2000; Pellegrini *et al.*, 2004, p 20). The three girls in this research did not elaborate on the activities in the play yard other than it being a time with friends. This corresponds to the notion that suggest girls are more sedentary and verbally less boisterous than boys and can find the playground unpleasant due to dominance of space by boys (Pellegrini *et al.*, 2004, p 117).

Sisters Tiffany and Hannah emphasised the personalities of her friends. Tiffany stated:

“We are friends because me and Alivia have similar talents and me and Annemarie like similar subjects at school. I think that is what brought us closer together. Annemarie is really smart and she knows lots about maths and literacy. India likes gymnastics and she loves dancing.”

“I like to work hard in maths especially and literacy; literacy is the one I need to work hard at. I like to work hard in school.”

Devine, Kenny and Macneela (2008, p 382) argue by being ‘smart’ at school provide important resources for minority ethnic children to draw upon in the negotiation of their status with peers. Both Annemarie and India are white British and alongside Tiffany they could be referred to as having constructed a successful learner identity that replicates what Reay also refers to as middle class pupil identity based on positive engagement with academic learning (Reay, 2006; Reay, 2009; Crozier, Reay and James, 2011).

Hannah, also stated:

“When I first came to the school, they were really nice to me and wanted to know more about me.”

Tiffany added:

“In the first day everyone liked us because we were new. But the second day we were just normal to other people, that’s why it was hard to make new friends.”

Tiffany summarised her current friendships by stating:

“They are friends, because they accepted me as who I am, and I did not need to change to become their friend.”

The girls placed importance on their first few days of arrival at the school and how this changed over time. Devine, Kenny and Macneela, (2008, p 381) state that for girls, being ‘new’ is a marker of status and inclusion, which could alter over the course of a school year. However, Tiffany has been at the school for one year during

and elected not to change her own identity to fit in which reflects finding from cross-racial friendships whereby this was of importance to girls (George, 2007, p 122: Weller, 2007, p 347).

Only Ben in this sample group has friendships across genders. The boys in the sample tends to focus upon more public demonstration of bonding and bridging capital with other boys through their dominance of the school yard. Devine, Kenny and Macneela (2008, p 381) concluded that 'sportiness' is a significant source for ethnic minority boy's inclusion and grounds for friendship and therefore developing social capital. Connolly (2000, p 507) argues that boy's social relationships are developed in more open spaces in the school and playground. Casey (2016) adds that outdoor play space provides boys with opportunities to demonstrate their physically vigorous and competitive behaviours. Casey (2016) found that physically active games with the levels of aggression, enhanced status for minority ethnic boys, thereby facilitating their inclusion in male peer groups. This is supported by Nicholson and Hoye (2008) who see participation in sport as a way to build social capital to achieve a sense of belonging.

Ben and his friend Maj's participation in the football group fits with the notion of masculine behaviours and 'tough' football playing boys (Vincent, Neal and Iqbal, 2015, p 12). However, Ben and Maj's involvement in football challenges Connolly's finding that rough games such as football tended to routinely exclude Asian boys who had tended to be constructed as weak and inferior (Connolly, 2006, p 147).

It was evident that competent sporting behaviour is an individual's commodity to extend social capital amongst boys, for example, Ron identified a new friend, an Afghan boy who was new to the school.

He is a new guy in our school, he is good at cricket, is good at batting, sometimes he bats the ball out of school

Further competitive games such as playing 'tig' was also a school activity played by Samesh and Kavin. Similarly, James stated that:

"We become friends in the school's playtime, like we played 'tig' with each other and we play racing sometimes."

Ron stated that:

“We play Black Opps or Zombies on the school field.”⁵¹

Ron explained that these games were physical and aggressive activities that could only be played during school breaks and on the school yard or school field. Whilst Ron’s activities with friends portrays a masculine identity, there are other markers of gendered identity that are reflected in the childrens drawings that they brought to the interviews. Similarly, to Ron, Kavin expressed an interest in aggressive games through the drawing that he brought to the interview. Kevan’s picture had the title ‘Boom Beach Friends’ which is a war strategy game he plays with his friends (7.3.4 p111).

Ben brought his drawing of a spider gram of his friends to the interview (7.3.1 p108); which reflected his main interest in the comic hero spiderman. At the end of the interview, he also showed me a collection of his drawings of spiderman to underline his enthusiasm. Dinella, Claps and Lewandowski (2017, p 265) argue that in child developmental theory the interest in superheroes reinforces children’s gender identity of the character they relate to.

Ben’s identification of his friendships in Figure 6 exposes the question of differentiating between bonding and bridging capital. Ben distinguished between close friendships and others. For example, in Ben’s group of friends he had specific group who he played football in the school playground in what can be defined as a ‘football ego network’ as a proxy for personal friendship and strong social networks’ (Bécares, Nazroo and Kelly, 2015; Zwolinsky *et al.*, 2018, p 6). Therefore, Ben’s football friends are more likely only to produce bridging social capital as their relationship is specific to playing football. This corresponds to Putnam’s (2000) assertion that bridging capital is outward looking and more likely to facilitate wider networks rather than bonding capital which is an ‘exclusive’ form of social relationships.

Skeggs (2004, p 22) draws from Bourdieu to suggest that social identity is first made from sexual identity, and shaped through early experience in the family, thus

⁵¹ This is role play acting out the characters in the computer games they play on-line at home.

informing their gendered habitus. Furthermore, Thorne (1993, p 600) argues that gender identity means becoming a member of a group that transcends family. Therefore, the gendered engagement with the art activities in the Drop-In reinforced the children's feminine **or** masculine forms of identify. This reflects Thorne's (1993, p 600) observations that each girl comes to realise that she shares a category with other labelled girls, and each boy realise that she shares a category with other labelled boys.

Putnam states that social capital is the means to achieve 'racially integrated' schools through familiarity, tolerance, solidarity, trust, cooperation and mutual respect (Putnam, 2000, p 362). Whilst Putnam further proposes that neighbourhood schools provide unique sites for building social capital through friendship, including developing children's habits of co-operation and solidarity (2000, p 362). There is overwhelming evidence that schools are important in promoting social and emotional development needs and often the only statutory agency providing formal support to asylum seeking children (Morrow, 1999; Hek, 2005; Spicer 2008; Sime and Fox, 2015).

Schools are a primary arena where children accumulate social capital that is independent of their parents (Weller, 2007; Coleman, 2010). This should be reflected in school policies that support the development of children's social competencies in order to facilitate inclusion and therefore the settlement of children (Lansdown, 2005, p 24; Iqbal, Neal and Vincent, 2017, p 3).

There are variations in how children experience and cultivate friendships. Vincent, Neal and Iqbal (2016, p 491) suggest that it easy to make assumptions that all children have the capacities for friendship. Whereas James, Jenks and Prout, (1998, p 88) state that some children become highly skilled and flexible social actors, whilst others are less skilled and limited in their in developing new relationships. This may be critical for refugee and asylum seeker children's ability to establish and maintaining friendships to establish social networks.

Figure 6 shows that Ben has friends from a range of ethnicities. Ben has attended his school since for 3 years since he was 4 years old and since then has had mostly contact for 5 days a week with many of his friends. It is argued that where there is

Figure 6: Case study: Ben's in-school friendships

| Name | Characteristics of friendship (school) | | | Ethnicity |
|-----------|---|--|--|---------------|
| Denver | He is my best friend and he's coming to my house. And a football friend. | | | Filipino |
| Dennis | He says people can't play with me because he is always my friend, but sometimes he does nice things for people. | | | Chinese |
| Rose | Because she always plays with me and is nice to me. | | | White English |
| Benji | This is Benji he is always good and he's always nice is very innocent and polite. | | | White English |
| Leeland | He is my talking partner (in class) and we help each other if we get stuck. | | | White English |
| Manisha | A class friend that plays with me and Rose. | | | Sri Lanka |
| Ruby | A class friend that plays with Rose, Manisha and Rose. | | | White English |
| Zoe | She is a good friend. | | | Bangladeshi |
| Marcel | A good friend. | | | Polish |
| Maryia | A good friend, from another class. Sister of Marcel. | | | Polish |
| Gabrielle | He is a football friend; we play in the school yard. | | | Polish |
| Charlie | He is a football friend-school- yard. | | | White English |
| Jay | He is a football friend-school- yard. | | | White English |
| Frankie | He is a football friend – school yard. | | | White English |
| Tyler | He is a football friend – school yard. | | | White English |
| Billy | He is a football friend – school yard. | | | White English |
| Maj | He is a football friend – school yard. | | | Bangladeshi |

critical aim of schools that will facilitate friendships and therefore support the sustained contact between people it brings about: 'positive attitudes to each other, reduces prejudice and builds lasting friendships' and therefore enhances settlement and a sense of belonging (Rzepnikowska, 2019).

Atkinson (2016, p 102) define schools as 'institutional fields', whereby Burke et al. (2013, p176) argue that institution's organisational practices is concerned with collective forms of cooperation. Hence, cooperation between school pupils is a development of social and cultural capital to support refugee and asylum seeker children's sense of belonging. Ben attends a small local Roman Catholic Primary School of 145 pupils that is within the dispersal area and in the most diverse part of The Town. There are 21 children in Ben's class, which is smaller than the national average class size. Small schools with small classes create sustained contact with fewer people that provides more opportunities to develop meaningful friendships (Weber 1978). Figure 6 is the detailed list of friends that were identified through discussion of his artwork used for the interview. The characteristics of each identify cross cultural friendship helps to define differences between social bonding and social bridging (See Appendix 1. for Ben's drawing).

The number of friends that Ben as acquired may be a charismatic function of his personal qualities; as Tskhay *et al.*, (2018) argue that charismatic⁵² people emphasise positive emotions in forming everyday relationships and setting an affable tone. Ben's dispositions were observable in the interviews and in his engagement with others in the Drop-In. This proposes that individual charisma may be a factor to influence and be accepted by others and towards facilitating settlement and belonging.

It is significant that Ben has Polish friends: the commonalities between refugee and asylum seeker children and Polish migrants both include in the challenges of settling into a Brexit and hostile environment (Rzepnikowska, 2019). Polish migrants were originally labelled as invisible due to their white skin, but since have been subject to rapidly increasing hostility and xenophobic violence (Rzepnikowska, 2019). A commonality across most migrant families is limited cultural capital of language

⁵² Tskhay *et al.*, (2018), recognises Weber's association of charisma to leadership (Weber, 1978) but challenges this by stressing charisma is important in everyday relations beyond leadership, politics and religion.

values and habits (Connolly, 2006). Whether Polish children are aware of this commonality with other immigrants needs further exploration.

7.4. Practice in schools: social capital, racism, and stigma

Policy papers such as the Casey Report (2016) assumes that children's acquisition of social capital and friendships is a positive experience. This ignores barriers to a sense of settlement such as potential symbolic violence that can occur in any relationship including friendships and other exchanges implicit in developing social capital.

Kavin (aged 8) and his brother Shamesh (aged 6) live in an area of town in which is predominantly white British, and along with their younger brother are the only ethnic minority children or adults in the school, Kavin told me that:

“My friend Michael, he did not know it being racist is nasty so he called me black, and another person in my class called me a black monkey. Michael did not upset me because he did not understand. I told the teacher and she sorted it out, we are still friends.”

Kavin downplayed this incident through stating that Michael has a lack of understanding, but it did expose the underlying difference of race and ethnic separation between friends.

It could be argued that Kavin was managing this incident through applying personal skills of 'cultural competence' Gavallan (2010) argues that children need to develop their own cultural competencies to negotiate 'difference' to understand the cultural nuances between children. Neal and Vincent (2013, p 911) identify these competencies as everyday cultural skills, knowledges and practices that are mobilised in a diverse society. Therefore, one of the challenges facing newly arrived refugee and asylum seekers is to develop these competencies to negotiate their

emerging 'social fields'. However, this incident with Kevan, also suggests that local children could develop these skills to support the settlement of refugee and asylum seekers. Gallavan (2010) argues that cultural competence should be embodied with the school curricular and behaviour management policy and practice for all students to learn about themselves as individuals, and each other and as a mutual aim to support the settlement of friends.

Research with refugee children argues that down-playing of the effect of racism is a familiar strategy for many children as a 'matter of fact as 'it is never going to go away' (Maegusuku-Hewett *et al.*, 2007, p 313; Ratna, 2014, p 303). Connolly (1998, p 11) argues that racism is internalised to the individual child that influences and shapes their actions and behaviours. Devine, Kenny and Macneela's (2008, p 381) research into racism in primary schools found that at times of conflict between children, they will draw upon inherent racist ethnic stereotypes and prejudices as a strategy to gain the upper hand with one another. In this incident Michael applied racism as a tool of symbolic violence to use in disagreements. Therefore, this suggests that friendships in primary schools can be underpinned by social constructs of difference with underlying dynamics of power, which in this incident is manifested through racism.

Kevan's experience also supports the suggestion that children's friendships are not independent of the adult world that surrounds them (Iqbal, Neal and Vincent, 2017). For example, Burnett (2017) argues that children, even from pre-school ages, do not simply repeat racism overheard from adults, but is more of a subconscious process taken from adult discourses to make sense of their own social worlds and relationships.

Michael's racism can be a result of family cultural reproduction and other influences of neighbourhood, media and government immigration discourse. Particularly, given recent policies that form a hostile environment to immigration and Brexit's exposure of racism (Jones *et al.*, 2017; Virdee and McGeever, 2018; Dorling and Tomlinson, 2019). This one incident experienced by Kavin and his friend demonstrates that this relationship maybe subconsciously underpinned by racism.

Kavin states that the teacher had ‘sorted it out’ and seemed satisfied with the action of the teacher. Love, Villanueva and Whitzman (2019) recognises that strengthening social capital is dependent upon efforts to increase equality. However, this incident exposes the challenges for schools in applying effective policy and practice whereby ‘out of school’ racism can be subconsciously normalised and transferred to school.

The management of inclusion and equality in school should be embedded in good practice, including the consideration of family’s economic resources. However, Ron’s father, Faqir, highlighted how poverty amongst asylum seekers can be a barrier to access enriching cultural activities. For example, the expectation of parents financial ‘voluntary contributions’⁵³ to school threatened Ron’s exclusion in activities that have the potential to facilitate social capital.

“if my son wants to go on a school trip or anything, we can’t send him because it requires money.

It is supposed to be a voluntary contribution, but that voluntary contribution is like ‘you have to pay’. I had a very detailed discussion with the Headteacher at the school and I told her that you know that this is not the way to do it. If you are saying it is for the students and it is up to them if they want to do it. Once they were having this football match in the school and they said that every student should pay £2.00 to wear an England t shirt, a week before that they asked £5.00 for something and the week before that £2.00 for something.

The last £2.00 was my limit so I went to the Headteacher and asked what is this? Why are you asking me for this thing? She said ‘no’ ‘no’ they should not have asked you and it was voluntary. So I said if it was voluntary why is my son not allowed to go and watch that game with the other students? If he is not paying, the teachers are saying he has to go home. I said you are not allowing him to sit in because he is not paying money, but it is voluntary, it does not make sense.”

⁵³ Voluntary contributions. Schools can ask parents/carers for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or any school activities, however (Department for Education, 2018). The Department of Education (2018) state that no child should be excluded from an activity simply because his or her parents are unwilling or unable to pay.

The head teacher said to Faqir that this was wrong and that he should not have been asked. However, this incident suggests that inclusion is not fully embedded in the school practices that was insensitive and represented symbolic violence. This is particularly so given the nature of the activity and its relation to the complex notions of 'nationhood' and children's 'identity' as discussed in later in this chapter.

Furthermore, it is argued that teachers can be cultural brokers between migrant children and 'other' children in the school. (Straubhaar and Portes, 2016, p 5).

However, this incident is a missed opportunity for the school staff to implement this and could underline a subconscious bias of school practice that demonstrates another barrier to children's settlement and sense of belonging.

Faqir's engagement with the school would reflect 'poverty' as a distinctive mark of social stigma (Goffman, 1963; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2013, p 297; Tyler and Slater, 2018). Faqir's experience reflects the findings of Murphy and Vieten (2016, p 47) of an asylum seeker who felt ashamed and a sense of inferiority that they could not give their child the same opportunities as some of the children in her class. This experience corresponds with much qualitative evidence of the stigma which asylum seekers and refugees experience as a result of their poverty (Allsopp, Sigona and Phillimore, 2014, p 19)

Stewart (2008, p 232) found that refugees and asylum seeker parents can be conscious of the detrimental impact of stigma for their children. Ridge (2013) links poverty to children's experiences of social exclusion, embarrassment, and stigma all of which are acutely felt by children which is a hidden impact upon children's lives.

Goffman (1963) argues that stigma reinforces an individual's sense of their inferiority within social contexts; and further argues that stigma reflects 'the situation of an individual who is disqualified from full social acceptance'. Faqir was financially powerless, given his legal status and conditions as an asylum seeker that reinforces his poverty. Goffman (1963) states that stigma is a form of social control and thus the stigmatism that is applied to asylum seekers reinforces their place in society. This constitutes a major change of status for Faqir who a wage earner in a well-paid management position in Pakistan was but his life as an asylum seeker in the UK prevent opportunities from being employment and reinforces his social and financial exclusion. This lack of an opportunity to access the monetary rewards of

employment was a major source of frustration for Faqir in our discussions in the Drop-In sessions. Thus, reinforcing his feeling of exclusion from accessing economic capital as a way to open opportunities towards embedding the family's settlement into the UK.

Practice to support refugee and asylum seeker children's settlement can be varied between schools (Ainscow et al., 2016, p 14). Whilst Faqir and Ron experienced a negative insensitive practice, Kavin felt that such incidents of racism was resolved through school mediation.

This incident exposes that schools can have limited control of the external influences of neighbourhood and of the wider societal forces that may impact upon the subconscious influence on school children. Kavin challenged racist behaviour through reporting it to the schoolteacher and was able to move on and continue his friendship with Michael. Both incidents are symbolic of subconscious racist insensitivity that has the potential to undermine racial inequalities in schools.

7.5. Conclusion

This chapter reflects that friendship are an important factors for refugee and asylum seeker children's settlement and sense of belonging. Putnam's (2000) argues that close friendships reflect strong ties with high levels of trust and reciprocity that reflect the notion of bonding social capital. Friendships was an important feature of children's lives within the sample group and for most of the children in this sample, schools are the only vehicle for children of primary school age to develop bonding and bridging capital. This reflects the restrictive spatial movements of children of this age that are reflective of wider societal concerns of child safety and of racism towards ethnic minorities. This is further examined in Chapter 12.

There are examples of both bonding capital through best friends and bridging capital whereby children participate in shared interests such as football in the playground. However, these forms of capital were highly gendered and reflect traditional identity

of the emotional capital that was apparent with Tiffany and Hannah and in contrast to the pursuit of masculine physicality by the boys in the sample. It is also notable that the girls in this sample were from single parent households and therefore embedded in a female family environment that may reinforce a feminised habitus.

The basis for developing social capital is influenced by individual habitus that is epitomised by the vast differences between Adele and Ben. However, Ben had spent most of his life in The Town and a substantial longer timeline to develop social networks and social capital. Contrasting this to Adele had has a history of displacement as a refugee in Pakistan and then within the UK.

The greater number of boy's contacts is achieved through bridging capital with weaker ties; however, Allan and Catts (2012, p 223) suggest that young people's bridging capital is temporary and needs constant renewal. The girls in this research had friendships is more compatible with 'bonding capital' with fewer and more exclusive ties. Allan and Catts, (2012, p 223) further suggest bonding social capital forms a stable platform for young people to develop their identity.

Despite the links between social capital and friendships in schools, this study finds that this can be a precarious and can be undermined by subconscious stigma and racism in the school environments. Bourdieu (1984) presents the subconsciousness nature of habitus, Reay, (2015, 19) expands on this to highlight notions of inferiority and superiority in which Robertson, (2013) argues is a subconscious taxonomy fed by imagined understandings of class, social hierarchy. Thus, the stigma of poverty and race although applied as a subconscious expression in the events of this chapter can be experienced as a conscious experience of symbolic violence.

The importance of school as becoming a consistent space for refugee and asylum seekers to develop friendships and social capital cannot be understated. This is examined in the following Chapter whereby parents recognise this importance and the role of education as a long-term strategy to for children to gain social mobility despite their precarious status in the UK.

An area that needs more consideration in further research is the arguments that the education curriculum that can shape or hinder children's sense of belonging and identity (Harris, 2013; Winter and Mills 2018). For example, as discussed in Chapter

4.2, schools have a duty to teach British Values, despite being highly criticised as being artificial and based on muddled political attempts to create a sense of national identity (Sant and Hanley, 2018; Healy, 2018; Stronach and Frankham, 2020). Nevertheless, Gouldboro (2018, p 19) states that British Values are aimed at fostering a positive sense of belonging and identity that defines our national identity. Existing research on teaching British values follows a pedagogical perspective; the five British values are not promoted verbatim to children, or needed to be recited by memory, but implicit, or subtly included in a range of activities (Gouldboro 2019). Therefore, the children's understanding of British Values were not directly pursued in the interviews but their sense of being British is discussed in Chapter 9.

Similarly, Winter (2018, p 460) argues that curriculum subjects such as geography and history can provide a sense of identity through a national story and informs students' sense of who they are and who they will become. Therefore, further school-based research would be useful to create a deeper understanding of the influence of the school curriculum upon a sense of identity and belonging upon refugee and asylum seeker children in the context of The Town.

Chapter 8

Education: Middle Class Strategies for Social Mobility

8.1 Introduction

The intersection between social class and cultural capital of refugees and asylum seekers is something that has limited coverage in literature. In this chapter I draw from a mostly Bourdieuan analysis of cultural capital to argue that the refugee and asylum seeker families in this study replicate UK middle class values towards education. Thus, I consider if the refugee and asylum seekers alignment to middle class values shape strategies to embed their children's settlement and social mobility.

This chapter begins by considering the professional and educational qualifications of refugees and asylum seekers that mostly become redundant in the equivalent employment fields in the UK. Thus, this links to Chapter 2 and the notions of hysteresis that is formed through a loss of the status and identity that this brought them in their country of origin. This is followed by identifying the strategies that refugee and asylum seeker families adopt to support their children's education, despite asylum seeker families temporary and uncertain status. Thus they aim to provide foundations for their children to achieve settlement as future adults through education as a means for employment (Ndofar-Tah *et al.*, 2019).

Many of the refugee and asylum seeker strategy includes enrolling their children at the town's secondary catholic school despite their Muslim or Hindu faith. However, the role of faith will be further developed in Chapter 10. A further aspect of this strategy is to embrace opportunities for educational enrichment through after school activities which is explored in this chapter. The chapter then considers the role of children as language and cultural brokers between their parents and life in the UK.

The chapter includes a detailed case study of one asylum seeker family, that brings a sharp focus on the issues of the habitus and cultural capital and how this is

negotiated in the fields they inhabit in the town. However, analysis is further developed through the lens of gender and patriarchy through a comparative analysis between married and lone mothers in this study. Thus, I argue that the data obtained through both interview processes and ethnological fieldnotes suggest that patriarchy can have a negative effect on the opportunities to engage with the social world outside of the home.

8.2. Parent's education, cultural capital, and education

Professional identity was difficult to maintain for parents in the sample. Nazneen and Faqir's voluntary work helped to maintain their identity as professionals. Kadhir maintained an aspect of this experience as an accountant as the Treasurer of the Drop-In. Both Kadhir, and Anyanwu (Jame's father) were qualified accountants in their respective countries of Sri Lanka and Nigeria but these qualifications are not transferable to the UK.

Kadhir's status as a refugee enabled him to work but he was only able to obtain work in low paid jobs such as a takeaway delivery driver and then a supermarket security guard. Kadhir aspired to qualifying as a mortgage advisor and found a course ran by a private company that will cost £1,000 to which he could not afford.

Anyanwu, volunteered at the town's hospital as a patient care worker, during the time of this research he obtained refugee status and along with Joy, his wife, both found work in low paid social care. He has not given up the ambition of becoming an accountant in the UK, but states he needs to defer taking a vocational course and states:

"I need to settle down now and earn some money before I can get my qualifications."

Daria was an Iranian asylum seeker worker who attended the Drop In. Daria was a dialysis Nurse in Iran but needs a level 2 qualification in English before she is

qualified to work as a Nurse in the UK.⁵⁴ My discussions with many of the refugee and asylum seeker parents who attended the Drop-In's have qualifications and experiences in higher education, including mothers who: have a Master's degree in Political Science, was a University Lecturer in English Literature, and a specialised Nurse (degree unknown). Whilst fathers include: an MBA, a PhD Candidate for Financial Risk Management, MA in Management, and a BA in Sports Administration.

Ndofar-Tah *et al.* (2019, p 16) identify employment as a means to create wider social connections. However, barriers remain, as asylum seeker are excluded from paid employment that denies them the professional identity that they obtained in their country of origin. Once refugee status is attained it is often that they experience marginality in the workplace whereby professional migrants occupy subordinate or non-professional occupations and thus reinforcing global inequalities (Kelly and Lusi, 2006). For example, the chairperson of the Drop-In Committee has a BA in Sports Administration and is now working in low pay care work. A parent's loss of professional and academic (institutional) capital may be a contributor towards hysteresis due to a loss of professional status. However, in order to preserve the family's middle class culture they are more likely to focus on their children's education. Bourdieu (1984) has shown in his empirical research that middle class cultural capital is often deployed to support the educational success of their children through the transfer of resources and opportunities across generations.

Modood (2004, p 102) argues that middle-class culture includes attaining respectability and social status through occupations which nearly always requires a good university degree. Modood adds to this by claiming this is the dominant culture that non-white ethnic minority parents would like their children to be part of.

⁵⁴ Daria arrived in the town in 2015 with her 19 year old daughter who by 2018 was studying an engineering Degree at Bath University after gaining an impressive four awards at college: A-Level Physics Prize for Achievement, A-Level Further Mathematics Prize for Achievement, Outstanding Academic Achievement and joint winner of the Principal's Award for Academic Excellence (source: The Town 6th Form College).

8.3. Education aspirations as cultural capital

All but one refugee and asylum seeker families in this research adapted strategies to utilise education as a way of increasing opportunities for their children's social mobility. Therefore, the sample of families in this research could be defined as possessing 'middle class' cultural capital even though they are likely to be categorized as 'working class' on economic measures in the UK (Shah, Dwyer and Modood, 2010). This counters the popular images of refugees often promoted by tabloid newspapers as poor uneducated, low skilled economic migrants (Philo, Briant and Donald, 2013).

Schneider and Lang (2014) research of Turkish migrants in Germany found they tended to self-identify problematic barriers to settlement and then applying strategies to overcome them. Similarly, most in the sample of parents in this research were acutely aware of the intersectional barriers they faced in terms of legal status, racism, and poverty. However, they also subscribed to the notion of educational meritocracy that reflects the policy discourse of both Conservative and previous Labour governments of Gordon Brown (Reay, 2009; Crozier, 2018). The pro-active strategies they use reflect meritocratic and individual responsibility towards their children's educational success to aid social mobility and future participation into a professional middle-class world.

Although Imran an asylum seeker father of two teenage children did state that:

“We can't decide yet (about education and employment) so we are not thinking about the future.”

Imran was a lone voice as other asylum seeker families were very much focused on their children's' future. The difference between Imran and other parents is their cultural capital. For example, Imran had no educational qualifications, but was an owner of a small business in Sri Lanka. This compares to other asylum seeker families who had professional and educational qualifications and already had plans and aspirations for their children in the UK.

“What my expectations are, , jobs and things are not that important really. When I was growing up I did not know what I was going to become, I got a good job, I am surviving right now. I am sure they will always remember it’s not a big deal. As long as they become a good human being, a good person, a good Muslim.”

Kadhir aspires for his sons to attend Oxford or Cambridge University:

“I always compare to my country. In my life when I studied in my country, there is an ambition to go to University and another big ambition is to go to Oxford or Cambridge University.

So I advise them (his children) that you are living in the UK so you have a choices of world universities in UK so your target is Oxford University, this is my advice, I am not going to push them, try to tell them about my ambition but it is their choice. I tell them, sometimes when we watch a film, I tell them, you are very lucky your target should be that one.

My target always will be University I will guide them, after that it is their choice.”

These aspirations reinforce Kadhir’s dispositions can be described as middle-class cultural capital. Thus, as with most of the families in this research, Kadhir’s reference to Oxford University⁵⁵ demonstrates that he sees education as a vehicle for social mobility. However, these aspirations towards higher education were for Kadhir’s boys, but given the role and dispositions of Sahithya (Kadhirs wife) that reflect a traditional paternalistic family model, raises questions about the intersection between middle class aspirations and gender. Nevertheless, the interviews with girls and their parents (lone mothers) did not refer directly to higher education but aspired to professional jobs such as Doctor and Police Officer.

8.4. Catholic Schools, the unlikely place for non-Christian aspirations

Although Faqir places a spiritual approach to their children's development as a priority, the family also harbour a wish to engage with what is perceived as 'better schools'. Faqir also discussed Nazneen's (his wife) experience of volunteering at her son's secular primary school which turned out to be a negative experience for her.

"So she started looking for voluntary work in some other schools, fortunately she got into (the Catholic) school which is a secondary school, a very good school, the best in The Town."

However, their son, Ron, realised that gaining a place in the Catholic secondary school would not be straight forward.

"I think I am going to the secondary school that I want, but I am going for appeal later this month for SRC (Secondary Catholic School) as it is a better school, they get a better rank."

Indeed, the SRC achieves the best GCSE results in the town, making it the top of the town's secondary school league table. Ron's acknowledgement of school and 'rank' corresponds with Ball's (2013) assessment that school performance league tables drive an educational market that attract the more socially mobile families. Ron's also reflects his parent's aspirations for education as a means to social mobility (Schneider and Lang, 2014, p 100).

Similarly, Veshnu, in discussion about Ben's future education said:

"For his secondary school he will go straight to SRC, a good school. Because we are not Christian, he could not go to SRC but because he goes to a primary Catholic School it should be easy".

Padhma (Ben's mother) added: *"It has a 6th Form College as well,"* which indicates longer term aspirations towards Ben.

Florence, Hannah and Tiffany's mother, had prior knowledge that they were moving from the South of England to The Town which allowed her time to research schools in the town:

“Once I found the number of the house, through people who were trying to help us move here, I searched the internet for schools that would be able to take the children. So, I first applied to the catholic primary school and they accepted us.”

Although the family are Catholic it was also recognised of the academic benefits of the school, as Tiffany stated that the primary school gave them: *“a better chance to go to SRC.”*

The school preferences of the above families is referred to by Ball (2003, p 82) as the field of choice that is mostly inhabited by proactive middle class parents. This reflects Bourdieu's argument that middle-class parents are very aware that 'ability or talent is itself the product of an investment of time and cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1984). Crozier *et al.* (2008) adds to this by proposing that UK education policies are key to middle class social reproduction. For example, education as a market place of parental 'choice' of schools as a key element of the 1988 Education Reform Act which supported middle class ability to draw upon cultural and social capital to make strategic decisions on the consumer choice of their child's school (Ball, 2003; Forrester and Garrat, 2016, p 48). Therefore, the majority of parents in this research reflect 'middle-class' orientations in their navigation of the education market' (Shah, Dwyer and Modood, 2010, p 1116). This could be framed within the context identified by Bourdieu, (1990a) cited by Pellandini-Simányi, (2014, p 657) whereby families have no other choice but to engage with the field of education in order to improve their child's position in the education field that drives social mobility. Whilst there are likely to be working class families who adopt this educational strategy, the overwhelming evidence is that such families are in the minority (Reay, 2017). However, it is cultural capital in the form of education that provides an advantage in the scholastic and recruitment and therefore competition between social classes in which working class children are more likely to be the losers (Bourdieu, 1986; Reay, 2017). Thus, adopting different education strategies to that of working-class

neighbours reinforce different cultural capital that may reinforce difference between refugees and asylum seekers and working-class neighbours.

8.5. Making the most out of extra-curricular

Many of the refugee and asylum seekers in this research reflected middle class cultural capital in which children are encouraged to work hard and supplement their school day with activities to enrich children's education. Six out of nine children in the sample were actively involved with educational enriching activities. For example, Tiffany attends after school clubs four nights a week, whilst Hannah attends three nights a week.

Ben attends swimming and football, as previously discussed but also attends private piano lessons. These piano lessons are costly given the limited economic capital of the family (this adds to the weekly cost of swimming and football training), furthermore, Ben has an electronic keyboard at home in which he practices on every day.

Kadhir's interest in science was transferred to his children, Kavin and Samesh who were interested in the historical figures admired by Kadhir such as the inventor Tesla and the mathematics genius Srinivasa Ramanujan. This reflects that cultural capital is mainly reproduced through family transmission (Bourdieu, 1986, p 17). Kenshi said he wanted to be a mathematician or a scientist and recognised he had to work hard and go to University to achieve this. Kadhir has refugee status and therefore access to economic capital (through employment) enabled opportunities to take the family on cultural and educational visits, such as travelling to Liverpool for a football stadium tour and driving overnight to visit a Hindu temple in North Wales. This mirrors research findings on middle class families whereby cultural visits foster a love of learning and cultural cultivation (Crozier, Reay and James, 2011, p 211).

The out of school activities of the refugee and asylum seekers in this study reflect Brooks (2019, p 156) who argues that middle class children are more likely to be

enthusiastic learners in school due to their extra-curricular activities. Whilst Ball (2010, p 161) suggests that extra-curricular activities is in essence the phenomenon of 'constant stimulation' for middle class parents to gain advantage for their children in a competitive world. Ball also draws from Bourdieu (1986, p 17) to state that this process involves a commitment to use the maximum of free time to maximise cultural capital. Thus, the out of school activities of the refugees and asylum seekers in this study are applied as a recognition of the link between informal learning, education, and social mobility.

8.6. The misrecognition of cultural capital; Ron's family - a case study

Ron and his parents who arrived in the UK with cultural capital that replicates UK middle class family values and behaviours⁵⁶ (Ball, 2010; Reay, 2006). This is reflective of research on migrants of Pakistani heritage whereby those with rich accumulated cultural capital in Pakistan reflect British middle class values (Shah, Dwyer and Modood, 2010). The focus on Ron's family as a case study provides a rich set of material to understand the cultural capital that supports their settlement.

Faqir has a degree in Information Management Systems that he obtained through studying for five and a half years in Cyprus whereby he further developed his English language skills. Nazneen (Faqir's wife) has a Degree in Financial Management, that involves the acquirement of competencies in English language, as most degree courses in Pakistan are taught in English (Tamim, 2013). Furthermore, girls access to higher education in Pakistan is dependent upon the availability of families cultural-religious and financial resources, including the ability to engage in English language at an academic level (Umelaila and Chohan, 2013; Tamim, 2013). Therefore, Nazneen has had the cultural capital associated with women in affluent middle-class Pakistani families including a command of language that can support her settlement into the UK.

⁵⁶ Research by Winter and Mills, (2018) also identifies how the British colonialism administration sets out to socialise students into English middle-class values and behaviours.

Faqir also volunteered at a local charity one full day a week carrying out administration tasks. Furthermore, he carried out work for the Ahmadiyya Community which included preaching and outreach as well as preparing and making radio broadcasts to an English language audience. It is also significant that before he joined the Ahmadiyya Community⁵⁷ he spent much time researching them before he became involved.

“When I came here, I did a lot of research (on the Ahmadiyya Community), to try to understand the inside goal, what they are, why they are, and what they are doing?”

Therefore, Faqir was drawing from his skills from his education and as a senior manager within an organisation in Pakistan to study the theology and the work of the Ahmadiyya Community in The Town. Hence, he is now dedicated to the work and teachings of the Mosque.

“After a year and a half, I got involved a lot in the Mosque and the (Ahmadiyya) Community, and now I really find it hard to get time, it is really difficult. Every day from morning until evening I am very much occupied, I have to maintain a diary now.”

Faqir’s wife, Nazneen, had a degree in finance but also a baccalaureate in early education, a qualification that is transferable from Pakistan to the UK. This helped her gain voluntary work at Ron’s primary school as a classroom assistant. However, Nazneen said that she moved to the SCS (Catholic Secondary School) school and volunteers 2 days a week whereby she supports Pakistani students and to act as a translator when necessary. Nazneen says that she enjoys this, but this work could also be beneficial to the family as Nazneen and Faqir are hopeful to get Ron accepted into the SCS. Therefore, it is this bridging social capital between Nazneen and staff at the school that maybe of strategic benefit to obtain a place in the school of their preferred choice.

⁵⁷ The Ahmadiyan Community identifies itself as a Muslim movement and follows the teachings of the Koran. However, it is regarded by orthodox Muslims as heretical because it does not believe that Mohammed was the final prophet sent to guide mankind, as orthodox Muslims believe is laid out in the Koran. ([BBC News - Who are the Ahmadi?](#))

Furthermore, Nazneen said that she takes up as many free opportunities for training, such as 'sign language' and was training as a Level 3 Teaching Assistant which involves a weekly trip of 25 miles to another town to do so. However, Nazneen frustratedly complained to me that one tutor was saying that she copied and pasted her work from a book. Nazneen insisted to him that she written in her own words which reflects Nazneen's level of academic and language skills she acquired in Pakistan. This event was an example of symbolic violence that is based on assumptions made by the tutor that undermined Nazneen's self-respect and confidence in her own ability (Sayer, 2005, p 934).

On a similar example, it was my actions as a researcher that could be interpreted as symbolic violence. During my preliminary visit to the family to discuss with the interview process. I offered to leave Ron some paper, pens and pencils so he could draw his friends prior to the interview. This was done as a courtesy to all child interviewees. However, Nazneen firmly but politely declined and stated that they had paper and pens. Thus, I interpreted this as a way of asserting their self-respect as middle-class actors who have educational resources in the home. It is argued that the process of refugees and asylum seekers settlement is concerned with the desire for self-reliance and self-respect (Castles *et al.*, 2002, p 144: Sim, 2014). This was demonstrated in these examples and demonstrates the thin line between courtesy and symbolic violence in the researcher and researcher dynamic.

The process to gain an interview with Ron and his family was facilitated by Nazneen (who attended the Drop-I). Nazneen stated that needed to gain agreement to do the research with her husband (Faqir). When the interview took place, it was just with Faqir whilst Nazneen disappeared into a back room with the children. This arguable reflects patriarchal model of family and the gendered cultural values that separate interactions between gender.

8.7. Motherhood, patriarchy, and cultural capital

I begin by draw upon the fieldwork recordings from the Drop-In that identified patterns of gendered activities and networks for adult refugees and asylum seekers.

I then make attempts to make sense of the gendered roles that parents displayed as I visited their homes to carry out the interviews.

Throughout my observer/participant role in the Drop-In I observed that there is a greater proportion of women in attendance (see Chapter 6.7, Figure 4). The drop-In provides a weekly focus for many of the refugees and asylum seekers who regard this as a social focus point, as well as meeting domestic needs of obtaining donated used clothes and household items. The donated items are set out on tables for the refugees and asylum seekers to choose from if they so wish. Given the limited NASS allowance of £37.50 a week (at the time of this research) the items, and specifically used clothes are in great demand. However, it is near to exclusively mothers who look at and select the clothes on behalf of their family.

There tended to be a group of around four to five Nigerian mothers who attended each Drop-In. The Nigerian mothers in the Drop-In stated that their husbands stayed at home most of the time. However, occasionally the Nigerian husbands attended the Drop-in for a specific appointment such as to see a case worker. I observed that the husbands would come into the Drop-In and rarely spoke to their wife or children and left immediately after their appointment.⁵⁸

Van Ee *et al.* (2013) found that refugee fathers are less involved in caregiving tasks than mothers. Wilding (2018, p 56) argues that gender norms make it difficult for migrant men to undertake caregiving roles; this reflects Bourdieu's assertion that men are also pressured by masculine domination in a constant pressure to live up this identity (Atkinson, 2016, p 107).

Vatsa (2016) argues that migrant women carry their existing culture with them, this often means that they have an imposed restriction to remain in the home and therefore remain invisible in the public sphere. However, my observations and discussions with Mothers suggest that it is mostly wives who were responsible for shopping, therefore, it is married women from refugee and asylum seeker families who are more likely to have a visual presence in public shopping areas in The Town.

⁵⁸ I had briefly met their husbands when I had delivered items from the Drop-In to their homes (see Chapter 6.7.)

Nevertheless, this also makes them more vulnerable to racist behaviours due to a combination of gender and race, as discussed further in Chapter 12.

There is a mixed response in the roles that parents adopted as I visited their homes to undertake interviews. Both of Ben's parents (Sri Lankan) and both of James's parents (Nigerian) were both present and contributed to the discussion when relevant. However, in three other visits, to Ron's family (Pakistani), Kavin's family (Sri Lankan) and Imran's family⁵⁹ (Sri Lankan) it was the mothers who undertook hospitality by offering me something to eat and drink, they then disappeared into another room whilst leaving their husband, or husband and children, to participate in the interviews. The commonality of these three families where they were from patriarchal South Asia societies that predominantly grants men's dominance over women (Vatsa 2016, p 72). Although two families were Muslim, and one family Hindu Friedland (2002) states that most of religious traditions propose a patriarchal structure of power and on family life that helps preserve the religious group's culture.

However, this contrasts to another Sri Lankan family whereby both husband and wife contributed to the interviews. Therefore, what this study confirms is that the complex relationship between migration and family roles of gendered power and obligations are never uniform or straight forward (Vatsa, 2016, p 72: Wilding, 2018 p134).

Shanaz is (Pakistani) the single mother to Adele (aged 11) and Iqra (aged 15) and embraced opportunities to achieve a sense of settlement and belonging, such as attending ESOL and as a volunteer at the food bank whilst maintaining social contact with other refugee and asylum seeker women at the Drop-In. Thus, Shanaz had a sense of freedom and the agency to pursue activities as Shanaz says: "*to help me learn English*" and implied as a strategy to settle into The Town. This may also be a strategy to tackle the isolation of not having another adult in the home, such as a spouse as a collective resource to improve resilience to the hardship of refugee and asylum seeker's experience. Hence that whilst Lenette, Brough and Cox, (2013) recognises that the increased control and agency afforded by lone mothers, they need to be equipped with higher levels of resilience. Lenette's (2014) research of widowed refugees found the absence of a husband influenced their life choices,

⁵⁹ Imran was the father of two teenage children- the family was referred but was outside of the sample criteria but the interview gave an insight into the family dynamics-See Figure 2.

including strategically engaging with others as a way towards achieving settlement. It was Shanaz, a lone mother, who had more agency as a women and mother to make personal strategic choices towards achieving settlement. Lenette, (2014, p 417) further observed that within refugee and asylum seeker lone mothers there is a clear shift in identity from that of wife, to that of 'mother'.

Healey (2006, p 264) argues that individual women could use their agency to dispute the patriarchal forces of their home culture towards adopting more liberal British norms of gendered identity. However, Healey further acknowledges that this is difficult to disrupt, given the gendered habitus of people's past. Nevertheless, Healey's pronouncements assume that patriarchal families are problematic for women that restricts opportunities to develop experiences and skills to participate. Hence there are two examples of mothers in this study who have limited English language skills compare the rest of the family. For example, in the interview with Imran, he stated that Saba, his wife, '*is slow at learning English*' in comparison to him and the children.

This could be part of the explanation of why Saba, and Sahithya (as discussed in 8.8) did not participate in the interviews. However, further thought needs to consider if it was the gendered dynamics of the interview that excluded the mothers whereby my presence as a male researcher automatically excluded them as it did Nazneen (Ron's mother) as discussed in Chapter 6.5.

In terms of migrant family settlement. it is argued that mothers act as moral guardians and preservers of the family that provide a sense of security, familiarity, and caring for the well-being of all others (Rao, 2013, p 3). Thus, it is also argued that the gendered roles, duties, and responsibilities of both parents enable a strong family unit to re-establish itself within a new setting (Yeoh and Ramdas 2014 p 1204). For example, the cultural capital of both parents may be a driving factor to support the educational aspirations of their children.

8.8. Language as a facilitator of settlement; a gendered approach to learning English.

I found that the lack of English skills was less developed among women in the sample. For example, my interactions with Sahithya (Kadhir's wife and Kavin and Samesh's mother) found that she struggled to be understood in English despite being in the country for 7 years. Kadhir's English was good, as he explained to me that he was taught English in school in Sri Lanka. Similarly, Iqbal who was also Sri Lankan said that Saba his wife could not speak English by stating that 'she is struggling to learn' making her the only one in the household who could not speak fluent English. It was evident that parent's language development can be supported by their children from the children attending early years to the older primary school children who become brokers for their parent's cultural acclimatisation. For example, one asylum seeker mother said of her 7-year-old daughter:

"She gets prizes every week for her spelling, so she is helping me, because her English is developing very fast."

This compares to Aylan (11 years -old) who translated parts of the interview carried out with him and his mother, Tiyaam states that: *"He is very good, he translates for me."* Aylan stated that the translation involved letters from school and reading signage when they were out. This is evident in further research that state that many refugee and asylum seeker parents rely on their children to act as interpreters, translators and cultural brokers between themselves and the world outside their family (Crafter *et al.*, 2017). This places much responsibility on Aylan, as Perry (2014) argues that child language brokers need to engage with sophisticated genres and literacy practices when helping their families. Therefore, as an 11-year old Aylan has taken responsibility far beyond what is expected of children at this age.

Aylan has become a competent English speaker after two years in the UK which corresponds to findings that children often learn the local language faster than their parents do as they can have better access to native speakers via schooling and peers (Resnyansky, 2016, p 2053).

Adele lives with in female household with her older sister (Iqra) and Shanaz her mother. Shanaz identified the cultural differences between women's lives in Pakistan compared to the UK.

*“It’s a huge change living in England compared to Pakistan
In Pakistan women are not allowed to work, and there are no
degrees for girls.”*

The statement that women are not allowed to work or obtain degrees reflects Shanaz's experience. Given that there are other Pakistani mothers at the Drop-In who do have degrees, as discussed earlier in this chapter, suggest that social class and gender stratification may apply differently across different families and places within Pakistan particularly between rural and urban area (Umelaila and Chohan, 2013). This analysis was confirmed in my discussions with Aleeza and Nazneen who both attained degrees in Pakistan. This is supported by who state that attitudes to girl's education can vary. Furthermore, Tamim, (2013) argues that working class girls and women in Pakistan experience discriminatory barriers across society. Therefore, Aleeza and Nazneen's accumulated cultural capital, including proficiency in the English language supports their settlement into the UK, whilst Shanaz does not have this advantage.

However, Shanaz encourages her daughters career aspirations in the UK as Iqra wishes to become a Police Officer, whilst Adele wants to become a doctor. Therefore, these professional aspirations differ from those the family experienced in Pakistan. Shanaz's competencies in English is developing through attending informal ESOL classes at a local 'Community Church'⁶⁰ and through interaction with local people though voluntary work with a Food Bank.

Shanaz's determination to be competent in English is not support by policy. Many of the refugees and asylum seekers with longer term residence in the town complained to me about the past decision of the local FE college to withdraw ESOL classes

⁶⁰ This is an evangelic church that describes itself as a 'community church'.

(Ofqual, 2011).⁶¹ ⁶² Padhma (Ben's mother) who has been in the town for five years said.

“Before I was studying at ESOL class, when it was free to Asylum Seekers, now we have to pay and I cannot afford it.”

The advice to government states that language is a key facilitators of settlement (Ndofar-Tah *et al.*, 2019; All Party Parliamentary Group on Refugees, 2017). Yet the government cut funding to colleges to deliver ESOL qualification (as discussed in chapter 3). The lack of opportunities for migrants to learn English feeds the popular adversarial complaint that immigrants don't speak English (Driffill (2017).

Since formal college based ESOL classes were closed, community groups in the town have attempted to fill this void on a mostly voluntary and ad-hoc basis. For example, ESOL 'lessons' have been delivered on occasions by a small number of white middle class volunteers from the Drop-In, there were also ESOL classes at a 'Community Church', the 'the Islamic centre', the RC primary school through a Family Support Worker, and at another town wide Community Project.

It was evident that only ESOL provision at the Community Project was deemed useful. For example, in a discussion with one newly arrived Pakistani refugee, he animated, in relation to learning English that: *“Community Project high”*, as he pointed upwards, *“Islamic Centre low”* as he pointed to the floor.

Significantly, the Community Project was the only place that employed a qualified ESOL worker. This reflects the policy of Ofqual who state that ESOL teachers should be professionally qualified and delivered by accredited organisations (Ofqual, 2011; Court, 2017). The official title of the qualification is ESOL Skills for life (Ofqual, 2011), which indicates a wider curriculum context to support language skills. Furthermore, Ofqual (2011) argues that ESOL teachers can be effective in promoting confidence and positive identity that facilitates settlement.

⁶¹ This is prior to the Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (under this scheme Syrian refugees have automatic refugee status whereby local authorities involved in the scheme are required to ensure these families receive English Language Support (HM Government, 2018).

The ESOL attendance at the voluntary groups was poor, which is reflected by frustrated Drop-In volunteer (Elizabeth) who intended to teach and told me:

“It’s no good me turning up for these English language lessons, because it does not work. Only one person turned up and there were two people to teach him, it doesn’t work.”

The lack of attendance at the Drop-In organised session could be due to the difficulty in communicating that these ‘lessons’ were running, and uncertainty to when and how long they will be operating due to an inconsistent ad-hoc approach.

In discussion with mothers of young children in the Drop-In childcare was an issue and they felt their taking their children to ESOL classes would distract them.

Amongst most of these mothers, including both African and Asian mothers there was a clear differentiation of family roles, stating ‘it was wrong to ask their husbands to look after their children’. This is reflected in Healey's (2006, p 264) research of asylum seekers from Africa and the Middle East that found that the responsibility for children was found to lie solely with the women. Similarly, Cheung and Phillimore (2017, p 227) found that refugee women with dependent children progress more slowly in developing English language as it takes longer to complete ESOL courses. Hence the social and structural inequalities that women suffer in their country origin continues into the UK (Cheung and Phillimore, 2017, p 215) which has an impact upon all forms of social and cultural acclimatisation whilst they have a immovable responsibility for childcare and domestic roles. Furthermore, if or when, they achieve refugee status, the lack of language and “ obligations may impact upon mother’s longer term employment opportunities (Cheung and Phillimore, 2017).

The refugees and asylum seekers who could speak English wanted further ESOL lessons so that they could further improve their skills. Furthermore, ownership of a certificate provides them with the institutional capital that an ESOL certificate offers to provide access to employment and training should they achieve refugee status. This accreditation is seen as a positive way of starting the settlement process and help gain employment to support their family (Manyena and Brady, 2007, p 8). As stated earlier, Daria, a dialysis nurse in Iran stated she needed a level 2 in ESOL

before she can get paid work in nursing and therefore an income to support her and her daughter and further their 'means' of settlement (Ndofar-Tah *et al.*, 2019).

8.7. Conclusion

The evidence in this study suggest that refugees and asylum seeker families bring with them cultural capital that is reflective of the UK middle class values towards education. Thus, the families in this sample engage in strategies to provide their children with the best educational opportunities and advantages they can. For those who have not achieved refugee status, this backdrop of uncertainty has not dampened these ambitions as they pursue education strategies for their children. Thus, I suggest that the strategies that families apply, are not about integration, but about strengthening their children's resources to aid long-term settlement into the UK, rather than focusing upon immediate 'integration' into The Town.

I argue that the importance of schools in supporting refugee and asylum seeker children's sense of settlement and belonging is a concept that is often taken for granted in literature, policy and in practice. However, the evidence in this Chapter suggests that schools offer a quicker sense of 'settlement' through the rapid accumulation of children's competency in the English language (Manyena and Brady 2007; Mozkal 2016; Madziva and Thondhlana 2017). Furthermore, schools support refugee and asylum seeker children through the process of accumulating cultural capital and the skills that are needed for future employment in the UK (Ball, 2010; Moskal, 2016). I argue that this may subconsciously raise expectations of primary school children that they are been prepared for long term settlement in the UK as adults. Therefore, I suggest that the links between education and the settlement of refugee and asylum seeker children is an area that is in need of deeper scrutiny in policy and educational practice.

Cultural dispositions that are bounded in education is derived from many of the refugee and asylum seekers parents past institutional capital of educational qualifications and professional attributes from their country of origin. It could be argued that by ethnicity the refugee and asylum seekers are reflective of a 'black-

middle class'. The differentiation between white and black middle classes is made in a range of literature that argues that black middle classes experience discriminatory racial barriers towards attaining social mobility (Meghji and Saini, 2018; Rollock, 2014). Wallace (2019) positions black middle class as a 'quiet alliance' as a calculated strategy for parents and children to negotiate hidden racism.

This is reflected in this chapter whereby refugee and asylum seeker parents possess similar aspects of white middle class cultural capital with dispositions of strong aspirations for their children to succeed in education. However, as demonstrated in Ron's family case study, refugees and asylum seekers can experience symbolic violence resulting in a lack of recognition of their professional and educational status and abilities.

The evidence in this chapter also places complex notions of family and patriarchy with no clear patterns, in this small sample, of the different family models. This is something that is also missing in literature and would be worthy of further development to relate this to a family's sense of settlement. For example, it was mothers who struggled with language in two of the families in the sample.

Parents attempt to develop language skills through formal adult learning is compromised by a policy that has cut ESOL provision and moves the focus to voluntary and unskilled attempts to bridge this gap that can facilitate settlement (Ndofar-Tah *et al.*, 2019). However, as demonstrated by Aylan, children's can act as cultural brokers to support their parent's development of English language skills to support their settlement into the locality. This positions children within different cultural fields, their family diaspora and in the local cultural fields through their interactions in their schools. Thus, children are negotiating two identities, associated with two different social fields; this is investigated in the following chapter.

Chapter 4.3 referred to 2015 Nicky Morgan, the then Education Secretary, who in 2015 questioned whether immigration levels are linked to "education tourism" within state schools (Ross, 2015). This suggests that policy makers bring an added area of 'suspicion' on the genuineness of refugee and asylum seeker families claims for asylum. Thus, further questions are needed to consider if there is resentment amongst policy makers and wider society, that refugee and asylum seeker families

are drawing upon UK resources to support their children's attainment in what is a perceived as competition between children and ethnicities (Reay 2009).

Furthermore, there is ongoing concern and a 'moral panic' of the underachieving of white working-class boys (Reay 2006, 2017). That there is a perception that multiculturalism is putting ethnic minorities first at the expense of white working-class boy's educational attainment. Therefore, adding to perceptions in areas such as The Town are being left behind (Winlow, Hall and Treadwell, 2017). as discussed in Chapter 1.3.

This study did not set out to make a comparative analysis between refugee and asylum seekers children and local working-class educational attainment, including a gendered analysis, but this would be useful longitudinal exercise in order to assess if the family-based strategies are effective for refugee and asylum seekers in The Town.

Chapter 9

Children's Emerging Identities in the Complex Fields of Belonging

'identity' is the story we tell ourselves and others about us,' Hudson, (2014, p 48)

9.1. Introduction

In this chapter I explore the emerging social identities of the refugee and asylum seeker children in this study. I argue that the children adopt strategies to achieve a sense of shared identity to be accepted by white working-class peers. Thus, as the last chapter concluded that parents are more focused upon the tools needed for their children's longer-term settlement, this chapter focuses upon the need for children to again immediate sense of settlement and belonging through adapting their identities that are credible to other local children. Hence, I examine children's performed identity and its relevance to Goffman's dramaturgical analysis of front stage and back-stage behaviours.

Parents in this research have lived their formative years in a place of origin they call their 'home' country, however, children born or brought up in the 'receiving' counties, may relate very differently to both locations (Dobson, 2009 p 358; Kraftl, 2013). This is reflected by Moinian (2009) who draws from Bhabha (1994) to use the term 'third space' which is area for 'shifting identities' in which the challenges for children are reconciling the closeness of family and family heritage with the desire to gain acceptance amongst their peers.

The chapter engages with the spatial and emotional geographies of identity, belonging and allegiance to 'place' such a place of birth and the locality they live. Dobson (2009, p 358) argues that children have the capacity to create their own identities despite their experiences of migration. However, children's forming of their

cultural identity can be challenging when their own self-image is becoming more prominent in their lives as they grow older (Casinader and Manathunga, 2019, p 2).

The starting point for much of the data in this chapter was the process of children producing drawings for the purpose of prompting discussion in the interviews. As discussed in Chapter 6.5. it revealed much about their aspiring, or achieved identities, for the purpose of belonging and being accepted by other children.

9.2. Playing it down; blurring the boundaries of difference.

Children in the house maybe considered unsafe receptacles for the information but also of such tender nature as to be seriously damaged by the knowledge' (Goffman, 1963, p 54).

Goffman's quote is from a chapter on information control and personal identity. Four out of the nine children in the interview sample, were born in the UK or arrived when they were very young. In the interviews and discussions with two parents said they had never spoken to their children about the terms 'asylum seeker' or 'refugee'. They explained that this was a deliberate choice to protect their children from the knowledge of their family's traumatic history. Therefore, this is an attempt to separate the children from the burdens of their parent's pre-immigrational experiences. However, these two families attend activities at the Drop-in whereby there is often signage and banners on display that refer to 'refugees and asylum seekers'. Furthermore, the Drop-In is a multicultural environment that is in sharp contrast to the predominantly white social environments of the school and locality in which they inhabit. I suggest that this demonstrates that these children have a tacit knowledge of belonging to the refugee and asylum seeker families. Nevertheless, outside of the identity markers of 'refugee' and 'asylum seeker', children manage their own identity. For example, in Kavin's interview his performance was a way not to be defined by his Hindu identity within the classroom setting,

Question. *"When you are in school do you learn about Hinduism?"*

Kavin: *“We have just finished that”*

Question: *“So when you are in school you can teach other children about this?”*

Kavin: *“Well they already know about it”*

Kavin’s tone and body language in this questioning indicated he was uncomfortable and dismissive of the question, even though in an earlier part of the interview he identified himself as Hindu. Kavin was forming an understanding of Hindu from his father, including family visits to a Hindu Temple in Wales. However, there is a sense that when at school he did not want to be defined by his religion.

Kavin also explained that assemblies in his school were Christian.⁶³ Therefore, it is likely that Kavin was conscious of presenting a different religious identity from that of the school’s Christian assemblies and different to the religious identity of his peers. As discussed earlier, Kavin and his family were the only non-white pupils in the school and within the local neighbourhood and live in ethnic and religious isolation. Thus, reflecting two forms of difference that may act as a barrier towards settlement and belonging into the locality that is predominantly white with a Christian heritage.

9.3. Identity, stigma, and performance

Kavin’s reluctance to portray a Hindu identity suggests he is adapting to what Goffman (1959) refers to as ‘front stage behaviour’ as a self-protective performance to present an appearance to fit in with his school peers. Furthermore, Kavin’s self-protective performance as an indication of his cultural competence could to negotiate ‘difference’ through an understanding of the cultural nuances between children (Gavallan (2010)). Hence, he has developed the awareness to ‘play down’ cultural differences

⁶³ The 1944 Education Act requires schools in England and Wales to provide "an act of collective worship", The (Department for Education, (1994. Circular number 1/94) states that ‘collective worship in county schools and equivalent grant-maintained schools must be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character but parents maintain the right to withdraw their children from participation’. However, the National Secular Society state that many schools flout the law as being inappropriate and unworkable (Farand, 2015).

However, the family's Hindu religion is signified by Hindu artefacts on display at home, and by family visits to Hindu Temples. The family's Hindu identity could reflect Goffman's (1959) 'backstage' analogy whereby Kavin displays acceptance of his religious identity within the private confines of the home.

Much of the literature reflects the stigmatisation of refugees and asylum seekers that has been fuelled by a historical media and social discourse (Phillimore *et al.*, 2007, p 7; Philo, Briant and Donald, 2013; Bates, 2012, p 126; Bennett *et al.*, 2015; Asghari-Fard and Hossain, 2017; Hynie, 2018). Ridge (2013, p 410) argues that heightened stigma is deeply damaging for children as they are fearful of being seen to be different and will strive hard to be seen to 'fit in and join in' with their peers.

Aylan was aware that he and his family are asylum seekers, as he and his family arrived from war in Iraq two years ago, aged 9-year-old. When asked if he had told his friends that he was a refugee he replied: "*I don't tell them, I don't want to, it's private.*" Therefore, Aylan reflects Goffman's (1963) notion of employing a strategy of identity management through constructing his own identity by choosing not to share his status as an asylum seeker to other children. Aylan did not want to expand upon this, however, the terms asylum seeker is often associated with the term 'victim' (Gupte and Matha, 2007, p 64). Something that an 11-year boy does not need when trying to establish credibility with other boys as they are pressurised to strive towards a hegemonic form of 'cool' masculine identity (Renold 2001). However, it is not clear if Aylan's school friends are aware of the terms 'refugee' or 'asylum seeker', for example a survey of primary and secondary school children conducted by the Red Cross found that almost a quarter of children did not know what a refugee was (Miller, 2019).

Whiteman's (2005, p 384) research of a school located in a North East asylum seeker dispersal area found that it was not practice to inform parents and students of the asylum status of students. However, Whiteman observed that many parents drew their own conclusions by assuming ethnicity equates to 'being an asylum seeker'. Given the demographics of The Town would suggest that many white adult

inhabitants may mark people of different ethnicity as refugees and asylum seekers as found in Whiteman's research.

9.4. Birth, place, belonging and identity

In this section I explore the notion of a children's settlement by virtue of their sense of belonging to a physical 'place'. The notion of England being a place of home is reflected in the responses of children in the sample group. Kavin said that he was born in London and therefore he supports Chelsea.

Similarly, James said he supported Manchester City: "*because I was born in Manchester.*" This corresponds with studies of immigrant children that confirm birthplace as a marker of national identity and having a positive attachments to place regardless of ethnicity (Sanderson and Thomas, 2014).⁶⁴ Therefore, Kavin's and James's sense of identity by birth suggests, that they feel that they belong to the place they were born. However, Kavin and James' responses could be a performance developed over time to reinforce their credentials to their friends and others and have become to believe in the part they are playing (Goffman, 1959, p 28).

In the interview with Tiffany, Hannah, and Florence - their mother, the discussion the girl's talked about their Nigerian grandmother who lives in Nigeria. Asking if they felt they would ever want to live in Nigeria and be with the extended family, Tiffany's response was: "*I am British, I don't want to go to Nigeria.*"

This statement also surprised Florence who was also present in the interview.

"I was surprised when she answered that question as she is always asking about my mother (who lives in Nigeria)."

Tiffany's response emphasises her identity as British.⁶⁵ Like Kavin, Tiffany was making a statement that puts distance between their Britain identity and that of their

family's country of origin. This reflects Reicher and Hopkins (2000, p 43) proposal that social identities are defined in terms of difference from the other.

Yuval-Davis (2006, p 197) refers to emotional attachment of feeling at home and feeling safe. Prabhat (2018, p 48) argues that when immigrants participate in everyday social relations and exchanges, they have a 'social belonging'. Tiffany and Hannah, as with all the children in this sample, participate in the social exchanges and relationships during every school day. Therefore, the attachment to being British reinforces a sense of safety would be compromised if they returned to Nigeria (in which they as a family fled from when they were very young).

Strang and Ager (2010, p 539) argues that Britishness can be partly defined by using English as the mother-tongue. Although parents in this sample did speak their mother-tongue to each other it was English as the language spoken to their children. The name given to children by their family is a powerful way of communicating identity (Carling, Erdal and Ezzati, 2014, p 44). It is children's names that act as an ethnic identity marker and an extension of their parent's first language (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Qasmiyeh, 2010, p 302). All children in the sample both their surnames and first names are from their parent's home country. Whilst Hannah and Tiffany had anglicized first names, the rest of the children had names that were distinctive of their heritage. In terms of identity this is the name that they are known by at school and by their friends, non-negotiable. However, it is also significant that when children chose their assumed name for this research, they chose anglicised names, or European names that reflect popular icons of footballers, or superheroes. Hence adopting a name that was a process of assuming identity in relation to a western or British identity.

Mina is an Iranian refugee occasionally attends the Drop-In to keep in contact with the Iranian diaspora as she has been moved to another town. Mina is Christian and dresses in western style clothing of jeans and jumpers. She spoke about her 8-year-old boy, Siri, and his frustration of wanting his family to be like other families at school.

"He keeps saying to me, why can't you be like other Mams at school, can you dye your hair blond and dress like other Mams?"

Mina⁶⁶ expressed to me her struggle to respond to Siri but recognises his frustration of being different in appearance to other children and their families. This consideration of appearance coincides with an account from Sreberny and Reza, (2016, p 22) of an 8 years old Iranian child receiving upsetting remarks because of her dark features and hair that engendered a sense of being an outsider. Moinian's (2009) research into Iranian children's migrant identity states that appearance is a visible 'ethnic marker' that physical characteristics such as skin colour and hair texture are symbolic markers that differentiate one group from another. Siri's response is a powerful example of how he feels as an 'outsider' by virtue of his family's physical appearance.

My fieldwork recordings identified two examples in the Drop-In whereby mothers had changed their appearance that reflects a more westernised images of women. For example, I observed that a Kurdish mother, who often became involved with her daughter in the drawing activity, appeared with her hair dyed blonde. On another occasion, an Madhia an Afghan, shortly after gaining refugee status arrived at the Drop-In in full face make-up for the first time. These two examples could reflect a symbolic act (Bourdieu 1990, p 193) and/or a rejection of past cultural norms of Muslim societies whereby femininity is symbolized by modesty and physical integrity, that identifies them from non-Muslims (Perry, 2014. P 79).

Whilst these two examples changing and fragmented habitus (Silva 2016b) or 'fragmented assimilation' through reproducing and 'performing' selected aspects of local identities (Vermeulen (2010)). However, most Muslim women in this study did not demonstrate any obvious change of appearance. Which arguably demonstrates gendered habitus has a strong resilience to change (Silva 2016b, p 174).

Phillips and Robinson (2015, p 411) argue that multiple identities do not necessarily weaken migrants' attachments to local places nor undermine their desire for engagement in local communities. This was apparent with refugee and asylum seeker children in this study whereby 'place' of birth is experienced as a marker of belonging. However, these markers of identity such as appearance and family

names may mark them out as outsiders in white working-class areas. Thus, this is a further barrier towards refugee and asylum seeker children's settlement and sense of belonging to other children in a predominantly white working-class locality such as in dispersal area in The Town.

9.5. Place and allegiance

The interviews and informal discussions with male parents and children in the Drop-In often led to discussions on football or cricket, consequently, I asked some boys in the interview around their support for England's football and cricket teams.⁶⁷

Although this could be regarded as a replication of the much criticised and controversial Tebbit's 'cricket question',⁶⁸ in terms of the 'boys' age and interest in sport and football, I asked this question, as a reference point to which they were familiar with. I asked Kavin: If England were playing Sri Lanka in football or cricket who would you support? Kavin replied: "*England*", and then looked at me with some puzzlement and then added.

"I live in England, I don't know that country (Sri Lanka). I am not used to their country I have never been"?

Ben was asked the same question and again answered "*England*". He then qualified this by stating:

"Because it's (Sri Lanka) is just an island, it's a tiny place and England is a big place".

⁶⁸ This is regarded as one of the most controversial questions asked by the Government Minister Norman Tebbit. The 'cricket test', also known as the 'Tebbit test', was made in April 1990 by the British Conservative politician Norman Tebbit in reference to the perceived lack of loyalty to the England cricket team among South Asian and Caribbean immigrants and their children. Tebbit suggested that those immigrants who support their native countries rather than England are not significantly settled into the United Kingdom. (Brah, 2018) The 'cricket test' is criticised as a superficial measurement of assimilation of migrant groups in Britain. And suggests that any attachment to people's nation of ancestry should be severed (Fletcher, 2012).

James was asked a similar question, who would you support in the Football World Cup, England or Nigeria? James replied: "*England, because they are better*".

These replies indicate the importance of birthplace and familiarity of the UK, and the importance of 'place', which is represented by the boys in terms of size of country and competency of the football team. It is also important to recognise that these children have spent nearly all, or from a very young age, of their lives in the UK and therefore, as Kavin stated, do not know any other country.

The notion of '*England is a big place*' and '*England because they are better*' could reflect a Western ethnocentric measure of 'success' (Erel, 2010. p 646). Furthermore, this may sit more comfortably in their friendships and networks with local children to enhancing in-group favouritism rather than becoming part of the 'out-group' (Stets and Burke, 2016, p 232).

As previously discussed, Ron's school had a day whereby all pupils were encouraged to wear an England football shirt to watch a live England World Cup game on television. This day provides the opportunity for children of migrant backgrounds to display symbolic capital of supporting England to reinforce relationships with their school peers. Hence it is an act of demonstrating allegiance, an English identity and England as a place of home (Burdsey, 2006; Moskal and North, 2017).

However, the notion of identity and national sport is a complex area. Moskal and North (2017) argue that there is a complex multi-layered difficulty in defining what 'Englishness' is in a globalised, multicultural, multi-ethnic society. Whilst Fletcher (2012, p 614) argues that a framework of allegiance is a superficial measurement of assimilation rather than an indicator of settlement and belonging.

9.6. Football, identity, and boy's sense of belonging

*“Wahid likes Barcelona and his favourite player is Messi,
Ghalam likes Real Madrid and his favourite player is Ronaldo”*

These were the words of Madhia when introducing me to her son's Wahid aged 11 and Ghalam aged 10 when I met them in the Drop-In shortly after they had arrived in the UK from Afghanistan. The boys both spoke a good level of English and had an enthusiasm for football and so we then spent time watching football highlights on my mobile phone, much to their pleasure. Arguably Wahid and Ghalam's cultural capital in Afghan was formed, partly, from the global community of football (Karen and Washington, 2015).⁶⁹ This reflects Crawley's (2011, p 43) research whereby that the single biggest area of European and British life in which asylum seekers were familiar with before they arrived in Britain is football.

A constant theme throughout this research with boys both in the Drop-In and through interviews was the interest in football. For example, when James drew the picture of his friends in preparation for the interview, he drew his friends on a football pitch adopting different positions in the Team (see Appendix 1 A3). In the discussion with James of his drawing James he identified 5 friends, despite 13 players in his picture. Hence emphasising his interest of football, and a possible commonality and connection to my interests, rather than producing a detailed image representing his friends.

The focus upon football in my findings reflect my own interests that I use as tool of shared interests to develop an element of rapport with the boys. The purpose of this rapport was to establish trust through a shared knowledge and an understanding and opinions of football (as discussed in Chapter 6). Knifsend and Juvonen (2013) found social connectedness across ethnic groups increased when children

perceived a connection of interests. This was the same basis for me as an adult white researcher to make connections with the children in this research.

In this section I highlight boy's settlement and a sense of belonging to community-based football that is outside of the immediate school peers through participation clubs with a Town wide catchment. Therefore, I build upon the findings in Chapter 7 whereby I found boys shared a form of identity through football and the physicality of boy's play in the playground.

During the interview with Aylan asked me if he could join a football club in the town. Consequently, I carried out some on-line research of youth football in the area and I provided him with the information. Later in the month he arrived at a Drop-In Session, and he came straight to me: he told me that he had went to a football club with a friend and scored two goals in training. This is my recording from the Drop-In session.

Aylan asked me where he could get a Real Madrid or Barcelona football shirt, I suggested somewhere such as JD but he replied that they are £50 and they could not afford it. E Bay is out of the question as he has no access to a home computer. I said I would ask around; he also needs football boots (size 6).

This corresponds to research that argues that financial restraints makes it more difficult for asylum seeker children and their families to participate into community based activities (Atfield, Brahmhatt and O'Toole, 2007, p 46; Manyena and Brady, 2007, p 28). Aylan's perception of being accepted is achieved not just by his ability in football, but by wearing the right football shirts that represent symbolic appropriation of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2013, p 295; Lewis, 2015, p 44). In Bourdieu's analysis this would equate to cultural capital as a resource in each social field, however within each field there are different levels of economic resources that results in a struggle to attain the correct cultural capital to be accepted (Wallace, 2018, p 468).

Kavin played at a youth football club every Saturday morning. Kavin stated that people came from all over the town, and everyone else at the club was white. This may reinforced Kavin's ethnic and racial identity and difference as racialised

outsiders in a predominantly white town. Nicholls and Uitermark (2016, p 882) draw from Elias (1994) to argue that stigmatised immigrants often experience hostility by dominant groups, however, this sense of racism was not discussed by the Kavin in relation to the football team, furthermore his younger brother Samesh was enthusiastic about attending the club when he is old enough to become a member. Ben attended weekly football sessions at the town's sport and leisure centre along with children from throughout the town. Ben proudly said that this is where he has gained: 'three certificates in football'. The boys who joined football clubs demonstrated the individual capacities that are needed to facilitate the development of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986, p 23; Pittaway, Bartolomei and Doney, 2015, p 401). Hence, as discussed in Chapter 7.2. this is an ability to apply 'performance' in relation to 'fit-in' with the interests of different groups, competencies in social and communication skills, and the time to develop these in the context of 'place'.

The boy's interest in football is a form of cultural capital that extends across backgrounds of ethnicity and cultural heritage. Thus, drawing together boys from different ethnic heritages to facilitate the forming of bridging social capital. As Putnam states bridging capital is a more outward looking and stronger in facilitating settlement. However, when extending football outside of the playground and away from the school, children face the lack of economic capital that is needed to apply symbolic cultural capital. Thus, this forms another barrier towards gaining credibility from other children who may have the means to attain the 'right shirts.'

The emphasis of football reinforces the need for boys to portray a masculinity identity of physicality as discussed in Chapter 7.2. This was evident in the art activities in the Drop-In, as detailed in my fieldnotes. The boys tended to draw superheroes, computer game characters or footballers, and showed the pictures to each other for discussion. There was also the occasional activity of making and flying paper aeroplanes in competition with other boys. Hence reflecting a hegemonic masculinity that reflect the emphasis on power and competition between boys (Stahl, 2019, p 286).

9.7. Girls, stereotypes, and emotional capital

Not surprisingly the girls in this study had different interests to the boys. In the Drop-in drawing activity the girls tended to draw their home, houses, school, flowers, and rainbows, which is also reflected in other research of the content of girl's drawings (Mand 2012). These pictures were not actively shared with others, and they kept their artwork as a 'present' for their mothers. This arguably is a symbolic act of gendered socialisation whereby emotional capital is passed from mother to child (Reay, 2000, p 569; Silva, 2016a, p 85). Furthermore, the girl's choice of subjects for their drawings may be a reinforcement of performed identity of gender in which domestic space centres upon girl-mother is at the heart of the family (James, Jenks and Prout, 1998, p 55; Lawler, 2008, p 116).

Gendered habitus represents all the ways that each person approaches, thinks about and acts upon in their social world (Reay, 2015; Connolly, 2006). Therefore, in applying this idea then then gendered identity of refugee and asylum seeker children is a key factor that shapes a sense of belonging towards their peers.

9.8. Conclusion

Whilst their parents may focus on longer term settlement, children's immediate need is to adapt identities to be accepted and gain a sense of belonging toward local friends. The responses of children in this chapter highlight children's negotiation of identity that includes an understanding of the cultural competencies and awareness that are needed to self-manage their social inclusion. Goffman's provides a useful framework to consider the notion of dramaturgy whereby children creatively adopt 'front of stage' performances to fit with the interests and cultural capital of their peers.

This research found that children create their own identity and become active agents 'constructing his or her everyday life and the world around them' (Uprichard, 2008, p 310). For example, identity markers such as 'asylum seeker', are played down and

uncomfortable for children in this research. Hence the notion of being labelled as a 'victim' along with a sense of 'stigmatisation' and of being a 'problems' for receiving countries (Gupte and Matha, 2007, p 64).

The focus on friends and boys shared interests such as football, exposes the complexities of identifying as English or Britishness as they need to be seen to make allegiances to fit in with friends and therefore maintain a sense of belonging with their peers. There is a gendered analysis as girls in this research such as Tiffany did not relate to sport nor need sport to reaffirm her Britishness to distance herself from a Nigerian identity.

It is notable that children equate spatial allegiances to England as a place of belonging by virtue of it is the place they inhabit and feel safe in. The fact that some of the children in this study were born in England may suggest a perceived English identity, which suggests inclusion by birth (Sant and Hanley, 2018 p 327). However, the 1981 Nationality Act excludes the children from British Citizenship as discussed in Chapter 4.1.

This chapter has also exposed limitations in the is research and provide further questions that could be explored outside of this research. Firstly, as a male adult researcher, I used my techniques of drawing upon football as a tool to develop rapport with the boys. Hence, this led to discussions on football as a tool to generate data on the perceptions of 'identity.' However, this has limitations, and shared interests with the three girls in this research is more difficult to achieve. Therefore, further research on refugee and asylum seeker girls, would provide a wider understanding of shared identity with other girls.

Secondly, the notion of children's identity in this study is limited to pre-adolescence stages of childhood. However, as children move into adolescence then identity formation is a much more complex process (Hall 1904; Erikson 1968), as cited by Cieslik and Simpson (2013).

Chapter 10

Filling a Void: Religion, Capital, and Settlement

10.1. Introduction

In this chapter I argue that there is a strong correlation between religiosity and the settlement of refugees and asylum seeker families. Religious institutions are recognised as key facilitators of physical and humanitarian support to refugees and asylum seekers, but also as a conduit to bring volunteers and human capital to befriend newly arrived asylum seekers (Putnam, 2000; Allen, 2010). I draw upon the experiences of refugee and asylum seeker families and volunteers to argue that the dynamics of religiosity are underpinned by a social class. Thus, the refugees and asylum seekers live alongside mostly secular working-class neighbours but are more likely to be engaged by middle class volunteers in the religious institutions of the Town.

To make the link between settlement and religiosity, this chapter is split into four overriding themes that are underpinned by the accumulation of cultural, social, and symbolic capital. I will interrogate religion as embodied habitus which manifests within the family and provides a starting point for children's settlement. I explore the commonality shared between Christianity from the locality and that of refugee and asylum seeker of Hindu and Muslim faiths. Thirdly, I consider the role of church members from the town and their access to social capital to support the welfare needs of refugees and asylum seekers. The further themes examine the symbolic capital of conversion to Christianity and to consider if religious conversion is a strategic decision to enhance asylum seekers application for refugee status.

10.2. Secularisation and religiosity

Barrett (2010, p 449) describes churches as one of the key institutions of civil society. Whilst Bartram, Poros and Monforte, (2014. p 83) state that participation and membership of key institutions is a way that immigrants can gain membership of society in the destination country'. This is supported by Ndoftar-Tah *et al.* (2019) who state that religion can facilitate social bonds and social bridges in the settlement process.

The importance of religion was a key identifier of each family in the sample, and the majority those who were engaged with in the Drop-In. The religion of the interviewed family's is reflected in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Religion of the interview sample families

| Families | Religion |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Sri Lankan x 2 | Hindu |
| Sri Lankan | Muslim |
| Iraqi | Muslim |
| Pakistani | Muslim |
| Pakistani | Ahmadiyya (Muslim) |
| Nigerian | Muslim |
| Nigerian | Christian |

All the sample families strongly identified themselves through their religion. This contrasts to the UK and in the North East of England whereby secularisation is becoming more prominent and religion is less influential (Schnabel and Groetsch, 2014; Goodhew and Barward-Symmons, 2015). Furthermore, the Office For National Statistics, (2012) state that between 2001 and 2011 there has been a decrease in the proportion of people who identify as Christian and an increase in those reporting

to have no religion.⁷⁰ According to UK Christianity, (2020), church membership in the UK is 10% of the population, and expected to fall to 8.4 % by 2025.

However, the Pew Research Center (2018) suggest that the majority of Europe's Christians are non-practicing but still identify as Christian. Furthermore, Schnabel and Groetsch (2014, p 380) argue that secularisation reflects the individualisation of religion whereby people chose aspects of what they believe.

In contrast to Europe, Gunn, (2007) states that the majority of Central Asians (including the theocratic nation states of Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan - of which many of refugees and asylum seekers at the Drop-In are from) consider Islam to be part of their social identity. They argue that strongly held beliefs can be institutionalised to become an all-bracing system of belief and ideology that governs members' actions and interpretations of the world (Barrett, 2010, p 455; Franceschelli and O'Brien, 2014, p 4). Thus, there is a seamless relationship between religion and the nation state whereby the state religion is embodied in all its institutions from law to education. Therefore, exposure to this embedded religiosity in their country of origin will have a significant impact upon the habitus of refugees and asylum seekers who are from theocratic states. This habitus is reinforced in this study by the symbolic signs of religious dress and types of food as discussed later in this chapter (10.3).

The interviewees all came from countries whereby religion is prominent. It is estimated that in both Pakistan, and Iraq, near to 100% of the populations have a faith, Sri Lanka with 95% and Nigeria 93%. Furthermore, there are Iranian refugees and asylum seekers who attend the Drop-In; whereby it is estimated that 100% of the Iranian population have a religion.^{71 72}

⁷⁰ The Pew Research Centre state that only 18% of baptised Christians in the UK attend Church on a regular basis and that many of those baptised do not describe themselves as Christians.

⁷¹ The reliability of the data from Pakistan and Iran could be questioned, as Islam is the state religion and is repressive of other faiths including the non-recognition of Ahmadiyya as a Muslim faith, and Christian and Hindu faiths. (Meral, Ziya Gray, 2016).

⁷² Data Sources from

<https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/religious-beliefs-and-freedoms-in-pakistan.html>

The refugees and asylum seekers in the UK are aiming to settle in a country whereby the importance of Christianity is reflected in the UK's constitution link between the Queen, The Church and Parliament (Bonney 2013). The link to Christianity is often linked to Britishness by far-right politicians, for example, Nigel Farage (then of UKIP) argued that he would "happily" accept Syrian Christian refugees into Britain, (ITV, 2015). Furthermore Brexit populist rhetoric identifies refugees as mostly a Muslim problem with the need to preserve the nation as Christian and white (Miah, 2018; Virdee and McGeever, 2018). However, Pike, (2017) draws from theologians who acknowledges that Britain cannot be characterised being a Christian country, as implicated by Farage, but Britain's 'cultural memory' is strongly Christian. The memory is visually represented in The Town whereby Churches dominate the skyline.⁷³

10.3. Capital, family, and religion

As a social field, the family is not culturally neutral but influenced by specific historical conditions, which determine both strategies and content of cultural transmissions between generations (Barrett, 2010; Voicu, 2016, p 3). Children in this study, are part of the familial social field whereby parent's religion and family values have a strong influence on their developing habitus that can shape their settlement and a sense of belonging.

<https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/religious-beliefs-and-freedoms-in-iraq.html>

<https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/religious-beliefs-in-sri-lanka.html>

<https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/religious-beliefs-in-nigeria.html>

<https://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/asia/iran/irfacts.htm#page>

⁷³ There are 28 Churches in The Town, including 10 in the asylum seeker dispersal area. To retain anonymity of The Town, the websites have been withheld (accessed 07/04/2020).

Five out of the eight families in the sample group are Muslim. Research conducted by Franceschelli and O'Brien (2014, p 7) offers a perspective of an Islamic habitus, whereby Islam is often perceived as 'more than a religion, but a way of life' forging everyday practices such as clothing and eating, but also social relationships and views of the world.

Wilding (2018, p 8) cites Beck and Beck-Gernshiem (1995, p 2) to argue that family operates through a set of binding rules and hierarchies of gender and age, whilst turning to religion for the meaning of life and how to live it. Kim and Wilcox, (2013) argue that the ties between religion and family strongly shape traditional family values. However, the traditional model of family can be hierarchical and be at odds with western models of family whereby there is a more equal and democratic between children and parents (Smyth, 2016). Furthermore Wilding, (2018, p 9) draws from Beck and Beck-Gernshiem (1995) to argue that families of Western heritage are less likely to turn to religion or tradition in how to live life.

This asks questions of the potential of cross faith partnerships and marriages for the children in this sample when they move into adulthood. This was explored in the semi structured interviews with parents when considering the longer-term aspirations and settlement for their children. However, it is also a challenge to parent's ideas on the preservation of religion and culture.

According to Putnam and Campbell (2010) a strong ethnic identity increases the likelihood of getting married with someone belonging to the same religious group. When parent interviewees were asked about their children's future marriage (if they secured a long-term refugee status in the UK), the response was varied. For example, a Sri Lankan parent said that:

"Our thought he must marry a Sri Lankan girl. Because we must keep within our community. Because we must keep our culture".

However, the remainder of parents were open to the possibly of mixed religious marriage when asked the same question. Shamesh's father (Kadhir) said in relation to his son's possible future marriage:

“Directly, I told him, if you marry an English girl you should become Christian you are born in this country, you don’t know about Hinduism so you should follow Christianity”.

Kadhir reveals that religion is important, and links religion with place, and a perception that to be English is to be Christian. Although Kadhir does not explicitly state this, marriage may also be a way to fulfil a sense of his children’s settlement as Yuval-Davis (1997, p 27) argues that only way 'outsiders', such as those born abroad, can conceivably join the national collective is by intermarriage.

The link between being English and Christianity is also shared by Aylan’s mother (Tiyam) an Iraqi, when asked about marriage when Aylan is an adult, she also responded: *“She could be Christian ... if she is good”.*

Ron’s father Faqih (who identifies as an Ahmadiyyan Muslim) on discussion about marriage said:

“The thing is this that I always prefer if they marry a Muslim girl. But you cannot force anything. For a wife I would always prefer a very good-natured girl, if she is a good human being then she would be a God-fearing person. If she is a God-fearing person, then she must be a religious. If she is a religious person, I have no objection on that.”.

Whilst, one Muslim parent was concerned about protecting their culture, two other Muslim parents were open to marriage across faith: ‘as long as they are good’ and ‘god fearing’ which suggests that their believe that there are compatible morals and values between faith.

It is notable that the responses on marriage, Muslim and Hindu parents assumed marriage as heterosexual. Indeed, an Iranian asylum seeker in the UK interviewed in Morrice’s research found homosexuality as disorientating stating that *‘We haven’t got gay people, we haven’t got lesbians’*, (Morrice, 2012, p 260). Furthermore, it is argued that many Muslims perceive homosexuality is perceived as a ‘western disease’ (Sanjakdar, 2013). I did not ask any questions specifically related to homosexuality or LGBTQ+ in the interviews. I felt that by raising what is regarded as a sensitive subject may

undermine the productive and collaborative relationships with families that has informed my study.

10.4. Muslim and Catholic alliances

Cantle argues that faith schools are separatist places and the antithesis of diversity (Cantle, 2012). However, this research challenges this notion, particularly in the religious demographic of the Town whereby refugee and asylum seeker families of Muslim and Hindu faiths seek out places in Catholic schools.

I was invited by Faqih to attend a multi-faith conference organised by the Ahmadiyya Community which took place in their Mosque. The Headteacher from the local Catholic Secondary school was on the conference panel to offer a Christian perspective on interfaith relations. A prominent member of the Ahmadiyya Community announced that his children were pupils at this school as he praised the headteacher and that it was a 'good' school. The notion of 'good' can be subjective to context, for example Ofsted's category of 'good' may differ from a cultural context. The terms 'good' may reflect commonalities between religions such as Putnam's (2000, p 304) assertion that Catholic schools have a high level of internal agreement about their values whereby their ethos and morals are clear and unambiguous. Whilst Norris and Inglehart (2012, p 234) suggest that in some societies there is a commonality of traditional values between Catholics and Muslims.

Anyanwu (James's father) a Nigerian interviewee said that he was Muslim, and his wife was Christian, and said that this was not an issue for them as there is little difference between Christians and Muslims. This reflects Janson's (2016, p 695) study of mixed worship in Lagos, Nigeria where it is said that 'God would answer our prayers because we're all children of Abraham'.⁷⁴ Norris and Inglehart (2012, p 234) state that in Nigeria the basic values of Nigerian Muslims are closer to those of their Christian compatriots than they are to those of South Asian Muslims.

⁷⁴Jame's parents were reluctant to take part in an interview, and so this was not fully explored. There are areas in Nigeria in which there is hostility and conflict between Christians and Muslims (Janson, 2016, p 646)

This commonality between Christian and Muslim faiths is reflected in one of the Muslim family's account. Nazneen was accepted as a volunteer in the Catholic Secondary School where she now enjoys her work, to which she states, '*where I feel valued and respected*'. It may be that Nazneen's religious habitus of morals and values, that was shaped in Pakistan, has informed her sense of ease in the Catholic school in The Town. Hence, Nazneen's account demonstrates a compatible experience across religion and cultures between Pakistan and The Town's catholic school.

Furthermore, the 2016 Annual Census of Catholic schools identifies that the biggest group of non-Catholic pupils are from Muslim families in which the Director of the Catholic Education Service, said Catholic schools were "beacons of diversity and integration up and down the country" and that "often, parents of different faiths value the distinctive and unapologetically Catholic ethos of the Church's schools" (The Catholic Education Service, 2016)

Ben attends a Catholic primary school and a Catholic Sunday School, his parents (Sri Lankan and Hindu) attend Catholic Mass every Sunday. Ben's father, Veshnu, said:

"We are not becoming Christian, but we have to concentrate our mind. We don't have any temple here, so we think like there is one God, so we go and pray and to make some friends. Plus, Ben (their child) is learning RE in school".

Ben's parents saw this attendance at church as fulfilling multiple functions through applying a religious function even though they are not Christian, to develop their social and cultural capital by making friends, and to facilitate Ben's learning in school which supports his education and development of cultural capital. All of which contribute to Ben and his family's settlement and sense of belonging.

10.5. Christian organisations, social capital, and support

I found that local Christian organisations supported refugees and asylum seekers accumulation of cultural, social, and economic capital - in the form of advocacy, donations of food and household goods. Spring et al. (2019) suggest that voluntary based drop-ins are the first step for asylum seekers to 'plug into new environments'. Mayblin and James (2018, p 5) draws from research to highlight that refugee and asylum seeker support organisations in dispersal areas are often small, heavily dependent on volunteers, are either faith based or rely on churches for support. Therefore, I build upon this narrative to examine religiosity in the acquirement of capital of both adults and children in refugee and asylum seeker families.

It is significant that the locations for the two Drop-In's in the town were located in Church Halls,⁷⁵ these are offered free of charge but the churches do not have a formal role in the management of the Drop-Ins, which corresponds with the findings of Spring *et al.*, (2019) in their research of another North East refugee and asylum seeker Drop-In.

Putnam (2000, p 49) research in the USA found that churches provide an important incubator for civic skills, civic norms, community interests, and civic recruitment whereby members befriend others who are in turn likely to recruit them into other forms of community activity (such as in leisure groups, parent teacher associations, religious groups, and charities). Putnam also states that church members are more likely to be involved in secular organisations (such as the Drop-Ins) and to have deeper informal social connections. This relates to Weber's notion of the ethic of 'good works' through social action as an individual quest for religious salvation (Weber, 1964, p 154). This is reflected in research of a North East foodbank whereby volunteers saw social action as a Christian duty (Garthwaite, 2016, p 29).

Figure 8: Membership of The Drop-In Management Committee and other prominent volunteers (the names are changed for anonymity)

| Name | Occupation | Church Link | Management Committee volunteer | Volunteer | Nationality |
|--------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| Emerson | Care Worker | Christian denomination unknown | √ | | Zimbabwe |
| Kadhir | Security Guard | none | √ | | Sri Lanka |
| Suleymaan | Taxi driver | unknown | √ | | Somalia |
| Irene | Council Officer | unknown | √ | | White British |
| Doreen | Former Housing Manager | unknown | √ | | Black British |
| Paul | Charity Manager | Roman Catholic | √ | | White British |
| Elizabeth | Church Official | Roman Catholic | √ | | White British |
| Sister Agnes | Church Official | Roman Catholic | √ | | White British |
| Aleeza | unknown | Christian convert | | √ | Pakistan |
| Vera | Family Support Worker | Church of England | | √ | White British |
| Tony | Retired | Roman Catholic | | √ | White British |
| Jane | Retired | unknown | | √ | White British |
| Chrissie | Not in employment | Church of Latter-day Saints | | √ | White British |
| Rob | Not in employment | Church of Latter-Day Saints | | √ | White British |
| Margaret | Church Official | Wesleyan Church Drop-In | | √ | White British |
| Catherine | Retired School Teacher | Wesleyan Church drop-In | | √ | White British |
| Tony | Retired School Teacher | Roman Catholic | | | White British |

Shanaz, (Adele's mother) volunteered at the local food bank, which itself was formed by local churches and community groups. This reflects Garthwaite (2016, p 27) who states that there are an estimated 42,000 volunteers who staff Trussell Trust Food Banks every week whereby the majority are predominantly practicing Christians who see their work as part of discipleship. This reflects Putnam's (2000, p 116-133) findings of a strong link between volunteerism and church membership. My discussions with volunteers at the Drop-Ins also reflected the pattern of church membership as a first step towards voluntary welfare work. Thus, reinforcing the link between religiosity and the humanitarianism.

The Evangelical Alliance (2007) found that church members play a role to help refugees and asylum seekers to settle in the community. The study further demonstrated the role that churches often provide a first port of call to newly arrived asylum seekers as they provide certain core services such as food and clothing, English language courses (Evangelical Alliance, 2007, p 2). These services mirrored the activities of the Drop-In.

This coincides with the view that churches and other religious organizations “play an important role in helping the poor and needy” and that they “bring people together and strengthen community bonds” (The Pew Research Center, 2018). This also reflects Putnam's research into social capital in the USA which states that religious congregations contribute to neighbourhood projects in which 80% of beneficiaries are not members of the congregation (2000, p 67-68).

What is less clear is that this support for refugees and asylum seekers is part of an evangelical agenda to attract more followers (Robbins, 2004). However, there is one example later in the section in which a new evangelical church in The Town made it apparent that this was their agenda.

Askins (2016) describes this voluntary approach as active citizenship based upon the philosophy of care in order to meet the needs of asylum seekers and others from whom the state has chosen to withdraw its support. Schnabel and Groetsch, (2014, p 390) describe this as ‘the ‘cuddlesome face of religion’ that is welcomed by governments. As discussed in Chapter 3, faith groups are filling in the gaps of other

provision that promotes social and cultural capital, including ESOL provision that was previously offered by the local FE colleges but withdrawn due to government spending cuts to this provision. Williams, Cloke and Thomas, (2012) argue that the increase of faith-based organisations in the delivery of social welfare is a by-product of neoliberalism against a shrinking public service provision. This is reflected by the then British Prime Minister David Cameron's policy drive towards creating a 'Big Society' through promoting a culture of volunteering to tackle social problems (Gov UK, 2011).⁷⁶

The Home Office requires that those companies who are awarded the contract to provide asylum seeker accommodation must provide local information and guidance in the form of an induction and a translating service (Home Office, 2019, p 13). However, the Chairman of the Drop-In said that the company who has the accommodation contract for The Town does not fulfil this requirement. Therefore, this puts more pressure on volunteers as new asylum seekers seek out The Drop-In as one of the few places to find basic practical information to help them acclimatise to life in The Town. However, the National Audit Office (2014) argues that this partly reflects a failure of The Home Office to monitor accommodation contracts; which requires an induction service for newly arrived asylum seekers.

For many refugees and asylum seekers attendance at the Drop-In it was a first step towards meeting others, either other refugees and asylum seekers, or local volunteers. This happened frequently at the Drop-In during this research, whereby newly arrived asylum seekers to The Town, who often had little or no understanding of English, would come in and just sit and looked around them hoping that someone would help them. My fieldwork recordings refer to this on several occasions in which new families had a look of fear and anxiety, this fear often continued when I first engaged with them and particularly if they had very little English language skills. Therefore, volunteers would look out for such families, and respond as best as possible, often seeking out other nationals from their country to help to translate for them. The volunteers were sensitive to the potential psychological difficulties and

⁷⁶ The Big Society policy has been heavily criticised as a flawed strategy to offset public spending and reducing responsibility of government to tackle social problems (Kisby, 2010). However (Evans, 2011) argued that the voluntary sector welcomed this approach and the recognition of the voluntary sector.

trauma that is experienced by many refugees and asylum seekers (Frykman, 2009, p 91).

It was often difficult for some of newly arrived children who attended the Drop-In who, like their parents, often looked very anxious sitting with strangers in a different world (Aidani, 2010; Amin, 2013). Thus for children the experience of being a newly arrived asylum seeker is one of vulnerability, acute anxiety, stress, and powerlessness (Hek, 2005; Quinn, 2014). Hence, for both parents and children, the trauma of the initial arrival can reinforce psychological barriers towards the first steps towards settlement.

The importance of first contacts also apply to refugee and asylum seeker children who are relocated to places across the UK, for example, a year after Tiffany and Hannah arrived in The Town they remembered that I was the first person who came to speak to them which was in the Drop-In.

On many occasions people used to drive up to the Drop-In and donate used clothing or household items. I tended to go out their cars to help bring in the items, this enabled me to form a perspective of those who brought items through observation of their language, dress and behaviour which always reflected middle class cultural capital - a judgement based on Bourdieu's analysis (Bourdieu, 1984; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

Ayling (2015, p 457) draws upon Bourdieu (1984) to argue that access to economic resources alone does not define a person's status (class) rather, the ability to demonstrate particular behaviours, dispositions, knowledge and aesthetic choices to assert particular kind of status and group membership. In this sense the way people dress, walk and talk, as markers of their classed identity (Bourdieu, 1984).

Figure 9 (next page) demonstrates the wide range of activities and range of Christian groups and organisations that actively support refugees and asylum seekers in The Town

Figure 9. Christian organisations actively involved in supporting refugees and asylum seekers.

| Christian Organisations | Support Activities |
|--|---|
| Roman Catholic Church | <p>Host to the main Drop-In up, ran by a committee of refugees and asylum seekers, a local government officer and volunteers most of which are connected to the RC Church.</p> <p>There are Up to 60 refugees and asylum seekers attendance, for 2 hours, one day a week. They offer support through a used clothes and household goods stall, a hot meal, and case work from a either a Drop-In volunteer or other attending agencies. There are also children's activities during school summer holidays.</p> |
| Methodist Church – Small Drop-In with a health focus. | <p>Host to a smaller drop-in with up to 15 refugees and asylum seekers in attendance, for 2 hours, one day per week. This is a social gathering with a meal and ran by refugees and asylum seekers. Although there is no involvement of the church in the running of the session, staff at the church have developed good relations with many of the English-speaking refugee and asylum seekers.</p> |
| Methodist Church 2 | <p>They provide occasional ESOL classes and social support. They have conducted baptisms of refugee and asylum seekers.</p> |
| Seafarers Mission | <p>They attend the main Drop-In offering individual practical support to refugees and asylum seekers.</p> |
| Evangelical Church | <p>There is a café attached to the church that welcomes all people, including refugees and asylum seekers.</p> |
| Evangelical Church 2 | <p>They promoted their new church at the Drop-In.</p> |
| Specialised Refugee Support Organisation | <p>This is a full-time professional Christian organisation specifically to support refugees and asylum seekers throughout the county. Including case work and facilitating access to local services.</p> |

I met Tony, a retired teacher, who used to bring used furniture for asylum seekers, I also met Georgina, a middle-aged retired person who came into the Drop-In to see a specific Albanian mother she was helping. Another regular visitor, Jane, was an elderly middle-class lady, had developed friendships and support with many of the refugee and asylum seeker women which extended outside of the Drop-In. Similarly, two retired female, middle class volunteers, including a retired teacher, who ran the Methodist Church office (a venue for the smaller drop-in) took an active interest in the welfare of asylum seekers particularly those who were converting to Christianity. This support is across generational gap between the older church activists above and younger refugees and asylum seekers families in The Town. It is argued that these older figures fill a vacuum left by the relatives they left behind at home who offered pragmatic and emotional support (Spring *et al.*, 2019, p 39).

Not all first contacts were through the Drop-In, one of the families said their first contact with people in Hartlepool was through an evangelical church:

“When we came here first time, we normally go to one church, they have a café. They give food, such as tinned food, bread, like that. We are friends now. They came to our house; we went to their house for an Easter party”.

This change of church attendance symbolises Ben’s family’s strategic way to achieve settlement, that is, that the catholic church offers better access to ‘good’ schools than the evangelic church. However, Veshnu said that he still maintains contact with members of the evangelic church. Nevertheless, the family made connections and developed social capital through both churches which are the social connections to support settlement (Ndofar-Tah *et al.*, 2019).

On one occasion in the Drop-In a visitor was helping with the clothes stall and his wife and children were sitting on the next table to me whereby his wife began to ask me about the refugees and the town. She said her husband was a Pastor and they run a church in another North Eastern location but were also opening a new church in The Town. Later during the Drop-In the Pastor was introduced by a verbal announcement to everyone. He announced he was a friend of the Drop-In’s Chairperson, hence underlying his social capital credentials, and proceeded to give

details of the new church such as the venue and times for services. Leaflets were given out, with the details and a picture of a service that had stage lights and musicians on stage that reflects a charismatic evangelical approach that is argued adapts to cultures it engages with (Robbins, 2004).

Goodhew and Barward-Symmons, (2015) acknowledges Christian congregational decline in the North East of England. They also found that in the North East there is an increase in the creation of new Christian congregations with the creation of 125 new churches that are highly diverse-ethnically socially and theologically is also evident in the North East. This new church addition adds to the two existing new churches in The Town and offering further faith-based pathways to acquire for social capital towards settlement.

10.6. Coping strategies or dependence

The 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act places asylum seekers in a situation that restricts their agency. For example, asylum seekers have no choice of place of dispersal, accommodation, and cannot gain legal employment as discussed in Chapter 2. Kelly and Lusic (2006, p 832) argue that the study of structure and agency is of critical important given that refugees and asylum seekers 'structural circumstances that are not of their choosing'. Therefore, local voluntary and community-based groups, such as faith groups may provide structures that enable and promote the agency of refugees (Morrice, 2007, p 168).

Refugee volunteers at the Drop-In had developed what Kelly and Lusic (2006, p 824) refers to as 'operational knowledge of welfare and immigration regulations.' This is reflected by Mayblin and James (2018, p 14) who argue that volunteers provide essential advice, support and stability to asylum seekers. There were occasional visitors to the Drop-In from non-faith-based agencies. One of which was a worker from the regional office of a refugee and asylum seeker national charity. The worker describes their work as mostly through a telephone helpline and sometimes attending Drop-In's to promote their service. On discussing her work, she stated that:

“asylum seekers and refugees need to be enabled rather than dependent on agencies who do things for them. Otherwise, they will always struggle to adapt and settle”.

Therefore, the dilemma for organisations such as the Drop-In to negotiate a balance between creating a dependence upon the volunteers or developing individual agency and resourcefulness among refugees and asylum seekers.

It was also interesting to observe that as newly arrived asylum seekers began to pick up language and local knowledge and their attendance at the Drop-In diminished only returning for occasional social contact.⁷⁷ This suggests that over time, the asylum seekers began to develop their own resourcefulness rather than remain dependent on volunteers and others in the Drop-In. Manyena and Brady (2007, p 39) refer to this process of development in their ‘resilience model’. This model assumes that refugee and asylum seeker children and their parents that despite the challenges they could have gone can develop some form of resilience. They argue that ‘resilience’ in this context of refugees and asylum seekers describes an active process of self-righting, learned resourcefulness and growth.

Therefore, a reduction of refugee and asylum seekers dependence upon agencies such as the Drop-In may be an indicator of settlement and dependence outside of the sheltered spaces of Drop-Ins and churches.

10.7. Symbolic capital and religious conversion

Religious affiliation can add a further layer of social and cultural capital to support refugee and asylum seeker family’s settlement. To unpack these complexities this section considers the notion of ‘symbolic capital’ in the process of conversion to Christianity that offers a symbolic statement of attachment to the UK as a Christian

⁷⁷ This was a challenge to research (as discussed in Chapter 6.5) as families became less dependent upon the Drop-In and their reduced attendance made it difficult to contact families. My fieldwork recordings contain numerous entries of frustration that families that I identified met the criteria for this sample (living in the Town for one year) had not attended the Drop-In.

country. Much of this section reflects Goffman's (1959) notion of symbolic front stage performances as a demonstration of religious affiliations to local Christian groups.

Prost (2006) argues that symbolic capital provides an important role when economic capital is scarce as with most refugees and asylum seekers. It is argued that symbolic capital reflects prestige, esteem and the search for recognition (Bourdieu, 2000, 240; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2013, p 297; Pellandini-Simányi, 2014). In essence, the symbolism of conversion to Christianity equates to social alchemy of converting symbolic capital to social capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2013, p 295). Thus, religious conversion could be a strategy to increase social and cultural capital and therefore a means of gaining acceptance and belonging.

There was always several Iranian refugee and asylum seeker families who attended the Drop-In and sat together. Their commonality is that they had converted to Christianity since arriving in the UK. This group were occasionally visited by the Parish priest, during the Drop-In. On one occasion they brought an A4 size photographs of them to show to selected others (Christian) in the Drop-In, the photograph was of them in a church procession following a Bishop in their Baptism ceremony. The display of the photograph is symbolic to others in the Drop-In of their newly acquired formal Christian identity. This is compatible with Goffman theory of presentation of self through front stage performance as the photographs were for a selected audience of like-minded others, and in the process cementing bridging capital to other Christians.

It was in the Drop-In that I was introduced to an Iranian asylum seeker called 'Daniel' by Aleeza (a volunteer refugee from Pakistan).⁷⁸ Daniel stood with a beaming smile when Aleeza emphasised the name of Daniel, as Aleeza informed me that this is his converted Christian name from Mahmoud. It is argued that a person's decision to change their own name acts a statement of 'transformation identity' whilst the change of first name indicates a religious conversion and is aimed to be symbolic capital that is valued by other Christians (Brubaker (2013, p 7).

⁷⁸ Correspondingly, Daniel is the name of a Christian Prophet presented in the Old Testament's Book of Daniel.

Aleeza is married and states her husband is suffering ongoing mental health difficulties related to the emotional trauma of having to seek refuge; and consequently, never leaves the home. Meanwhile she has become active in voluntary work to support other refugees and asylum seekers which brought her into contact with Christian groups. Consequently, Aleeza has become an active Christian such as attending scripture meetings and organising occasional ESOL classes for refugees and asylum seekers in a local Methodist church.

I attended a multi-faith conference in the town organised by the Ahmadiyya Community, which included a panel of speakers from Judaism, Sikhism and Christianity. The audience was also multi faith but predominantly, judging by the framing of questions put forward by members of the audience many were from Christian evangelical denominations. As I entered the hall Aleeza was already sitting next to a middle-aged white couple, and Aleeza asked me to join them. The couple were introduced as from a local Methodist church, and it was apparent Aleeza had a good relationship with them that had been established over time. During the question and answer session, Aleeza, stood up, and pronounced that *'everyone should just love one another'*. This was received by smiles and nods of approval by the middle-aged couple and from others in the room. I do not doubt the sincerity of Aleeza's pronouncement, but this was also a symbolic act. Hence this produces symbolic capital that is needed in the religious 'field' inhabited by the middle-aged couple and other attendees. Thus Aleeza's actions became part of the expressive equipment or stage prop to facilitates performance (Goffman, 1959, p 34).

It is notable, that the Iranian group photograph was only shown to selected other Christians in the Drop-In. However, the conversion to Christianity may be interpreted as symbolic violence to non-Christian refugees and asylum seekers who feel their religious status reinforces their deficit position in their application for refugee status. Bourdieu and Wacquant (2013, p 298) argue that any capital, whatever the form it assumes, exerts a symbolic violence as soon as it is recognized. This maybe manifested in non-Christian others may feel left behind in the struggle to seek acceptance, asylum, and legitimacy in the UK. This is reflected by the social 'field' occupied by asylum seekers, which like all social fields, produces competition (Bourdieu, 2000).

A discussion in the Drop-In with Mina an Iranian women (who had converted to Christianity) claimed that 90 % of Iranian refugees and asylum seekers convert to Christianity. Whilst there is no conclusive evidence to support this claim, questions in the media do ask if Iranians are converting to increase their chances of being granted refugee status in the UK. Sherwood and Oltermann, (2016) reported that there are a growing number of Iranian refugees in Europe who are converting to Christianity, for example, a weekly Persian service at Liverpool's Anglican Cathedral attracts between 100 and 140 people; whilst most conversions (baptisms) conducted by the Bishop of Bradford at that time were Iranian. The article emphasises, however, that the process is not easy as Anglican and Catholic denominations must undergo a lengthy preparation for baptism.

Snyder (2011 p 569) argues that refugees and asylum seekers from countries with majority Muslim populations, notably Iran, may have 'converted' to Christianity in order to claim asylum based on religious persecution. However, it is argued that religious conversion is characterised by an individual processes that is driven by intellectual or emotional driven spiritual experiences (Kéri and Sleiman (2017;Sahraei, 2017). Furthermore, conversion, for whatever reason, can be 'high risk' strategy for Iranians as conversion from Muslim to Christianity can be punishable by death in Iran should they be deported back to Iran as a failed asylum seeker (Sahraei, 2017).

Furthermore, Sherwood and Oltermann, (2016) suggest that although there may be an expectation that conversion may aid asylum applications, there are complex factors behind the trend including a heartfelt faith in a new religion and due to a gratitude to Christian groups who offer them support. This is acknowledged by the Evangelical Alliance (2007, p 2) who states that 'asylum seekers often become attracted to Christianity through the work of churches who offer kindness and help at times of great need and in the process demonstrating spirituality.' They add; 'therefore, it is unsurprising to hear of stories of asylum seekers who convert to Christianity once in the UK'.

Aleeza already had status as a refugee before she began to attend an evangelic Christian church, therefore, which does not fit with the argument that the motive for conversion is to strengthen the applications for status. Kéri and Sleiman (2017, p

286) argue that the process of conversion for refugees and asylum seekers may be gradual and associated with negative emotions such as guilt before submission to Christianity.⁷⁹ Research of religious conversion suggest that this is preceded by a crisis of some sort, including a form of long-term crisis, a misfit with the environment, and a search for something else (Ulmann, 1982; Jindra, 2014, p 124). Hence for refugees and asylum seekers the long-term crisis may have formed by dual pressures such as persecution from their country of origin, and misfit with the environment that they are likely to experience on arrival to the UK. Hence, the self-scrutiny of religious beliefs that may have been embedded in a person's habitus may be difficult to manage and therefore add another layer of hysteresis.

I met the Chairperson of the Islamic Centre in The Town, and on a separate occasion met then Iman of the Aymediyyan Centre. On both occasions the significance of support to refugees and asylum seekers was lost. Firstly, the Chairman of the Islamic centre questioned why *'they' (refugees) always head for the UK'*. Secondly, when I was chatting to the Iman prior to the beginning of the multi-faith conference, I informed him of my research, he asked me who invited me, I replied it was Faqih (the Preaching Secretary of the Mosque) to which he paused and then said, *"Oh yes, I forgot Faqih is an asylum seeker"*. Both conversations suggest that support for refugees and asylum seekers was a periphery matter to their organisations. Hence there were no targeted support from Muslim organisations to support and help settle refugees and asylum seekers in the way that reflect the work of Christian organisations in The Town. That is despite the higher proportion of refugees and asylum seekers who are Muslim.

This lack of 'targeted support' for asylum seekers and refugees from Muslim groups is not confined to the town. Snyder's (2011 (p 578) research of faith-based responses to asylum seekers concluded that further support for asylum seekers in the UK is needed by Hindu, Jewish, Sikh and Muslim faiths and suggests that they each will have different roles, strengths and weaknesses to that of Christian organisations.

⁷⁹ Ulmann (1982) argues that this is common in conversion between all faiths.

The Muslim Council of Britain (2018) found that asylum seekers and refugees were mostly excluded from interacting with established Muslim British Citizens.⁸⁰ However, Atfield, Brahmbhatt and O'Toole (2007, p 48) indicate that a shared diaspora identity is stronger than religious identity. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Qasmiyeh (2010, p 298) indicate that Muslim Middle East and African asylum seekers form a minority in the Muslim community in the UK. Most of the Muslim population in The Town are of Muslim Pakistani heritage and therefore a different diaspora to the Syrian, Iraqi, Nigerian, Sri Lankan and Russian Muslim refugees and asylum seekers that I met in my fieldwork. This may explain why there is limited support from Muslim organisations.

10.8 Religiosity and social class

I consider the link between religiosity and social class of both the volunteers and the refugees and asylum seeker families. Thus, consider if the experiences of being 'middle class' in one society are transferrable between countries that facilitate forms of capital and settlement in the UK.

Van Hear (2004) argues that the transnational understanding of social class is reflected in migrant's possession of economic, social, cultural, symbolic, and human capital. Therefore, Van Hears' argument would add further support to the findings of this study that each family's educational history and strategic approach to their children's education reflect middle-class values.

McKenzie's (2017) found that Christianity is bound by social class, and that working-class evangelist Christian's can struggle with an identity to be both working class and active in the church. This is an excerpt from the research:

'it's only because I'm a Christian that I have so much to do with middle-class people. So, I wouldn't be mixing with middle-class people very often...I'm aware of it because I'm with people a lot of

⁸⁰ The Muslim Council of Britain is involvement of the Community Sponsorship for Syrian Refugees; however, this is dominated by the high proportion of Christian groups.

the time that are different from me in that sense. And we've got more in common than not in common, in that we have the gospel and that's the main thing...You know I can't pray with my next-door neighbour because they're not even a believer.' (McKenzie, 2017, p 4).

This reinforces the notion that Christian volunteers such as in the Drop-In are more likely to reside in localities outside of working-class areas in which refugees and asylum seekers live. Therefore, this may reinforce the sense of isolation for refugees and asylum seekers as most volunteers are middle class whose contact is mostly limited set times around the Drop-In.

As discussed earlier in this work through Ron's family case study (Chapter 8.6); Ron's parents Faqih and Nazneen were University graduates and had well-paid managerial jobs in Pakistan. Scourfield *et al.* (2017) found that unlike other religious groups, Muslims from lower socio-economic backgrounds and with lower qualifications were more successful in passing on their religion to the next generation (Franceschelli and O'Brien, 2014). Therefore, it is arguable that those from higher socio-economic groups with an education such as Faqih and Nazneen who bring with them cultural capital that is associated with education and economic capital are more likely to question their religion or be less successful in passing it on to the next generation.

This is also reflected by Kavin and Samesh's father (Kadhir) who is Hindu.

"I never teach about my religion to them, I never push them. When I go to the temple they will follow, because I can't leave them in the car. I have the photos (of Hinduism) and they ask the meaning and I explain it to them. But never push them. In the future it is their choice. That is my idea".

This example reinforces the notion that cultural capital that is associated with social class from their country of origin, rather than the embedded religious standing associated with those who are working class and in poverty. The families in this study are more likely to apply a more pragmatic approach towards their children in the dynamics between religion, settlement, belonging, and social mobility.

10.9. Conclusion

Throughout this empirical research it became apparent that religion is a key aspect of refugees and asylum seekers habitus that can shape opportunities and barriers towards gaining a sense of settlement.

Weber's notion of 'theodicy' identifies faith as a quest for meaning which is philosophical and cognitive construct to reconcile suffering, injustice and pain (Morgan, 2002, p 307). Given the trauma of the conditions that lead to forced migration and resettlement within a temporal and precarious status, would indicate that theodicy could be meaning to their situation, or explain why refugees and asylum seekers may reject one faith, but need to replace it with another one.

Furthermore, Stark (2001) draws from the functionalist perspective of Durkheim and argue that it is not the spiritual forces but the 'moral order' that is held in awe and reverence by the individual. Therefore, the continuation of a religion after migration or converting between religions continues a 'moral order' whether it be Christianity or a form of Islam.⁸¹ The religious habitus of parents is reflected in their need for moral order which is reflected in most of the parent's statements about the qualities of marriage partners for their children.

Therefore, further understanding of why support to refugee and asylum seekers are nearly exclusively from Christian organisations in an area for development. Thus, I refer to Chapter 2.I. that poses a theological question of 'can the social work of Islam can be transferable and understood in a Christian centric understanding of faith'?

It is notable that the responses on marriage from Muslim and Hindu parents assumed marriage as heterosexual. Indeed, an Iranian asylum seeker in the UK interviewed in Morrice's research found homosexuality as disorientating stating that '*We haven't got gay people, we haven't got lesbians*', (Morrice, 2012, p 260).

Furthermore, it is argued that many Muslims perceive homosexuality is perceived as a 'western disease' (Sanjakdar, 2013). I did not ask any questions specifically

⁸¹ Schnabel and Groetsch, (2014, p 380) draw from Durkheim to place religion as an agent of social control through the reduction of anomic behaviours.

related to homosexuality or LGBTQ+ in the interviews. I felt that by raising a sensitive subject may undermine the productive and collaborative relationships with families that has informed my study.⁸² Therefore, this is an area that would benefit from further and sensitive investigation, such as the views and the experiences of children as they become adolescence and adults in a society that is less hostile and accepting of LGBTQ+ people.

The quest for refugee and asylum seeker families to enrol their children in Catholic school reflects the maintenance and transmission of morality to their children (along with the good academic reputation of Catholic schools as discussed in Chapter 8.4. However, further analysis of refugee and asylum seeker families' experiences of secular schools could provide a useful comparative analysis on how these impacts upon settlement.

Active support for refugees and asylum seekers settlement is mostly Christian middle class led from people who are likely to live outside of The Town's dispersal area. However, the dispersal area is within a poor and working-class neighbourhood with increasing levels of secularity. Therefore, the religious basis for settlement may not necessarily be transferable to the streets in which the refugees and asylum seekers inhabit.

Religiosity plays a significant role in supporting the settlement of refugee and asylum seeker families in this study. Whilst there is an argument that religion conversion can be used as a strategic tool to demonstrate 'integration' into the UK. This chapter provides evidence that religiosity is a personal and family reference point to bring a sense of moral order to a chaotic and uncertain world in which refugee and asylum seekers inhabit in The Town. I would argue that the evidence in this Chapter makes strong links between of religiosity and a sense of settlement which is often overlooked in literature. Therefore, this chapter can contribute towards the development of further exploration of this important area of study.

⁸² Jaspal and Cinnirella, (2012, p) argue that even the most educated Muslims can hold deeply homophobic attitudes, exhibiting "repulsion and disgust toward homosexuality.

Chapter 11

Leisure and Play: Opportunities and Barriers to Participation and Inclusion

11.1. Introduction

The term 'leisure' is a vague concept and should be understood not by 'the activities themselves, but in the cultural context that the object of leisure is based' (Rojek (1995)). It is argued that refugee and asylum seeker families' participation in social and leisure activities is a means to settlement (Putnam, 2000; Ndofo-Tah *et al.*, 2019). Thus participation in leisure can be a way of engaging with others and developing social and cultural capital to foster a sense of identity and belonging (Spicer (2008, p 500; Bangsbo *et al.*, 2016; Children's Commissioner, 2017).

Children have much time to fill outside of the school timetable. A typical primary school week involves approximately 30 hours per week (6 hours per day) this leaves mostly unstructured time outside of the school day and weekends in which refugee and asylum seeker children need to occupy.

Stone (2018, p179) argues that participation in sport and leisure can add to cultural, social, and mental welfare of refugee and asylum seeker families making it easier to feel more welcome and it can channel frustration in a constructive manner. Chapter 2.7 captures the trauma of family displacement and the accumulative impact upon poor mental health of many refugees and asylum seekers (Phillimore *et al.*, 2007; Mitschke and Kelly, 2017). Furthermore, this could be accelerated by everyday conditions of interlinking psychological stresses of boredom and social isolation (Phillimore *et al.*, 2007, p 7; Allsopp, Sigona and Phillimore, 2014, p 34; Murphy and Vieten, 2016, p 88). Therefore, leisure and recreation activities can be an important way to tackle mental health amongst refugees and asylum seekers of all ages (Stone 2018).

In this chapter I argue leisure activities, particularly for children, can be important for the settlement of refugees and asylum seekers yet the lack of economic resources inhibits their ability to participate with others in leisure and recreation activities on an equal basis. For example, one child in this study joined a football club but struggled to obtain the expensive boots and branded shirts that other boys were wearing. Therefore, I argue that participation with other children in leisure does not necessarily foster a sense of belonging as the lack of economic and the lack of symbolic capital such as branded shirts will reinforces difference.

Refugee parents in this study are employed in low pay occupations, whilst asylum seeker families are reliant upon the basic NASS subsistence. Consequently, refugee and asylum seeker children can access free public amenities such as municipal parks, however, visits to fast food outlets, the cinema or engaging with friends in the virtual space of on-line activities are unaffordable for most asylum seeker families (The Children's Society, 2013, p 22).

I am mindful that there is an ongoing wider societal shift from children's unsupervised outdoor play, to the preference for home entertainment that has changed the culture of childhood (Children's Commissioner, 2017). Nevertheless, this Chapter further develops the notion of childhood friendships, as discussed in Chapter 5 and approaches this from three spatial areas outside of school: outdoor play with friends, indoor play, and leisure activities spent with families. Much of this analysis reflects a gendered use of leisure time and identifies different patterns and barriers to participate in activities.

11.2. Playing out, safety and restricting practices

For many refugee and asylum seeker children the school often serves as an only security base outside the home (Candappa, 2002, p 229). For example, Gill (2018) found that refugee and asylum seeker parents tended to describe low-income white-majority neighbourhoods, such as The Town, as dangerous and threatening places. Furthermore, Spicer argues that refugee and asylum seeker children in dispersal

areas may face racial hostility that prevent outdoor play (Spicer, 2008, p 496). Consequently, Spicer argues that refugee and asylum seeker parent's own experience of place can construct their children as vulnerable to threats by white young people and some adults (Spicer, 2008, p 497).

Parents in this research were conscious of this, for example Kavin and Samesh only went out to play outdoors in the local park under the supervision of their father. Kavin is only allowed to go to his friend's house if his father took him and brought him home. Similarly, Kavin's friends (who are white working class) were only allowed to visit his house under the same conditions of being driven to and from the house by their parents.

James was only allowed to play at one of his friend's home (Jack) who lived close by. However, James was not allowed to play outside in the street, even though the street was usually empty as he and his family were the only residents living in the street as it was due for demolition, as discussed in Chapter 12.2.

Ben and Aylan, both lived in flats in the same asylum seeker accommodation, a two-storey block, and only went out to play in an attached small car park whereby their parents have a clear view from their living room windows. Ben played with two other asylum seeker children who also lived here, Aylan played football in the car park with two other local school friends who lived close by.

The sense of danger can apply to children regardless of ethnicity, or immigration status, both in disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged areas. It is argued that parents act as gatekeepers, in a world that defines the concept of 'bubble wrap' and 'cotton wool' children against multiple forms of danger including traffic and fear of crime (Foster *et al.*, 2015; Nikiforidou, 2017). However, Valentine, (2004, p 16) argues that Asian parents have an exacerbated fear due to their family's vulnerability to racism.

11.3. Using public space: racism in the park

This section applies a cautious approach to how leisure in public places may provide notions of settlement into the locality. For example, I examine a racist incident in a

park and show how refugee and asylum seeker families apply resilience by as a strategy in navigating their sense of settlement.

During the school holidays, there are occasionally activities organised through the Drop-In for refugee and asylum seeker children that took place in a local and busy park. On the occasions that I attended the children played organised games by instructors employed by the council. The group consisted of about 15 children and their parents sitting together watching, and occasionally children waved to other children they knew from school. The group included a mix of Nigerian, Sri Lankan, Somali, and Pakistani families. The Park is situated in an area of The Town whereby the presence of ethnic minorities are rare; at the times of my visit I observed that the cultural markers of race and ethnicity represented 'difference' to others using this space.

It was Ada (a Nigerian mother) who told me about an incident that happened during one such activity in the park that emphasise the dangers that refugee and asylum seeker children can face in public spaces. As the children were taking part in a group activity, an older group of white children deliberately and menacingly directly drove their bicycles at the children on several times just missing them on each occasion. They were laughing and continue to do so even though parents of the refugee and asylum seekers children were present. This event reflects research by Stewart and Shaffer, (2015, p 68) who identify that racist behaviour towards refugee children is an occurrence across public municipal parks in locations across the UK.

However, Ada's 16-year-old son reacted during this incident by angrily challenging these children whereby he had to be physically restrained by the adults in the group.⁸³ I asked children and adults who were present about the incident. The adults and children confirmed the event had happened but were dismissive and moved the conversation onto another subject. Maegusuku-Hewett *et al.*'s, (2007, p 313) and Ratna (2014, p 303) found there are times whereby refugees victims play down racist incidents as a matter of fact as 'it is never going to go away'. This explored

⁸³ The physical reaction by Ada's son, may be partially explained partly through the theory on the physical and cognitive development of adolescence which impacts upon self-control of violent emotions and rash actions (Lansdown, 2005, p 23). Research on forms settlement and belonging of adolescent refugees and asylum seekers young people would include different a different context and experiences of settlement than that of this study with younger children.

further in Chapter 12 in the account of refugees and asylum seekers experiences of racism in The Town. Children regardless of ethnicity are viewed by parents of being vulnerable to risk, including violence, when playing outside the home. However, this event reinforces that refugee and asylum seeker children are more at risk through racism and racist anti-social behaviour.

11.4. Playing in-doors: including and excluding friendships

There has been a shift in children's leisure towards virtual digital media. This section explores the notion that playing interactive on-line games with friends is an aid to maintaining friendships and therefore strengthen a sense of social and cultural belonging (Munn (2012, p 9). However, for refugee and asylum seekers families, access to on-line activities can be dependent upon the economic resources to facilitate this.

Ron had access to the internet at home that enabled him to play on-line games with his two close friends from school. Ron stated that "*I have a PS3 upstairs and we play Zombies of Black Opps on-line*". Arguably, these choice of games is an extension of school friendship that reflect online gaming which is male oriented (Williams, 2006). Therefore, boys show of masculinity in the school playground is replicated by the aggressive nature of on-line war games.

It is surprising that Ron has access to online games that allowed him to participate with other local children given the family's income which is below that of Universal Benefit.⁸⁴ Ron's use of on-line games contrasts with that of Aylan, who has a games console, but does not have access to the internet at home.

Ron's access to on-line games suggests that his parents are likely to access economic capital via their social networks. Faqir, Ron's father, also had access to on-line technology to support his voluntary work as the Preaching Secretary for Ahmadiyya community. Faqir said that he has very limited leisure time due to his

⁸⁴ I did not ask the family about how these resources were funded, as it was felt to be too intrusive, this is discussed in the Chapter 7.

voluntary work for the Ahmadiyya Community included producing radio programmes.

“I have recently completed 13/14 episodes, recording programmes and that was my first programme as a producer and editor. So, this Community also made me a radio presenter, producer, and editor”.

Bourdieu (1986) states that forms of capital are interchangeable. In Ron and Faqir’s situation the economic capital needed to facilitate on-line technology is also used to support Ron’s cultural and social capital to help reinforce friendships and therefore facilitate the sense of belonging to his group of friends. Aylan, on the contrary, does not have access to the economic capital and can only extend the in-school friendships via the relatively cost-free activities of football in the safe space of the car park.

11.5. Leisure, social capital, and participation

I draw upon the patterns of leisure that children in the sample group participate in, and compare this to the leisure facilities that are seen as a social norm for children. Davey and Lundy (2011, p 6) draw from a Play England commissioned report (Ashley Godfrey Associates, 2008, p 2) that states that good play provision must pass the ‘three frees’ test i.e. free of charge, children are free to come and go and free to choose what they do whilst there. Figure 10 is a table provides an overview of the leisure and recreation facilities in The Town that could provide children and families with spaces to facilitate the development of social capital and social interactions. The facilities are listed in two categories, places for leisure that are free, and activities that are not.

Figure 10: The main family leisure facilities in The Town

| Leisure Facilities | Free | Charge |
|--------------------------------------|------|--------|
| The Seafront Marina and Promenade | √ | |
| Municipal Park | √ | |
| Country Park | √ | |
| Town Museum | √ | |
| Municipal Leisure Centre | | √ |
| Cinema | | √ |
| National Museum | | √ |
| Popular family fast food restaurants | | √ |
| Membership of sports clubs | | √ |

Tiffany and Hannah stated that they only went out for walks with their Mother. They talked about going to the local park and that they once walked to a Country Park which is two miles away on the edge of the town. This was clearly a highlight as Hannah said:

“It’s really fun, there’s a lake, you can even camp there. There is a really long slide, it’s really high and I was really scared.”

Visits to the local park were highlighted by Samish and Kevin, who are restricted in going to the park to ‘when it’s really good weather’ and are always taken by their parents. This reflects Tiffany and Hannah’s experience of the as a family occasion rather than a friendship activity. These family activities were free, this is important as Faqir explains.

“You have no money and very limited as you cannot take your family for a day out for fun or anything like that.”

Candappa and Egharevba's (2000) stated that refugee and asylum seeker children they did not have as many friends or pursue as many leisure activities as non-refugee children; and also tended to have more caring and household

responsibilities and watch TV rather than go out of the house. Candappa and Igbini (2003, p 63) further added that a refugee child's home responsibilities were often gendered according to practices prevailing in the home country, although this was not apparent in this research with the small number of girls in the sample.

The girl's access to opportunities to develop social capital is limited outside of school. For example, in the interview response found that none of the three girls in the sample went out with friends. Adele said that she spent most of her time at home. She did not extend contact with her only two friends outside of school other than walking to and from school and did not visit each other's house. However, Adele said she keeps herself busy during weekends within the home alongside her older sister and her mother. Hannah and Tiffany are sisters with similar interests in music and dance that they listened and danced to during the considerable time they spend together at home.

Ron spent time cycling with his father and younger brother on cycles that were given to them. Ron also talked about going to cricket training with his father at the local cricket club during the previous summer but said he had not made any friends or acquaintances there. However, cricket was a lesser priority as Faqir reminded him that he could only attend cricket "*after he has done his SATs*".

The limited free leisure and recreation facilities contributes to the isolation of parents, Faqir said:

In the beginning, when I was new to the town I used to feel isolated, because I had no friends, I had no place to go, every day I was just sitting here in this room on this couch looking outside the window waiting for the postman to come to see what he brings for me this day.

Faqir eventually benefited from social capital that was attained through his role in the Mosque, however his access to leisure was still limited. However, Faqir is a keen cricket player.

"I play at the town's Cricket Club, I have not signed any contract with them or anything like that. The reason for this is to play for the team you also have to go out of The Town, but I don't have those means to

travel. Even to go from my house to Cricket Club is very difficult, to carry a huge kit bag all the way there. Coming back is quite tough so I go there just to practice and take my son to practice there”.

Participation in team sport can facilitate social capital (Putnam, 2000). This is supported by Ndofar-Tah *et al.* (2019) who regard involvement in sports clubs as a means to develop bridging social capital. However, Nichols, Tacon and Muir (2013) argue that team bonding can reinforce the network of insiders and excludes outsiders. Faqir, with his son Ron, use the cricket club facilities, but do not play in a team that they state are local and white.

Ben’s father, Veshnu, occasionally played Badminton. When I asked Veshnu how he became involved he said:

“Because one Sri Lankan family was here when we first arrived, they have one son, aged 15 years old. He goes to St Joseph’s Church and he had some English friends, so they invited me to come to the Badminton. So now I have been going for nearly three years.”

Veshnu benefited from the social capital available to him, initially, through the ethnic capital of another Sri Lankan family, and bridging capital to ‘English’ friends through the Catholic church.

Veshnu’s wife Padhma, said that she was happy for Veshnu to go to Badminton as she spends her own time going to activities for parents in Ben’s school, alongside other mothers, such as informal ESOL or occasional activities such as cake decoration. Whilst Nazneen (Ron’s mother) used her time to do voluntary work in the RC school or in finding free adult learning courses.

This reflects that participation in leisure is shaped by the social construction of gender. I found that gender is an important determinant in understanding how both adults and children in this study experience in their leisure (Rojek (1995, p 107).

11.6. Conclusion

The main restriction placed on refugee and asylum seeker families is the lack of economic capital which restricts opportunities to develop further social capital through leisure activities. The Children's Society (2013, p 22) suggest that it is difficult to see how families on asylum support can have regular meaningful engagement in cultural and social activities through attending leisure facilities, such as cinemas and concerts. This supports previous research by Candappa and Igbinigie (2003, p 62) whereby refugee children said that they don't go to the cinema, compared with 19 percent of non-refugee children. Although their research is dated, and viewing habits have changed towards home entertainment, none of the refugee and asylum seekers children in this research stated they attended cinemas or other public events.

Nevertheless, the families in this study supported boy's participation in activities such as joining football clubs, however, they struggled to acquire the symbolic capital of the 'correct' branded shirts and football boots that would reinforce their sense of belonging. The small sample of girls in this study displayed different leisure interests and were less concerned with joining organised activities out of school. Thus, the focus upon girls' developing social bonding and bridging capital outside of school was less of a priority. The findings in this Chapter suggests that there is a stereotype gendered approach between leisure as means to develop social capital and a sense of belonging. However, further investigation is needed with a larger sample of girls to establish stronger evidence.

Patterns of leisure across 'all' children and families in the dispersal area needs also to be considered.⁸⁵ Shildrick and MacDonald (2013, p 288) identified that leisure activities in economically disadvantaged areas were limited and usually focused on free home-based activities.

The enjoyment and excitement that Tiffany and Hannah gained from going to the country park is an example of an activity that engenders positive feelings and well-

⁸⁵ In 2019, 41% of children in the dispersal area are identified as being in poverty.

being (Loebach and Gilliland, 2016). Yet this study found a range of barriers that prevent access to leisure. In wider social change children are generally accessing more virtual space of on-line leisure activities to generate and maintain friendships. Yet access to virtual and public spaces can be dependent upon access to economic capital.

The notion of unsupervised children in what is perceived as dangerous public spaces of the street, or the park is a prominent concern across all of society (Nikiforidou 2017). However, there is a heightened sense of danger for non-white children, including refugees and asylum seekers, in public spaces due to racism. The prevalence of racism is demonstrated by the racist incident in the park that was instigated by older children. Further accounts of racism experienced by refugees and asylum seekers are explored in Chapter 12.

The study found that gender shaped the opportunities and types of leisure that children in the sample group engaged with. Girls were more restricted to the home, in improvised play such as music and dance, whilst boys, as seen across these data chapters are concerned with physical active pursuits such as sport.

This chapter also highlights the invisibility of mothers, and other women, in the field and spaces of leisure. This is addressed throughout Chapter 12 that looks at gendered habitus and further barriers to settlement into the locality.

Chapter 12

Neighbourhood, Class and Hostility

12.1. Introduction

The population in the dispersal area in The Town are beset by a range of complex and challenging social and economic conditions as set out in Chapters 1 and 3. For example, the underlying challenge in The Town is the comparatively high levels of poverty to the rest of the UK, including high levels of child poverty. However, in this chapter I explore the structural commonalities between the local population and refugees and asylum seekers such as social exclusion and symbolic violence that has emerged from successive welfare and economic policies. Hence, I explore the government's notion of 'integration' which is defined as 'where people, whatever their background, live, work, learn and socialise together' (HM Government 2019, p 9).

I provide examples of local people who acted as 'good neighbours' to refugees and asylum seekers. However, I highlight racist and Islamophobic actions that has permeated across refugees and asylum seekers experiences during my fieldwork, this confirms the initial fears that the dispersal policy would bring about racism towards refugees and asylum seekers as discussed in Chapter 3.

This research took place against a backdrop of anti-immigration politics that was compounded by public and political rhetoric of pro-Brexit that corresponds with the rise of race hate crime in The Town. The settlement of refugees is concerned with the breaking down of prejudices and hostility, however, this can be a substantial challenge to gain a sense of belonging in the hostile environment (Hetherington, Benefield, Lines et al 2007). However, only one child in this sample group stated that they experienced racial hostility in school from a white working-class peer. I have previously argued that this may be a result of the development age of the sample of children whereby notions of difference and identity are less formed, and through the strategies in which refugee and asylum seeker children use towards acquiring social and cultural capital.

I argue that adult refugees and asylum seekers do not have the sustained contact with white working-class adults and families needed to develop the forms of capital that are needed to support their sense of settlement. This form of segregation of refugee and asylum seekers from the white working-class population can reinforce the cultural differences that can threaten notions of settlement and belonging.

To develop the above arguments, I draw upon the interviews from the sample group, the fieldnotes from the Drop-In, including discussions with Committee members who as refugees recall their own personal experiences, and I also draw upon the local media, including some of the published reader's comments.

This chapter begins with attention to the poor socio-economic conditions and high levels of crime of the dispersal area. This is followed by considering white working-class racism in The Town from a historical perspective until the present times of the Hostile Environment the Brexit (E.U. referendum) and the post 9/11 rise in Islamophobia.^{86 87} This is demonstrated by examples of symbolic violence and racial violence alongside alternative examples of good neighbours.

12.2. Working-class social exclusion

Spicer (2008, p 493) refers to dispersal areas as suffering from social exclusion and structural inequalities. Therefore, it is crucial to understand if the social and structural positions of residents provide barriers to the settlement of refugees and asylum seekers.

The accommodation for asylum seekers is sought out by private providers for its low cost and availability which reflects the poor housing conditions for those who already live there (Kemp, 2011, p 1020). Hence the social conditions in the dispersal area

⁸⁶ As indicated in Chapter 1, I refer to when the term Hostile Environment, was first used in the Immigration policy announcement made by Theresa May, the then Home Secretary in 2013, to the present immigration policies. The time frame I use for Brexit Britain refers to the first announcement of the EU Referendum by the then Prime Minister David Cameron on February 2016 to the present.

⁸⁷ There is a rise in Islamophobic hate crime after each terrorist atrocity (Tell MAMA, 2015).

reflects Robertson's (2013, p 370) description from the Social Exclusion Unit (1998) as areas that suffer from a combination of interlinking problems such as 'unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown'.

The council ward that covers most of the refugees and asylum seeker dispersal area in The Town has high level of reported violent crime, and anti-social offences with a growing level of race hate.^{88 89} The majority of the housing stock are old terraced houses with an increasing number owned by private landlords that reflect conditions characterised by tenants in poverty and an association with anti-social behaviour and drug misuse (Wadhams, 2011, p 23).

On the first visit to conduct an interview, I found that the family were the only occupants living in the street, as the rest of the street was being prepared for demolition and left the family physically isolated from others. This reflects other research in asylum seeker accommodation in other UK locations that include houses boarded up and scheduled for demolition (Vickers, 2014). The living room in which the interview took place was dark, cramped and had bare walls. The physical bare walls reflected the interior of all the asylum seeker families in the sample. Hence there were no decorations or cultural symbols and artefacts from their country of origin in sight which are symbols of distinction (Moinian, 2009, p 38; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2013, p 293). Hence the house reflected a cultural vacuum from a visual perspective. This was different to the homes of families who had refugee status whereby their walls would include symbolic pictures and artefacts that reflect their religious identity. Hence, refugees had a stronger sense of permanency in accommodation, and more likely to have the economic resources to obtain these items.

Daria and Zara her 17-year-old daughter are Iranian asylum seekers. One day I was dropping them off at their home after the Drop-In. The home was in the same street

⁸⁸ <https://www.ukcrimestats.com/Subdivisions/UTW/42336/> (accessed 18/09/19)

⁸⁹ The town newspaper report 13/10/17 (accessed 18/09/19)

that Ada lived with her family (who were victims of break-in and racist abuse to be discussed in 12.5). As we entered the street there were three white women of different ages sitting on a front door-step acting incoherent with cans of beers spread about the pavement. This is a recording I made from the following week in the Drop-In.

I talked to Zara that I noticed the neighbours on the street looked drunk and intimidating. Zara said that they were alcoholics and drug users and that there are a lot of disturbances. For example, the Police were called at 4.00 am the other morning. She said that there is talk of moving one family out, and if that happens everything would be better.

Given the ‘talk’ would suggest that there are only ‘some’ families in the street who were problematic, and that Zara was talking to neighbours about the situation. Faqir also talked about his previous next-door neighbours in a different street.

“Unfortunately, there were some troubles in the street people were dealing in drugs and fighting and things.”

This reinforces the link between dispersal areas and concern over safety due to anti-social behaviour. However, it is also worth noting that in dispersal areas of high levels of crime means there are working class victims (Reay, 2009) and not exclusively refugee and asylum seekers victims. For example, in one street there was a high-profile investigation of the murder of an alcoholic vulnerable young white woman and another investigation into the manslaughter of a middle-aged white man.⁹⁰

A discussion with two former volunteers, Chrissie and Rob, from the Drop-In provided a powerful insight on some of the local perceptions of refugees and asylum seekers. These were a married couple and the only local and working-class volunteers who attended the Drop-In during the period of my research. Chrissie and Rob are active members of The Church of the Latter Day Saints who tend not to moralise between the deserving and underserving and advocates support for

⁹⁰ As reported in the local town newspaper.

refugees in the local neighbourhoods (Burton, nd; Williams, Cloke and Thomas, 2012, p 1495).

Chrissie and Ron had not been at the Drop-In for several weeks and we came across each other in a street. I commented that I had not seen them lately and they said that they have moved on to volunteer with another charity aimed at tackling poverty; they gave two reasons.

Firstly, they were in the shopping centre and spoke to an asylum seeker woman who was buying 2 tubs of face cream at £20 each. Chrissie said, "*I thought, I can't afford it why can they*"? Chrissie and Rob are not in work and claiming welfare benefits, so questioned if they were helping people who were better off than themselves.

Secondly, they said that they were sick of friends and neighbours who were criticising them for helping asylum seekers. This meant that they were constantly having to justify themselves to friends and neighbours who were saying that 'they should help their 'own' people first'. This example highlights the tensions in some working-class areas that discourages engagement with refugees and asylum seekers (Jones *et al.*'s (2017, p 22).

Research by Lewis (2005) found that many of the public got their information on asylum issues from friends, family or neighbours and what they see around them. Lewis (2005) further adds that this information is often interpreted in the light of personal prejudice. This follows many political and public perceptions that the majority of asylum seekers are 'bogus' and 'undeserving' of entry to Britain and of social support (Dorling, 2013; Sales, 2002; Stewart and Mulvey, 2014).⁹¹

Coinciding with the notion of the 'undeserving', there is also perceptions of a section of the working class who are the 'underserving' poor who are often identified as a section of a white culture of deficient, unemployed, lazy and dependent people (Valentine and Harris, 2014). Therefore, there is an irony that both groups; refugees and asylum seekers and their working-class neighbours, share the same physical space and suffer the stigma of being 'underserving' of resources received from the state. Hussain and Silver, (2014) argue that the combination of cultural anxieties and

⁹¹ As discussed in Chapter 2, The Border Agency operates on the presumption that most asylum seekers are 'bogus' and 'undeserving'.

socio-economic insecurity is a potent mix that can undermine social cohesion and therefore refugee and asylum seeker settlement.

Research in a white working-class area concluded that there was a failure to engage with the views of the existing settled populations on being designated as a dispersal area (Hussain and Silver, 2014, p 3). Arguably, this reinforces a working class sense of powerlessness and of being ignored (Winslow, Hall, and Treadwell, 2017, p 111). Therefore, neighbourhoods that have been designated as dispersal areas without consultation with residents could lead to resentment against refugees and asylum seekers and therefore is another layer to impact upon experiencing sense of acceptance and belonging.

12.3. White working-class racism

An increasing level of racism and hostility towards immigrants has been a growing concern through Brexit with increased profiles of xenophobia and anti-immigrant sentiment. In the days after the EU referendum there was no indication from those who attend the Drop-In that there was an increase in hostility towards them. However, since then the local newspaper reported a rise in hate crime linked to Brexit in the town (21/10/17).

Harris (2013, p 412) argues that history illuminates the present. The historical context of race hate in the town was told by Ellen who is a black migrant from The West Indies and a member of the Drop-In Management Committee. Ellen presented her story to the audience at the Drop-In's annual celebration of diversity as a message for the refugees and asylum seekers in The Town to report hate incidents to the Police.

Ellen is married to a white English man and had lived on a council estate in The Town in 1994 but were driven out of their home by the BNP.⁹² Over time there was an escalation of racial harassment and threats towards them from people who lived

⁹² British Nationalist Party is a far-right political party that advocated forced repatriation of non-whites from Britain and the halt to all immigration. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/8320451.stm

on the estate, including her immediate neighbours. Police informed Ellen that they had intelligence that the BNP had planned to set fire to their house and therefore Ellen and her family were immediately moved out. Consequently, Ellen and her husband were moved into a caravan for six months and eventually re-housed elsewhere in The Town.

Although this was over twenty years ago this sets a context to the story of multiracialism in the town. Ellen told me that when she moved into the town, she did not see another black face. In a different context, Mary, a volunteer at the Drop-In, is Irish, and stated that when she arrived in the town 25 years ago, people were asking her when she was going back to home as they could not comprehend the idea of someone foreign wanting to permanently live in the town.

The situation was similar for Emerson a Drop-In Committee Member. Emerson is a black Zimbabwean and arrived in the town as an asylum seeker in 2009. He stated:

“People used to take a ‘double take’ as I walked through the streets, and I received much racism such as name calling. This included one child who was often egged on by his laughing parents. It was only through repeatedly reporting this to the police that the situation improved.”

Quraishi and Philburn (2015) identify multiple forms of racism. These examples could be framed with three categories. Mary’s experience could be defined as subtle form symbolic violence towards someone who was of the same colour but with a different culturally identity (Brondolo *et al.*, 2012). Emerson’s experience is an example of the perpetrators feeling of superiority and gain pleasure in their actions ‘because it’s fun’ (Quraishi and Philburn, 2015, p 85). Ellen’s experience reflects violent racism through a source of right wing ideology in which the perpetrators are mostly located in working class areas and see themselves as the ‘real’ victims’ of social injustice in the competition for recognition and resources (Winlow, Hall and Treadwell, 2017; Quraishi and Philburn, 2015).

12.4. Racism and Islamophobia in a hostile environment and Brexit Britain

One older male asylum seeker spoke to me in the Drop-In and told of younger men who used to drive alongside him and shout “Paki” out of the car window at them. He laughed about it and said: *“they don’t realise that in my language being called a ‘Paki’ is a positive thing”*. This example demonstrates a resilience of what Manyena and Brady (2007, p 39) refers to as the ‘resilience model’ adopted amongst refugees and asylum seekers towards everyday experiences of racism. Furthermore, this reflects earlier analysis in Chapter 11 whereby refugees and asylum seeker victims play down racist incidents as a matter of fact (Maegusuku-Hewett *et al.*, 2007, p 313; Ratna, 2014, p 303).

As the fieldwork in this study developed it became apparent that Islamophobia was a significant barrier towards a sense of safety and settlement in The Town. Faqir and his family have been victims of Islamophobia on three occasions.

“I tell you an incident a few months back: someone put bacon strips on my window, they know that I am Muslim because I do a lot of preaching so everybody here, and a lot of my neighbours have come to my Mosque. So, they all know, so people know this family is a Muslim family and they don’t eat pork and things like that, so somebody just put bacon strip on my window and left.”

Faqir went on to say:

The same thing happened at the Mosque a few months back, someone put a bacon slice on the lock on the big steel door, so things like that happen. Lately, a few people have been throwing stones at our Mosque, and a few weeks back one of our windows was broken. We complained about that to the Police we had the security camera and these things do happen.

Another incident was highlighted by Faqir of a racist incident against Nazneen (his wife) who was singled out despite his presence.

“Once me and my wife (Nazneen) were walking towards the town centre, a lady was coming down the street and as soon as she come near to my wife she screamed very loudly, ‘go back’, or something like that. She was so loud my wife was really scared, just in her face you know and then she ran away.”

These examples are a stark reminder that experiences of Islamophobia is forms further barriers to the settlement to Muslim refugees and asylum seekers. Thus, these are symbolic actions from individuals in the population who do not want Muslims to become settled. Hence this reflects Winlow, Hall and Treadwell, (2017) argument that these racist and Islamophobic events are a symbol of an undervalued white working-class which stokes prejudice and resentment towards ‘others.’

Tell MAMA, is a campaign group that challenges Islamophobia in the UK state that Muslim women are disproportionately victims of hate crime, as they are more visible through wearing Islamic garments and more likely to face attack. Hence, Muslim women are more likely than men to be attacked on public transit or while shopping (Tell MAMA, 2015). Faqir does not wear the clothes or has a beard that could be defined as markers of Muslim identity. However, it is argued that the hijab is a prominent cultural marker that leaves Nazneen vulnerable to Islamophobia in public spaces (Hopkins and Greenwood, 2013; Omar and Finney, 2016). However, Maegusuku-Hewett et al. (2007, p 317) argue that the hijab functions as a symbol of ethnic identity and demonstrates ‘resistance’ to racism.

Whilst Ellen’s experience was historical, there are similarities to the experience of a Nigerian family who lived in one of the most socially volatile streets in the dispersal area.⁹³ Ada lived with her husband and three children a boy aged 16, a girl 13 and a daughter aged 2 years old. They returned home to find that their house had been broken into, vandalised and their furniture stolen. This was further to the on-going harassment Ada and her family had received from neighbours such as racist name calling in the street, damage to doors and windows, and her children being followed

⁹³ This is the same street that Daria and Zara and her 17-year-old daughter lived as discussed in Chapter 12.2 regarding neighbour’s anti-social behaviour.

to school. Further to this Ada said that she was frequently racially abused in the town centre whereby people would shout and made animal noises at her.

Ada said that after the break-in she rang the Home Office begging them to move them to London, but they refused. With support from Ellen and the police, measures were put in place with the aim of improving Ada's family's safety, including installing a panic alarm linked to the local Police Station.

As well as being an active member of the Drop-In, Ellen is a member of the Community Involvement Panel at the Crown Prosecution Service and uses the contacts implicit in this work to bring support to victims of race hate crimes. Consequently, Ellen's role facilitates 'social links' between refugees and asylum seekers to the justice system as a way of supporting a sense of settlement in the home and in the locality (Beirens *et al.*, 2007, p 221; Ndofar-Tah *et al.*, 2019).

Ellen's contacts have brought about active relationship with the Police and Crime Commissioner. Furthermore, Community Police Officers informally attend the Drop-in on occasions which is encouraged by the Drop-In Committee, as Emerson, the Chairperson said:

"We encourage the Police to come into the Drop-In, many of these people are fearful of police uniforms due to what has happened to them in their country. We are trying to get the message to them that in this country the Police are your friends. Hopefully, they will be less frightened and report crimes to the Police."

The work of the Drop-In encourages refugees and asylum seekers to develop a positive and trustful relationship with the Police to enhancement a sense of safety and security⁹⁴ (Phillips and Robinson, 2015; Spicer, 2008, p 496). It is also notable that the figureheads of power the local MP and the local Police Commissioner usually attend the Drop-In special events such as annual celebrations. This is a further example of developing 'social links' between refugees and asylum seekers individuals to local power structures (Ndofar-Tah *et al.*, 2019 p 17).

⁹⁴ There is a strong counter narrative to these claims in the UK concerning Institutional Racism of the police. <http://www.irr.org.uk/>

Kadhir has experienced subtle forms of racism from next-door neighbour. They only spoke when complaining about Kadhir's parking, otherwise they did not speak to Kadhir or his family:

“This problem was my next door neighbour, every time it was trouble. I don't like to live long here I need to move location.

The next door neighbour had a child who died aged 11 months, the first I had heard about it is when someone knocked on the door and asked for money for the family, so I gave them money. So, I knocked on his door, to give my sympathy, but the man did not let me in his house. I am quite surprised about this. So, I gave up. Some people like to do that, some people aren't like that, I don't know what to expect so I keep a distance.”

Hence, despite Kadhir's efforts, the family next door had maintained a distance. Therefore, this reinforces separation between two sets of families and neighbours due to racism, and results in Kadhir's wish to move house as he feels the hostile relations of neighbours make it an uncomfortable for his family to settle. Furthermore, Kadhi is informed his experience of the unpredictably of people, and so engages in a strategy to keep his distance to avoid hostility. Arguably, Kadhir's preference to keep his distance reflects the preferences of many residents in working class localities who may prefer to 'keep a safe distance' from others (Winlow and Hall, 2013,p 171), as discussed in Chapter 1.2. albeit for difference reasons.

12.5. Good neighbours: countering the narrative of working-class racism

There is evidence in this research to suggest there are supportive but individualised working-class attitudes towards refugees and asylum seekers that supports the process of settlement. Adele, one of the Pakistani Muslim children in the sample, and her family said that they had not received any racism or Islamophobia since

moving into the town. Adele's mother, Shanaz, said: *"I talk to many people, I like English people, they are very nice"*.

Faqir offered a balanced perspective between his negative experience of Islamophobia and his experience with other neighbours to others in the street:

"The people who live across the road are very nice people, they are very, very, good, they have been living in the street for more than 40 years, such wonderful people. They are husband and wife, and they are always taking care of us and asking if everything is going alright. This is what we look for, it not that we are looking for a nice house with all the facilities and things like that, it's the neighbours who are living next to you and the community that makes the neighbourhood, that counts basically."

Similarly, Kadhir, who experience difficulties with his next-door neighbour, as discussed earlier, also had made good friends with an older couple who lived opposite them.

"They are always asked after the children, and Sahithya (mother) goes to their house every day, they are very nice people."

Kadhir and his family have lived at this house for approximately 3 years as refugees, Kearns and Whitley (2015) suggest that for each additional year in the area migrants are more likely to talk to and know their neighbours.

Mina also told me of the occasion when she moved to The Town. She initially thought that all people in the street very unfriendly but added:

"When we first moved to the street no one spoke to us. So, I cooked something for my neighbour, the man looked frightening, he was bald, Scottish and big, and I when he opened the door, I read out a welcome in English. He took the dish from me and shut the door. He later returned the dish with a welcome message in Farsi, translated from Google, now he and his wife are still our friends."

Whilst this research finds conclusive evidence of problematic racist and antisocial issues in areas of dispersal. There is little, if any literature, that identifies that there are examples of social bonding capital between refugees and asylum seekers and their neighbours. Furthermore, research into white working-class communities in Manchester also found evidence of a more sympathetic attitudes (Hussain and Silver, 2014, p 58). This is a quote straight from their research:

On our street, there are African refugees, somewhere from Africa, and they don't speak a word of English. And I'll smile at them, and they'll smile at you, God love 'em, and I think, do you know, why don't whoever is looking after them take them to English lessons so they can converse? (Woman, 62 years old).

This research found that refugees and asylum seekers social interactions are mostly concentrated with middle class volunteers and church members. This may vindicate the arguments in Chapter 1.3 that working class neighbourhoods whereby populations have become more individualized whereby neighbours are strangers. However, the few positive responses of working-class neighbours in this chapter suggest that middle class do not have exclusive class ownership of humanitarian values and working-class actors can respond positively to support the settlement of refugees and asylum seekers outside of the deficit caricature of a hostile working class(Hussain and Silver, 2014)(Hussain and Silver, 2014) (Hussain and Silver, 2014).

12.6. Conclusion

The historical account of racism in this study reflects concerns that dispersal areas are hostile environments and can be problematic for refugees and asylum seekers in establishing a sense of settlement and belonging. Whilst historically there is much literature to suggest that there is a working-class habitus of similar beliefs, tastes and dispositions (Lloyd (2013). However, Lloyd also indicates that working-class

experiences has become more fragmented individualised and nuanced. This explains the different behaviours of local people from extreme racism, past and present, to stories of neighbour's acceptance and friendship.

Nevertheless, much literature places the working class as a group who are experiencing structural inequality and social exclusion. The social conditions of the area reflect a profile of dispersal areas that reflect high levels of poverty, crime, alcohol and drug misuse and antisocial behaviour. This can be a threat to a sense of safety and security for refugees and asylum seekers and that of many residents. These are not the ideal conditions to develop social capital between the local population and newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers (Putnam, 2000).

There is continued concern in this study over incidents of racist crime including Islamophobia experienced by refugees and asylum seekers. However, bridging partnership between the Drop-In and the justice system attempts to make the social links between refugees and asylum seekers and the Police. Thus, the Drop-In is trying to foster a notion of trust in the police service, however, this is not without difficulty, given that some families will have experiences of hostile police forces as instruments of oppression in their original country (Franks, 2006).

Most volunteers associated with the Drop In's tend not to live in working-class dispersal area in The Town, therefore, this is unlikely to impact upon street level relationships in the dispersal area. There are examples of social bonding with neighbours, however, these relationships are few and the account given by Chrissie and Rob suggest this may need to be justified to their friends and neighbours.

However, the findings in this chapter need to be considered in line with refugee and asylum seeker children's mostly positive experiences of friendships developed in the locality through bonding and bridging social capital. These are mostly positive friendships between the sample group and working-class children who 'are' citizens and social actors in the dispersal area. Thus, the social capital attained through friendships and relationships within schools has supported the settlement and sense of belonging between the sample group of children in the dispersal area despite the barriers identified in this chapter.

The findings in this chapter reinforces the problematic notion of 'integration' whereby people live, work, learn and socialise together (HM Government 2019, p 5). For example, to expect people to socialise together ignores the complex social and cultural differences, perceptions, and aspirations that differ amongst each other. Indeed, the local community are not a homogeneous group, nor are the refugee and asylum seekers in this study.

Whilst there is a broad range of literature and evidence in this study that refugees and asylum seekers experience 'working class' racism, it would be useful to understand the notions of 'middle class racism' and how it may be manifested in day-to-day practices. However, I argue that policy is a creation of middle-class actors and reflected in successive government policies of an 'hostile environment' and 'suspicion' of immigrants.

Chapter 13

Thesis Conclusions

13.1 Introduction

I have examined, theoretically and empirically, the settlement of refugee and asylum seeker families in the location of this research. In Chapter 1 I set out that existing research on the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers tend to be sited within multi-cultural inner-city locations. Therefore, the site of my fieldwork was chosen based on being a post-industrial, predominantly white, poor, working-class town, it being an asylum seeker dispersal area that accommodates mostly families.

Furthermore, I gained the consent and support of the Committee to use the Drop-In as a base to develop my empirical research. In basing my research here enabled me to contribute towards new knowledge through addressing my research question within the context of a post-industrial town with a prominent white working-class population

This thesis followed in the footsteps of existing research into primary school friendships from Connelly (1998- 2006) and a recent series of three research projects from Neal, Vincent and Iqbal (2015-17) that examines primary school friendships in multi-cultural and super-diverse localities settings. However, my focus is upon refugee and asylum seeker children's form of friendships and identity and how this contributes to refugee and asylum seekers children's sense of belonging and settlement.

Furthermore, this research is placed within a recent and ongoing political context as during the timeline of my research. This included an increase in political language and actions of a 'hostile environment' and the increase of migration tensions of the EU Referendum in which The Town obtained national attention as a firm leave 'area'. Hence this research contributes to the emerging body of research that explores the notion of a white working class and poor post-industrial locations that are 'left behind'

(Goodwin and Heath, 2016; Winlow, Hall and Treadwell 2017). Whilst this research finds no direct evidence of the impact of Brexit on the families or children, there is secondary evidence that is elaborated upon in Chapter 12 that found an increase in race hate crimes in the locality. This is unsurprising given the examples of the historical racism in the town and more recent racist and Islamophobia incidents that I have also discussed in Chapter 12.

As the research progressed, I re-assessed the policy and social understanding of 'integration' and concluded that this is a vague concept that does not reflect the aspirations of families who were aiming to achieve a sense of 'settlement' through home making as an antithesis to the previous experiences of displacement and precarity.

13.2 Aims, theory and methodology

As set out in Chapter 1, the aims of this research were influenced and developed through my previous experience of education practice with refugee and asylum seeker children and their families. I also developed an interest in Putnam's theoretical approach that considered the social networks and capital within and between diasporic populations. Putnam's theory was relevant as it drew some similarities to a Home Office Report 'Indicators of Integration' (Ndofar-Tah et al. 2029). The framework Ndofar Tah et al. (2019) offers has a focus on social connections of bonds, bridges and links which reflects Putnam's notions of bonding and bridging capital.

As I began my empirical research, I found Putnam's theory limited in engaging with the dynamics of power and inequality between groups. To compensate for this, I developed a theoretical interest in Bourdieu's 'Theory of Practice' as it can be used to interrogate social capital within the wider dynamics of power and inequality within different social fields (1986, p 17). Thus, as I set out in Chapter 2, Bourdieu provided the theoretical tools to help make sense of the complex dynamics that shapes

experiences of 'integration.' This provided a framework to investigate how economic, cultural, social, and symbolic forms of capital interact within the social fields in which refugee and asylum seekers inhabit. Furthermore, I was interested in Bourdieu's notion of 'symbolic violence' in which I argue is implicit in hostile anti-immigrant government policies, as set out in Chapter 3, and how this may be manifested in the localised context of 'social fields'.

As my empirical research developed, I was aware of how Bourdieu's notion of symbolic capital was reflected in the actions and behaviours of the research participants. For example, this included the adult's symbolic religious presentation to a multi-faith as discussed in Chapter 11. This also included, for example, the need for children to wear the correct football shirts as a symbol of shared interest and identity in what Goffman (1959) describes as a projection of 'belonging and identity' in order to be 'included' in peer groups in which the children in this research were seeking. Goffman's concept of 'dramaturgical performance' was a useful theoretical tool to expand upon symbolism and how it is 'performed' in everyday life as a 'front stage' performance through language, ritual and participation in the activities in their friendship groups. However, there was also evidence that children 'played down' their family's religious identity to their peers thus reflecting Goffman's 'backstage' analogy. Thus, the aims of this study were developed and based upon forms of 'capital' and 'identity' to interrogate the research question.

Aims

1. Explore children's forms of 'capital' and its significance for a sense of belonging and settlement.
2. Explore children's forms of 'capital' in negotiating their multi-layered identities such as peer group status, ethnicity, and faith.
3. Explore the influences of parent's and carer's capital and how it enables and restricts children's settlement.

4. Identify and explore 'excluding' and 'including' factors for the parents of refugee and asylum seeker children. This includes the macro sense of UK refugee policies and the micro dynamics of neighbourhood.

To capture the aims of this research I applied semi structured interviews, participant observation and secondary research as discussed in Chapter 6. The semi structured interviews helped to capture experiences and voices of children and their parents. Children's interviews were mostly aided by creating their own drawings as a starting point to help me draw out bonding and bridging capital they had developed with their friends and peers. The drawings reflected a child friendly approach rather than the traditional adult led interview. Parents were also interviewed in order to learn of their experiences and perspectives on their own settlement and of their aspirations for their children. By interviewing both children and parents captured the experiences and perceptions from two perspectives. Thus, semi structured interviews were originally planned to be my main method of research.

However, in Chapter 6, I discussed my struggle to identify enough children to make a sufficient sample size. I continued to apply my own criteria of children being resident in The Town for a year to allow children to develop experiences. As I have referred to throughout this study that Bourdieu (1986) argued that social capital takes time to accrue and to convert to cultural capital. Furthermore, I soon came to the realisation that I had underestimated the impact of dispersal policy for families in The Town. The policy reinforced the precarity and temporariness experienced by many refugee and asylum seeker families who can be quickly moved out of locality and without choice. This again limited my opportunities to identify children and their families for the interview sample who had been in The Town for a year or over.

In the process of identifying a sample group and to developing trust with families I began to attend the weekly Refugee and Asylum Seeker Drop-in. However, as I attended the Drop-In I soon realised that there was much rich data that I could acquire from being an observer/participant. For example, I was observing social patterns of connectivity between the refugee and asylum seekers themselves, but importantly, with the white middle class volunteers and visitors. This approach

allowed me to develop an understanding of the aspects of social and cultural capital between the actors who were present. This reflects Costa et al., (2018, p 3) who state that the ethnological approach of researcher participant as the most appropriate tools to capture the emerging habitus and social and cultural capital. Furthermore, the semi-structured interviews were not the 'end product' as my contact continued with children and families during the weekly Drop-In that enabled me to apply a longer-term view of their settlement to inform my data.

In Chapter 6, I set out the sensitive nature of this research with refugees and asylum seekers. Therefore, I applied a reflexive approach within a duty of care to the research participants. This underpinned my research and thinking given the vulnerability of participants and my implicit position of power as a white, male, British adult. Therefore, my research was dependent upon the development of trust with participants through my reflexive approach.

13.2. Summary of main findings

In this section I draw out the key conclusions of this research that reflect the processes of settlement of refugee and asylum seeker children and their families in this study, these being:

- Children develop friendships and social capital with local working-class children they have met in school.
- This contrasts to experiences of their parents who are more likely to develop social capital with other refugee and asylum seekers and local middle-class volunteers they have met in the Drop-In.
- Refugee and asylum seeker parents reflect middle-class values particularly in applying strategic approach to support their children's education.

- Religiosity and religious identity are a strong factor in the lives of many refugee and asylum seekers in this study, and in the lives of volunteers.
- The policy language of 'integration' as reflected in much research and non-government organisations is vague and unrealistic, and not reflected in the aspirations and experiences of the refugee and asylum seeker children and families in this study.

In the following section of this conclusion, I summarise the above main findings.

- Children develop friendships and social capital with local working-class children they have met in school.

In Chapter 7, I examined the friendships, through the theory of social capital whilst Chapter 9 built upon this to bridge the relationship between friendship and children's construction of their own identity. I argue that forms of social capital are integral to the formation of friendship and peer group networks. Hence children who have lived in the area for longer periods are better equipped to develop friendships and a therefore a stronger sense of belonging and acceptance by working class children in the locality. For example, I argue that friendships develop cultural capital as refugee and asylum seeker children and their friends seek to share cultural interests to gain acceptance. Whether this is through playing computer games, or football. The findings in this study suggests that is more applicable to boys as girls demonstrated more guarded selection of friends based on the capital of emotional intelligence. Hence, I argue that the findings of this study reflect the traditional gender stereotypes that is reproduced as a form of cultural capital as a means of gaining acceptance and settlement. However, this gendered analysis needs further investigation given the small number of girls in this study.

I argue that friendships and identity and intrinsically linked. For example, children display of traditional gendered identities are also reflective of what Goffman (1958) refers to as 'front door' performance or what Bourdieu (Bourdieu and Wacquant,

2013) would argue can be a means to generate symbolic capital. That is to portray an identity and image that has value to others. However, a sense of identity has value to those who process it, as reflected by Hudson who states that *'identity' is the story we tell ourselves and others about us,*' (2014, p 48). For example, in this research there were direct examples of this such as Kavin, who sought to blur his religious identity towards his school peers, and Aylan who kept his status as asylum seeker from the knowledge of his friends. In a contrasting way Tiffany and Hannah, did not compromise upon their own preferences for friendship and therefore their identity when seeking friends thus reducing the need to 'perform' an identity to 'fit - in'. Hence, these are the older children in this study who demonstrated an emerging ability to control and shape their identity.

A significant finding in this study was children's sense of national identity. Most of the sample group of children identified themselves as British, this includes children who were born in the UK or came to the UK when they were younger. Yet, the Nationality Act 1981 excludes these children from British Citizenship. These children associated a sense of nationality through 'place' of birth or residence rather than the country they or their parents originated from. In some instances, children were quite assertive in their sense of identity. This is not surprising as Kavin stated in Chapter 9 that he has never been to or knows about Sri Lanka indicating Britain as his home. Similarly, Ben, only knew English language demonstrated no affinity with Sri Lanka, despite his parent's desire to preserve Ben's cultural identity (as they stated they would prefer Ben to have a Sri Lankan wife should he get married). The evidence in this research suggests that the children have mostly embedded socially and culturally into the UK. Hence, the hugely problematic situation for the children in this research if their family was refused refugee status and they were expected to be repatriated to the country of their parents.

Importantly, I found, not surprisingly, that schools are ready-made places for primary school children to develop friendships and forms of social and cultural capital. This study found that refugee and asylum seeker children of primary school age therefore have opportunities to gain a sense of belonging and settlement with working class children in the locality.

- This contrasts to experiences of their parents who are more likely to develop social capital with other refugee and asylum seekers and local middle-class volunteers they have met in the Drop-In.

Parents do not have access to a large social institution and the day-to-day structure and consistency in the way that schools can offer their children. Overall, parents and other adult refugees and asylum seekers, have limited contact with their working-class neighbours, and are more likely to have contact and support from middle class volunteers who live outside of the dispersal area. Hence, the Drop-In, provides some element of consistency, albeit two hours a week, to develop and maintain social networks with other refugee and asylum seekers and usually within diasporic groups as identified in Chapter 12. There are several barriers for refugee and asylum seeker adults to develop friendships and social capital with neighbours. However, I elaborated upon in the analysis of policy later in this Chapter.

- Refugee and asylum seeker parents reflect middle-class values particularly in applying a strategic approach to support their children's education.

Whilst children were concerned about existing day to day life experiences. I found that parents were focused upon the longer-term settlement for their children. Hence, this is set out in chapter 8 whereby I argue that refugee and asylum seeker families placed huge importance upon education to help their children settle into the UK and in doing so to gain the tools for the social mobility of their children. Hence parent's strategic decisions to do what they can to improve their child's chances for their child to attend the local Catholic Secondary school which has the best academic reputation in the town. Hence, this reflects the established UK middle class parents' ability to utilise and benefit from a competitive education market (Reay, 2017). This is reflective of the cultural capital that parents brought with them from their county as many had professional qualifications or have attended Higher Education. However, structural barriers prevent them from societal recognition of their middle class and professional status in the UK.

However, this research informs us that refugee and asylum seeker aspirations for children's education can place them in a different position to the families of the children's working-class peers. For example, working class families do not have the cultural capital needed to negotiate the education system (Reay, 2009; Vincent; 2001, p 348). This is reinforced by the structural conditions associated with the of poverty, inequality, and discrimination through stereotype notions placed upon white working classes who are 'pathologised' as unmotivated, unambitious, and underachieving (Reay, 2006). Research also indicates that unequal structural conditions such as an increase in child poverty has significantly reduced the capacity for upward social mobility for working-class children (Reay, 2017). Therefore, the friendships between refugee and asylum seeker children and their working-class peers could be temporary due to differences in family's cultural capital such as a different set of aspiration for their children. However, in a similar way refugee and asylum seekers are pathologized with negative and deficit stereotypes albeit underpinned with racism (Bennett *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, structural barriers, albeit in different contexts apply to both working class children and the refugee and asylum seeker children.

I argue that cultural capital in practice, is it not limited to refugee and asylum seekers parent's habitus and previous education and professional status that drive educational aspirations for their children. Consideration should be given to dispositions of race, gender, language, and poverty that may offset the educational orientated cultural capital. Therefore, this poses further questions on structural inequalities and education that could be partly answered by longitudinal research of refugee families.

- 'Religiosity and religious identity are a strong factor in the lives of many refugee and asylum seekers in this study, and in the lives of volunteers'.

I argue that the desire for refugee and asylum seeker parents to enrol their children in the town's Catholic school reflects both educational aspirations and to maintain a

sense of moral order to their children, as I argue that there is a commonality between different faiths as I discussed in Chapter 8.4. Therefore, I argue that there has emerged in The Town, to what would be perceived by many, an unlikely educational alliance between the Muslim, Hindu and Catholic faiths. However, further analysis of refugee and asylum seeker families' experiences of secular schools could provide a useful comparative analysis on how these different schools impacts upon settlement.

It soon became evident in my fieldwork that religiosity was a strong factor in many of the lives of refugees and asylum seekers in the town, and in the lives of volunteers of the drop-in. Furthermore, volunteers in Christian churches and organisations in The Town also sought to actively support refugees and asylum seekers. Hence, Chapter 10 examined religious habitus that shaped barriers and opportunities to develop social and cultural capital as a means of settlement. Including, the use of symbolic capital as a way for adults to proclaim a shared identity and belonging with Christians in The Town. However, most of the active volunteers in this study were white middle class and lived outside of the immediate dispersal area. Hence, refugee and asylum seeker adults were more likely to develop contact and forms of social capital with white middle class volunteers than they would with their working-class neighbours. I found inconclusive evidence that church groups are motivated by the possibility of on-Christian refugees and asylum seekers as potential converts. However, further research on this question would be a useful, if not a difficult and sensitive area, to further research. Similarly, further research would be useful in understanding the lack of support for the settlement of refugees from the Muslim faith and organisations, both in The Town and in the wider UK.

- 'The policy language of 'integration' as reflected in much research and non-government organisations is vague and unrealistic, and not reflected in the aspirations and experiences of the refugee and asylum seeker children and families in this study'.

I will summarise my arguments to this in the following section.

13.3. Policy

The population in the dispersal area of The Town experience a range of challenges as set out in Chapters 12 from interlinking problems such as 'unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown'. Therefore, as I discussed in Chapter 3 the likelihood of 'integration' between two distinct populations is highly unlikely given the prominent populist narrative within narrative of the media, far right politicians, and local population whereby refugee and asylum seekers are seen as 'the problem' and a drain of limited resources. Hence the original criticisms of the Dispersal Policy as predicted in 1998 in Chapter 3.1 have proved to be justified, and that is without the foresight to predict the toxic impact of Brexit which polarised views on immigration and increased levels of racism in a town that already had a history of racism.

There is much government rhetoric that sets out the country as having a '*proud history of providing protection for refugees*' (The Home Office, 2016; 2017). Nevertheless, the evidence, collated in this study identifies a rhetoric of a hostile society that places suspicion upon the motives of refugee and asylum seekers of exploiting the UK welfare systems, and even more prevalent to my findings, a suggestion that they are 'education tourists' rather than fleeing persecution. Therefore, refugee and asylum seeker children in this study who make the most of education opportunities can be subject to suspicion rather than the government considering the long-term benefits that they may contribute to the UK society and the economy (Sales, 2002, Collyer, et al 2018).

In policy papers of 'integration' there is limited acknowledgement of refugees and more of a focus upon 'fixing' the problems of separation in multiculturalism (Cantle, 2012; Burnett 2016; Casey, 2016). Hence, reaffirming the marginalisation of refugees, whilst the lack of reference to asylum seekers confirms their status as temporary and with suspicion as discussed in Chapter 3.2. Yet my empirical analysis suggest that asylum seeker families optimistically look at the longer-term settlement and establishment of their children in the UK.

In Chapter 4 I argued that the UK government apply a 'migrants first, children second' which is at odds with the rhetoric of global social policy such as the UNCRC. In Chapter 5 I argued that childhood is a critical time to develop habitus and identity formation that can inform the basis for childhood's development into adulthood. Therefore, the processes of asylum seekers children's development could be, and could have been, supported by successive governments compliance to fulfil international duties associated with the UNCRC (1989) and its principles of: non-discrimination (article 2), best interest of the child (article 3) the right to life survival and development (article 6) and the right to be heard (article 12).

I argue that policy does discriminate against asylum seeker children by virtue of their temporary status, whereby collectively asylum seekers, and their children, have limited agency and a lack of a political voice (Vickers, 2016). Therefore, I argue that to uphold the UNCRC there needs to be a commitment to support children's development beyond the statutory duty to provide education. For example, their parent's ability to work legally, would enhance opportunities to create economic capital to support their children's social inclusion and participation in activities. Such as activities that are customary for local children, such as on-line activities and leisure activities that therefore opportunities to support the acquirement of social and cultural capital.

However, the length of time for asylum seekers to wait for a decision has continued to rise, for example, in 2017 Refugee Action reported an 'alarming increase' in asylum seekers waiting for a decision and continue to rise, and more recently, in further delays caused by Covid 19 (UNHCR UK, 2021). If we add further extension of time due to appeals against the original decisions, as stated in Chapter 3.2 that 30 % of failed applications are overturned and the process could take up to 5 years (Home Affairs Committee, 2017, p 14). However, one family in this research had continued to wait for 7 years which is a substantial time during childhood to suffer material deprivation.

13.4. Crossing boundaries: From practitioner to academic.

This conclusion captures my habitus and experiences as a practitioner through a reflexive account of my research. I refer to Chapter 6.2 in which I cite Bourdieu (2003) who argues that a researcher's awareness of their habitus is a reflexive analytic resource in the production of knowledge.

Undertaking a PhD fulfilled a long-term ambition when I began this study as I had the space and opportunity to further explore my interest in sociology. I specifically wanted to 'study' the experiences of refugee and asylum seeker children as I have witnessed in my practice in what I perceived was the cultural adaptation of children and into the dispersal areas. However, the space and opportunity soon became limited as I gained a post as a University Lecturer in Childhood and Youth.

The strength of my application for the Lecturer post, I believe, was my years of practical experience across a range of settings and locations. Whilst this approach can be described as egotistical and self-indulgence (Ryan 2015), however, as I have previously discussed in Chapter 6, Bourdieu (2003, p 281) stated that the personal experience of the researcher is an 'irreplaceable analytic resource in the production of knowledge'.

Therefore, when I initially approached writing for a PhD it was from a practical mindset. Indeed, I was a little perplexed when it was suggested to me that there is much policy to analyse in this subject area. I had never needed to write about policy in competing two previous Master's degrees,⁹⁵ neither was policy something that was prominent in my sociological textbooks. As a practitioner, I was bound and guided by government policy, but I had neither the time nor the energy to pick apart the 'language' of policies at any depth (Ball, 2008; Nixon et al 2008). However, I soon realised the blindingly obvious, that this thesis, in essence, is an assessment of the

⁹⁵ Management Studies, completed in 1999, and Inclusive Education completed in 2003.

dispersal policy within the Immigration and Asylum Act (1999) and how it impacts upon children and their families.

As a practitioner I took for granted some assumptions about the Community Cohesion policy that I was charged to develop in a 'community' school. I began my research by taking similar assumptions about the term 'integration' that is abound in government policy, in academic literature and in national and international NGO reports. Hence the term integration as used in my thesis title. It was not until further analysis, and on reflection of my fieldwork, that I began to question the term. Furthermore, my empirical analysis of my fieldwork also placed doubts and questions of the relevance of the term. I began to conclude that families don't necessarily strive to form bonds with neighbours or with the volunteers when outside of the Drop-In sessions. Thus, there is no evidence of a desire to aspire to the government's notion of integration: *'to live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities, and opportunities'* (HM Government 2019).

My research concludes that children 'do' wish to learn and socialise with 'selected' other local children based on friendships and interests. This does not necessarily reflect parent's own wishes or needs. I concluded that refugees and particularly asylum seekers do not have *'shared rights, and opportunities'* as set out in the above government statement. Furthermore, the governments idea of *'responsibilities'* is to contribute to communities (Ndofar-Tah, 2019). Ron's parents volunteered at a charity and a school, and Adele's mother volunteered at the Food Bank, thus working within the spirit of *'responsibilities'* and therefore within the spirit of the 'Big Society' agenda that is continually encouraged by the present government. Nevertheless, opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers to apply the governments notion of *'responsibilities'* can be limited if, as I have found, there is no adequate ESOL provision in The Town to support refugees and asylum seekers with the language skills to 'integrate' into society as discussed in Chapter 3.7.

Therefore, I re-framed the notion of 'integration' to that of 'settlement' thus following in the footsteps of Archambault (2012) who proposed that refugee and asylum

seeker's primary goal is to 'make a home' and seek the 'beginning of new possibilities' in a new country as discussed in Chapter 1.3.

I applied reflexivity to develop my understanding the diverse experiences of refugee and asylum seekers though that I need to self-reflect upon my own habitus, practice, and place in this research (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p 36). I attempted to utilise my skills and experience to try to bridge the cultural and identity gaps between myself as a researcher the participants in this research. Throughout my youth and community work career I engaged with some of the most marginalised groups in society including making initial contact and develop relationships with young people who were described as 'hard to reach'. In my work with marginal young people my working-class background I brought aspects of cultural capital to help facilitate social capital and reciprocal relationships.

My working-class background and previous practice influenced this research by recognising the structural conditions and experiences of the working-class population in the dispersal area. Thus, I was careful, particularly in Chapter 12, not to demonise the working class, as to recognise the fractured, challenging experiences of the structural inequalities of working class, poor, populations. Although, there is much evidence in this study of locally initiated racism, I would argue that racism is not exclusive to the working class but also represented in middle class (Gillborn, 2005; Gillborn 2010) which is also represented by policy that is created by middle class policy makers.

In Chapter 6 I argued that I adopted positions of 'outsider' and 'insider' by virtue of my drawing upon multiple identities including the masculine dimensions of being male, husband, father and 'football fan'. Therefore, I was able to draw upon a repertoire of identities which would be defined by Goffman as 'performances' as to gain credibility from the research participants. However, the masculine dimensions expose the main limitations of this study.

13.5. Contribution to Knowledge, Limitations, and Future Research.

This study has contributed to addressing the gaps in existing literature and research as set out in Chapter 1.8., notably the lack of research of the integration of primary school aged refugee and asylum seeker children, and whilst there was existing research of cross- cultural children's friendships, there was a lack of specific studies of refugee and asylum seekers friendships in predominantly white working-class areas. Yet these are important areas to develop knowledge given the needs and experiences of a marginal group as refugee and asylum seekers and as children in a North-East post-industrial town. Thus, my findings as discussed in 13.2 suggest that these gaps and the wider associated issues has been interrogated.

I argue that the theoretical framework, methodological approach and finding in this study can contribute to the wider knowledge and sociological understanding of refugee and asylum seeker families.

In Chapter 2, and earlier in this chapter, I set out and justified my theoretical approach of engaging primarily with Bourdieu. Whilst Bourdieu provides a theoretical framework for several studies into 'integration', future studies may also want to consider how other sociologists such as Goffman and Putnam can complement Bourdieu in making sense of the everyday experiences and actions of refugees and asylum seekers. Goffman was useful to make sense of how 'identities are performed' to help children 'fit-in' with the expectations and behaviours of their peers. I argue that 'performance' was a significant tool, particularly among boys, and helps make further sense of settlement, belonging and identity. However, not only is this specific to refugee and asylum seekers, but Goffman's notion of performance may be a useful theoretical tool in the study of pre-adolescent boys and notions of masculinity.

The data that I generated in my empirical research of the experiences and perceptions of parents led to me challenging the notion of 'integration' and reframing their need as more concerned with 'settlement'. Thus, I was also influenced by Archambault (2012) who set out that refugee and asylum seeker families were more

concerned about establishing a home and sense of settlement rather than to subscribe to the dominant discourse of wanting to 'integrate'. This re-framing challenges much of existing policy and literature that focus on 'integration.' I would argue that changing the paradigm from 'integration' to the 'settlement' of refugee and asylum seekers is a key aspect of this research to take forward to future research and policy.

This research reinforced an understanding in literature and in practice that refugees and asylum seekers are a powerless and marginalised group, and this is further compounded for children due to limited agency or even understanding of their status. Therefore, primary research of pre-adolescent refugee and asylum seeker children provides researchers with difficult ethical challenges. This may be a barrier for researchers to engage with this subject due to a reluctance to engage in such ethical and complex issues. Yet, there continues to be a need to understand their experiences in order to further develop knowledge and to inform policy makers of the findings.

My reflective approach was underpinned by a duty of care and engaging with age-appropriate child friendly research. I would suggest that this is an area that would be useful to refine in order to establish best practice for future research with vulnerable and marginalised young refugee and asylum seekers.

I argue across the empirical chapters that further investigation would be useful in understanding the settlement and experiences of girls, and of mothers. This may be best undertaken by a female researcher countering a gendered power imbalance between myself as a researcher and the girls and women in this study by drawing upon gendered habitus and gendered personal resources. Hence a female researcher may mobilize their gendered resources to produce different and more focused data on the experiences of girls and mother's settlement (Bourdieu, 2003: 291; Linabary and Hamel, 2017 p 96-98).

Whilst I was engaged in much informal discussion with mothers in the public arena of the Drop-In, requesting semi structured interviews, in their homes, or elsewhere, would have also been culturally and ethically difficult. Again, a female researcher may have developed these conversations further to generate further data from a

mother's perspective and experiences, including the experiences of settlement in a patriarchal model of family.

At one point of my research, I discussed with my supervisors the problematic issue of the lack of girls in the study. Hence, there were no refugee and asylum seeker girls who were visible via families in the Drop-In or identifiable through the existing contacts to provide a snowball method of sampling. This posed the questions of are there any refugee and asylum seeker girls of primary school age who live in The Town? Or if they are there, why are they invisible? Therefore, there was a decision to make, either just focus upon boys, or given the fluidity and changing numbers of asylum seekers, wait and in the longer term they may appear and consent to be part of this research.

As time progressed, I had the opportunity to interview Hannah and Tiffany so I decided that there may be scope to interview further girls should the opportunity allow. However, this was not to be and in retrospect, an interview sample that only included 3 girls, two of them sisters, has placed huge limitations on the gendered data available for this research. Nevertheless, there was some relevant and interesting data that was produced in the interviews with the girls that posed many further questions, including the contrast between Adele's and Ben's friendships and their different conditions and circumstances. Whilst Tiffany and Hannah provided some interesting insights to friendships that confirmed and validated other findings in the study about place and identity.

In terms of girl's limited representation in the sample group and indeed, there is a small number of children and adults who participated in the semi-structured interviews, the challenges of obtaining a larger sample group have been discussed throughout this research. This poses questions regarding the external validity of this aspect of my research as it could be argued that this is not a representative sample of other post-industrial towns in the North East that share similar social and economic conditions. However, I would argue that the findings that are generated from the interviews provide a starting point for future research, for although this was a small sample, I would argue that it generated a rich source of data to inform my findings.

This research only tells us part of the story, to develop a further understanding of refugees and asylum seekers' sense of belonging and settlement, then the experiences, attitudes and needs of their working-class neighbours need to be considered in further depth. Hence analysing the barriers and possible opportunities for refugee and asylum seekers and their neighbours to coexist in a non-threatening environment. I have approached this analysis from mostly a literature perspective throughout this study, that mostly paints a deficit position of working-class populations in socially and economically challenging dispersal areas. Whilst the data in this research such as the examples of symbolic and physical violence against participants would suggest that non-threatening coexistence is an imaginary and romantic nonsense. However, learning from the examples of the good neighbours, and children's friends, would be a useful addition to the knowledge and understanding of settlement.

In Chapter 1, I set out the perception that a hostile reception was waiting for asylum seekers who are dispersed to economically poor and predominantly white working-class localities. Furthermore, Winlow, Hall, and Treadwell, (2017) depict a growing marginalised and dissatisfied poor white working class in which immigration is often cited as the reason for these economic conditions. The economic conditions in post-industrial locations such as The Town and the North East continued to be of concern with growing rates of poverty (CPAG 2021; North East Child Poverty Commission, 2022). Therefore, as economic conditions in dispersal localities continue to be of concern, it would be useful to revisit and test the findings of this research across other dispersal areas in the North East. Hence, as poverty increases, does this further impact upon the safety, sense of belonging, and the settlement of refugee and asylum seeker families.?

My concluding sentence for this thesis was going to suggest that families in this research show an optimistic future for their children that is underpinned by utilising every opportunity to give their children best education possible. My own optimism for the children in this research remains to be high. However, for future refugees and particularly asylum seeker families there is an indication of challenging times as discussed in the Chapter 3.10 of harsh and symbolic violent policy development

towards prospective asylum seekers. Whilst this research finds optimism for existing refugee and asylum seeker families, future families will have a further sense of hostility to manage as they attempt to settle into a new home and life.

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Appendix 1

Recording from the Drop-In session: 10th July 2017

(names and places have been excluded to maintain anonymity)

Good session never stopped, was earlier than usual.

Arrived and ***** asked if I could present my finding so far. The date is Sept 11.00 to 10.30 am, to the committee in the hall (no overheads). Asked about the Sri Lankan women who used to attend but does not now, it is the same person ** talked about last week, and lives at *** Street. One of her sons is 14 and one is 16 years , perhaps a retrospective interview?

Approached the Iraqi's women's groups (discuss every week). One woman said she could speak English so I introduced myself. Think she understands University. She translated to the rest of the group, and I found they were Kurdish. So, I went through the Lute-Chow routine, entertainment for them and me, plus I gained more Kurdish words.

Asked the main person if she liked Hartlepool, she said that people knocking on her door and then running away, plus I gained a general sense that neighbours were hostile to them. She has three children, 6 months, four years and 6 years, the children like where they live, the oldest goes to **** School and likes it very much.

Later ***** called me over to say that one of the women, had gained her status, said congrats etc, asked if she is going to stay in *****, she said she is moving to Glasgow, to be with friends (note friends are more likely to be based on bigger cities by way of larger immigrant, refugee populations).

Met a lady dropping off goods for the stall, clothes etc. She was looking to speak to an Albanian women but she was not there. She was a white middle aged, middle class lady who is also member of the Parish. Nice person talked about background living in Reading and abroad, and returning, I discussed the differences between children and adults in integration, then she told the story of when they tried to register at a doctors on return to Hartlepool, the receptionist was not very nice, as she had said don't assume you can be registered, and asked them for their passports (This is the main NHS Health Centre), her husband refused and they registered at another doctors no problem. She was upset at the time, and that she was concerned as her and her husband needed their monthly prescription.

The Nigerian women, came in, she thanked me again for helping her last week. I went and got rag doll from the car, as the child left it last week. The child 4 years old was very happy and smiley.

The older child was there 8 years old. I asked her if school was not on, she said yes, she also says she goes to ***** School. I asked her if she had many friends, she said yes, I asked if she liked where she live, she said yes. I asked if she played in the street and around friend's house, she replied she did not know. Her language is very good, but the 8 years old and agency issues are prevalent despite my earlier contact that suggests she may. However, my line of questioning needs to be improved asking lots of questions. She asked if drawing was happening again. So, I went to the car and brought the materials in and set up at the bottom of the room, she and her 4-year-old sister came and started to draw, I sat and draw with them, another African girl came along, only about 2 years and she was also drawing. (2 year old places does she have access??)

A new face came along, she seemed uncertain and quite unhappy/stressed. She was on her own, about late 30's 40's I overheard ***** saying that anyone causing problems to speak to her, or the police, such as issues to do with race. Possibly women is Nigerian, I think she spoke to Nigerian mam, at a point, but there was a point when she was just sitting on her own

***** (Sri Lankan) showed me a video clip from 70's programme 'Mind Your language'. It showed people having problems in stating names to the Police and misunderstanding. ***s friend said it is like Jackie Chan etc Rush Hour 2. I said that the programme was criticised as it stereotyped people. He listened but could only see the humour in the clip. !!!!!

Disappointed last week's Syrian interpreter was not present.

The volunteers came out at the end very cheerful, nice atmosphere, lots of laughter. *** and **** from the Red Cross were busy throughout and in demand.

Appendix 2

A Selection of Reader's Comments from the local Town Newspaper

5:16 PM on 21/11/2015

Everyone knows this will get pushed through as our incompetent Labour Mafia scrapped the town plan.....IDIOTS! As has been said by other commenters already, Labour are paying lip service to wanting to help refugees/migrants call them what you will. I haven't heard of any local councillors offering to let migrants live with them; have you?

Despite what the Western media tries to feed us; the vast majority of these migrants coming in by boat ARE NOT women and children - they are MEN. Most arrive with no papers to prove either their age or identity and authorities in Europe are now admitting they suspect many of these males are older than they claim to be and not from Syria at all. It is a FACT that wherever these men have been put, there is a corresponding rise in sex related crimes.

The liberal Swedes are now bitterly regretting the day they welcomed Islamic migrants in with open arms; as a great many of these men treat women appallingly and think nothing of sexually harrassing/abusing or raping women. The number of rapes in Sweden has gone through the roof; don't take my word for it, just do some research on Google or social media.

Here is a classic example: <http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/5195/sweden-rape>

What we are seeing unfolding now in Europe is a de stabilisation of the West and things are about to get far, far worse

41 PM on 09/11/2015

I for one do not want this in my town with what I have read in other places where they have been housed and what is still going on now . I have Grandchildren and don't want them putting at risk . Grow some and knock this back agai .

5:45 PM on 30/05/2016 deport all these people back to whence they came, why should the English taxpayers have to foot the bill for this lot and the rest of the flotsam& jetsam of the world.

10:30 PM on 30/05/2016

If we didn't have people like these we wouldn't be able to operate the NHS and London would be deserted you pillock.

1 reply

9:12 AM on 31/05/2016 # if we didnt have people like these, the nhs would operate better cos it wouldnt have so many patients, and London would be populated with Londoners , you ralph!,!

Appendix 3

Children's Research Information Sheet

CHILDREN FROM REFUGEE AND ASYLUM SEEKER FAMILIES; CAN THEIR RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN AND OF HOST FAMILIES ENHANCE NEIGHBOURHOOD RELATIONS WITHIN DISPERSAL AREAS?

The aim of this study is to explore friendships made by children of families who have had to leave a different country to seek refuge in the UK. I will then compare children's friendships to friendships and contacts made by their parents.

This sheet tells you all about the research. We would like you to take part in the research and this sheet helps answer questions you might have about it. Once you've read the sheet, or talked about it with George, you can decide whether you'd like to take part or not.

What are you trying to find out?

I will also be looking to find if you feel safe, welcome and accepted in the neighbourhood and about friendships and social networks you have made.

What will happen as part of the research?

If you agree to take part in this study you will be asked to take part in an art work project, whereby you will be asked to do a drawing or painting of all your friends. This can be portraits or a diagram showing best friends and other children you consider as a friend.

A week or more later I (George Stobbart) will be asked to interview you about your drawing. This will take about 30 minutes. I will take notes of this discussion, and if you wish, you can see these notes to check if they are true and correct. I will also record the discussion on a voice recorder unless you do not want this to happen.

The interviews will be undertaken outside of school, such as a home, or at another place agreed by you and your parent or carer.

Why do you want me to take part?

I am asking you to take part in this research as I am very interested in learning from your experiences as a person from a family seeking refuge.

What if I don't want to take part?

You don't have to take part in the research. Just tell the researchers that you're not interested. It's not going to be a problem. It's up to you if you take part in the research.

What if I change my mind?

If, after a session, you change your mind about taking part, that's OK. You might have started off wanting to talk to the researchers, but you don't now. Or perhaps first of all you didn't want to talk to them, but now you do. It's fine, just let us know.

You have the right to withdraw from the research at any point without giving a reason. You can do this by speaking to me, your teacher, or parent who can pass the message to me. Any tape recordings and notes relating to you will be destroyed.

You said you're going to take notes/record the interview. Will you write down things that I say?

If you don't mind me using a Dictaphone (voice recorder) I will record everything you say so I won't forget everything you have told me. I may also write down some notes.

Will anyone know I've taken part in the research?

All information you provided via the interviews will be made anonymous - you and any other persons or locations mentioned will be provided with false names. You can choose your own false name if you wish. Everything you say will be confidential (unless you say something that makes me believe you are at risk of harm and I will have to pass this information on to others to help protect you).

How do I know that you're going to keep my information safely?

The tape recordings and notes will be stored within secure premises and on computer files accessible only to George Stobbart. All written notes and tape recordings will be kept by George Stobbart and will not be used for any purpose other than for the research described above and will be destroyed when the research is completed. All art work will be returned to you later in the year.

What's going to happen after you've done all this research?

Once I have finished my research at your school or community group, I will provide a short summary of my findings and send them to you. When I have completed all of my research, I will present this to a group of academic people who will decide if the research is worthy of a research degree (PhD).

OK, I think I want to take part

On the next page there's a consent form to sign. If you don't want to sign it, then you can just tell the researcher that you're happy to take part. They will make a note on the form for you.

You should keep this information sheet, just in case you have any questions.

I want to know more about the research

You can ask the researcher whenever you see them about the research. George will be happy to answer your questions.

I want to complain about the research or report something about the research I'm unhappy with

If you want to know further information such as the role of Northumbria University in this research, or wish to make a complaint you can contact or Mark Ceislik 0191 227 3416 or via e mail to: mark.ceislik@northumbria.ac.uk