

(Un)belongings: within and against asylum dispersal in Sheffield

An enquiry into a sense of belonging to people and place over
time among people who have been dispersed in the asylum
system

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Abstract

This thesis asks how people who are made to move in the asylum system develop a sense of belonging to people and place over time. Immigration and asylum policy can marginalise and exclude migrants. People seeking asylum are excluded from belonging to the state via citizenship. Refugees and people seeking asylum are often excluded from belonging to the British nation. This thesis engages with the consequences of one aspect of asylum policy: dispersal. Enacted in 1999, dispersal compulsorily moves people seeking asylum to different parts of Britain – usually post-industrial urban centres. The policy of asylum dispersal is driven by deterrence, discomfort and disintegration. Its drivers can reduce or limit a sense of belonging by systematically excluding people from full participation in British society.

Through ethnographic fieldwork with 15 people in the major dispersal city of Sheffield in the North of England, this study explores how people can be both excluded from and struggle for belonging. It considers participants' rich lives and connections to people and place within and against a suite of policies that actively seek to deter and exclude. The study finds that repeat moves and changes to legal status over time can disrupt a sense of belonging for people. In addition, it finds that being dispersed to relatively peripheral locations within a city can create everyday challenges and disrupt a sense of belonging. The study finds that migrant-owned businesses – salons and restaurants – as well as leisure practices both online and offline can lead to a sense of belonging and its practice. The study contributes to sociological debates on belonging by considering its practice and focusing on how people seeking asylum can forge a sense of belonging within and against unbelonging.

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Glossary and abbreviations

ASPEN card – The pre-paid debit card onto which weekly S4 and S95 payments are loaded.

Further Submissions – New evidence submitted to the Home Office to support an asylum claim if it has been refused, withdrawn or if appeal rights have been exhausted. The Home Office consider further submissions to be a fresh asylum claim if the new submissions are significantly different to previously submitted material and the content has not already been considered and it presents a realistic prospect of success.

FSU – Further Submissions Unit. People wishing to make further submissions must make them in person at the Further Submissions Unit in Liverpool¹.

IAC – Initial Accommodation Centre. Provides temporary full-board accommodation under S98 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 prior to dispersal.

ILR – Indefinite Leave to Remain allows the person who holds it to live and work in the UK for an unlimited time. A person who has lived continuously in the UK for five years as either a refugee or someone with humanitarian protection can apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain.

IRC – Immigration Removal Centre. People detained under immigration powers are held in Immigration Removal Centres. The term “detention centre” is widely used by activists and practitioners because many people are held in detention for long periods of time with no prospect of removal (deportation).

Judicial Review – This is a procedure through which a court can review an administrative action by a public body and (in England) secure a declaration, order or award.

¹ This was the case at the time fieldwork was conducted. Since March 2020 it has been possible to make further submissions by post or email.

NRPF – No Recourse to Public Funds. Prohibits access to defined public funds which include a range of benefits given to people on a low income, with particular social care needs as well as housing support.

S4 support – Section 4(2) of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 allows for the provision of support for refused asylum seekers if they are destitute and meet a certain set of criteria, including being unable to leave the UK, having made further submissions or having applied for Judicial Review. Support consists of accommodation and £35.39 per week (in 2019) loaded onto an ASPEN card.

S95 support – Section 95(1) of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 provides support for asylum seekers and their dependents if they have an ongoing asylum claim and are considered destitute by the Home Office. Support consists of accommodation and £37.75 per week (in 2019) loaded onto an ASPEN card.

S98 support – Section 98(1) of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 provides support for asylum seekers and their dependents until the Home Office is able to determine whether support may be provided under S95. Support consists of accommodation in an IAC and no weekly financial support.

RCO – Refugee Community Organisation.

TSO – Third Sector Organisation.

Universal Credit – This is a mainstream welfare benefit for people in or out of work. In 2018, it replaced six types of welfare benefit.

Notes on the text

Categories: people seeking asylum

Where possible I refer to people seeking asylum rather than asylum seekers. This is to avoid reducing participants to their imposed legal status while aiming to accurately reflect the differences in everyday lived experience that the imposition of different statuses creates. When I refer to “people in the asylum system”, I include people who have been refused asylum. This is because people who have been refused asylum are often in the process of re-engaging with the asylum system – either waiting to make further submissions or having recently made further submissions (see section 2.4).

Britain/the UK

There is a tendency in the literature on asylum in Britain to refer to the UK. Throughout this thesis, I will use England and Britain unless referring specifically to UK law in the interests of accuracy. There are two reasons for this. The first is that the North of Ireland is outside of the broader system of asylum dispersal (Vieten and Murphy, 2019). The second is that immigration and asylum policy as a reserved competency overlaps with devolved competencies such as health, education and social care (gov.uk, 2013). In addition, Scotland and Wales take different approaches to asylum. The New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy (Scottish Government, 2018) for example sets out a vision for integration from arrival and the Welsh Government’s Nation of Sanctuary plan proposes greater support for people seeking asylum within the devolved areas it can influence (Welsh Government, 2019). For these reasons and because no one who took part in this study was dispersed to Scotland or Wales, I will refer to England or Britain, where relevant.

Pronouns

Throughout this thesis I will use participants’ preferred pronouns. When referring to academic and other authors, I will refer to them by surname only. This is because I do not want to make gendered assumptions about authors whose pronouns I do not know (Srinivasan, 2020). Where I do know an author’s preferred pronoun, I will refer to them by surname only for consistency.

Chapter 1. Introduction: welcome to Sheffield, “check the map”

1.1 Introduction

On one evening during my first summer in Sheffield, I found myself walking down one of the city’s main shopping streets. As I walked past an old department store that had been temporarily reborn as an arts venue while awaiting redevelopment, I was drawn in by music and a large sign proclaiming that the venue was hosting the city’s first Migration Matters festival with the tagline: “a celebration of sanctuary in the city of steel”. It was around this time that my friend Hope, who later became a participant in this study, was awaiting a court date for Judicial Review on her asylum claim while preparing to celebrate her daughter’s first Holy Communion. As I nosily drifted into the building, I thought about the friendships I had made since moving to the city the previous autumn, my feelings about the city and my experience of having completed volunteer caseworker training for a charity that supports people who have been refused asylum in the city a few months prior. I reflected on the types of support available for refugees and people seeking asylum in Sheffield and everyday life for people seeking asylum within and against an explicitly punitive system. Over time, these reflections led to the core enquiry of this thesis which is how people who have been dispersed to Sheffield under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 develop a sense of belonging to people or place over time.

This introductory chapter will proceed in four sections. The first will introduce the context and core enquiry of the thesis. The second will present the aims of the thesis as well as the contributions it makes to existing studies. The third will set the scene by introducing the city of Sheffield where the fieldwork took place. The chapter will end with an overview of the structure of the thesis.

1.2 Asking the question: research context

Prior to the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, the dispersal of refugees to different parts of the country was used in exceptional circumstances, such as under specific programmes where a cohort of people was granted refugee status or temporary protection (Bloch and Schuster, 2005). The historic and contemporary dispersal of refugees and people seeking

asylum is concerned with the place of settlement and the desire to prevent a spatial concentration of refugees and people seeking asylum, particularly in London and the South East (Griffiths et al., 2005). Under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, dispersal became an integral part of the asylum system. Spontaneous arrivals, that is, people applying for asylum on arrival, began to be dispersed compulsorily because eligibility for support became linked to dispersal (Bloch and Schuster, 2005). This policy emerged at a time where there was an increasing policy focus on preventing the arrival and settlement of so-called new asylum seekers (Zetter, 2007, Hynes, 2011). Over time, successive tranches of legislation created an increasingly hostile environment for new arrivals (Mayblin, 2017).

In 2016, as I was beginning to get to know the city of Sheffield and meet with more people who had been dispersed to the city, I became increasingly interested in the experience of being dispersed in the asylum system. This was against the backdrop of the so-called refugee crisis with its shifting discourse of migrant crisis to refugee crisis and back again where, for a brief period, people seeking asylum went from being a threat to manage and control to being a vulnerable, needy Other and back again (Goodman et al., 2017). This galvanised my interest in asylum dispersal and in particular, the tension between the individual agency of people made to move in the asylum system and the challenges and pitfalls of dispersal. Some of the difficulties of dispersal were captured in an interview I conducted early on in the fieldwork for this thesis:

When they drop us in Sheffield, we came on the 17th December and it was a few days to Christmas and it was really horrible, like really really horrible. We don't know what to do, we don't know where to go to and with a little child she's like 7 years old. Like, they just took her out of her friends from London they brought her to Sheffield. They just gave us a map. We don't know what to do, we don't have food to eat and the housing officer, he said “oh check the map, if you check the map, you can know what to do and where to go to”

First semi-structured interview with Hope

Experiences like the one above as well as everyday moments of joy and tension in place drive my enquiry (Back, 1996). This thesis is concerned with how people dispersed to Sheffield can develop rich lives and connections to people and place in spite of and against a suite of policies that actively seek to deter, create discomfort and exclude. Using preliminary work and time spent with refugees and people seeking asylum, I developed the following question:

How do people who are made to move in the asylum system develop a sense of belonging to people or place over time?

The breadth of this question aims to privilege individual experience over imposed legal categories (Calhoun, 1999). The core components of people, place and time centre everyday life. The conceptual focus on belonging allows me to consider the drivers of asylum policy without losing sight of lived experience in place over time by interrogating the contestation and reproduction of belonging at different sites and scales in the city of Sheffield. This is because although belonging is a contested concept, its multiplicity, production and practice can provide insight into people’s complex social worlds. In order to answer the research question, I use an ethnographic methodological approach because it has the potential to reveal the everyday practices of belonging without losing sight of the structural (Back, 2015). Based on this, the following section will explore how I use the concept of belonging in order to contextualise my enquiry and key contributions.

1.3 Research aims: uncovering (un)belonging

The overwhelming focus of policy-led research into asylum dispersal is understandably concerned with the impacts of a policy that seeks to deter, dehumanise and disempower (e.g. Phillips, 2006, Wren, 2007, Sim and Bowes, 2007, Hynes and Sales, 2009, Darling, 2016a). I seek to complement this research by considering how people can and do build a sense of belonging within and against such policies. To do this, I build on studies focused on everyday life for people who have been dispersed in the asylum system (e.g. Hynes, 2011, Lewis, 2015, Mayblin, 2019). I do this by considering how people build a sense of belonging and potential barriers. This thesis aims to contribute to the sociological literature on asylum

dispersal by focusing on the relationship and ambivalences of a sense of belonging and the politics of belonging.

In line with Yuval-Davis (2006), I see the politics of belonging as the construction of the boundaries of a political community. The politics of belonging comprise various political projects of belonging that can create, contest and maintain boundaries of difference. The politics of belonging encompass what it means to participate and have rights within society. In Britain, specific political projects of belonging to nation and state citizenship can exclude refugees and people seeking asylum. The political projects of belonging to nation and state citizenship often focus on the right of abode, the right to work and the right to plan a future where you live (as refugee status is contingent and temporary) (Yuval-Davis, 2006, 205). The politics of belonging can thus mark refugees and people seeking asylum as outside the political community and therefore unbelonging. The politics of belonging which create the boundaries of a political community therefore exclude refugees and people seeking asylum from full socio-legal participation in society. Exclusion can persist irrespective of whether an individual feels a sense of belonging to the British nation or accesses more secure or formal belonging to the state by gaining refugee status and even citizenship.

I contrast the politics of belonging with a sense of belonging. A sense of belonging as an impulse for attachment (Probyn, 1996) is composed of social locations through axes of difference – identifications, attachments and perceptions of others through value systems (Yuval-Davis, 2011). Social locations refer to an individual’s intersecting subject positions and are closely related to how an individual may seek attachment or identification with a particular group through self-expression as well as how they may be seen or encountered by others. How an individual sees themselves can sit in tension with how they are seen by those who consider themselves to be within the boundaries of a political community. This tension and how it filters into everyday life can give insight into the experience of asylum dispersal. In doing so, it can contribute to sociological debates on belonging by addressing the unbelonging or exclusion embedded in immigration and asylum policy and how people who have been dispersed can nevertheless forge a sense of belonging to people and place over time.

The relationship between a sense of belonging and the political projects of belonging enables me to add complexity to studies of asylum dispersal by considering the simultaneity and contradictions of dispersal and life after dispersal. In other words, these tensions allow me to explore how one can both celebrate a life event while waiting to hear about the outcome of an asylum claim and how one may participate in a celebration of sanctuary while also being turned away from services or being the target of racist abuse. In this way, my primary conceptual concern is (un)belonging or, how a sense of belonging can sit within and against a system predicated on unbelonging.

My methods aimed to capture this. I used ethnography because how belonging manifests, is challenged, encountered and reproduced is part of our everyday lives (Yuval-Davis, 2011). Ethnography has the potential to reveal the micro-politics of everyday interaction (Amin, 2002) while also having the potential to capture complex layers of affinity and reveal multiple and mobile identifications to people and place over time (Neal et al., 2013). My mixed methods approach comprised participant observation, semi-structured interviews, mobile interviews and participant-led sociograms with 15 core participants, the majority of whom were dispersed to the Sheffield City Region in the five years preceding the start of fieldwork in January 2019. They aim to capture: a) the practice of belonging; b) the multi-sitedness of everyday belonging; and c) maintain a critical focus on the production and reproduction of boundaries of difference in everyday life.

Since the 1990s, belonging has increasingly been used as a theoretical and analytic tool across the social sciences. There has also been a proliferation of studies concerned with refugee and asylum seeker belonging (e.g. Valentine et al., 2009, Correa-Velez et al., 2010, Smith, 2016, Dromgold-Sermen, 2020, Parker, 2020). However, this is often centred around either solving the problem of a lack of belonging (Wood and Waite, 2011, Youkhana, 2015) or targeted interventions aimed at promoting a sense of belonging (e.g. Kale et al., 2020, Woodhouse and Conricode, 2017, Rishbeth et al., 2017, McDonald et al., 2019). By focusing on the practice of belonging, through the alternative political project of belonging as an ethics of care, this thesis brings studies that engage with the practice of belonging as

something that can lead to social change (Schein, 2009, Yuval-Davis, 2011, Wright, 2014, Bennett, 2015) into dialogue with studies focused on belonging among refugees and people seeking asylum. In doing so, I maintain a focus on individual agency within dispersal and centre everyday life in order to gain insight into processes of change and power in society (Yuval-Davis, 2011).

I build on existing studies of the temporalities of belonging (Game, 2001, Lewis and May, 2019) by engaging with the temporal experiences of asylum dispersal. Existing studies on the temporalities of asylum focus on waiting, stickiness, suspension and frenzy (e.g. Conlon, 2011, Griffiths, 2014, Clayton and Vickers, 2019, McNevin, 2020). This thesis builds on these studies by considering how the fracturing of the refugee label (Zetter, 2007) and the proliferation of legal statuses limits a sense of belonging by placing people who may have once shared legal status out-of-time with each other. I consider the temporal dynamics of re-dispersal and its impact on everyday time as well as the choices people make after asylum.

The year 2019, when the fieldwork for this study was conducted, marked the 20th anniversary of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. In the time since its introduction in the year 2000, dispersal has become a normalised and sometimes unquestioned aspect of asylum policy. This thesis thus renews specific engagement with dispersal as existing studies largely rely on data that was gathered prior to 2015, with the majority relying on data gathered prior to 2010 (e.g. Zetter et al., 2005, Phillips, 2006, Hynes, 2011, Darling, 2011, Darling 2020). In addition, I begin to consider some of the processes of urban change asylum dispersal has contributed to over time.

The policy of asylum dispersal has brought changes to dispersal locations. In spite of negative local media portrayals of dispersal that may seek to demonise new arrivals (Finney and Robinson, 2008), dispersal over time has led to the emergence of new communities where a new arrival may encounter someone who shares ethnicity, nationality, culture or language in different places such as the street or at the supermarket. In addition, dispersal has led to the creation of new businesses (Lewis, 2009) and refugee community

organisations (RCOs) (Griffiths et al., 2005) with the potential to lead to positive change, growth and new opportunities in dispersal locations (Sim and Bowes, 2007, Phillimore and Goodson, 2008). By focusing on dispersal in one city, this thesis points to how almost 20 years of dispersal has brought change to the city of Sheffield and how this can shape and influence a sense of belonging to people and place. In order to introduce the setting for this study, the next section will provide a brief introduction to the city of Sheffield which will be further developed with a consideration of dispersal in Sheffield in chapter two and inequality in Sheffield in chapter six.

1.4 The setting: welcome to Sheffield

Sheffield has a population of around 575,000 people (SCC, 2021). The city is most often associated with its industrial history. It is the birthplace of the steel industry and its surrounding towns have long been associated with coal mining. Today, Sheffield is often seen and described through the prism of post-industrial decline. The city’s industrial past – from empty warehouses to rows of terraced houses – dominate the urban landscape. Deindustrialisation decimated Sheffield’s social and economic life and the city has since been depicted in popular culture as one of deprivation and loss (Lane, 2016). In the 1980s, the city gained the moniker “The People’s Republic of South Yorkshire”, reflecting its ambitious social housing policies, subsidised transport network and its raising of the red flag over the city council on May Day. While successive rounds of privatisation and political change have brought transport subsidisation and ambitious social housing policies to an end, the city remains associated with radicalism and progressive politics (Humphris, 2020). In addition, the city is often discursively presented as one of sanctuary and refuge for those fleeing persecution (Darling, 2010).

The Local Authority, Sheffield City Council, has long presented itself as welcoming towards refugees and people seeking asylum. Local residents, trade unions and the Local Authority were historically involved in welcoming Chilean refugees fleeing Pinochet’s regime, refugees from Vietnam in the 1970s and refugees from Kosovo in the 1990s (Price, 2018). In 2003, the Local Authority set up its own Asylum Seeker Team to support those dispersed to the city under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, but this was later disbanded following the full privatisation of dispersal in 2012 (Darling, 2010, Darling 2016a). In 2004, the Local

Authority was one of the first to join the Gateway Protection Programme, a partnership between the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), eight national non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the Home Office, which provided refugee status and a “legal means of entry for the most vulnerable refugees” (Darling, 2010, 128). In 2007, with the support of the Local Authority, the city became Britain’s first city of sanctuary (Bauder, 2019). The city is also one of the largest receivers of people seeking asylum in England. Of all local authorities in Britain, Sheffield was the 11th largest receiver of people who have been dispersed in 2019. It received the 9th highest number of dispersed people of all local authorities in England in that year (gov.uk, 2019a).

Sheffield’s industrial heritage also means that the city has its own distinct migration history prior to the first schemes to disperse refugees in the 1970s. In the 19th Century, Sheffield received international migrants from China and Yemen and throughout the first half of the 20th Century, Sheffield’s industries attracted workers from all over the world (Runnymede Trust, 2012). Around 19% of Sheffield’s residents today are from a minority ethnic background (SCC, 2021).

As a key site for dispersal in the Yorkshire and Humber region, Sheffield is an excellent setting for exploring how people who have been dispersed within the asylum system develop a sense of belonging to people or place over time. This, combined with Sheffield’s history of welcoming, the range of organisations supporting refugees and people seeking asylum as well as my own relationships in the city, means that it is an ideal site for an ethnographic study.

I have so far introduced the context of this study, my research question and contributions. I then introduced the research setting. The following section will provide an outline of the thesis as a whole in order to orient the reader to my core arguments and content before turning to my first full chapter “a hostile environment to belong to: the literature on asylum policy in context” which will provide the history and policy context for this thesis.

1.5 Outline of the thesis

Chapter two develops some of the points introduced in this chapter on asylum dispersal by focusing on the history of immigration and asylum policy. The aim of this is to contextualise and provide background for the thesis overall. It begins with a brief overview of British immigration and asylum policy, traces its racialisation and the emergence of the figure of the asylum seeker. It then turns to how the contemporary asylum system operates with the intention of orienting the reader before providing an overview of dispersal in particular. Following this, it considers the specificities of dispersal in Sheffield. This serves to situate the study and provides additional context to the focus on place. The final section considers approaches to asylum dispersal in the literature in order to explore how dispersal is conceptualised and build towards the conceptual framework.

Chapter three, “interrogating belonging: building a conceptual framework from the existing literature”, situates the discussion of policy in chapter two within the core conceptual focus on belonging. It conceptualises Yuval-Davis’ (2011) framework for belonging which draws a distinction between the politics of belonging as comprised of specific political projects of belonging that construct the boundaries of different collectivities and what I describe as a sense of belonging as a feeling of comfort and impulse for attachment which, as Yuval-Davis (2011) argues, is composed of social locations, identifications and attachments and the moral value systems through which one is encountered. It then turns to the practice of belonging to consider how an ethics of care may emerge as an alternative political project of belonging. The chapter develops this focus by exploring the sites and scales of belonging in everyday life. It provides an overview with how place is used in this thesis before considering empirical approaches to refugee and asylum seeker belonging to place and people over time. In doing so, the chapter presents a framework that allows for an engagement with the systemic factors that inform policy as well as how they are experienced and reproduced in everyday life.

Chapter four, “methods: uncovering belonging”, discusses the methods most appropriate to this study. It argues that an ethnographic methodological approach can reflect the complexity and ambivalences of belonging. It situates the study in existing ethnographic studies of belonging among refugees and people seeking asylum. It then discusses each of

the methods used: semi-structured interviews, participant observation, participant-led sociograms and mobile interviews. It outlines how I developed each of these methods over time and how they elicit responses on a sense of belonging to people and place over time and can reflect how the politics of belonging can limit or constrain a sense of belonging. It also presents the approach taken to data analysis. The second half of the chapter explores my own sense of belonging relative to the study before focusing on research ethics. It considers formal ethics. It then builds on this by engaging with ethics in practice with a particular focus on power, belonging and ethnography in order to begin to problematise research. The final section considers recruitment and access in light of the ethnographic approach before introducing each of the 15 people who took part in this study.

The four empirical chapters are divided into two. Chapters five and six centre the limits and constraints to a sense of belonging. Chapters seven and eight focus on how participants build and practice a sense of belonging. Chapter five, “asylum dispersal: time and belonging” considers participants’ asylum journeys. It explores repeat moves and changes in legal status over time. It begins with life in Sheffield before exploring how living as a refused asylum seeker can limit a sense of belonging. It then turns to experiences of re-dispersal to different cities and how this can disrupt everyday routines. The last section in the first half of the chapter explores the decisions some participants have made after receiving a positive outcome on an asylum application and what this means for their sense of belonging to people and place. The second half of the chapter has two main components. The first is focused on the temporal demands of the asylum system through application deadlines, court hearings and reporting appointments. The second considers the production of and future orientations to belonging. It does this by exploring how participants narrate themselves and the boundaries of belonging evident in encounters with Third Sector Organisations (TSOs).

Chapter six, “Sheffield and its people: a place for belonging”, considers how exclusion impacts a sense of belonging to people and place. It explores economic and social divisions in the city of Sheffield with specific reference to housing and the historic political projects of belonging to the British nation. This enables an exploration of where in the city participants

were dispersed and how dispersal locations within the city can limit a sense of belonging through both fixity and hyper-mobility. It argues that being dispersed to deprived and relatively peripheral areas of the city can limit and constrain a sense of belonging. This is because the confluence of the perusal of cost efficiencies in dispersal accommodation, historic political projects of belonging to nation and transport policy fix people in place. It considers this in terms of everyday life and having to cover large distances to access food shops, schools and places of worship.

Chapter seven, “making places to belong: the practice of belonging”, builds on both chapters five and six. It does this by first exploring how a sense of belonging to place and the practice of belonging through an ethics of care can have transformative potential in the city over time and then by considering how participants build a sense of belonging to place in the city. The primary focus of the chapter is on commercial places. The first half of the chapter focuses on the businesses two participants established following a positive outcome on their asylum claims. It considers how their businesses create a place for belonging as well as the practice of belonging as an ethics of care and its ambivalences. It then turns to some of the places that participants choose to spend their time. This includes chain restaurants, a leisure centre café and a betting shop. It argues that familiarity and quiet co-presence in these places can lead to a sense of belonging and its practice.

Chapter eight, “making time to belong: everyday time and belonging in Sheffield,” builds on chapters five and six and extends some of the arguments made in chapter seven. It considers how access to the Internet and everyday time spent online can lead to a sense of belonging to people and place. It argues that this can begin to overcome some of the challenges of being dispersed to relatively peripheral areas of the city. The chapter focuses on leisure as self-actualising time as a means to build a sense of belonging. It focuses on leisure time spent online, partying, drinking and smoking and time spent in green spaces. It explores the tensions between work and leisure time for people who have no right to work as well as expectations of ‘good’ or productive leisure time. It then engages with access to and use of green spaces. It considers the gendered use of time in light of belonging as well

as how different uses of green spaces can lead to a sense of belonging to people and place within and against dominant expectations of how green spaces ought to be used.

Chapter nine, “belonging against unbelonging” concludes. It summarises the thesis, outlining key findings before discussing how they contribute to the literature. It then makes key recommendations for practitioners and TSOs and proposes two avenues for future research. It ends with a coda on the impacts of Covid-19 in light of my findings.

Chapter 2. A hostile environment to belong to: the literature on asylum policy in context

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the context and aims of this thesis. In order to contextualise and set the scene for the thesis overall, this chapter will focus on immigration and asylum policy. It will begin by giving an overview of the constructed categories of refugee and asylum seeker and their emergence. This will allow for the later conversation between how the politics of belonging exclude and how people nonetheless build a sense of belonging in chapter three, “interrogating belonging: building a conceptual framework from the existing literature” and throughout the analysis.

The second section will briefly detail the history of British immigration and asylum policy. It will discuss two previous dispersal schemes as well as trace the development of contemporary asylum policy. Following this, the third section will turn to the particular focus of this thesis: asylum dispersal. It will introduce the process of seeking asylum today before exploring how asylum dispersal operates. Discussion of the operation of asylum dispersal will be followed by approaches to asylum dispersal in the literature. This will lead to the argument that the relationship between the politics of belonging and a sense of belonging allows for a consideration of everyday life that is sensitive to individual experiences in the city without losing focus on the systemic exclusion of refugees and people seeking asylum.

2.2 Categories

We’re not like other asylum seekers.

First semi-structured interview with Mahyar

This thesis is concerned with how people who are made to move in the asylum system develop a sense of belonging to people or place over time. To answer this question, it is first necessary to consider why people are made to move in the asylum system. This requires an

exploration of who people seeking asylum are and what the asylum system does. It is this starting point that will enable me to consider the drivers of asylum policy in this chapter and its impact on people's sense of belonging in the subsequent chapters.

2.2.1 Who is the refugee and who is the asylum seeker?

This section will trace the social construction of the categories of asylum seeker and refugee. This will enable a consideration of how people become the target of policies that produce unbelonging and exclude. Under the Geneva Convention (1951), a refugee is someone who has a well-founded fear of persecution, is outside their country of origin, nationality or habitual residence and unable or, owing to fear, unwilling to return to it (UNHCR, 1951). A person seeking asylum is someone applying to be recognised as a refugee. In the UK, this has led to the creation of five key policy categories:

- **Asylum seekers** who are making a claim for refugee status under the Geneva Convention;
- **Refused asylum seekers** whose asylum claims have been rejected and whose asylum support is removed. People who have been refused asylum have limited access to welfare rights and no right to work;
- **Refugees** who are given five years' Leave to Remain in the UK. People with Refugee Status can work, apply for mainstream welfare benefits, apply for a travel document permitting travel to all but the individual's country of origin and can apply for family reunion. After 5 years of Refugee Status, it is possible to apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) and British Citizenship thereafter (Dwyer, 2005);
- People who have been given **Humanitarian Protection**, which is similar to Refugee Status, with the exception that someone given Humanitarian Protection cannot apply for a refugee travel document (Right to Remain, 2019);
- People who have been given **Discretionary Leave**, which grants leave to remain for a period of up to 30 months. People who have been granted Discretionary Leave can apply for ILR after 6 or 10 years depending on the length of Discretionary Leave. People granted Discretionary Leave cannot usually apply for mainstream welfare benefits but are generally allowed to work. Discretionary Leave is usually granted on medical grounds; in modern slavery and trafficking cases; on the basis of private life; and compassionate grounds (Free Movement, 2020b).

Beginning with these categories poses problems for researchers. For Bakewell (2008), it is important for researchers to reflect critically on the assumptions inherent in categories such as 'refugee' and 'asylum seeker'. This is because by taking the categories and priorities of policy makers and practitioners as an initial frame of reference, researchers run the risk of privileging the world view of those policy makers (Ibid, 432) and in doing so, risk reducing people's lives to their ascribed legal categories, which is then reflected in media and popular discourse. Based on this, I will consider how these categories have come about before stating how I use the categories described above in this thesis.

The category of refugee emerged as a result of the Second World War, before which no specific category of refugee existed (Malkki, 1995, 497). The Geneva Convention was initially only intended to apply to people from Europe and to deal with the large numbers of people displaced as a result of the Second World War. It was not until 1967 that a new protocol was added to cover other international contexts (Mayblin, 2017). The exclusion of people from outside of Europe from the right to be recognised as a refugee has significant implications for racialised understandings of who bears rights (Ibid). This has particular significance in the context of decolonisation where the "third world refugee was seen as a third world problem" (Malkki, 1995, 497). In effect, the figure of the "third world" refugee in Europe after 1967 was a distant object of compassion (Goodman et al., 2017) whereas the refugee within Europe was more often than not a heroic, white defector from Communism. This is what Chimni (1998) describes as the myth of difference. The myth of difference is the idea that great dissimilarities characterised refugee flows in Europe and the third world². According to Chimni, the myth of difference led to the root causes of refugee flows being laid "at the door of post-colonial societies and states" (1998, 351). For Chimni (1998) this meant that at the end of the Cold War, so-called new asylum seekers from majority countries who no longer "possessed ideological or geopolitical value" became a 'problem' that was then translated into "a series of restrictive measures which, together with those

² Note that I use third world here in line with Chimni. Throughout this thesis, I will use the terms majority/minority countries.

introduced earlier, constitute today what has been called the non-entrée regime” (1998, 352).

The increasingly restrictive responses to ‘new asylum seekers’ at the end of the Cold War led to the fracturing of the category of refugee in order to manage “so-called new migration” (Zetter, 2007, 174). This, as Zetter (2007) argues, has led to the politicisation of the category of refugee in such a way that it has produced pejorative labels. These pejorative labels are predominantly targeted towards people who are racialised as Other from the perspective of minority-country policy makers. These racialised groups who were no longer a distant humanitarian concern increasingly became seen as a threat at the borders of Europe. This led to new asylum seekers becoming a threat to the national order and a problem in need of management (Malkki, 1995).

The emergence of these pejorative labels as a result of new migrations in Britain can also be seen in the light of post Second World War colonial migrations. Attitudes towards race, migration and belonging in Britain can be explicitly linked to empire (Bhambra, 2017). Racism towards predominantly colonial or post-colonial South Asian, Caribbean and African migrants in the post-war era, many of whom were British citizens, have shaped attitudes towards race, migration, and conceptions of belonging over time. While the struggles that led to the Race Relations Acts in 1965, 1968 and 1976 progressively reduced discrimination and exclusion in areas such as work, education and housing, immigration policy conversely ensured that new arrivals were systematically placed outside the ‘mainstream’, entrenching exclusion and discrimination (Bloch et al., 2013). In other words, although anti-racist struggles challenged institutional racism and secured some change for those who arrived in Britain between 1945 and 1990, the policy response was to aim to reduce immigration for people arriving in Britain after 1990 by ensuring systematic exclusion through exceptionalisation (Bloch et al., 2013).

The systematic exclusion of new arrivals, that is, of non-white refugees in Europe at the end of the Cold War, led to borders of rights and entitlements becoming increasingly significant in establishing and marking out the boundaries of belonging (Sirriyeh, 2014, 74). This led to the establishment of a racialised hierarchy of deservingness through which people seeking

asylum gained the “almost paradigmatic status as the outsider par excellence” (Ibid, 74). It is through this that people seeking asylum increasingly became a group of people assumed to be ‘bogus’ and undeserving of protection (Goodman et al., 2017).

Overall, the fracturing of the refugee label and the emergence of the figure of the asylum seeker can be placed within a particular history of decolonisation and race (Mayblin, 2017). The emergence of the category of asylum seeker as a racialised Other seeking to exploit opportunities in minority countries thus created a group in need of management and control. This has led to the homogenisation of people seeking asylum. Moreover, the focus on people seeking asylum as asylum seekers privileges the particular political projects of belonging that inform policy design and create legal categories (Zetter, 2007). For this reason, although my research involved people who have been dispersed in the asylum system, I do not wish to assume shared qualities but rather seek to use shared experiences of particular policies and imposed categories to explore people’s complex social worlds (Bakewell, 2008); that is, people’s sense of belonging to people or place over time. The people who took part in this study hold a range of legal statuses. To focus on people’s sense of belonging as someone seeking asylum or as someone with refugee status alone runs a risk of reifying constructed legal categories. By using a framework that draws on the political projects of belonging, however, I will aim to move beyond viewing people seeking asylum or refugees as vulnerable or in need of saving and towards an understanding of how a group of people who move or who are made to move develop a sense of belonging within and against a policy infrastructure that produces unbelonging through exclusion.

Before doing so, however, the next section will give a brief overview of British immigration and asylum policy from the post-war era onwards. This will add depth to discussions so far and will enable the consideration of previous dispersal schemes as well as policies seeking to assimilate or integrate the Other. This will contextualise discussion of asylum dispersal in the subsequent sections. Doing so will enable an understanding of the everyday experience of policy and contextualise it within particular political projects of belonging.

2.3 British Immigration policy in context

The previous section explored the emergence of the categories of refugee and asylum seeker. Drawing on Zetter (2007) and Chimni (1998), I argued that the arrival of racially Other so-called 'new asylum seekers' following the end of the Cold War led to the fracturing of the refugee label and the emergence of the figure of the asylum seeker as someone in need of control. This section will contextualise this by outlining the key acts of parliament relating to immigration after 1948, alongside increasing hostility towards the racialised Other and how this relates to previous dispersal schemes. The aim of this is to place contemporary asylum policy within its broader policy history. This will allow for later consideration of the political projects of belonging that inform policy.

There were significant labour shortages in Britain following the Second World War. In response to this, the 1948 Nationality Act gave Citizens of the UK and its Colonies (CUKC) the right to live in the UK. By 1962, increased racial hostility targeted towards people who arrived in Britain after 1948 led to the Commonwealth Immigration Acts of 1962 and 1968 followed by the Immigration Act of 1971, all of which progressively restricted access and right of abode in Britain to British citizens of British colonies or former colonies (Hynes, 2011). This increased hostility towards migrants is evident in previous dispersal schemes and the prevailing policy approaches to integration over time (Bloch and Schuster, 2005).

2.3.1 A brief history of dispersal in Britain

Although previous dispersal schemes in Britain were largely used in 'exceptional' circumstances, "dispersal also has a history as part of the racialised social policy interventions that occurred in response to Black post-war settlement in Britain" (Bloch and Schuster, 2005, 503). There are six notable examples: the policy of bussing immigrant school children from the 60s to the 80s; the dispersal of Ugandan Asians made to leave Uganda under Idi Amin in the 70s; the dispersal of Chilean refugees fleeing Pinochet in the 70s; the dispersal of refugees from Vietnam in the 70s; and the dispersal of Kosovan and Bosnian refugees in the 90s. In this section, I will briefly draw on four examples in order to highlight continuities with contemporary asylum dispersal.

Previous dispersal schemes were used to “prevent spatial concentration” (Bloch and Schuster, 2005, 504) and promote assimilation (Esteves, 2018). In the case of Ugandan Asians, the vast majority of whom were British citizens, their expulsion from Uganda under Idi Amin coincided with an economic downturn in Britain and an explicit, racialised set of policies to deter and prevent the arrival of British East African Asians. The Ugandan Resettlement Board dispersed refugees by delineating “red ‘no-go’ areas and green ‘go’ areas” (Bloch and Schuster, 2005, 504). These coloured demarcations on the map aimed to discourage refugees from clustering and settling in areas where new arrivals would create economic pressures to housing, services and employment (Ibid). Prior to dispersal, Ugandan Asians were held in camps across England.

Vietnamese quota refugees to Britain were also dispersed. Following a period in camps or reception centres in England, Vietnamese refugees were housed in groups of 4-10 families based on housing availability (Bloch and Schuster, 2005, 505). The driver for dispersal was that it was seen by the government as a “necessary precursor for assimilation” (Robinson and Hale, 1989, 320). In spite of this, the policy to disperse Vietnamese refugees was “almost universally regarded as mistaken” and the reasons not to disperse were ignored (Ibid, 326-329).

These dispersal schemes were implemented at a time when there was a policy focus on deterring new arrivals to Britain. For those already settled in Britain, a key policy was assimilation. Assimilation sought to ensure that Other groups would adhere and conform to the majority population. Over time, and in response to anti-racist struggles, multiculturalism emerged as a policy framing in the 1980s. Multiculturalism as a policy was intended to recognise ethnic and cultural diversity in Britain and build towards equal opportunity in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance (Solomos, 1988, 65). The policy of multiculturalism, although light touch, focused on meeting cultural needs such as the provision of interpreters or service information in different languages (Bloch et al., 2013). It did not, however, recognise systemic disadvantage through the lens of race (Ibid). While this meant that there were targeted services to support new arrivals in subsequent dispersal schemes, these were short lived and often underfunded (Robinson et al., 2003).

Between 1992 and 1995, quota refugees from Bosnia arrived in Britain. What is distinct about the dispersal scheme for this group of refugees was that refugee status was temporary and the people arriving were expected to leave Britain once it was safe to do so (Hynes, 2011, 17). Kosovan quota refugees arriving in 1999 were also granted asylum on a temporary basis (Bloch and Schuster, 2005, 505). Local authorities were closely involved in developing services for these groups and meeting cultural needs. Yorkshire and the Humber was a significant dispersal region for Kosovan refugees and the dispersal programme led to the development of specialist knowledge in local authorities (Darling, 2016b).

However, the increasing hostility towards so-called new asylum seekers at this time led to progressive exclusion and exceptionalisation in wider asylum policy beyond quota programmes such as those for Bosnian and Kosovan refugees. Within quota programmes, there was a desire to prevent and deter long-term settlement as is evident in the temporary and contingent nature of the protection granted to Bosnian and Kosovan refugees. The temporariness of protection can be seen as a logical progression of the fracturing of the category of refugee (Zetter, 2007), with a shift towards protection being contingent on safe third countries and safe return.

2.3.2 Asylum: creating a hostile environment

From the 1990s onwards, the desire to deter new asylum seekers led to several new acts of parliament. This occurred alongside multiculturalist policies for those already here. Between 1993 and 1999, there were three major acts of parliament directly related to immigration and asylum (Mayblin, 2017). The 1993 Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act restricted who could apply for asylum; the 1996 Asylum and Immigration Act withdrew access to some welfare benefits and the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act introduced dispersal for all asylum applicants, enabled immigration officers to raid people's homes, separated asylum from welfare and ended the right to work for most (Ibid).

The acts of parliament targeted towards people seeking asylum from the 1990s onwards created an increasingly restrictive environment. This increasing hostility continued throughout the early 2000s at the time of the so-called death of multiculturalism (Bloch et al., 2013). Following civil unrest in cities in the North of England in 2001, it was argued that

ethnic minorities were living parallel lives leading to segregation and ethnic tension (Cantle, 2001). The advent of policies focused on community cohesion arguably contributed to the demise of multiculturalist policies (McGhee, 2005). Community cohesion resulted in policies that sought to integrate those already there into majority society (Phillimore, 2012), this was not accompanied by similar policies directed towards new migrants or people seeking asylum. Bakker et al. (2016) argue that this was part of a “dual policy focus”. The dual policy focus involved strategies to promote inclusion and cohesion for those recognised as refugees and those ‘already there’ (that is, established migrants) on the one hand and social exclusion for people seeking asylum on the other.

This is evident in the acts of parliament related to immigration and asylum from the 2000s to the present. The 2006 Immigration Asylum and Nationality Act granted Refugee Status for a maximum of five years and the 2007 Borders Act introduced immigration reporting (similar to bail reporting) (Mayblin, 2017). The cumulative effects of this can be seen in the hostile environment set by policies from 2014 onwards as well as in the decreasing policy focus on social integration. Policies to promote cohesion, inclusion or integration for new migrants or established migrants since 2010 have been limited (Griffith and Morris, 2017). Exceptions are the Controlling Migration Fund and the Integrated Communities White Paper. The Controlling Migration Fund helps local authorities to “mitigate the impact of recent migration” with a small budget to recruit Asylum Seeker Liaison Officers to support people with the transition from asylum seeker to refugee status (MHCLG, 2019). The Integrated Communities White Paper provides funds for some English classes and a scheme to increase ethnic minority youth participation in national youth groups like the police cadets (MHCLG, 2018). Despite these limited efforts, an increased focus on local government and devolution means that some local authorities in England have begun to develop their own integration strategies which include people seeking asylum (Home Office, 2019).

In 2012 the then Home Secretary, Theresa May, said in an interview for a national newspaper that it was a priority to create a “really hostile environment” for irregular migrants (Kirkup and Winnett, 2012). The hostile environment as a specific policy approach was enacted in the 2014 Immigration Act and has since mutated to refer to the “generalised

state-led marginalisation of immigrants” (Griffiths and Yeo, 2021, 1). The hostile environment added to a suite of already harsh immigration policies. Although there was no official definition of “hostile environment” or a government White Paper that preceded it, the hostile environment led to policies enacted by both the 2014 and 2016 Immigration Acts and other areas of legislation (Ibid). The hostile environment set of policies diffused immigration controls into everyday life through health, housing and education. This has led to what Yuval-Davis et al. (2018) describe as everyday bordering. They describe everyday bordering as “intimately linked to specific political projects of belonging” (Yuval-Davis et al., 2018, 230).

The progressive racialisation of immigration policy is particularly evident in immigration statistics. In the year 2019, only 6% of migrants to the UK were people seeking asylum (gov.uk, 2019a). In the year 2019, 34,354 people applied for asylum and 111,700 visas were granted to highly skilled workers and investors (gov.uk, 2020a). In the case of investors and highly skilled workers, applicants from the US and Australia are in the top five nationalities. In contrast, the top five nationalities for asylum applications in the same year were Iran, Iraq, Albania, Eritrea and Pakistan (gov.uk, 2019a). This contrast can be used to illustrate the racialisation of immigration policy and the framing of people seeking asylum as a ‘problem’. The contrast can also be used to highlight differential approaches to belonging and inclusion – that is, who deserves the right of entry and over time, the right to belong. This differential can be used to argue for a framework based on belonging. This is because while everyone may belong in some way, people seeking asylum are often portrayed as unbelonging and are the target of policies that produce unbelonging based on appeals to race, class and nation.

The interplay of the political projects of belonging as manifested through immigration policy and a sense of belonging is the central concern of my thesis. The previous section on categories and this section traced the emergence of the categories of refugee and asylum seeker and provided an overview of the history of immigration policy in Britain (Zetter, 2007). These sections argued that immigration policy has become increasingly restrictive and racialised, culminating in the hostile environment policy approach (Griffiths and Yeo, 2021). These sections have shown that previous dispersal schemes have prioritised

deterrence and a desire to avoid the clustering of racially Other groups (Bloch and Schuster, 2005). In addition, it traced the bifurcation of attempts to integrate the Other (Bakker et al., 2016). Whereas anti-racist struggles arguably led to the abandonment of assimilationist policies, efforts to integrate or include racialised minorities through policy over time have increasingly ignored new migrants culminating in a dual policy approach as described above.

2.4 The asylum process

This section will give an overview of the process of applying for asylum. It does not intend to capture all of the complexities or intricacies of the asylum process. Instead, the intention in this section is to orient the reader with flowcharts followed by a description in order to lead into a more detailed exploration of asylum dispersal. Applying for asylum is a complex process. The Home Office expects people to claim asylum as soon as they arrive. The flowchart below gives an overview of applying for asylum through to the first time someone receives a decision.

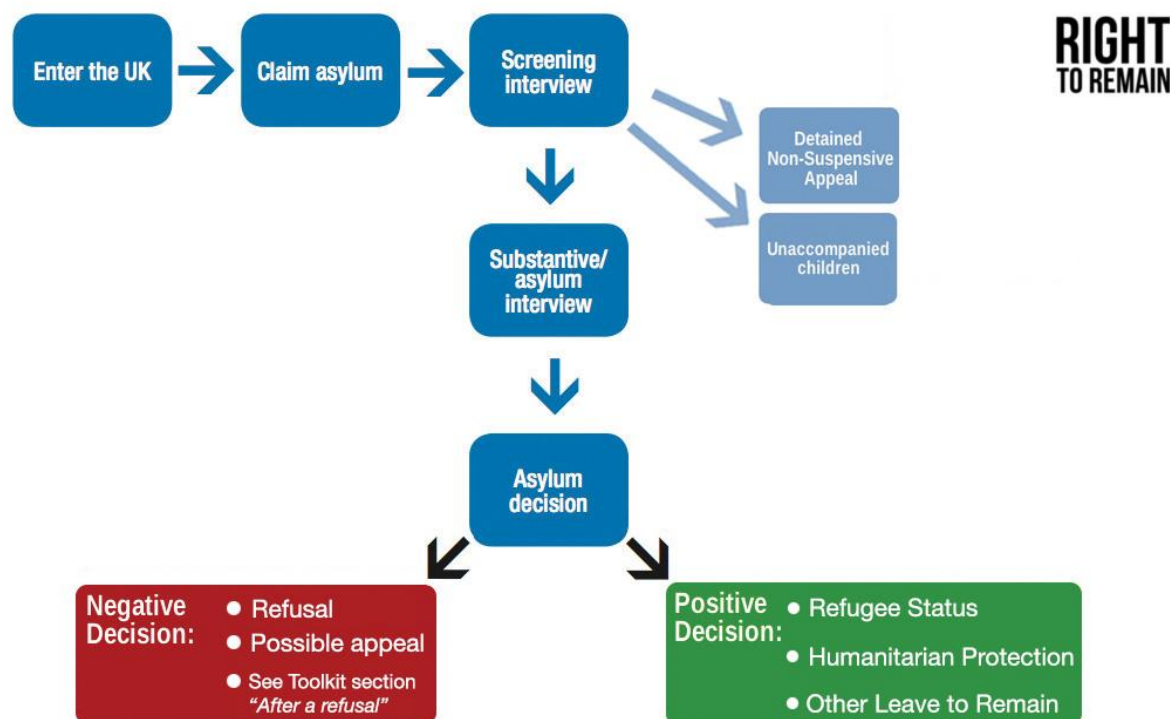


Figure 1 Asylum application process flowchart

Source: Right to Remain, 2019

Both screening and substantive asylum interviews tend to be scrutinised for minor inconsistencies and are often assumed to be falsifications (Bohmer and Shuman, 2018). People whose claims are considered to be “clearly unfounded” at the screening interview may be detained. However, detention is possible at any stage of the asylum process. Those who are considered to be destitute at the screening stage enter the dispersal system (Right to Remain, 2021). People seeking asylum are only entitled to legal representation at their substantive interview; 42% of applicants have their cases refused at this stage (gov.uk, 2019a).

The process following initial refusal is complex. As is evident in the flowchart below, some people are not granted the right of appeal which means that their only legal means of challenging the decision they have received is Judicial Review (Right to Remain, 2020a). Deadlines for submitting appeals are 14 days. Applications at any stage may also be refused if someone receives a criminal conviction. Those who are granted the right of appeal are able to appeal at the First Tier Tribunal and then at the Upper Tribunal (Ibid). Those who are refused at the Upper Tribunal have their “Appeal Rights Exhausted” and are at risk of detention or deportation.

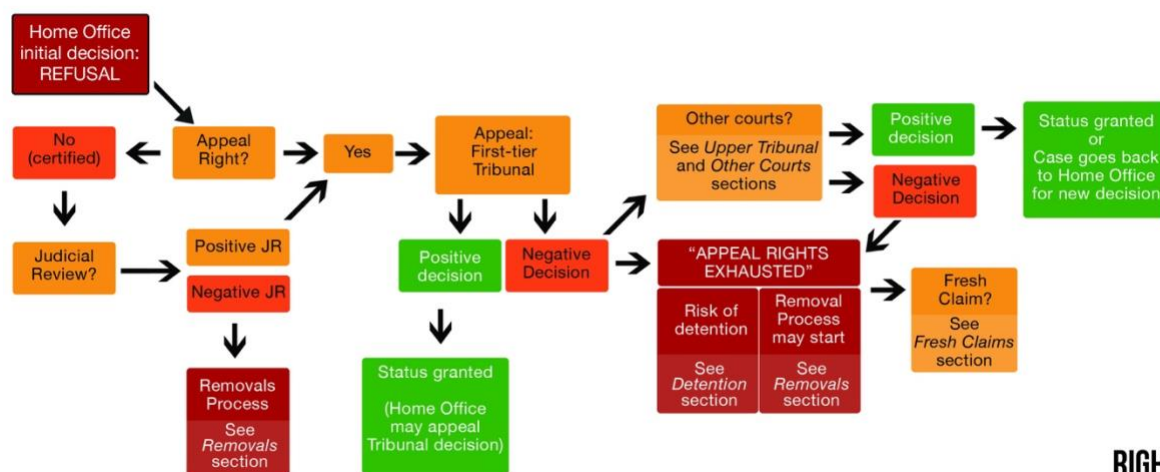


Figure 2 Asylum process after refusal flowchart

Source: Right to Remain, 2019

Once appeal rights are exhausted, people may submit further evidence to the Home Office in person at the Further Submissions Unit (FSU) in Liverpool. The flow chart below illustrates this process:

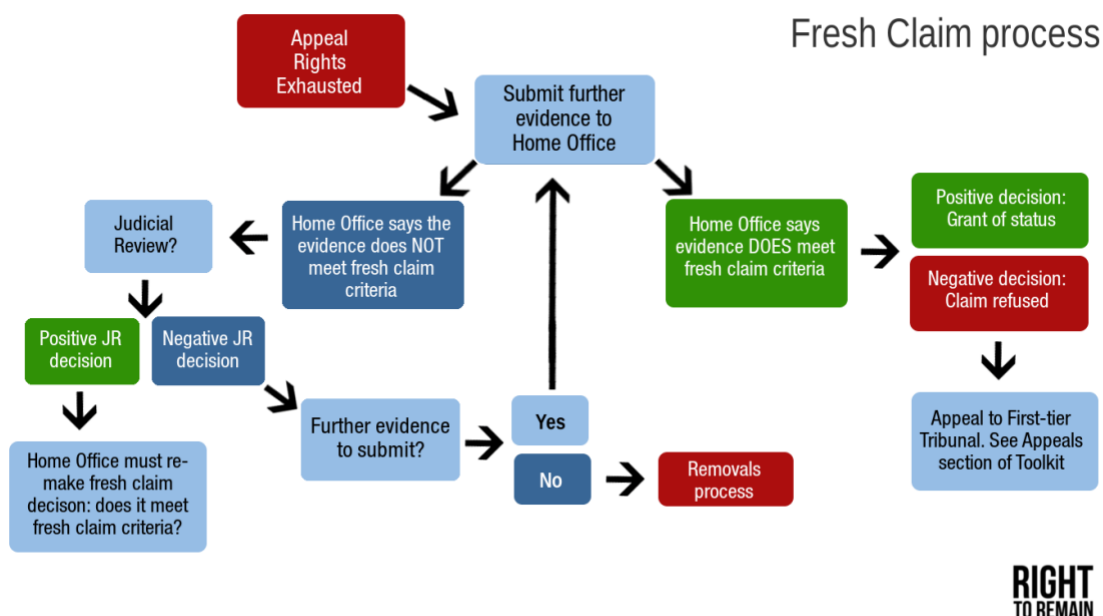


Figure 3 Submitting further evidence flowchart

Source: Right to Remain, 2018

The Home Office uses a legal test to ascertain whether further submissions constitute a fresh claim. If further submissions meet the fresh claim criteria, the process effectively starts over from the point of “initial decision” described above (Right to Remain, 2018). At this point, a claim may be refused if someone has an outstanding NHS treatment bill (Free Movement, 2020c). Those whose further submissions do not meet the fresh claim criteria may challenge this decision via Judicial Review.

Alongside this are a complex set of entitlements that, owing to the devolved competencies of health, social care and housing, can vary across the four nations of the UK and within regions and local authorities. People seeking asylum or who have been refused asylum do not have the right to work. However, from 2010 onwards, those who had been waiting for over 12 months following an initial claim could apply for the right to work in jobs on the Shortage Occupations list. This list is far from comprehensive or accessible to most people and includes jobs such as Older Adult Psychiatrist, Geophysicist and classically trained Ballet

Dancer. The Shortage Occupation list is also restricted by nation, with some only applying to one of the nations in the UK (gov.uk, 2016b).

Those who have applied for asylum are entitled to NHS care (gov.uk, 2020b). However, in England, access to specialist care can vary based on local decisions made by Clinical Commissioning Groups. Access to education in England can also vary. Children who are of school age must attend, however, additional support for the children of people seeking asylum varies by school and local authority (McIntyre and Hall, 2020). Similarly, with regards to further and higher education, although there is no formal access, some further education colleges and higher education institutions do offer places to people seeking asylum (Murray, 2019). Finally, although people seeking asylum are entitled to legal representation, there is an uneven geographical spread of legal services and some dispersal areas are in what are considered to be “legal deserts” where it is difficult to access any form of legal representation (Wilding, 2019). Unqualified or inexperienced legal representatives are also known to predate on people seeking asylum (Burrige and Gill, 2017). Building on this, the next subsection will consider how asylum dispersal operates. This will contextualise the overview of the asylum process and entitlements above as well as the discussion of lived experience in the empirical chapters.

2.4.1 Dispersal

The year 2019 marked the 20th anniversary of the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act which introduced compulsory asylum dispersal. Whereas previous dispersal schemes were targeted towards particular groups or quota refugees who came to Britain as a result of specific government agreements, compulsory asylum dispersal applies to all spontaneous applicants who are considered to be otherwise destitute (Hynes, 2011). Twenty years since the first people seeking asylum were dispersed, dispersal has become a normalised and sometimes unquestioned part of the asylum system. This section will describe the operation of dispersal in England at the time fieldwork was conducted (January to September 2019). The following section will describe dispersal in Sheffield before situating my study in the wider literature on dispersal.

When discussing the operation of asylum dispersal, I will focus on England in the interests of precision. Although I will cite studies that draw on Welsh or Scottish case studies, I will focus on England because devolved responsibilities over health and social care, education and training and local government and housing can mean that the experience of dispersal in Wales and Scotland differ. I do not include the North of Ireland because it is outside the broader system of asylum dispersal (Vieten and Murphy, 2019) (see also: page vii, notes on the text).

The 1998 White Paper *Fairer firmer faster: a modern approach to immigration and asylum* led to the policy instruments of the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act. The White Paper rested on two assumptions: first, that a great number of asylum applications were fraudulent and second that the welfare benefits system acted as a pull factor (Home Office, 1998). As a result, the proposals put forward in the White Paper and its accompanying information document (Home Office, 1999) sought to separate the asylum system from welfare in order to make Britain less attractive to fraudulent asylum claims and make the asylum system less vulnerable to abuse (Home Office, 1998). As Hynes argues, the distinction between genuine and other cases was explicit in the White Paper, as was the assumption that genuine asylum seekers “would not be concerned about how they received support or where they lived” (2011, 45-46). In this way, the policy design that led to dispersal began with a focus on deterrence, discomfort and the assumption that people seeking asylum were undeserving of support (Sales, 2002) and consequently in need of control.

Dispersal began in April 2000. In addition to the dual assumption of fraudulent applications and the pull of the British welfare system as drivers of a policy of deterrence and discomfort, dispersal specifically aimed to reduce the burden on London and the South East (Griffiths et al., 2005, Sales, 2007). This is because many people seeking asylum until this point had chosen to stay in London for various reasons, including being close to family, friends and other social networks (Hynes, 2011). The policy thus sought to avoid a visible concentration of people seeking asylum in one area (Robinson et al., 2003) and can consequently be seen as a continuation of efforts to avoid the clustering of racialised minorities in previous dispersal schemes (Bloch and Schuster, 2005). Beyond this, dispersal

was a housing led policy (Wren, 2004). By spreading the burden and reducing the pressures on dwindling social housing stock in London and the South East, dispersal was intended to enable new dispersal areas to generate income by renting their hard-to-let social housing stock and reduce overall costs to the public purse (Darling, 2020). Despite successive changes to accommodation provision and multiple reviews, dispersal today operates mostly on the same basis as it did in the 2000s. The regions in England with the highest number of dispersed people are the North West and Yorkshire and the Humber. In 2019, three of the ten local authorities receiving the highest number of dispersed people were also three of the ten most deprived local authorities in England (DCLG, 2019).

Pre-dispersal

Once an application for asylum is made and a determination of whether someone is destitute is being conducted, people can be temporarily accommodated in Initial Accommodation Centres (IACs). IACs are usually hostels which provide full-board meals and basic toiletries but no cash support (ASAP, 2017). Accommodation in IACs is under Section 98 (S98) of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. Support under S98 may be provided “only until the Secretary of State is able to determine whether support may be provided under section 95” (Immigration and Asylum Act 1999). IACs are intended to be short term, but many are made to stay for several months before dispersal (Right to Remain, 2020b). The poor conditions of IACs have been widely reported (Home Affairs Select Committee, 2017, Grayson, 2020). People are moved once dispersal accommodation becomes available. Only two bags of personal effects are permitted per person (Hynes, 2009).

S95: Financial support

People who are deemed to be destitute because they do not have accommodation or money to meet living expenses for themselves and any dependents become eligible for Section 95 (S95) support under S95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 (ASAP, 2016). This comprises accommodation in a dispersal area offered on a compulsory, no-choice basis and weekly support payments. Those who are able to find alternative accommodation, such as with friends or family, are eligible for Subsistence Only support comprised of weekly S95 payments (Hynes, 2011). Weekly payments are expected to meet only essential needs, excluding the cost of travel and communication. In 1999, support levels were set at 70% of

mainstream Income Support and payment was made via vouchers (Immigration and Asylum Act, 1999b). In 2019, S95 payments were £37.75 per week for adults (gov.uk, 2019b). This rate is 37% of the 2019 standard Universal Credit allowance for those over 24 (gov.uk, 2019c) and 24% of the relative poverty line (Bourquin et al., 2020) Additional payments are made for people with dependent children (gov.uk, 2019b). After almost 20 years, S95 payments have increased by just £2.22. The £35.54 per week paid to people seeking asylum in the year 2000 would have the purchasing power of £60.27 in 2019 (Bank of England, 2019). For people on S95 support, the voucher system was replaced by a cash system in 2002 (Reynolds, 2010). Cash payments were collected from Post Offices. In 2017, pre-paid debit cards, ASPEN cards, (administered by the multinational company, Sodexo) were introduced for people on S95. These cards cannot be used to make purchases online but can be used in all shops accepting Visa payments and at cashpoints.

S95: Housing

The initial geography of dispersal was based on the availability of housing (Hynes and Sales, 2009). Today, dispersal accommodation is concentrated almost uniquely in low-cost urban areas in formerly industrial cities (Darling, 2020). The system of contracting used by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) meant that dispersal was effectively privatised from the start (Hynes, 2011). Between 2000 and 2012, NASS negotiated housing through a network of regional consortia which included contracts with local authorities, housing associations and private landlords (Netto, 2011). Dispersal was fully privatised in 2012. Contracts under the Commercial and Operating Managers Procuring Asylum Support (COMPASS) were given to three companies: the security company G4S, the services company Serco and the accommodation provider Clearel (Darling, 2016a). Of these three companies, only Clearel had any prior experience providing asylum accommodation (NAO, 2014). At the end of 2019, shortly after my fieldwork came to an end, the COMPASS contracts were replaced by the Asylum Accommodation and Support Services Contracts (AASC) with services in Yorkshire and the Humber passing from G4S to the Mears Group.

Since its inception, the condition of dispersal accommodation has been widely criticised (Carter and El-Hassan, 2003, Phillips, 2006, Dwyer and Brown, 2008, Netto, 2011). With the exception of families, most housing is shared, usually with one person to a room (Home

Office, 2018a). Families are usually given whole flats or houses, but lone parent families are often made to share (Ibid). People living in dispersal accommodation are subject to unannounced housing inspections (Darling, 2020).

Service provision

In its early days, dispersal locations were often in areas that lacked the appropriate infrastructure for services to support people seeking asylum and often exposed people to racism, marginalisation and isolation (Netto, 2011). In addition, many dispersal areas were ill-prepared for the reception of new arrivals, including a lack of institutional knowledge and cultural sensitivity among local service providers (Carter and El-Hassan, 2003). Although dispersal led to the rapid development of new Refugee Community Organisations (RCOs) and other Third Sector Organisations (TSOs) seeking to support people seeking asylum, dispersal did not attract new funding (Zetter et al., 2005). Many local authorities in dispersal areas began to create teams to support people seeking asylum, but the dissolution of NASS and the privatisation of dispersal in 2012 led to the loss of these teams, loss of services and loss of institutional memory (Darling, 2016a). In addition, there were no initiatives in place to plan for the long-term settlement of people who had been dispersed and no inclusion of refugees, asylum seekers or RCOs in decision making processes (Carter and El-Hassan, 2003).

2.4.2 After asylum

The majority of people who have been refused asylum are left destitute. Lacking the right to work, having no access to welfare and living in fear of deportation can mean that people are dependent on support from friends, family, social networks and TSOs (Bloch, 2014). In addition, people who have been refused asylum are only able to access emergency healthcare through the NHS and may be charged for certain urgent care provision, such as childbirth (gov.uk, 2020b). Fear of large bills can mean that many people avoid accessing healthcare (Feldman, 2020). This has raised significant public health concerns (Phillimore et al., 2015, Kearns et al., 2017, Griffiths and Yeo, 2021).

State support for refused asylum seekers

In some circumstances, the state will support people who have had their claims for asylum refused. There are two routes for this: support under Section 4 (S4) of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 and support for people with mental or physical health needs that meet the high threshold for support under the Care Act 2014. S4 support can be given if someone has been refused asylum and is taking “all reasonable steps to leave the UK”; if they are unable to “leave the UK for a medical reason”; or if there is “no viable route of return” (Immigration and Asylum Act, 1999a, ASAP, 2016). Those who are awaiting Judicial Review or have made further submissions are also eligible for S4 support. The application process for S4 can sometimes be delayed. Adults waiting for their application for S4 to be processed remain destitute.

Although the voucher system for people on S95 support came to an end in 2002, vouchers were reintroduced for people in receipt of S4 in 2006 as a disincentive to stay in Britain (Carnet et al., 2010). In 2009, vouchers were replaced by the AZURE card, a pre-paid debit card (administered by Sodexo). The AZURE card could not be used at ATMs and its use was restricted to certain retailers with a ban on purchasing items such as tobacco and alcohol (Carnet et al., 2010). In 2017, people in receipt of S4 were moved onto ASPEN cards but ASPEN cards for people in receipt of S4 support cannot be used at ATMs. S4 comprises a weekly payment which in 2019 was £35.39 (£2.36 less than S95 support payments) and dispersal accommodation. People will sometimes be housed in IACs before re-dispersal into S4 accommodation (gov.uk, 2019b). People who are given S4 are usually re-dispersed within their region (Hynes, 2009).

Support under the Care Act 2014 can be provided to people who have been refused asylum if they have complex mental or physical disabilities or care needs that have not been caused by destitution and meet the threshold for support (gov.uk, 2016a). Care Act support is given by Adult Social Care through the local authority and can only be given to people who have been refused asylum if not doing so would amount to a breach of their human rights (Ibid). This, however, is often hard to prove (ASAP, 2018).

Receiving a positive decision

When any of the categories of leave to remain described in section 2.2 above are granted, people enter the 28-day move-on period. During the move-on period, people continue to receive support payments but, in that time, must find somewhere to live, apply for a national insurance number, find work and apply for welfare benefits if they are eligible for them (Hynes, 2009). Given the time it can take to access benefits (six weeks for an initial payment at the time fieldwork was conducted), find work, receive a national insurance number and raise a rental deposit or register for the waiting list for social housing, the move-on period places many in a state of destitution (Potter, 2018).

Not all who are granted Discretionary Leave are given recourse to public funds. Where there is a condition of No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF), people are not eligible for any form of mainstream welfare benefit. However, it is possible to appeal this decision. For families granted Discretionary Leave with NRPF and are made destitute in the move-on period, accommodation and financial support can be provided by the local authority's Children's Social Care Department under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 (NRPF Network, 2016). Section 17 of the Children's Act 1989 imposes a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of any child in need in their area (Free Movement, 2020a). This section has provided a description of how dispersal operates. As mentioned above, the experience of dispersal in England can vary across regions and local authorities. In order to contextualise my consideration of asylum dispersal in Sheffield, therefore, I will now briefly outline the specificities of dispersal in Sheffield.

2.4.3 Dispersal in Sheffield

In 2019, there were 800 people on S95 support in Sheffield (gov.uk, 2020a). There are no Local Authority level disaggregated data on the number of people on S4 support (Ibid). Unsurprisingly, there are no accurate means to gauge how many people who have been refused asylum live in Sheffield or exactly how many people choose to stay after receiving a positive decision on an asylum claim (Stewart, 2012). At the time fieldwork was conducted, G4S held the contract for asylum accommodation in Sheffield. What participants describe as "G4S houses" are often on the outskirts of the city in areas of low-cost housing with poor transport links to the centre (Greenwood cited in Goran, 2017) (discussed further in chapter

six). The condition of dispersal accommodation in Sheffield has been widely criticised as substandard and dangerous. This has included a lack of fire escapes, infestations and broken and damaged furnishings (SYMAAG, 2017). G4S houses in Sheffield do not have access to Wi-Fi (Home Affairs Select Committee, 2016).

In many dispersal cities, there are TSOs that provide support to people who have been refused asylum. Sheffield is distinctive because of the extent and number of TSOs supporting or working with people seeking asylum, who are recent refugees or have been refused asylum. Sheffield is also distinctive in the specialised statutory services offered to people seeking asylum as well as its past experience as a dispersal city and as one of the first asylum dispersal locations. The following section provides a brief overview of these services and their historical context.

Sheffield City Council was involved in the previous refugee dispersal schemes described above and especially involved with the dispersal of Chilean, Vietnamese, Kosovan and Bosnian refugees (Humphris, 2020). In 2003, in response to the growing number of people who had been refused asylum finding themselves destitute in the city, a group of people formed ASSIST (Asylum Seeker Support Initiative Short Term). The group, which later became a charity, supports refused asylum seekers with weekly cash payments and/or a bus pass as well as accommodation for around 20% of its clients. It has around 90 clients and 200 volunteers (ASSIST, 2019a).

In 2002, a GP practice that provides health services specifically for people who are seeking asylum, refugees or survivors of human trafficking was established in order to meet their particular health needs (Migration Yorkshire, 2015). The practice is in the city centre and only a few doors away from ASSIST's offices and the weekly multi-agency drop-in service for refugees and asylum seekers. In 2005, the UK City of Sanctuary movement was established in Sheffield (Bauder, 2019). In 2007, Sheffield became the first City of Sanctuary in Britain with the support of the Local Authority and different local organisations. As a result, Sheffield is often discursively presented as a welcoming and hospitable city (Darling, 2010). The primary aim of the City of Sanctuary is to build a culture of hospitality for people seeking sanctuary. It aims to influence policymakers and change public attitudes towards

migration (Squire and Darling, 2013, 61). In 2018, the City of Sanctuary took over an old storefront next door to the building where multi-agency drop-ins are held for people who are seeking asylum or who have refugee status. The Sheffield City of Sanctuary in 2019 coordinated the weekly multi-agency drop-in, ran its storefront open space with computers, hot food and seating areas and provided office space to other organisations supporting refugees and people seeking asylum. It also hosts the monthly refugee and migrant forum which feeds into the city council's Cohesion and Migration Partnership Group (na, 2019). In 2018, the city council's Cohesion and Migration Partnership Group contributed to the development of a charter on cohesion committed to "support the work of charities that work with the most vulnerable asylum seekers and refugees newly arrived in Sheffield" (Greenwood, 2018, 8). In 2010, the charity South Yorkshire Refugee Law and Justice (SYRLJ) was established to provide legal advice about people's claims for asylum and help find evidence that people may need to support further submissions in response to a dearth of legal services in the city (SYRLJ, nd). Many of the people who took part in this study have used the services described above. Many of these organisations feature in the data and will thus be discussed in the empirical chapters. Those organisations will not be mentioned by name if the comments are negative because this thesis does not set out to critique the often-well-intentioned actions of organisations but consider participants' experiences of them in light of belonging.

2.5 Approaches to dispersal in the literature

This section will briefly consider approaches to asylum dispersal in Britain in the literature. This will explore how asylum dispersal has been conceptualised to build towards the framework developed in chapter three. Central to this exploration are studies that concern how the policy drivers of dispersal produce exclusion and how people can develop a sense of belonging within and against a system predicated on exclusion. Building on this literature, I will argue that it is necessary to bring together the impact of policy, individual experiences and the specificities of dispersal in Sheffield because existing studies do not always draw the three together.

Many of the studies of asylum dispersal in Britain begin with policy. These studies broadly argue that the policy drivers of asylum dispersal are deterrence, discomfort, (dis)integration

and the privileging of market forces. Such studies tend to focus on the regulation and control of people seeking asylum by the state (Bloch and Schuster, 2005, Phillips, 2006, Hynes and Sales, 2009, Darling, 2011). Bloch and Schuster (2005) consider dispersal as a part of an arsenal of control in response to perceived crisis and fear of the Other as a result of changes in global politics. With regards to the specific policy of dispersal, Phillips (2006) considers how the process of asylum dispersal produces deprivation and insecurity. Similarly, Hynes and Sales (2009) argue that asylum dispersal is explicitly punitive and can undermine social cohesion. They argue that dispersal can dehumanise and dehistoricise individuals and lead to an experience of continuous waiting, disempowerment and austere living conditions. They conclude that although policy is driven by liminality, people who have been dispersed can and do begin to build a sense of identity and belonging within and against dispersal's policy drivers. More recently, Darling's (2011) study considers regulation and control using domopolitics, arguing that the nation is seen as the 'proper' place for belonging and, while on the one hand domopolitics can lead to embracing mobility for economic advantage, on the other it can also lead to insecurity and disciplinisation for people who are not seen as desirable.

The policy drivers of deterrence and discomfort are also considered from the perspective of (dis)integration and the privileging of market forces. Although the policy of dispersal intended to prevent clustering, the focus on sourcing low-cost housing has meant that in many dispersal cities and towns, people seeking asylum are clustered and concentrated in certain wards (Phillips, 2006). Darling argues that although dispersal can be seen as having been intended to be a form of targeted integration which ensures the "effective distribution" of people seeking asylum across Britain, the privileging of cost efficiencies has meant that dispersal has created areas of disintegration and multiple deprivation (2016a, 485). Darling argues that the pursuance of neoliberal cost efficiencies has led to the further social marginalisation of "those seeking asylum as an economic and fiscal drain during a time of austerity, at the expense of a citizenry constructed as our people" (2016b, 235). For both Wren (2007) and Dwyer (2005), the pursuance of cost efficiencies has led to poor service delivery for people seeking asylum as well as poor regulation, coordination and scrutiny within the dispersal system.

When considering (dis)integration, Sim and Bowes (2007) argue that dispersal has led to the emergence of new communities. Phillimore and Goodson (2006, 2008) similarly find that over time, dispersal can lead to local regeneration through the economic potential of people seeking asylum and their practices of integration at the local level. However, there is limited engagement in the literature on dispersal and regeneration. The longer-term transformative potential of asylum dispersal will therefore be explored in chapter seven.

There are a number of studies focusing on the lived experience of dispersal. These include studies concerned with social capital (Zetter et al., 2005) and RCOs and support services (Dwyer, 2005, Griffiths et al., 2005, Wren, 2007). Alongside these are studies concerned with how dispersal interacts with education and young people (Sirriyeh, 2013, Bloch and Hirsch, 2017), access to legal support (Burrige and Gill, 2017) and health (Maffia, 2007, Feldman and Musgrave, 2015, Feldman, 2020). More specifically, there are studies that are concerned with how people who have been dispersed can and do lead rich and fulfilling lives within a system that seeks to discomfort and exclude. Lewis (2010, 2015) for example engages with leisure practices in the North of England through music, dancing, and food. Lewis considers how these practices can constitute and symbolise belonging, familiarity and feelings of identity and argues that the spontaneity of parties and dancing can allow people to momentarily escape the “insecurities, precarity and depersonalising effects of the asylum system” (2015, 54). In this way, it is possible to bring together engagement with the exclusions of asylum dispersal and how people can and do build a sense of belonging in everyday life. Such an approach is evident in Spicer’s (Spicer, 2008) study of how young people who have been dispersed build social networks in everyday contexts at the neighbourhood level. Spicer (2008) finds that refugee children’s agency in building social connections can lead to a sense of belonging. This too is evident in Hynes’ (2011) exploration of the continuum of liminality and belonging where people’s social networks within and against a system predicated on liminality can lead to a sense of belonging. By using a framework based on belonging, therefore, I hope to consider how people build a sense of belonging within and against a system that produces unbelonging through policies intended to exclude. This will enable me to build on existing studies and consider the interplay of systemic factors and individual agency while maintaining a focus on the specificities of experience in Sheffield.

Darling (2020) argues that academic work on dispersal has tended to privilege its regulatory basis and role at the heart of the goal of deterrence. While the studies mentioned above do consider the everyday experience of policy, Darling argues that “such discussions have overlooked how the conditions of urban life shape refugee experiences and how cities and their politics are reworked [...] by the presence of refugees” (2020, 8). For Darling, this gap needs to be approached with a focus on the city. Building on this, I will argue that the conceptual frame of belonging allows for a consideration of the relationship between policy and individual experience in a way that is sensitive to the generative elements of the practice of belonging in place. This will enable me to consider the joys and tensions that exist in people’s everyday lives and how people moving through the city and practising belonging can lead to social and urban change (Hall, 2015). In doing so, I will maintain a specific focus on the particular experience of dispersal in Sheffield and its connections to the wider system of dispersal as well as other places. This will build on Phillimore and Goodson (2006, 2008) but will do so in a way that is not focused on integration or regeneration but on everyday acts and agency. This will necessarily involve a consideration of change and adaptation over time.

There is relatively little literature that engages explicitly with the experience of time in the dispersal system. Existing studies concern how people use their everyday time (Lewis, 2015, Rishbeth et al., 2019), how waiting for a letter from the Home Office can shape experience (Darling, 2014a), and on the choices people make after they have received a positive decision on their asylum claim (Stewart, 2012, Sim, 2015, Stewart and Shaffer, 2015). I add to these studies by considering belonging and time in chapters five and eight. This will involve how people position their sense of belonging over time and onward migrations. For example, Stewart and Shaffer (2015) in a national study find that dispersal has diversified the ethnic composition of British cities with greater numbers of refugees choosing to stay in their dispersal location. I will add ethnographic analysis to this by considering how the choice to move from Sheffield or to stay is shaped by a sense of belonging to place. Overall, the framework of belonging will enable a consideration of the experience of being made to move in the asylum system that privileges the individual over their imposed legal status,

considers agency and transformation, maintains a focus on the specific experience of dispersal in one city and draws on the unbelonging generated by policy.

2.6 Conclusion

By exploring the emergence of the categories of refugee and asylum seeker, this chapter argued that immigration and asylum policy has become an increasingly restrictive way to deal with the 'problem' of the racialised Other. Following this, the chapter provided an overview of immigration and asylum policy history in Britain, arguing that policy over time has sought to deter new arrivals into Britain. The legal categories of asylum seeker and refugee as well as the history of immigration policy require a frame that a) does not reduce people to their ascribed legal categories and b) is sensitive to how policy produces exclusion or, as I will frame it in this thesis, (un)belonging. I understand unbelonging as the process through which the asylum system limits a sense of belonging through exclusion, producing unbelonging. I understand (un)belonging as part of how people can build a sense of belonging within and against unbelonging.

The chapter then turned to the process of seeking asylum and asylum dispersal specifically. The description of how the asylum system operates will serve to orient the reader throughout the thesis. Following this, the chapter gave a brief and non-exhaustive overview of how dispersal in Britain has been approached in the literature. It considered the way studies focused on policy find that the asylum system produces unbelonging through exclusion and how studies of everyday experience of the asylum dispersal consider an individual sense of belonging. I argued that there is a need in the literature to consider this in light of urban specificities. The following chapter will present the conceptual framework of belonging. I will argue that the complexity of belonging as a concept can allow for us to engage with people, place and time in light of the relationship between an individual sense of belonging and the politics of belonging which can exclude.

Chapter 3. Interrogating belonging: building a conceptual framework from the existing literature

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter explored the construction of the categories of asylum seeker and refugee as well as the history of immigration policy in Britain. I then examined how immigration policy sets out to deter the arrival of people seeking asylum into Britain. This engaged with how policy instruments targeted towards the racialised Other have undergone change over time (Bloch and Schuster, 2005, Bloch et al., 2013, Yuval-Davis et al., 2018) and how asylum dispersal operates. I argued that the complexity of belonging as a concept can allow us to engage with people, place and time in light of the relationship between an individual sense of belonging and the politics of belonging which can exclude.

This chapter will situate my discussion of policy in the previous chapter with respect to my core conceptual framework, that of belonging. The central enquiry of this thesis is how people who are made to move within the asylum system develop a sense of belonging to people or place over time within a policy framework that seeks to deter and exclude. Having asked who the asylum seeker is and what the asylum system is, this chapter will make an argument for why I have chosen to situate my enquiry within the literature on belonging and will review the literature on refugee and asylum seeker belonging. The chapter will be divided into four sections.

The first will explore different ways of conceptualising belonging including the politics of belonging and a sense of belonging (Antonsich, 2010). Drawing on Yuval-Davis' (2011) outline of an analytical framework for the politics of belonging and belonging – it will consider the political projects of belonging and an individual sense of belonging. I will argue that the political projects of belonging to the state (via citizenship) and the nation can produce difference and exclusion. I will argue that a sense of belonging as a feeling (Probyn, 1996) can be about seeking comfort and familiarity as well as positioning oneself within and against different political projects of belonging. I will then turn to how the practice of

belonging as an alternative political project of belonging through an ethics of care can begin to challenge political projects of belonging to the nation and state citizenship.

My core argument will be that belonging as a concept allows for an engagement with the construction of boundaries that lead to the exclusion of people seeking asylum and their differential effects as well as the multiple ways in which an individual may feel they belong or not belong at different sites and scales. This will enable me to focus on how individuals develop a sense of belonging to place and people over time. In other words, a conceptual focus on belonging will allow me to engage with the systemic factors that inform policy instruments targeted towards people seeking asylum and how they filter into everyday life while centring lived experience. This is because although belonging is a contested concept with many different interpretations, its multiplicity, production and practice can reflect people's complex social worlds.

In order to consider how a sense of belonging to people and place may emerge over time, the second section will discuss place as a product of social relations and explore the sites and scales of belonging in everyday life. The third section will build on this by reviewing empirical studies of belonging with a focus on studies concerned with refugees and people seeking asylum in place at different scales in the context of my conceptual framework. I will use this to consider how a broad macro analytic approach to the politics of belonging combined with a narrow focus on a sense of belonging in individuals' lives can be used to gain an understanding of asylum dispersal. Although there is a significant amount of literature on belonging among refugees and people seeking asylum in majority countries (see: Chowdhory, 2018, Ramírez, 2018, Mlotshwa, 2019, Njwambe et al., 2019), I will focus on literature from minority countries and regions because my research was conducted in Britain.

Having reviewed empirical studies of refugee and asylum seeker belonging, I will conclude that belonging is useful for the study of dispersal in the asylum system because it connects the person to the social (May, 2011), it is vital to how people imagine and remake their worlds (Wright, 2014) and holds potential for social change (Schein, 2009). Building on this, I will outline gaps in the literature and provide an explicit justification for my study.

3.1.2 What is belonging?

Belonging is at once self-evident, taken for granted and difficult to define. Everyone belongs to something and indeed, as Wood and Waite argue, it is “impossible not to belong” (2011, 201). It is possible to belong in lots of different ways and at lots of different scales (Mee and Wright, 2009). An individual may be seen to belong to their family, their locality, social institutions and organisations or the nation-state. They may also feel like they belong or hope to belong. An individual may also be precluded from belonging at these scales.

There is a growing interest in the study of belonging. Since the 1990s, belonging has increasingly been used as both a theoretical and analytical tool across the social sciences. There has been a particular interest in the concept of belonging in sociology (e.g. Probyn, 1996, Fortier, 2000, Yuval-Davis et al., 2006, May, 2011, Yuval-Davis, 2011), geography (e.g. Mee and Wright, 2009, Antonsich, 2010, Wright, 2014), philosophy and cultural studies (e.g. Game, 2001, Leach, 2002, Miller, 2003, hooks, 2008) and politics (e.g. Geddes and Favell, 1999, Babacan and Singh, 2010, Bauböck, 2018). Within sociology, belonging has been used to think through the relationship between the individual and society (May, 2011). This connects how an individual or group may see themselves to how they are seen by society. In this way, belonging can be located at the heart of the tension between the sociology of power and the sociology of emotion (Yuval-Davis, 2011, 138). Within geography, belonging is seen primarily as a way to connect matter to place (Mee and Wright, 2009). This deals with the question of what various practices of boundary making mean for the experience of being in place. Similarly, philosophical approaches to belonging see it as an ideal mode of being, or the sense of being at ease with ourselves and social contexts (Miller, 2003). Approaches from the discipline of politics theorise belonging as the relationship between the self and publics. That is, the relationships between the self and social institutions and the nation-state (Geddes and Favell, 1999).

Belonging is of interest to a number of disciplines and, in many ways, the study of belonging is an interdisciplinary one. The brief summary above shows how belonging is central to some of the thorniest and most contested questions in the social sciences: those of self, location, society and the state. The varying uses and applications of belonging have led to

the criticism that it is nebulous and ambiguous (Antonsich, 2010). However, belonging as something that is at once “slippery and axiomatic, flexible and self-evident” has also been described as its greatest strength (Wright, 2014, 391). This is because its messiness and uncertainty allow it to become a “problem not to solve, but to think through and reimagine the world” (Ibid, 404). The summary of disciplinary approaches to belonging above reveals a common theme of belonging as a way to understand the multiple connections between the self and society.

May (2013) brings together a relational account of self and society to understand social change. For May, a focus on belonging makes it possible to keep “in focus different aspects and modes of being, such as the cultural, the relational and embodied, and to see how these come together in the lifeworld of a person” (2013, 152). This allows for a view of self and society as mutually constituted and sees shifts in belonging as a product of social change. What this achieves is a move away from canonical approaches to understanding the connections between the self and society. May’s (2013) approach to belonging sees society not as something that is done to people and experienced through Marxist alienation, Durkheimian anomie or Weber’s iron cage, but something that is co-produced. Belonging as a concept thus grants greater agency to people moving in and through the world. This view of belonging, however, raises the questions of what we seek to belong to; how and to what we belong; and who decides who belongs. Connecting these strands of enquiry, we can relate how we make sense of our lives and narrate ourselves (Yuval-Davis, 2011, 20) to how we seek to form attachments to people, places or modes of being (Probyn, 1996, 19). By forming attachments, we recreate ourselves and the world around us (Antonsich, 2010, 646). This relates us to the material and social worlds we inhabit (Wood and Waite, 2011, 202) and can simultaneously reveal how the construction of boundaries of difference can shape how we see ourselves (Crowley in Geddes and Favell, 1999).

The formulation and contestations of belonging allow for breadth in terms of understanding boundaries of difference, change within society and sensitivity to the self. In this thesis, it will allow me to connect individual lived experience of asylum to systemic exclusion while avoiding viewing the state as a totalising force. In order to do this, I will use Yuval-Davis’ (2011) framework for belonging which considers the multiple and overlapping political

projects of belonging and the complexity of an individual sense of belonging. I will conceptualise the political projects of belonging to nation and state citizenship as they directly inform immigration and asylum policy while remaining mindful of alternative and overlapping political projects of belonging. I will then conceptualise a sense of belonging before using both to discuss Yuval-Davis' (2011) feminist ethics of care as an alternative political project of belonging.

3.2 Conceptualising belonging

Yuval-Davis (2011) draws a distinction between the politics of belonging and belonging. The politics of belonging comprise specific political projects which construct belonging to particular collectivities (2011, 11). This can include belonging to a state, a city, or a club. For Yuval-Davis (2011), the hegemonic, often state-led political projects of belonging that have dominated the past century are those of state citizenship and the nation. There are also a number of alternative or emerging political projects of belonging that draw on citizenship and nation such as urban citizenship or struggles for national liberation. There are also political projects of belonging that include but are not limited to religion and cosmopolitanism, as well as Yuval-Davis' own alternative political project of belonging, described as a feminist ethics of care. In contrast, belonging, or a sense of belonging, involves a feeling of comfort, familiarity or safety. It is a relational state of emotion and mind (2011, 155). In order to explore this distinction, Yuval-Davis proposes an intersectional analytical perspective as this can enable us to begin to understand the "differential impact of the political projects of belonging on different members of different communities" (Ibid).

Intersectionality can be understood as an investigation into how intersecting power relations influence social relations across and within different societies and in our everyday lives (Collins and Bilge, 2020). It sees power relations not as discrete but as mutually reinforcing entities (Ibid). hooks initially focused on challenging us to consider gender's relation to class, race and sexuality (hooks, 1984). This later coalesced and began to be known as intersectionality, as coined by Crenshaw (1991). Crenshaw defines intersectionality as a way to engage with the multidimensionality of lived experiences (Ibid). Yuval-Davis (2011) uses this to study the complex interaction between the determination of what is involved in belonging to a particular collective (such as a state, nation or a city) and

how one may feel they belong to a particular collective while, for example, simultaneously being seen or felt not to belong by another member of the same collective.

Yuval-Davis (2011) calls on other scholars to build on the approach to belonging outlined in the book *The politics of belonging: intersectional contestations* by investigating it with specific, empirical case studies each with their own shifting and intersectional effects. This thesis will begin to do this by considering how people who have been made to move in the asylum system can build a sense of belonging within and against a suite of policies which, through the political projects of belonging to the nation and state citizenship, actively seek to deter, create discomfort and exclude. To do this, I will explore the politics of belonging and a sense of belonging in light of how I will use them in this study.

3.2.1 Political projects of belonging: state citizenship and nation

I focus on the politics of belonging to the nation and state citizenship as these most directly inform immigration and asylum policy. Belonging to a nation can encompass a number of different political projects of belonging, including nation-building in diaspora, indigenous struggles and anti-colonial struggles (Yuval-Davis, 2011). Likewise, citizenship as a political project of belonging can encompass urban citizenship (Darling and Bauder, 2019) or activist citizenship (Yuval-Davis, 2011) among others. In order to consider the effects of immigration and asylum policy on a sense of belonging, however, I focus on the political projects of belonging to nation and state citizenship as enacted by the state. This is because the political projects of belonging to nation and state citizenship exclude people seeking asylum from full participation in society and can produce unbelonging. In addition, a focus on state-led political projects of belonging can also enable us to consider how these political projects manifest and are (re)contested at different sites and scales.

Citizenship and the nation are highly contentious and rich fields of enquiry. Conceptually, both are extremely well-trodden grounds (e.g. Hobsbawm, 1992, Yuval-Davis, 1997, Isin, 2002, Anderson, 2016, Arendt, 2017 [1951]). As the central focus of this thesis is everyday lived experience, I can neither do justice to these extensive debates nor would they be directly useful to the question of how people who have been made to move in the asylum system develop a sense of belonging to people and place over time. This having been said, I

am interested in how the determination of what it means to belong to the British nation or the state via citizenship has on the lives of people seeking asylum. For this reason, I engage with the political projects of belonging to nation and state citizenship. Citizenship alone is not thick enough to give insight into its emotional dimensions (Crowley in Geddes and Favell, 1999) and the question of nation and nationalism alone runs the risk of reducing the analysis to identities and identifications (Yuval-Davis et al., 2005). Using the frame of the political projects of belonging to nation and state citizenship, as part of the politics of belonging can allow for the two to be considered both together and separately. In doing so, it can allow us to consider the reproduction and contestation of the political projects of belonging as enacted by the state in everyday life. Rather than monolithically focusing on the actions of the state, therefore, engaging with the political projects of belonging allows us to explore how the boundaries of the collective are produced in policy as well as in everyday life. This conceptual fluidity enables us to think about different power relations and the overlapping, differential impacts of the political projects of belonging. The political projects of belonging thus equip us with the ability to maintain an awareness of the complex processes and actors involved in creating and sustaining a system that excludes people seeking asylum.

The political project of belonging to nation is often based on essentialised, primordial notions of the collective (Youkhana, 2015). It is this essentialised notion of the collective that can lead to a violent politics of belonging (Yuval-Davis et al., 2006). The political project of belonging to nation can produce a globally stratified system of belonging that includes some but excludes others (Wright, 2014, 394). It is within these boundaries that difference can be produced and everyday representations of the Other as imagined by those who consider themselves to be insiders can come into being. The creation and maintenance of boundaries through imagined communities (Anderson, 2006) and enacted by discursive appeals to nation and by the state can thus reveal assumptions about race and the imaginaries of the Other. This is evident in graffitied slogans such as “keep Britain white”, assumptions about loyalty to the British nation or everyday encounters with people who may bemoan an individual’s lack of English language skills. In addition, appeals to the nation shape state citizenship as a particular political project of belonging. Citizenship – or the right to full participation in society (Marshall and Bottomore, 1992 [1950]) – is bound up with

who has access to a range of rights within a state. Citizenship can be thought of “both as a relationship between individuals and the state and as a way of belonging to a national community” (Yuval-Davis, 2004, 215).

The evolution of the political project of belonging to the British nation can be traced through the history of immigration and asylum policy. National descent as the ultimate criterion of belonging is evident in policies that sought to exclude those who originated in different countries and cultures from belonging to Britain in the post-war period. Assimilationism, where belonging was closely associated with an emotional identification with and attachment to Britain as a nation dominated the policies of the Thatcher government (Yuval-Davis, 2011, 26-27). Under New Labour, belonging as loyalty and solidarity with the British nation came to the fore (Yuval-Davis, 2004). More recently, Yuval-Davis et al. (2018) argue that autochthony, or “true indigeneity”, is becoming the hegemonic political project of belonging which through populist claims to rights over the nation, shape policy, bleed into every aspect of everyday life and limit a sense of belonging.

The discourse of national descent shaped the racialisation of British citizenship (Hynes, 2011), the assimilationist logic of identification shaped previous dispersal policies (Bloch and Schuster, 2005) and the logic of solidarity following the “death of multiculturalism” (Bloch et al, 2013) led to the introduction of the Life in the UK test and citizenship ceremonies (Anthias, 2013). Appeals to national belonging thus shape belonging via state citizenship and vice versa. The political project of belonging to the state via citizenship can be seen, for example, in the separation of the asylum system from welfare. The New Labour belief that social welfare existed to benefit citizens who had obligations to the state excluded people seeking asylum as non-citizens (Bloch et al., 2013, 61). The political project of belonging to the state via citizenship can also reveal how policy excludes refugees and people seeking asylum. This is evident in the temporary nature of the protection offered to refugees, the precarious path to citizenship (Vathi and King, 2013, McNevin, 2020) and in how those who are eventually able to access citizenship rights – contingent on time spent in the UK, meeting the good character requirements (Yeo, 2019) and passing tests (Anthias, 2013) – are not necessarily seen to belong to the nation. This shows how immigration rules both

enforce gradations in belonging and how citizenship and belonging have become statuses to be proved and earned (Sirriyeh, 2015).

The political projects of belonging to the nation and the state via citizenship can involve discursively representing and producing people seeking asylum as unbelonging. Policies driven by deterrence, discomfort and exclusion (Bloch and Schuster, 2005, Hynes and Sales, 2009) can limit a sense of belonging and normalise exclusion at multiple sites and scales in everyday life. The historical evolution of the political projects of belonging, how they bleed into everyday life and involve different populist claims can enable us to understand an individual sense of belonging and vice versa. This could involve how an individual feels they are perceived on the street or at the local council offices as well as how, where and with whom people choose to spend their time. As such, a macro engagement with the political projects of belonging allows for a recognition of the complex forces that lead to the exclusion of people seeking asylum. Within and against this, a sense of belonging and its practice can enable us to engage with the processes of how people create inclusion and contribute to different or alternative political projects of belonging. The tension of (un)belonging is the central conceptual motif of this thesis. It will allow me to explore how people who have been dispersed in the asylum system can build a sense of belonging within a system predicated on unbelonging and exclusion. In order to develop this, I will now consider a sense of belonging. Yuval-Davis' (2011) framework contrasts the politics of belonging to belonging, which I describe here as a sense of belonging for analytic clarity.

3.2.2 A sense of belonging

For Yuval-Davis (2011) a sense of belonging centres around individual feelings of comfort and is deeply related to the politics of belonging and multiple and overlapping political projects of belonging. In this thesis, I use a sense of belonging as an impulse for attachment (Probyn, 1996) to consider the ambivalences in the relationship between the political projects of belonging and a sense of belonging in everyday life. The definition of "'who we are' and 'what our location is in the world' are both constructed by discourses of particular political projects of belonging and affected by the specific social agents taking part in these 'everyday' social dynamics" (Yuval-Davis et al., 2018, 231). This connects a sense of belonging to the political projects of belonging by focusing on the everyday actions of

individual people. By using an intersectional analytic framework, Yuval-Davis' approach to a sense of belonging seeks to:

Deconstruct simplistic notions of national and ethnic collectivities and their boundaries, interrogating some of the differential effects that different political projects of belonging have on members of these collectivities who are differentially located socially, economically and politically (2011, 12).

This can allow us to see a sense of belonging among people who have been made to move in the asylum system not simply through the lens of their experiences of being an asylum seeker or a recent refugee but as multiply positioned individuals who are differentially affected by various political projects of belonging and specifically, the political projects of belonging to nation and state citizenship. In addition, this approach can reveal how the "stories people tell about themselves directly and indirectly relate to self and others' perceptions of what being a member of particular grouping might mean" (2011, 20).

Based on this, Yuval-Davis (2006) argues that a sense of belonging as comfort, safety and familiarity is composed of: social locations through different axes of difference including class, race and gender; multiple individual identifications and attachments that are shaped by intersecting subject positions and; the value systems through which you encounter and judge others. Social locations refer to people's intersecting and complex subject positions (Yuval-Davis, 2011). This enables an engagement with social axes of power and how they affect different groups in different ways. This can enable us to interrogate how the Other comes into being through different political projects of belonging and how social locations are ascribed. In turn, this can enable us to consider how social locations lead to the decisions people make about how they choose to identify and the attachments they choose to make or are precluded from making. This can emphasise the complexity of the attachments we make to place and people over time and their generative potential without reifying particular identity categories or particular places (Ibid). Value systems can allow for a robust engagement with both the political projects of belonging and a sense of belonging. This includes how the political projects of belonging are narrated at different sites and scales by different groups of people and lead to people being perceived in certain ways. This

may involve how a volunteer perceives the needs of someone seeking asylum or the belief that a recent refugee does not deserve welfare support. As such, the relationship between a sense of belonging and the politics of belonging can reveal how the political projects of belonging filter down into everyday life as well as how political projects of belonging to nation and state citizenship can be (re)contested, challenged and pursued by differently socially located groups of people.

A sense of belonging thus has transformative potential through its interaction with the politics of belonging and specific political projects of belonging. This potential can be seen in light of the relationship between social locations and identifications and attachments. For Probyn, belonging is an impulse for some form of attachment, whether to people, places or modes of being (1996, 19). It is about the ways in which individuals are caught up with wanting to belong or wanting to become. Rather than seeing identity or being as a stable state, therefore, this approach to belonging is about desire. This desire is about how we seek to and choose to act in the world and how we relationally change and develop through our actions. Based on this, belonging can be broken down into being and longing for (be)longing. Wanting to become is not about moving from one identity category to another but seeing how who we are is shaped by the world around us and in doing so, choosing to connect and reconnect differently. That is, someone does not belong to a city or a nation by virtue of being born there but because of their relationships and experiences. By building relationships and having experiences, one can develop an attachment to the place they were born and, in doing so, change that place and themselves through reflection. This is productive because it can rearrange relations (Probyn, 1996, 13). Wanting to become is consequently about seeking a sense of accord or self-actualisation and relationally remaking the self and the world through desire. This productive element of belonging is therefore not about discovering the self or seeking completeness or fixity but an elusive process of opening up and going forth (Game, 2001, 226). Belonging is thus a powerful emotional imperative that informs the ways in which lives and futures are lived and made (Wood and Waite, 2011). A sense of belonging can thus be a wilful, pleasurable act within and against the political projects of belonging (Ahmed, 2004, 164). For Miller (2003), a sense of belonging is a state of “correct being”, or a sense of ease within community, locality and history. It arises through attachment to place and people over time and can be seen as a

condition of the self through desire and self-expression (2003, 219). Belonging can thus be productive and generative through the choices people make about their self-expression. While attachment through self-expression may lead to a sense of ease or accord, a sense of discord can be equally productive because it can lead to people seeking new means to attach to people or place over time. This can mean creating new places such as community centres or businesses or seeking to challenge discord through particular articulations of the self. Seeing a sense of belonging in this way, can enable a focus on choices, feelings and actions in a way that centres the individual and allows for a consideration of connection to place, people and wider society over time. This can involve how people seek to belong to certain groups, such as language groups or ethnic groups in diaspora through community associations, through political or religious affiliation or through family and kinship. This can enable us to explore the relationship between a sense of belonging and the political projects of belonging. By bringing Yuval-Davis' (2011) understanding of the political projects of belonging into the dialogue with authors such as Probyn (1996) and Miller (2003), I consider how seeking accord, desire and self-actualisation can lead to both a sense of belonging and alternative political projects of belonging, including an ethics of care. I have so far summarised approaches to the politics of belonging and a sense of belonging. This has allowed for a consideration of belonging as something that connects the self to society and has the potential to generate social change. In light of this, the chapter will now turn to a feminist ethics of care as an alternative political project of belonging. This will be central to the discussion of the practice of belonging in chapters seven and eight.

3.2.3 An alternative political project of belonging

Yuval-Davis (2011) proposes a feminist ethics of care as an alternative political project of belonging. This utopian ethics of care allows love to become a means to practice belonging (2011, 157). Through this, an alternative political project of belonging emerges where belonging is actively created by people caring for each other and moving through and in the world. This approach to belonging as a means to create social change is also evident in a number of other scholars' discussions of the practice of belonging.

For Wright, belonging is created through multiple practices by a wide range of agents (2014, 400). The practice of belonging is widely seen as a means to achieve social change. Schein

(2009) for example, argues that different conscious practices of belonging can bring about alternative ways of knowing, acting and doing in the world. Schein's (2009) argument from the discipline of geography centres on anti-racist practices of belonging in the US. Bennett (2015) also argues that belonging should be understood as a practice. For Bennett, whose sociological study concerns belonging in place among families who have lived in the town of Wigan in North West England for three generations or more, argues that belonging can be transformative. This is because belonging as a regularly and habitually performed practice in place such as shovelling snow from a neighbour's drive or offering to care for a neighbour's child creates familiarity through an everyday ethics of care. This is similar to Hage (2003) who sees an ethics of care as a participatory form of belonging in place. Such practices of belonging can be minor and involve offering a cup of tea, giving directions to a particular place or be about creating places of familiarity through businesses such as halal butchers. The practice of belonging can thus be emancipatory where "being and belonging understood in radically heterogeneous ways can lead to a progressive politics" (Wright, 2014, 396). As such the practice of belonging can lead to an alternative political project of belonging and in doing so allow us to imagine and remake our worlds and thus bring about social change. The practice of belonging will be my primary concern in chapters seven and eight. The practice of belonging as an ethics of care can also be seen as an articulation of a sense of belonging that may be positioned against or within particular political projects of belonging.

In short, the politics of belonging involve the construction of the boundaries of a collective and comprise specific political projects of belonging. The political projects of belonging are multiple, varied and overlapping. For example, there can be multiple political projects of belonging that draw on nation. In this thesis, the political projects of belonging to nation and state citizenship which exclude people seeking asylum and new refugees will be considered in light of an individual sense of belonging. A sense of belonging can involve comfort, safety and familiarity. As such it includes how an individual is perceived, a desire for attachment or accord and it can have transformative potential. It can lead to an ethics of care as an alternative political project of belonging. It can also lead to alternative political projects of belonging such as nation-building in diaspora. This framework will allow for an exploration of the complexities and ambivalences of participants' everyday lives. Antonsich

(2010) argues that Yuval-Davis' (2006) approach to belonging neglects the importance of space and place. As belonging is central to everyday life and because the research question involves belonging to place, the chapter will now turn to belonging in place as part of my overarching conceptual framework.

3.3 Belonging in place

If the political projects of belonging pursued by the state are the primary site for the production of difference at the level of policy, then it is important to consider how these are contested and reproduced at different scales. This is both about how political projects of belonging filter down into everyday places such as the street, a park or a city and how a sense of belonging can develop to a specific place or places. As such, I use the relationship between the political projects of belonging and a sense of belonging to engage with the everyday places for and practice of belonging. This section will begin with theories of place as a site of belonging in order to pivot to engagement with belonging to place that specifically concerns refugees and asylum seekers. This adds a more explicit engagement with the spatial dimension of belonging to Yuval-Davis' (2011) framework. The discussion in this section will situate findings on a sense of belonging to place in chapter six.

3.3.1 What is place?

For Massey (2005), place is not simply a given location. Place is the product of social relationships. Seeing place as a product of social relationships can enable us to see how political projects of belonging manifest at different sites and scales and how they are contested through a sense of belonging and its practice; it is relevant to the political projects of belonging because it allows us to consider how place is constituted historically and how our understandings of it are often based on concepts such as nation. By considering belonging in place we can explore how different political projects of belonging (re)make or transform specific places – such as a park or a neighbourhood. It is also relevant to a sense of belonging because places can be a site of attachment or hope for future attachment. This relates to the transformative potential of a sense of belonging and how it can lead to an alternative political project of belonging as an ethics of care in place.

Belonging is often seen as inherently spatial or geographical (Mee and Wright, 2009, Antonsich, 2010) and is often explored in relation to geography. A sense of belonging to particular places is widely used as a frame for exploring a sense of belonging. The geographical scales for belonging vary widely – from the home to cities, nations and anywhere in between. Antonsich (2010) proposes an analytical framework for belonging in the discipline of geography, arguing that the self emerges emotionally through place. Place-belongingness is composed of the attachments that people form – the social relations that structure people’s attachments and the wider social and political settings that define how people develop a sense of belonging in place. This complements Yuval-Davis’ approach to belonging and allows us to ground the abstract ambivalences in the political projects of belonging and sense of belonging in concrete and empirical examples.

In Leach’s (2002) study of belonging in architectural studies, a sense of belonging to place is achieved through our everyday acts and interactions at a number of scales ranging from within the home to neighbourhoods and cities. This theory of belonging in place is made up of how we make sense of places through narratives, how we achieve a sense of belonging to place through our actions and how we come to identify with those places through familiarity. This is echoed by May who sees our familiarity with place emerging through everyday time-space routines and multi-sensory “place ballets” (2013, 371). In this way, belonging to place is fundamental to our sense of belonging as we come to identify with places over time (Ibid). Place can thus be understood as an imagined, embodied and active site for social practices through time, relationality and materiality (Bennett, 2014). Such a view of place is valuable in its multi-sitedness. A sense of belonging to place can thus manifest in a number of scales and sites. It can emerge in the home, the neighbourhood, a park or beyond. Likewise, it can emerge through routine. For example, as will be explored in chapter seven, visiting the same café every day can lead to a sense of belonging to both people and place. Situated, everyday encounters in places such as parks, cafés, school playgrounds, bus stops or beyond over time can reveal how a sense of belonging emerges and how political projects of belonging are encountered and reimagined. Places are not static but are a fluid and interactive part of social life (Massey, 2005). In this way, the practice of belonging in place has the potential to be oppositional by changing places through use and creating new ones, as discussed below and in chapters seven and eight.

3.3.2 Everyday belonging in place and time

Developing an understanding of particular places as sites of everyday encounters, movements and routines requires an engagement with the everyday. The everyday has long been an area of concern and rich engagement within sociology. Indeed, it has become an interdisciplinary field of enquiry where sociological engagements have fed into other disciplines within the social sciences (Neal and Murji, 2015). Although it is not possible to do this rich field of enquiry justice here, I will briefly outline seminal engagements with the everyday in order to guide my engagement with belonging.

From Goffman's dramaturgy (1959) to Lefebvre's ([1958] 1991) analysis of the everyday as a site of resistance to De Certeau's (1984) focus on the mundane and the routine, everyday life is recognised to be at the centre of human existence (Pink, 2012). Everyday experiences through routine and bodily praxis can be a means through which to problematise the things we take for granted or leave unquestioned and in doing so, produce new knowledge (May, 2013, 70). The everyday as the focus of analysis provides both "sites and moments of translation and adaptation and a site where the social gets made and remade" (Neal and Murji, 2015, 812). The everyday can thus give insight into individual agents and reveal processes of social change and power in society (Yuval-Davis, 2011). In other words, everyday life can enable us to see the differential effects of the political projects of belonging and how they are (re)contested in addition to allowing us to see how individuals build a sense of belonging at different sites and scales.

There is a rich engagement with belonging and the everyday. Much of this is concerned with belonging to place, with a focus on urban sites in particular. There is a call in the literature to naturalise and see belonging as part of everyday practices in place (Fenster, 2005). This call is echoed by May (2013), Wright (2014) and Schein (2009). They variously argue that focusing on belonging necessitates taking the everyday into account. This is because practices of belonging encompass routine repetition and creative action (May, 2013, 364), because belonging is produced through everyday experiences (Wright, 2014) and because an everyday sense of belonging has the potential to be transformative (Schein, 2009). There is also an increasing engagement with everyday belonging in time. This involves mundane

and repetitions and routines (May, 2016, Lewis and May, 2019) and future orientations (Probyn, 1996, Hage, 2003). An everyday approach to belonging can enable us to connect the person to the social (May, 2013), see how the world is reimagined and remade within and against various political projects of belonging and begin to build towards an alternative vision for society and the self (Schein, 2009).

The chapter has so far presented how I will approach the concept of belonging. In line with Yuval-Davis (2011), I argued that the politics of belonging produce difference and considered the political projects of belonging to nation and state citizenship before turning to an ethics of care as an alternative political project of belonging. I considered how a sense of belonging can involve articulating the self against and within that which is imposed. Building on this, I argued that the everyday can give us a means to explore a sense of belonging in relation to the politics of belonging in different places over time.

The chapter will now briefly review the empirical literature on refugee and asylum seeker belonging. A sense of belonging to people and place is widely used in migration studies (see: Valentine et al., 2009, Correa-Velez et al., 2010, Smith, 2016, Dromgold-Sermen, 2020, Parker, 2020). However, this literature often considers refugee and asylum seeker belonging as a problem to solve (Wood and Waite, 2011). Based on this, I will consider studies that engage with belonging among refugees and people seeking asylum in light of my conceptual framework.

3.4 Refugee and asylum seeker belonging

According to Brun (2001), refugee studies can assume that a sense of belonging is disrupted when people are no longer in their 'natural', national home spaces. This can reproduce the assumptions that the nation is the proper place for belonging thereby presenting belonging among refugees and people seeking asylum as a problem to solve. This can mean that attempts to solve the problem of unbelonging do "little more than to entrench that group's sense of dislocation and exclusion" (Wood and Waite, 2011, 201). Rather than begin with the problem of unbelonging, therefore, I focus on the relationship between the politics of belonging which (re)produces difference and how people can build a sense of belonging within and against specific political projects of belonging. This will allow me to avoid

analysing participants' experiences solely based on their imposed legal categories (Calhoun, 1999) and instead engage with the multiple and complex social locations, identifications and attachments of the people who took part in this study (Yuval-Davis, 2011). Doing so will allow me to engage with how everyday experiences of (un)belonging do not just depend on legal status or visible difference but draw on the full spectra of belonging that factor in class, family and affiliation (Law et al., 2013). This section will explore the empirical literature on belonging among refugees and people seeking asylum. It will synthesise the literature according to four salient themes: a sense of belonging to home; belonging in the city; belonging to nation; and the narration of belonging. This will guide analysis in the empirical chapters.

3.4.1 Belonging and feeling at home

Home is a useful term and one to which many can immediately relate to. The concept of home is often used in tandem with belonging. In many ways, it seems "central to defining belonging" (May, 2013, 83). For May (2013), belonging to home is the domestic space in which one lives and is often depicted as a place for comfort and leisure. For the people who took part in this study, however, home as a domestic space (herein accommodation or G4S house), is not necessarily a place of belonging. Indeed, for many home is multiple and shifting, it is where people are accommodated, or in one participant's description, where they are "kept", and it can change at any time, often without notice.

In contrast, for Brah (1996), who theorises home in light of migration and diaspora, home is positioned between a discursive place of desire and the lived experience of a locality. As such, home and belonging to home involves choice and desire. Home can thus be thought of as a) comfort, safety and security in a locality or domestic space, b) the basis for a claim of belonging to a nation and its denial and c) the discursive representation and narration of homes present, past and future. Ahmed (2000), who also theorises home as a post-colonial feminist scholar, argues that home is where the self and space meet and co-permeate. Home in this sense is a feeling produced through the process of disorientation and reorientation as a result of migration. In this way, home and the practices of making home can create a sense of security (Ahmed et al., 2020). In Hage's (1997) ethnographic study of Lebanese migrants in Sydney, Hage argues that home is an ongoing project of hope for the

future or a safe space. Feeling at home can thus be seen as something that transcends the domestic (hooks, 1990). This is echoed in Sirriyeh's (2013) study of home and the lives of young refugee women in Leeds and Huddersfield in the North of England. Sirriyeh (2013) argues that home can be found in many locations simultaneously. By challenging the simplistic dichotomy of home and public, Sirriyeh argues that rather than viewing migration as a rupture from home, it can be a useful way in which to understand how people find (new) routes to home. That is, how the process of home-making is both complex and fluid (Sirriyeh, 2013, 7). Home can thus be understood as something that is "experienced at the intersections between spatial, social, psychological and temporal domains where people feel a sense of belonging" (Sirriyeh, 2013, 15). In this way, home does not simply stand for a domesticated space but a symbolic space or spaces of familiarity, comfort, security and emotional attachment (hooks, 2008, 213). The routes to home and the processes of home-making can encompass multiple sites, places and locations and can be viewed as a multi-sited component of a sense of belonging. This is evident in my discussion of home-making practices after asylum in chapter five.

3.4.2 Places for belonging: belonging to place and places for belonging in the city

In addition to studies concerned with belonging and home, there are a number of place-based enquiries into belonging among refugees and people seeking asylum that focus on urban encounters. Rishbeth et al.'s (2017) synthesis of the grey literature on refugee and asylum seeker belonging in parks and green spaces in Britain, for example, finds that targeted interventions to promote belonging can lead to new social connections and everyday acts of participation. In addition, a sense of belonging to place in parks and green spaces can also be found through the acts of presence, reflection, respite and nostalgia where everyday routine practices can create a sense of belonging to place (Rishbeth et al., 2019, Rishbeth and Powell, 2013, Rishbeth and Finney, 2006). Nostalgia and routine in particular point to the temporal dimensions of belonging and how a sense of belonging may develop and change over time.

A sense of belonging to people in green spaces can also be considered in the multiple entanglements of place. Mathisen and Cele (2020) explore place at a more general or abstract level among young refugees in Norway. They find that young people gain situated

knowledge through their habitual use of place over time. This includes mundane everyday routines such as walking to school and catching the bus as well as time spent in playgrounds, at organised clubs and simply hanging out. They argue that the routine use of multiple places over time leads to a sense of belonging to people and place through knowledge of the local area. Belonging to place is thus about knowledge and identification over time. A sense of belonging to people or place over time therefore can arise through multiple attachments, knowledge and familiarity; that is to say, knowing where one wishes to belong (such as to a particular group of friends or club) and where one does not wish to belong (such as to a particular area or political association). Such an approach can build towards analysis that is sensitive to the manifestations of the political projects of belonging such as nation which exclude within specific cities or towns based on everyday experiences of racism.

The multiplicity of belonging to place is captured in two recent studies on asylum dispersal in the Netherlands (Huizinga and van Hoven, 2018, van Liempt and Staring, 2020). As in Britain, the Netherlands has a dispersal system. van Liempt and Staring (2020) consider everyday routines and how they contribute to belonging in a system where housing is assigned on a no-choice basis. van Liempt and Staring (2020) consider home-making in the city in a number of places including particular material objects such as park benches and access to greenspaces more broadly. They see the practice of home-making as an active process of seeking security and familiarity. This can include accessing mosques and developing social networks and contacts in the city. Huizinga and van Hoven's (2018) enquiry also centres on dispersal and belonging. For Huizinga and van Hoven, belonging is embodied and relational. A sense of belonging emerges through everyday social relationships. This can include polite nods with neighbours, encounters with co-ethnics at culturally familiar supermarkets or stopping to chat outside the supermarket. Huizinga and van Hoven (2018) present a multi-sited approach to belonging which draws on Antonsich's (2010) theorisation of place-belongingness. As such, Huizinga and van Hoven (2018) consider the intermeshing of different places across the city and focus on the multi-sitedness of belonging in the Dutch dispersal system. van Liempt and Staring and Huizinga and van Hoven's studies are among the few to engage directly with belonging and dispersal and are as such highly relevant to this study.

Belonging to place through everyday, mundane routines can also reveal the production of difference through everyday experiences of racism. Sinha (2008) argues that the histories of colonialism and post-war migration have shaped the experience of race and racism for new migrants in East London. For Sinha (2008), the politics of belonging diffuse into everyday life and can lead to people seeking sanctuary becoming the target of racism within racially diverse neighbourhoods. This, Sinha (2008) finds, can exclude new migrants and those seeking sanctuary from belonging to people and place. Sinha's approach thus draws together a) everyday situated experience in the city, b) multiple overlapping relationships in place and c) history and social policy. This approach can enable us to consider how the political project of belonging to nation can be experienced and reproduced differentially at different scales – newer migrants may not be seen to belong by more established migrants within a neighbourhood while, at the same time, both new and established migrants may not be seen to belong at the scale of the city or beyond.

Similarly, Wise and Velayutham (2009) who, in their edited volume on everyday multiculturalism, engage with everyday difference in places including markets, gyms and neighbourhoods argue that place and the everyday can allow for an understanding of wider social power structures. Such engagements are also evident in Jones et al.'s (2015) study of everyday multicultural encounters in franchised cafés and Neal et al.'s (2015) study of urban parks and green spaces. Although neither study explicitly engages with the concept of belonging, both provide an excellent means through which to consider everyday encounters in place, as explored in chapter seven. This is because these studies synthesise how everyday social practice can lead to new political practices (or an alternative political project of belonging) and urban reconfiguration (Hall, 2015). As such, studies of everyday belonging and place both specific and general can provide insight into the relationship between a sense of belonging, the practice of belonging at the city level and the politics of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2011). This theme will run through the empirical chapters of this thesis.

Belonging to place over time

Belonging as emerging through mundane, everyday routines and repetitions in place necessitates an engagement with time. The asylum system is often experienced through

waiting and temporal uncertainty. Whether it is waiting for a letter to arrive determining the outcome of an application (Darling, 2014b) or waiting for dispersal following an application or reapplication, the experience of waiting within the asylum system is marginal and non-linear. The non-linearity of the temporalities of migration makes the asylum process ambiguous (Khosravi, 2018). Being without status or papers removes people from dominant temporal routines (Khosravi, 2014). Thus, “for asylum seekers, temporality is often conceptualised as waiting, limbo or suspension” (Mountz, 2011, 381). Waiting, being out-of-time with others (Griffiths, 2014) and temporal uncertainty can shape people’s sense of belonging to people and place. This can involve not wanting to access new places or make new connections to people because of uncertainty about how long one may remain in a particular dispersal area or having a sense of belonging to people and place disrupted by re-dispersal. This is an emerging area of research that this research directly contributes to in chapters five and eight.

3.4.3 Nation as the place for belonging

As discussed in section 3.2.1 above, there are a number of political projects of belonging to nation. These can include struggles for national independence, national recognition, nation-building in diaspora as well as indigenous struggles (Yuval-Davis, 2011). Alternative political projects of belonging to nation across borders are also evident in national diasporic associations or cultural or language schools. A sense of national belonging, through an individual’s social locations, identifications and attachments (Yuval-Davis, 2011), can also be evident in people choosing to move or travel to areas to be close to people who share a sense of national, ethnic or linguistic belonging (Finney and Jivraj, 2013). A sense of belonging in place can also occur where one can access national foods or foods that meet cultural needs (Platts-Fowler and Robinson, 2015). However, this does not necessarily mean that people seek to belong to places where they can find ethnic, religious or cultural familiarity and nor is this necessarily equated with nation. Indeed, as Pemberton and Phillimore (2018) argue, this line of thinking can privilege ethno-national approaches to belonging in place. Such approaches can reify particular identities while overlooking the more complex social locations which may lead to individuals choosing to spend time with people who share a linguistic, ethnic or national background. Based on this, my analysis will be sensitive to a sense of belonging to nation. That is, I will not assume that an individual’s

choices are driven by a particular social location but will consider the complex, often intersecting social locations, identifications and attachments that may contribute to an individual's choices.

Many people are transnationally connected and see themselves as multiply related to nation(s) (Dahinden, 2012). A sense of belonging to nation articulated in diaspora organisations, for example, can both increase a sense of belonging to a 'new place' and be an expression of multiply positioned transnational belonging. It is possible to view people who move or are made to move not as uprooted or confronting a problem in their sense of belonging but as firmly rooted in both new places and to a homeland or 'home' nation (Glick-Schiller et al., 1995). A sense of belonging can thus be articulated both in terms of new places, a desire to connect or develop a sense of belonging to different places in the future and to past places or homelands. In this way, a transnational sense of belonging can also be generative and lead to new political projects of belonging within and against those enacted by the host and home states. Such an approach can thus denaturalise essentialist approaches to belonging and de-exceptionalise transnational migrant belongings. Transnational belongings also have particular resonance for a sense of belonging. One may feel connected to family or friends in places beyond (Skrbiš, 2008) but this sense of connection to places beyond may change over time. Although my study concerns a sense of belonging in Sheffield and thus will not engage directly with the extensive literature on transnational belonging, it is also important for my study to be sensitive to places beyond (Rogaly, 2020). This is because a sense of belonging at the level of the city, for example, is necessarily entangled with a sense of belonging to places beyond. This is evident, for example, in how people maintain relationships within and across different places at the level of the city or of the nation. This will be particularly relevant for my consideration of belonging to people and place online (Marlowe, 2020) in chapter eight.

3.4.4 Narrating belonging

For Yuval-Davis (2011) identities are narratives, or stories that people tell themselves and others about who they are. Some of these stories are about belonging and can involve the articulation of future attachment to a collective (Yuval-Davis, 2011, 20). Among refugees and people seeking asylum the narration of current and future belonging can often be in

line with perceptions of state-led, or hegemonic, political projects of belonging. As McNevin (2020) argues, the acquisition of citizenship for refugees can sometimes be presented unproblematically as the endpoint of belonging. However, the acquisition of citizenship does not necessarily mean that someone will be seen to, or feel they, belong to the national collective. As will be explored in chapter five, McNevin's (2020) argument highlights that moving from one imposed legal category to another does not necessarily imply a stronger sense of belonging.

Belonging is often presented as unproblematically about integrating migrants into the host nation and enabling them to develop a sense of belonging to that nation over time (Humpage and Marston, 2006). This is evident in Verdasco's (2018) study of refugee belonging in Denmark. Verdasco (2018) finds that even under conditions of liminality, uncertainty and temporariness, people find anchoring points that create a relational sense of belonging to a community that can enable a sense of belonging to the nation of Denmark in the long term. Although Verdasco considers the multi-sitedness of belonging, this is primarily framed as part of an end-goal of belonging to the nation of Denmark. In this way, the study reproduces ideas about belonging to the nation as an idealised form of belonging or the endpoint of belonging. Such approaches can assume that belonging to nation is singular and that movement and belonging to one or more nation creates a problem to solve (Valentine et al., 2009).

Such orientations to belonging are also evident in how host 'groups' and charities, in particular, conceive of belonging. Fakhrashrafi et al. (2019) for example, consider belonging as articulated by the sanctuary movement in Canada. They argue that belonging as articulated by charitable organisations is ahistorical, liberal and humanitarian. For them, charities can seek to produce subjects who express their sense of belonging in terms of nation and deservingness. They connect this to colonial histories with a focus on Canada as a settler-colonial state. This is echoed by Darling (2011) who finds that the practices of care and generosity at an asylum seeker drop-in in Sheffield reproduce hierarchies of belonging through compassion as a moral response to the Other. In this way, the presumptions of rights, citizenship and belonging made by volunteers and workers may undermine well-intentioned responses to people seeking asylum. As such, the value systems through which

Others are encountered can reproduce the political projects of belonging to nation and state citizenship.

With respect to the narration of belonging, Wernesjö (2020) finds that unaccompanied minors in Sweden use discourses of deservingness to narrate their own lives in order to navigate their conditional belonging to the Swedish state. This is echoed by Sirriyeh (2020) who finds that among dreamers (undocumented second-generation migrants) in the US, people seek recognition for existing practices of belonging by articulating narratives of deservingness. Similarly, Vathi and King (2013) who look at belonging with respect to the future acquisition of citizenship among people seeking asylum in Britain finds that participants see belonging through the lens of social and economic contributions and seek to align their future belongings to work, deservingness and the state. How participants narrate belonging to themselves and others will be discussed in chapter five.

In the review of approaches to refugee and asylum seeker belonging above, I have shown the myriad ways in which belonging among refugees and people seeking asylum have been conceived in relation to people and place over time in the literature. I have identified a number of salient approaches. The first of these is the concept of home as being deeply connected to practices of belonging. I will consider home as a component of belonging to place in chapter five both in terms of home-making practices and the choices participants make after asylum. I then turned to place. The studies discussed in this subsection hold the most relevance for my study because they provide a means to consider everyday practices of belonging. I will build on these studies in the empirical chapters as a means to consider participants' experiences in the city. This study will add to existing studies of place at the level of the city by more explicitly drawing on temporal analyses. This will interrogate how a sense of belonging can be disrupted as a result of changes to legal status in chapter five. Of particular relevance is a consideration of how value systems are enacted and how this can reproduce state-led political projects of belonging. This will be important for my consideration of the time spent volunteering and the role of charities in chapters six and eight. In addition, I focused on transnational belonging and a sense of belonging to national groupings. My conceptual framework which is sensitive to multiple positionalities will enable me to navigate multiply positioned belonging.

3.6 Conclusion: belonging in this thesis

This chapter has presented the conceptual framework for this thesis. I argued that the politics of belonging and the specific political projects of belonging to the nation and state citizenship can produce difference. I then explored a sense of belonging, arguing that it is an impulse for attachment and is comprised of social locations, identifications and value systems. A sense of belonging can be generative and can lead to new practices of belonging which have transformative potential through an ethics of care. Following this, I considered where belonging takes place. I argued that the everyday can be a site where we can see the relationship between a sense of belonging and the politics of belonging. Belonging thus presents a powerful conceptual framework to connect the individual to the social and explore how people act in and move through the world. Following a review of empirical studies on belonging among people seeking asylum and refugees in the literature in light of my conceptual framework, it is evident that a conceptual framework drawing on Yuval-Davis' (2011) approach to belonging can provide a robust means to engage with the question of how people who have been dispersed in the asylum system develop a sense of belonging to people and place over time.

Chapters five and six consider the limits and constraints to a sense of belonging. In contrast, chapters seven and eight focus on building a sense of belonging and its practice. Before turning to the empirical chapters, the next chapter presents the methodology for this thesis. Building on the literature presented here, I will identify the methods most appropriate to the research question and conceptual framework.

Chapter 4. Methods: uncovering belonging

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the conceptual framework for this thesis. It considered how the politics of belonging produce difference and how a sense of belonging can contest or be built within and against difference. This led to the argument that the relationship and ambivalences between the politics of belonging and a sense of belonging animate how we act and move in the world. I argued that this can enable consideration of how the category of asylum seeker comes into being without losing sight of individual agency. The chapter then considered the different places in which belonging takes place and its everyday dynamics. This chapter will discuss the methods I have chosen to address the research question, which is: “how do people who are made to move in the asylum develop a sense of belonging to people or place over time?”, in light of the conceptual framework.

The chapter will proceed in six sections. The first will argue that an ethnographic methodology is the most appropriate for this study because it can reflect the complexity and multi-sitedness of belonging. The second will build on this by explaining why a multi-method approach comprised of participant observation, semi-structured interviews, mobile interviews and sociograms are appropriate for this study and how I developed my methods over time. Following this, the third section will situate my own belongings relative to the research and build towards my ethical framework in the fourth section. I will argue that a multi-method approach is a sensitive way to conduct research. The chapter will present how I have overcome ethical challenges as well as the ethical limitations of conducting research with people who have been dispersed in the asylum system. The fifth section will build on this by describing how I entered the field and recruited participants. The penultimate section will introduce each of the people who took part in this study. The final section will conclude in light of the conceptual framework and introduce the empirical chapters.

4.2 Belonging: an ethnographic approach

Belonging involves the politics of belonging which produce difference and a sense of belonging which involves individuals’ feelings and actions. How belonging manifests, is challenged, encountered and reproduced is part of our everyday lives. As discussed in the

previous chapter, belonging can be contested and re-contested in a number of different places and scales. The multi-sitedness of belonging and its complexity thus requires a methodological approach that is sensitive to the individual; the complexity of place as a product of social relations; and the political projects of belonging.

Alongside this is the question of how the voices, life-worlds and experiences of refugees and people seeking asylum are presented, represented and used. As discussed in section 2.2.1, refugees are often presented as speechless emissaries (Malkki, 1996) who are reduced to “unfortunate creatures stuck in purgatorial circumstances” (Rajaram, 2002, 248). In line with this, Bakewell (2008) argues that beginning with the categories of refugee or asylum seeker to generate policy-relevant knowledge can reduce our understanding of people’s complex lives. Bakewell (2008) thus calls for greater emphasis on policy irrelevant research – research that does not begin and end with legal status as an individual’s defining characteristic.

Much like belonging, ethnography as a methodological approach is contested. It can be defined as “the business of inquiring into other people’s business” (Wolcott, 1999); “a wonderful excuse for having an adventurous good time” (Van Maanen, 1995); or as a product of a “cocktail of methodologies that share the assumption that personal engagement with the subject is key to understanding a particular culture or social setting” (Hobbs, 2006). Ethnographic research comprises multiple techniques that often involve being immersed in a social setting for an extended period of time, regular observations, active listening and writing up field notes (Bryman, 2015). One way to begin to reflect an individuals’ multiple, intersecting and complex social locations, identifications and attachments is to use an ethnographic methodological approach. By recognising that “every version of an Other wherever found is also a construction of the self” (Clifford, 1986, 23), an ethnographic approach has the potential to reveal the complexity and relative belongings of the participants and the researcher.

An ethnographic approach can render what is invisible visible in order to shed light on our sometimes taken for granted actions and experiences. In this way, the seemingly policy irrelevant can be shown to have policy relevance by connecting what can be taken for

granted to the structural or systemic. This can generate knowledge that has the potential to be responsive to policy, place and everyday life without starting and ending with an ascribed legal category. Ethnography can capture complex layers of affinity (Neal, 2015), reflect multiple and mobile identifications to place (Neal et al., 2013) and enable us to see how structural forces unfold in everyday life (Back, 2015). By focusing on the routine and the mundane, an ethnographic approach can reveal the everyday, micro-practices of belonging without losing sight of the structural.

Ethnography is widely used in studies of refugee and asylum seeker belonging because it can capture: a) the performance and practice of belonging; b) the multi-sitedness of everyday belonging; and c) maintain a critical focus on the production and reproduction of boundaries of difference. As Glick-Schiller et al. (2006) argue, the multiplicity of migrants' relationships locally, nationally and transnationally requires methods that see the scales of belonging not as a neat babushka doll but as complexly connected and dynamic. The complexity of belonging thus requires sensitivity to place and the micro-politics of everyday interaction (Amin, 2002) while also being attuned to places beyond (Rogaly, 2020).

Ethnography is a methodology that is concerned with listening and being-with can provide this sensitivity.

My initial research design primarily involved semi-structured interviews with participant observation as a more marginal method. As I reflected on the literature, spent time with participants and developed relationships, however, my previous experience, personal history and friendships led me to an overall ethnographic methodological approach that gave primacy to personal engagement and meaning-making through closeness, openness and listening (Back, 2007). I found that this was more able to capture the complexity of belonging as a concept while allowing me to remain sensitive to participants' multiple and intersecting social locations, identifications, attachments and value systems. This enabled me to begin to search for parts or fragments, their interrelationships and relations to the whole (Spradley, 1980).

Drawing on this and previous ethnographic studies on belonging (see: Probyn, 1996, Fortier, 2000, Savage et al., 2004, Humpage and Marston, 2006, Yuval-Davis et al., 2018), I began to

shift towards an overall ethnographic methodological approach. This is because longer-term, slower methods in a range of places can reflect the complexity of belonging. By shifting to an overall ethnographic methodological approach, I aimed to reflect the complexity of everyday belonging to people and place over time by capturing participants' relationships, micro-geographies, temporalities and feelings as well as jointly reflecting with participants on the data I had collected.

I used multiple methods. This involved participant observation to capture routine, everyday belongings in place; semi-structured interviews to elicit responses on how (if at all) participants developed a sense of belonging to the city of Sheffield over time and mobile interviews led by participants to capture a dynamic sense of belonging to place over time. In addition to these methods, I used participant-led sociograms in order to visualise and map belonging. The following section will outline how I approached the question of belonging, describe each of my chosen methods and explain how they complement each other.

4.3 Methods

In this section, I will discuss each of my methods in turn and describe how I approached data analysis. I worked with 15 participants. I began fieldwork in January 2019 and 'ended' fieldwork in September 2019. However, I remain in touch with several participants. The fieldwork comprised:

- Participant observation in participants' homes, at Third Sector Organisations (TSOs), reporting appointments, parks, a hair salon, restaurants, a leisure centre, cafés, supermarkets, shopping centres and fundraising meetings between January and August 2019 in Sheffield, Leeds, Huddersfield and Wakefield with all 15 participants as well as around ten non-participants who joined in on conversations;
- Two semi-structured interviews spaced six to eight months apart with all 15 participants;
- A mobile interview between the two semi-structured interviews with 14 participants;
- Two sociograms spaced six to eight months apart with eight participants.

I will outline how each of these methods enabled me to collect data that captures the complexity of belonging to people and place over time in order to answer my research

question. Before doing so, however, I will first explain why I did not directly ask participants about belonging.

4.3.1 How to ask about belonging?

To directly ask participants questions about belonging would be to impart my own normative assumptions of what belonging is or is not. As discussed in the previous chapter, belonging is at once taken for granted and nebulous. For this reason, I chose not to ask about a sense of belonging or perceptions of belonging. The aim of this was to avoid pre-supposing any particular conceptual frame or understanding of belonging. I framed questions around relationships, activities and daily life in the city. This is because my intention was to build upwards from participants' experiences and feelings rather than asking them to frame their experiences in terms of a conceptual approach that I, as a researcher, had defined. By avoiding analytic terms, I was able to ask for use rather than meaning (Spradley, 1979). When writing up the participant information sheet, I focused on people's experience of the asylum system and how this relates to people and place over time. The participant information sheet described the project as follows:

My project aims to understand how people who have been dispersed in the asylum system experience and build their lives in the place that they are in. I am interested in talking to people who have been made to move to Sheffield as a part of their asylum journey and find out about the connections they make with people and places, and how this has changed over time.

Describing the study as being about connections to people and place over time allowed me to consider the complexity of belonging without asking participants to frame their experiences in terms of an inherently slippery concept. Drawing on Yuval-Davis' (2011) understanding of belonging as comprised intersecting social locations, identifications and attachments and moral value systems meant that I was able to build upwards to the conceptual framework of belonging by considering the "stories that people tell themselves and others about who they are" (Yuval-Davis, 2011, 20). I used this to consider both how these stories relate to belonging to particular collectivities and participants' perceptions about being a member of a particular collectivity might mean. The focus on place allowed

me to consider the spatial boundaries of belonging and how they are perceived and experienced. The study did not ask about the politics of belonging but participants' descriptions of their activism and the lives they have established did shed light on the practice of and alternative political projects of belonging. I took my focus to be not on the construction of the boundaries of difference through specific political projects of belonging at the level of policy but how they are experienced by individuals. The sensitivity to everyday life and experience allowed me to engage with the politics of belonging through participants' discussions of their encounters and, often, how they felt they were perceived. However, research is rarely purely inductive and researchers inevitably have concepts in mind which they may impart (Sirriyeh, 2013, 25). While I acknowledge this, I hope that the interpretive self-reflexivity as part of my ethnographic approach enabled me to reflect critically on this throughout the fieldwork and analysis.

4.3.2 Pilot

I had initially planned to conduct two semi-structured interviews, two sociograms and a mobile interview with participant observation as a complementary, occasional and minor aspect of my study overall. This shifted following a pilot interview which I reflected on in my research diary below:

Doing an interview with Hope was really weird. Having known her for so long and being close friends, the dynamic of the interview felt quite strange. It felt like Hope was speaking for the Dictaphone. It seemed like there was an element of storyfication. It made me think of asylum screening interview transcripts. I found this really interesting and kind of distressing. What I also found interesting was that when I arrived at the house, we interacted as we usually do; we had a cup of tea, we talked about relationships and we caught up on gossip. When we switched the Dictaphone on, the entire dynamic shifted. Although conversation flowed easily, I noticed when playing the audio back that both our voices had become more formal and our registers had shifted. It felt like we were both performing. It felt weird asking Hope to recount experiences we had shared. There were a few times Hope said, "but you know this already".

Research Diary 15th January 2019

Following this pilot, I chose to privilege participant observation. This meant that I chose to use semi-structured interviews as a means to complement participant observation rather than use participant observation to complement semi-structured interviews. Participant observation allowed me to consider belonging through more sociable methods and I began to shift to an ethnographic mode that emphasised co-presence as a part of the “art of listening, learning, telling and showing” (Back and Sinha, 2018, 155).

4.3.3 Participant observation

Participant observation involves the “systematic description of events, behaviours and artefacts in the social setting chosen for study” (Marshall and Rossman, 1989). It can draw on multiple senses and enable engagement with everyday lived realities that cannot otherwise be fully captured in methods such as interviews. In doing so, it can provide insight into the everyday as the place where the complexity of structural forces unfolds (Back, 2015, 834).

Participant observation turns on the tension between the self and Other (Alasuutari et al., 2008). It relies on how the researcher comes to know the Other and how the researcher chooses to represent the Other both in their fieldnotes and to their audience. Although participant observation as an ethnographic method can privilege what researchers see and how they describe the world (Neal et al., 2017), making explicit the role of the researcher and challenging the researcher’s role and presuppositions can contribute to the mindful representation of that which is observed (Neal and Walters, 2006). Mindful representation will be central to my discussion of interpretive self-reflexivity in section 4.4 below. By engaging with the tensions between self and Other through participant observation together with my other methods, I was able to reflect on the production of difference and the relationship between a sense of belonging and the political projects of belonging.

Participant observation allowed me to slide into the worlds of others (Bennett et al., 2015). I participated in the everyday lives of participants, which included seemingly uneventful activities such as sitting in cafés or doing the food shopping as well as actively observing interactions in places such as Home Office reporting centres. As a participating observer, I

became a regular in some participants' social lives and became involved in everyday activities (Bryman, 2015, 434).

For Fortier (2000), belonging is produced through ritualised everyday performances. For this reason, participant observation of everyday routines can give insight into how a sense of belonging emerges. Beyond this, if, in line with Ahmed (2004), belonging is about pleasure and connecting with others, it is important to access places where belonging is enjoyed and practised. Participant observation can allow us to see how place is contested and remade and how affective (dis)connections create and limit belonging (Radford, 2017). An ethnographic approach to the production of place through participant observation can in turn capture a world of betwixt and between (Smith, 2016) and enable us to conceptualise the everyday as the site where the exclusions of policy unfold (O'Reilly, 2018).

Ethnography is often understood as an empathic understanding of a social scene where researchers enter a new social milieu (May, 1997). For some, however, ethnography is not just about entering a totally new or uncharted milieu but seeing how the researcher may enter familiar milieus in new ways. For me, this meant spending time in parts of the city I am deeply familiar with in new ways. It also meant that I spent time with people I knew well in new ways. As an ethnographer rather than as a friend or former caseworker, participant observation led to me becoming differently attuned to "gestures, textures, atmospheres, things and the context of happenings" (Bennett et al., 2015, 9). This enabled me to consider how I, as a researcher, may be "newly marked as sexed, racialised and othered in different contexts" (Okely, 2007, 77). This consideration also allowed me to reflect on how my sense of belonging intersects and interrelates with participants' belongings. Through this I was able to reflect on how, ethnography is both about discourse and about an act of co-reinterpretation (Clifford, 1986).

Field diary

Does that count as ethnography too?

Field diary 23rd April 2019

Following time spent in the field, I would record my observations in my field diary. This was separate from my research diary where I largely recorded methodological observations (discussed below). My field diary involved descriptions, notes of conversations and a record of my own feelings. My field diary was broad and varied. At times it involved long entries about my own anxieties about being in the field or feelings about how participants perceived me (Czarniawska, 2007). At others, it involved detailed descriptions of what I could see and hear around me. In my interactions with Hope, for example, I noted the constancy of the BBC news channel in the background, both in her home and at her workplace. Sometimes, this would segue into my thoughts on the snippets of news that we caught or how they snuck into our conversation. Other entries involved detailed descriptions of participants' homes or the conversations we had. The breadth and shifting tone of my entries in my field diary reflect Sanjek's (1990) description of the contradiction of field notes as something both deeply personal and shared.

During participant observation, I avoided carrying a notebook in order to avoid intrusion and to attempt to capture back-stage dynamics (Goffman, 1959). This meant that some of my field diary entries were scratch notes hastily typed up in bullet point form – sometimes on my phone but mostly on my laptop – on trains or buses before I could support them with fuller entries when I returned home or to the office. Although I did not carry a notebook, all participants were aware that I would write up reflections from the time we spent together, and I offered to share my field diary with them in spite of their occasional “dirt, blood and spit” (Jackson in Sanjek, 1990, 28). I discuss sharing my field diary with participants in greater detail in section 4.5 on research ethics below. Participant observation allowed me to describe and reflect on everyday interactions and contexts – from what we ate to seemingly banal chats over a cup of tea.

4.3.4 Semi-structured interviews

I used semi-structured interviews to complement participant observation. By using mixed methods, I aimed to capture “the situated knowledge and imagination of the individuals involved in which their social positionings, their emotional attachments and identifications as well as their normative value systems were included but not collapsed into each other” (Yuval-Davis et al., 2018, 232).

Semi-structured interviews are broad in their scope but are generally based on a topic guide that can be re-sequenced depending on the flow of conversation or adapted during the interview. Within an overall ethnographic approach, a semi-structured interview, as opposed to a structured or survey interview, can be more sensitive to reciprocity, reflect rapport between the participant and researcher and be less hierarchical (Okely, 1981). I chose to use semi-structured interviews because of their flexibility and responsiveness to participants. For the first round of interviews, I produced a loose topic guide. By creating a loose topic guide, I was able to allow some space for organic conversation and was able to pursue avenues of discussion that strayed away from the topic guide (Edwards, 2013). Semi-structured interviews allowed each conversation to develop at its own pace.

The first round of semi-structured interviews elicited responses on arrival in Sheffield. Questions were built around how people met others in the city, how they got around and what they did. This intended to capture how a sense of belonging to people and place developed over time. Although I recognise that belonging to place can also include belonging to 'home countries', I avoided asking participants about their journey to Britain or experiences prior to seeking asylum in order to avoid asking participants to re-live potentially traumatic experiences. This meant that participants who shared their experiences prior to seeking asylum did so out of choice.

Life-story approaches and biographical interview methods are common in studies of refugee and asylum seeker belonging (e.g. Fenster, 2005, Verdasco, 2018, Myadar, 2020). This is because life-story approaches can convey lived experiences while decentring the researcher (Alasuutari et al., 2008). Although biographical methods can reflect complex belongings to people and multiple places over time, they risk asking participants to re-live what may have been traumatic experiences. As I do not have the formal training to be able to ethically and supportively handle people's experiences of trauma, this approach is less suitable for this study. For this reason, the semi-structured interview approach taken by, for example, (e.g. Valentine et al., 2009, Parker, 2020) allows for a more structured, ethical engagement with individual lived experience of belonging to place and people over time.

A strong feature of the first semi-structured interviews was the everyday. In the second, I used my initial inductive analysis of the first round of transcripts as well as participants' feedback on their own transcripts to create personalised topic guides. The two semi-structured interviews were spaced about six to eight months apart to introduce a longitudinal element to the study. By developing tailored topic guides in the second, I focused on participants' individual experiences. This meant that I was able to collect data that was both comparable and specific to each participant by cross-checking emergent themes. The longitudinal element of this aspect of the study highlighted change and churn for some participants and stasis and waiting for others. This generated data on how change and stasis influenced belonging to place and people over time. It also gave a more fine-grained insight into participants' experience of dispersal over time because I was able to compare data that tracked change across the space of six to eight months for participants who were dispersed more recently to participants who were dispersed up to five years ago (with the exception of two). This, for example, highlighted increased stability for those with more secure legal status and uncertainty, stasis or rapid change among people who have been refused asylum.

The two semi-structured interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. I used an interpreter for interviews with three participants. In positivist approaches to social science, interpreters are often treated as a threat to validity or a negative effect to control for (Berman and Tyyskä, 2011, 178). When working with interpreters, I aimed to see their involvement as an opportunity to include an additional active producer of knowledge (Ibid, 181). Although interpreters may be seen as a threat to validity because of what they choose to interpret and what they may inadvertently include and exclude in their representation of what participants are saying, by including interpreters as key informants, it is possible to involve them as a visible contributor (Edwards, 1998). Where possible, I briefed and debriefed with interpreters, building in a discussion about their own thoughts and perceptions. I made a note of these discussions in my research diary. When working with a Farsi interpreter, I recruited an interpreter I knew through my experience as a volunteer caseworker. This meant that the interpreter was familiar with the experiences of people seeking asylum and, as a social science PhD student, provided his own insights into the research process.

Research diary

Throughout both rounds of interviews, I kept a research diary which was separate from my field diary. My research diary was primarily methodological. In this, I commented on what was said on and off tape (including what participants asked me to exclude from transcripts); practicalities such as problems with my recording device; discussions with interpreters; reflections on interpersonal dynamics, ethical concerns and initial analytic thoughts. My research diary sometimes included notes to self, such as reminders to pack food to share or the best bus routes.

4.3.5 Mobile interviews

Many traditional methods within social sciences deal poorly with the mobile, the multiple and fleeting (Law and Urry, 2004). In addition, they can sometimes struggle to engage with the sensory, the emotional and that which is compressed in space and time (Ibid). By using mobile interviews in conjunction with semi-structured interviews, sociograms and participant observation, my mixed methods approach brought together the mobile, the temporal and the relational in a multi-sensory way that was able to capture the complexity of belonging.

I had initially planned to conduct walking interviews with participants. A walking interview involves going along with participants as they move around their environments in order to gain insight into their sense of place and attachment in an area, locality or neighbourhood (Emmel and Clark, 2009). Walking interviews as a method used as part of ethnography can bring together participant observation and semi-structured interviews by capturing a sense of place in everyday experience. They can reflect streams of experience and practices as participants move through and interact in their social environment in a way that cannot always be captured by static participant observation or direct conversation through interviews (Kusenbach, 2003, 463). Walking interviews are an emerging method in studies of refugee and asylum seeker belonging (O'Neill and Perivolaris, 2014, van Liempt and Staring, 2020). Walking interviews have the potential to reveal the emergence of everyday belonging to place.

The walking interviews aimed to collect data on belonging to place. There were two primary motivations in my initial choice of walking interviews. The first is that walking practices can create an everyday sense of belonging (van Liempt and Staring, 2020). The second is that walking interviews can address the power imbalances between researcher and participant. Walking interviews “transfer power to the participant by minimising the usual power relations between the interviewer and interviewee that exist in traditional interviews” (Costa and Coles, 2019, 528). By asking participants to walk me through their own everyday, I was the subject of their hospitality and participants were both my hosts and guides through the encounter. In addition, being guided through participants’ everyday lives enabled me to enter into a “relational and dialogic space where embodied knowledge and the relationship between the visual and other senses and memories were shared” (O’Neill and Perivolaris, 2014, 327).

The aim of the walking interviews was to complement the semi-structured interviews and extend the sociable co-presence of participant observation. The walking interviews aimed to give greater weight to the body as an experiential site to gain insight into complex person-environment interactions by increasing the sensory range of data collection (Merleau-Ponty, 1995 in Costa and Coles, 2019, 527). When setting out to conduct walking interviews, I aimed to be as responsive to individual participants’ needs and experiences as possible. When explaining the purpose of the walking interview, I asked participants to take me on a tour of where they usually spend their time or where they enjoy spending their time in order to gain insight into the places where a sense of belonging can emerge. It was at this point that the term mobile interview rather than walking interview became a more accurate description of the method. I completed a mobile interview with all participants with the exception of Zhala who struggles to walk unaided. This enabled me to reflect on the ableism arguably inherent in the walking interview method as well as consider the fixity of some participants’ experience in place. Instead of going on a mobile interview with Zhala, we spent time knitting together in her accommodation. In addition, what surprised me was that in the case of Chish, our walking interview became a cycling interview. Likewise, with Hope our walking interview became a driving interview. For this reason, I refer to mobile interviews throughout the thesis. By maintaining openness and adaptability in my methods, I was able to engage in the unexpected, thereby enriching the data I collected as well as

reflecting on the potential harms of assuming mobility and using ableist language such as walking.

When conducting mobile interviews, I did not use a Dictaphone for two reasons. The first is ethical: I did not want to inadvertently record the voices of people in the background who did not consent to be recorded. The second is relational: I wanted to ensure that our interactions were as organic as possible. For this reason, I also chose not to carry a notebook. This meant that I recorded my reflections and experiences of the mobile interviews in my field diary at the end of the mobile interviews. I told participants that I would write up notes from the mobile interview in my field diary.

4.3.6 Sociograms

I complemented participant observations, semi-structured interviews and mobile interviews through visual representations captured in participant-led sociograms. A sociogram is a diagram where an individual's relationships are captured (Whitehead and Dufault, 1999). They have been used widely in social network analysis to represent and map interactions, relationships, friendships, antagonisms and controversies (Roethlisberger and Dickson 1939, 505 cited in Conway, 2014). Sociograms can draw together spatial, relational and temporal dynamics in migration research (Ryan and D'Angelo, 2018). Sociograms also have the potential to introduce a more participatory dynamic into research, complementing an ethnographic methodological approach.

Sociograms can vary greatly in form and content. They include egocentric sociograms that place the individual at the centre and map out distance to and importance of different social connections; concentric circles with quadrants that mark out different areas of an individual's life and social linkages in circular shapes (Ryan et al., 2014). I chose sociograms because they can visually represent social connections in place and across time thus reflecting belonging to people or place. They also move away from methods that give primacy to spoken English. These aspects can provide rich insight into people's everyday lives as well as how meeting certain individuals or moving through certain places may have contributed to a sense of belonging.

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This component of the study consisted of two sociograms spaced six to eight months apart. I aimed to draw together visual and narrative approaches and asked participants to visually represent their lives. Having two sociograms aimed to capture change over time. Whereas some participants wanted to create their sociograms during formally recorded interviews, others wished to create them in their own time. With some participants, drawing the sociogram became integral to the interview process and worked as a springboard to elicit further probes and avenues for exploration, whereas for others the sociogram became a tool to complement and extend my analysis of other data.

As a participatory tool, sociograms allow participants to have greater influence in the research encounter. This is because what participants choose to highlight can help shape the interaction between the researcher and the participant. Sociograms can also shift the balance of power away from verbal narration (Ayala and Koch, 2019, 3). In a research setting where an interview is conducted in a participant's second or third language, being able to draw rather than verbally narrate can make conversation easier and overcome some of the anxieties that can arise when expressing yourself in a second or third language. However, as I found, some people preferred to narrate their experiences verbally or physically through movement and showing. Not all participants wanted to take part in the sociogram aspect of the study, preferring to use other forms of communication. Other participants, such as Daniel, said he enjoyed the thinking that went into completing his sociograms. Eight of the 15 participants completed two sets of sociograms.

Before asking participants to complete their sociograms, I showed them a range of examples (including egocentric sociograms, network maps and quadrants) and spent time discussing how participants might want to complete theirs. I maintained a reflexive approach to the use of sociograms. I avoided setting the form and content of the sociograms in order to ensure as much ownership over the process as possible. As a result, I describe my sociogram data as participant-led. By choosing to use participant-led sociograms, I avoided the potential emotional risk to participants of having to visually represent relatively sparse social connections (Block et al., 2013).

Some participants chose to focus on the everyday, mapping their experience in different places over time. Others chose to focus on relationships, exploring instead how meeting certain individuals led them to access new places or resources. Others still chose to focus on how they have moved across Britain, plotting time in different dispersal towns or cities and in IRCs. The sociogram aspect of my research design intended to map and visualise participants' lives. The aim of this was to capture different ways in which participants perceived their own relationships to place and people over. What participants chose to depict enabled me to consider places for belonging, a sense of belonging to people and belonging over time.

Overall, my multiple methods allowed me to collect data that reflects the complexity of belonging. This included routine, everyday belongings and belongings to place and people over time through visual and narrative methods. By using multi-sensory methods, I made data collection more inclusive. Whereas some participants felt at ease in a semi-structured interview setting, some expressed that they preferred walking, showing, telling and leading.

4.3.7 Analysis

I used my initial analysis of the first round of transcripts to create the topic guides for the second round of interviews. I completed this initial analysis by hand. I used open coding to generate key themes for further enquiry. Following the first round of interviews, several participants asked to see their interview transcripts. This form of member checking enhanced validity and helped challenge the researcher-participant power hierarchy (Caretta, 2016). When sharing transcripts, I took the opportunity to discuss the research process with participants and explore their views on my progress so far. With some participants, this led to me exploring my emerging themes with them and asking them to comment on the second round topic guides I had drafted. In doing so, I was able to reflect on emerging themes, draw on participants' input and reflect through discussion on how I had come to draft certain questions and not others. In Nawid's case, this led to me including specific questions on Internet access and time spent online.

Once I had collected the second round of semi-structured interview data, I input both sets of interview transcripts – 30 – in total into NVivo. I used open coding in NVivo to identify key

themes (Bryman, 2015). I aligned parent codes to my core research question with parent codes for “people”, “place” and “time”. As an example, with respect to the “place” parent code, I organised child codes as specific places such as “accommodation”, “parks” and “shops”. As I coded each of the interview transcripts, I referred back to corresponding entries in my research diary. This enabled me to reflect on the emerging themes and assess them in light of my own thoughts at the time. This provided an opportunity for metacognition on the research process (Gerstl-Pepin and Patrizio, 2009), enabling me to engage in interpretive self-reflexivity about my own relationship to the research.

Once I coded the interview transcripts, I used the data visualisations built into NVivo to map my codes. I used the hierarchy chart and comparison diagrams to visualise my codes and their relevant child codes. Seeing my codes visualised in this way led me to hand draw thematic and colour coded mind maps of codes. This enabled me to better visualise interconnections and themes within themes building from people, place and time to belonging. This approach to analysis complemented my multi-sensory and multi-method research design.

Following this, I repeated the same process for my field diary. I used open coding to identify key themes. Once I had generated a list of headline themes, I wrote a summary of around a page for each theme highlighting key issues, sub-themes and my own initial reflections. This enabled me to consider my own belongings relative to the research process and reflect on circuits of communication, convergences and discord in how I claim to represent belonging. I was then able to read these summaries in line with my code hierarchies and hand-drawn mind maps to deepen my analysis. My approach to analysing sociogram data was similar. I took time to reflect on each participant’s sociograms in light of my interview, field diary and research diary data. This led to me writing around a page of reflective thematic analysis for each set – eight in total – and enabled me to confirm and cross-reference themes across the different types of data.

In order to reflect my use of mobile methods in my analysis, I hand drew maps for each participant based on their individual transcripts, sociograms and field diary data. I first wrote up a long-form, 1000-word, pen portrait for each participant. I then used this to

colour code and map participants' trajectories within Sheffield and beyond on an Ordnance Survey map. This enabled me to visualise participants' movements over time and consider how this may have affected a sense of belonging to people and place. It also led to me being able to visualise patterns of housing allocation as well as service provision. This enabled me to consider the political projects of belonging as they manifest in policy. Following this, I drew individual maps for each participant using a graphics editor. This combined with the sociogram data, enabled me to reflect on disruptions to belonging as a result of repeat dispersals or sofa-surfing, as well as the limits to a sense of belonging resulting from a lack of physical proximity to services, leisure spaces and social networks. The mobile interviews are thus implicit to some of the analysis in the empirical chapters where they emerge as a component of my discussion of belonging to place and movement through places. The mobile interviews are central to the mobility maps presented in chapter six.

Overall, my interpretations of participants' belonging in the analysis is a sensitive reading of what they have expressed about people, place and their own feelings over time and how these can reflect the relationship between the politics of belonging and a sense of belonging. My combination of visual, verbal and mobile methods enabled me to analyse upwards from participants' diverse and multiple experiences. As a researcher, this required reflexive engagement with my own acts of representation. Based on this, I will now consider my role as a researcher and research ethics.

4.4 Where do I belong? Positioning myself

You're not really white though, Eda, so we can talk about this
First semi-structured interview with Hope

You're integrated, you're not Turkish, you're British
Conversation with interpreter, research diary, 20th March 2019

Ethnographers speak in partial truths and represent the lives of others (Clifford, 1986). By telling others' stories, ethnographers run the risk of asking their readers to "take their word for it" (Probyn, 1989) and in doing so risk presenting the lives and life-worlds they represent as scientific fact. In this way, knowledge claims can be a form of symbolic violence committed by researchers wielding social power (Bourdieu, 1994). One way of addressing

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the partiality of ethnographic claims is self-reflexivity. A self-reflexive approach to ethnography can recognise how the researcher is implicated in knowledge production. However, this can sometimes lead to a hand-wringing confessional about the relative power a researcher may wield (Patai, 1994) or an attempt to sweep the discord in knowledge production under the rug (Pillow, 2003). Lichterman (2017) argues that an interpretive approach to self-reflexivity can consider social positions within ongoing circuits of communication. This means that interpretive self-reflexivity can enable a critique of the self in relation to participants' agency and recognition of the discord that comes from contributing to knowledge production.

We can consider interpretive self-reflexivity in ethnographic research using the conceptual frame of belonging. This frame lends additional complexity to the continuum of insider/outsider and thus problematises the boundaries of insider/outsider. For Fortier (2000), ethnography is about navigating the tensions between the perceptions and performances of belonging through which the author can gain a keener sense of marginality. Interpretive self-reflexivity can enable us to consider how a sense of self may not fit with what we are expected to be and what the implications of this may be for how we relate to the people we research with (Probyn, 1993). Interpretive self-reflexivity can enable us to see how our sense of belonging is perceived and produced relative to the people we research with.

Building on this and my discussion of Probyn's (1996) approach to belonging in the previous chapter, it is important to consider my own place in this piece of research. This will involve how I see myself in society and how I see myself as belonging or not belonging to the field of research. In this way, I will aim to reflect on my own self and experience in order to challenge my own values and presuppositions and build towards mindful representation (Neal and Walters, 2006).

My parents moved to London from Turkey in 1989, shortly after leaving university. After overstaying their visas, they applied for asylum. We were granted Indefinite Leave to Remain in 1995 following Judicial Review and were naturalised and received our British passports in 2001. My experience of the asylum system is direct in the sense that I

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remember the arrival of letters from the Home Office and having family friends to stay when immigration officers raided their homes but indirect in the sense that much of this for me is a childhood memory. While I remember some of these experiences, in many ways they feel distant from the position of social privilege I now occupy. Moreover, these experiences are distant from how my belonging may be perceived. Indeed, in many ways, I may be seen to belong to the British collective and adhere to British political projects of belonging through my education, accent, class, appearance or behaviour.

My relationship to this piece of research is shaped by my own family's experience of the asylum system, activism, and the people I met following my move to Sheffield. Although the political projects of belonging placed my family outside the sphere of belonging to Britain, our social locations through class and perception of race have, over time, shaped both our attachments and the value systems through which we have been encountered and through which we encounter others. In my case, this is encapsulated in the two quotes above.

The two quotes above expose my own social locations as well as my shifting belonging with respect to the study. I view myself as a migrant and an ethnic minority in Britain and often position myself as such in my social interactions. However, I was not judged as such by the interpreter. In contrast, Hope said that she shared her experiences with me because I am "not really white though". Although I perceived myself as sharing a sense of belonging to region and cultural practice with the Farsi-speaking Kurdish interpreter who is also a social science PhD student, he saw me as primarily belonging to Britain. When I remarked that I see myself as *both* Turkish and British, he commented on the Turkish state's ethnic cleansing of Kurdish people. In this way, it is possible that I was seen to belong to Britain either because of how I present myself and perform belonging through behaviour or because belonging to the nation of Turkey can be equated with a political project of belonging that denies the right of existence to Kurdish people. These complex dynamics of place and relational belonging can also be seen in terms of time. Whereas I am a second-generation migrant who has a sense of ease or accord in Britain (Miller, 2003), the interpreter is a more recent migrant. This temporal dynamic may have also influenced his perception of me being "integrated". The complexity of belonging consequently goes beyond the continuum of not-integrated to integrated, revealing that perceptions,

performances and passing (Ahmed, 2000) contribute to how integration and consequently, belonging is seen and assessed.

These complex and interrelating dynamics reveal circuits of communication. The claims and counter-claims of belonging above can enable me to reflexively interpret miscues and convergences in the field. This can enable me to: a) challenge the assumptions I make about others based on who I think I am; b) reflect on what this means for how I represent data; c) consider how I am perceived by others and finally; d) reflect on how I am perceived can influence what is shared with me. Experiences of belonging in the field, therefore, can lead to both critical reflections on the discordant nature of knowledge production and the relationship between the politics of belonging and a sense of belonging. Whereas 'insider' status has often been considered in relation to identity categories (Cook and Fonow, 1991, Zavella, 1996), belonging can be used to effectively frame the dance between insider/outsider categorisations and complexify shifts in interrelating dynamics and circuits of communication.

4.5 Ethical approach

Building on the interpretive self-reflection above, it is necessary to consider research ethics. This will involve formal ethics, ethics in practice as well as the problematics of research. The following section will first consider formal or procedural ethics. It will then turn to practical ethics in the field, reflecting on the research relationship. Lastly, it will explore some of the problematics of conducting research with a focus on the potential extractiveness of knowledge production.

4.5.1 Formal ethics procedures

The study was given ethical approval by the University of Sheffield's research services before fieldwork began. The ethics application number for the study was 022824. Before entering the field, I had participant information sheets and consent forms translated into Amharic, Arabic and Farsi because these languages, based on my experience as a volunteer caseworker, are three of the most commonly spoken languages among people who have been dispersed to Sheffield. I also prepared audio recordings of participant information sheets. This was to ensure that the research was as inclusive as possible, and participants

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were able to give fully informed consent. In addition, before conducting the first semi-structured interviews and after obtaining consent, I spent informal time with participants. This informal time allowed me to build trust and rapport with the participants I did not already know well and to ensure that consent was fully informed. When obtaining consent, I offered the choice of giving verbal, audio-recorded or written consent. With the written consent form, I gave participants the choice to sign with a pseudonym or with an X. Although I have stored identifying data and consent forms securely, giving participants the option to sign with a pseudonym or an X was intended to give participants (particularly those who have been refused asylum) reassurance in addition to the data protection information I gave on my participant information sheet. In addition, I made it clear that participants were able to withdraw their consent at any point in the research process and that they had the right to access and withdraw their data.

At the end of each of our more formal research encounters (semi-structured interviews and mobile interview), I gave each participant a £20 voucher to thank them for their participation. I gave each participant a total of £60 in the most widely accepted high street voucher available. I did not want to give vouchers because they limit people to chain stores, precluding purchases from independent stores. However, the university did not allow me to give cash gifts. I did not feel comfortable depriving participants of agency over how to spend their thank you gifts because some participants will have had experience of being given S4 support in the form of vouchers or being given vouchers by TSOs. For this reason, once participants had signed for their vouchers, I offered to swap their vouchers for my own cash. I did this after explaining the university's policy on cash thank you gifts. The majority of participants chose to accept the vouchers saying that they would be able to use them for specific items like clothes or shoes. Three asked to swap for cash.

As I have worked with people who have experience of the asylum system in a voluntary capacity since 2012, I have a good working knowledge of adult safeguarding procedures and the availability of support services – both statutory and non-statutory. In the event that participants disclosed that they or others were at risk of harm, I planned to discuss this with my supervisors in the first instance. I was able to mitigate potential risk to myself by working primarily with participants I already knew. However, I took additional precautions by

ensuring that my supervisors, as well as a trusted contact, were aware of when I was conducting fieldwork in line with the University's Lone Working Policy. Finally, by adopting multiple and multi-sensory methods, I was able to reflect on some of the power imbalances in the participant/researcher relationship. These dynamics, however, require more detailed consideration and are what I will turn to now.

4.5.2 Ethics in practice

Fieldwork is an emotional business and requires an ethics of encounters (Thrift, 2003).

Fieldwork is a social practice – one that involves navigating multiple social locations, identifications and value systems (Yuval-Davis, 2011). In this way, the fieldwork experience, as with any social interaction, can lead to a transformation or change in the perceptions of self and relative belongings of both the researcher and the participant (Probyn, 1993). This can lead to mutually creating new spaces, or transforming the self and, in doing so, constructing mutual ground while recognising that mutuality may be unstable or fragile.

Moving through the fieldwork led me to reflect on how formal consent, in line with Darling (2014b) needs to be supplemented with a reciprocal recognition of shifts in relationships. This, for Darling (2014b) requires iterative consent. Throughout the fieldwork, I was careful to remind participants of my role as a researcher and regularly asked participants if they would like to review my field diary. Although no one asked to see my field diary, a number of participants did give me a list of ground rules – topics of conversation that they would like me to exclude from my field notes and transcripts. Sharing transcripts and asking for comments on tailored topic guides helped me to move away from replicating the formal, structured and 'truth' oriented type of interview encountered in Initial Asylum Screening and Substantive Asylum interviews (Back and Sinha, 2018, 157).

As my relationships with participants transformed over time and several developed into friendships, the process of iterative consent meant that we were able to navigate shifts in our relationship within the bounds of the research relationship. Seeking iterative consent also gave participants the option to refuse further involvement if the realities of research and what they were expecting differed (Sirriyeh, 2013, 21). In addition to iterative consent being in line with ESRC ethics guidelines (ESRC, 2020), the experience of seeking iterative

consent as relationships develop can reveal how research and solidarity can go hand-in-hand. In one example, I was asked to store suitcases for a participant who was about to be re-dispersed. Whereas storing Juhur's belongings may be seen to transgress formal ethical boundaries and power dynamics, it is possible to argue that it would have been more harmful to the participant and our relationship to refuse to offer up my unused cupboard space. Moreover, offering up something that I had to share also meant that I was able to engage in a small act of reciprocity. Darling (2014b) describes similar encounters as a way in which the researcher's status can be strategically used by a participant. This strategic use of something that I had to spare, can be seen as a means for the participant to redress imbalances of power in the research relationship by enabling him to ask something of me. Despite this, ethical practice and consent also led to me declining additional help and support, highlighting the balancing act of ethical practice, support and solidarity. Following a discussion of his first-round transcript and emerging themes, Juhur, who has a research background, offered to share his expertise with me by offering to support me in my use of NVivo. He gave me general advice on how to get the most out of the software, but I declined more structured support because sharing all transcripts with him would have breached other participants' consent.

4.5.3 Problematising research

Since the beginning of the so-called refugee crisis, there has been a proliferation of research in migration studies – a process of proliferation of which I am a part. The proliferation of studies focusing on the plight of refugees and people seeking asylum can be thought of as a process of stealing stories (Pittaway et al., 2010). The desire to narrate the struggle or plight of the Other to an often affluent, often minority-country academic audience can also be voyeuristic. Pascucci (2017) argues that the politics of compassion that can drive research in migration studies can emphasise colonial continuities by practising a form of humanitarianism that seeks to save the Other without critical self-reflection about how the researcher may be implicated in extraction. This is echoed by Nayel (2012) who sees research with refugees as primarily serving the interests of researchers. Similarly, Sukarieh and Tannock (2012) note that this can lead to participants being denied agency.

This process of extraction can be placed within a broader context of the colonial episteme or as knowledge production being focused on categorising, knowing and dominating the Other (Bhambra and Gebrial, 2018). This can culminate in research being seen as a “dirty word” (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012). Although my study does not overcome this, my hope is that a combination of interpretive self-reflexivity and multiple methods can begin to contribute to an attitude that can lead to humility in knowledge production (Maldonado-Torres, 2017).

The risk of over-research and extractive research with people who are refugees or who are seeking asylum was evident in the following:

Chish says that he no longer agrees to do any kind of research interview. He told me about his last two experiences. The first he said was a woman based at X Uni. Chish said that she promised to share transcripts with him, promised to share her thesis with him and give him time to reflect on what she had written but she never did. Chish said that she just disappeared. The second, he said, was a man based at Y Uni. Chish described this man as “being on a placement” and “not really a volunteer”. Chish said that this researcher absolutely lost it when he said that he wasn’t interested in participating in the research project. Apparently, the researcher went off on one about how his dad is a professor and how he’s a very important researcher and how participating in the project would help “change” the asylum system and make things better for Chish. Chish said that he was insistent about not being involved. He said that he’s sick of being interviewed and asked to tell his story again and again for people who think their work is super important. When I asked why he agreed to take part in my research, he said it was because I was honest about my project. When I asked him what he meant, he said there’s a big difference between saying “take part in this important piece of research” and in saying “hello, how are you, do you think you could help me with my uni work?”.

Field Diary, participant observation, 5th April 2019

In this encounter, Chish described being asked repeatedly to recount his experiences for the researchers’ benefit. In one case, Chish was told that his participation would lead to change in the asylum system. As someone who hopes to make a career out of people’s experiences,

I too am a part of this. Although I doubt this thesis will lead to change, I hope that my interactions with participants and work over time will incrementally contribute to some form of change. I hope, that by building a relationship with Chish over time, I was able to sensitively reflect his experiences and build in a sense of reciprocity and sincerity to our research encounter. While I represent Chish's experiences as someone seeking asylum, therefore, I hope that this does not subsume the passion Chish expresses for long-distance cycling and playing the tuba. One way I tried to sensitively represent participants' lives was to ask them to read sections where I have written about them in this thesis. I was pleased, for example, when Chish made the following comment about my first draft in an email:

I have been reading your thesis on sections about me. I could not have put it better. I must admit, I have been teary a bit. It's a thought provoking document which I am going to read in full.

Email from Chish 3rd December 2020

Overall, although I am very much a part of a proliferation of studies about people seeking asylum and found myself feeling anxious about this throughout the fieldwork, by sitting with this sense of discord in knowledge production, I hope that I can begin to contribute to the studies that critique and uncover discord and extractive dynamics in research (e.g. Mackenzie et al., 2007, Voutira and Doná, 2007, Hugman et al., 2011). I also hope that I can build on this in future research.

Having considered research ethics and some of the ethical limitations of research, the following section will turn to recruitment and access to the field. This will also serve to develop my ethical engagement with my dual role of researcher and volunteer as well as how TSOs can see the role of researchers as extractive. Having done so, I will introduce each of the people who took part in this study and how different legal statuses will inform analysis.

4.6 Recruitment and access

This section will consider both the formal process of recruitment and how my own sense of belonging shaped recruitment and access to the field. The section will first consider my

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formal process of recruitment before turning to relationships in the field. This will involve my navigation of the roles of ethnographic researcher and volunteer as well as how my own sense of belonging may have facilitated access to the field.

I recruited 15 participants using opportunistic and snowball sampling methods. I drew on my own contacts to recruit an initial group of seven participants and later drew on participants' contacts to recruit four further participants. I recruited three participants through ASSIST, a charity I volunteer for. Around ten non-participants who were friends, family or customers of participants were also sometimes present and contributed to conversations during participant observation. Their interactions and conversations with participants helped shape analysis.

I have been a volunteer caseworker for ASSIST (see section 2.4.3) since 2016. In order to recruit from there, I sought permission from the Leadership Team and the Board of Trustees. When seeking permission, they explained to me that they do not usually allow researchers to recruit participants from the organisation because they are approached by so many and that when researchers have entered the organisation in the past, it has been a drain on their resources. I was told that I would be able to recruit because I was a caseworker and had been involved in supporting their internal research. Supporting internal research may have created a sense of trust between me and the organisation (Bryman, 2015, 428) and may have led to them seeing me as someone with a longer-term commitment to the organisation as opposed to someone, in Chish's description (see section 4.5.3), who was "on placement" and "not really a volunteer".

When I began my fieldwork, I was assigned a point of contact from the Board of Trustees who asked me to provide them with a list of participants who were also current clients for safeguarding reasons. I kept in regular contact with them, providing updates on the progress of my research. I have discussed and will explore opportunities to make my thesis, or parts of it, available to ASSIST in a format that is useful to them. Based on my supervisors' suggestion, I also arranged for a £400 facilitation fee to be paid from my ESRC Research Travel and Support Grant to ASSIST. This also enabled me to use their rooms for some interviews.

4.6.1 A volunteer-ethnographer or an ethnographer-volunteer?

When I began fieldwork, I had to negotiate the dual roles of researcher and volunteer. I had previously had a caseworker relationship with four participants and three participants were ASSIST clients at the time I started fieldwork. The advantage of working with participants I already had a caseworker relationship with was that I had already established trust and rapport. However, this also raised concerns with regards to navigating the shift in relationship from caseworker to researcher. This involved navigating different positionalities and boundaries.

Tinney (2008) considers the boundaries between being an ethnographer and being a volunteer in a care home setting. For Tinney, ethical boundaries can be maintained through the emotionally challenging process of avoiding a conflation of the role of volunteer and the role of researcher. Similarly, Garthwaite (2016), a volunteer and ethnographic researcher at a food bank, navigated boundaries by choosing not to be involved in decision making about who would be supported. When I began fieldwork, I ensured that I did not see any of the three participants who were current ASSIST clients in a casework capacity. The aim of this was to avoid conflating the two roles and to ensure that all clients received similar levels of support.

When participants asked me questions directly pertaining to casework, I reminded them of my role as researcher and asked them to speak to their new caseworker. These boundaries, however, were difficult to navigate. This is because there were times when it was more ethical to directly share information, for example regarding the existence of particular services such as food banks, than it would have been to withhold information or to ask participants to seek an appointment with a caseworker. Although I was aware that such involvement could mean that I was perceived as someone in a caseworker or supportive role, I was able to enter a dialogue with participants, thus navigating the boundaries between researcher, friend and former caseworker.

4.6.2 Belonging to the field

Navigating different positionalities (Clifford, 1986) necessarily involves the question of where I feel I belong and where I am seen to belong. This also has implications for how I accessed the field. Although I am temporally distant from my own family's experience of the asylum system, discussing these experiences contributed to my ease of access in some encounters. Even though my parents sought asylum before restrictions on the right to work were introduced and the asylum system was separated from mainstream welfare, some commonalities of experience contributed to my sense of ease and accord with people navigating the asylum system today. In one example, I was drawn into a wider conversation about asylum when one participant asked me how and when my family acquired citizenship.

In other encounters, a shared sense of belonging meant I was readily welcomed into participants' homes as a sister or daughter because of my instrumental use of my sense of belonging to Islam and Islamic culture. My claims to belonging in some ways facilitated my access to the field, enabled me to establish rapport and were often enacted through taken for granted social cues such as bringing dates to break the Ramadan fast. However, as an atheist (who ate a portion of chips on the train before arriving at the iftar³ meal), I also felt uneasy about using this sense of belonging. My instrumental use of social locations can thus reveal the performativities of belonging (Bell, 1999). This can lead to a critical reflection on how we choose to narrate ourselves and what this can mean for the research relationship where the ethnographer searches for a "keener sense of marginality" (Fortier, 2000).

My roles as a researcher and a caseworker in addition to my sense of belonging influenced my ability to recruit, to access the field and the relationships I built with participants. I will now briefly outline how I recruited each of the 15 people who took part in this study before presenting pen portraits. I have known Hope as a friend since I moved to Sheffield in 2015 and was heavily involved in a campaign to prevent her and her daughter from being deported. Helen's children attended the same primary school as Hope's daughter and I became friends with Helen through Hope in 2016. Once I started recruiting for this study, Hope introduced me to Daniel.

³ Iftar is the evening meal with which Muslims end their daily Ramadan fast at sunset.

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I used to be a caseworker for Ahmed, Bilen, Mahyar, Zhala, Nawid, Juhur and Ako. At the start of the fieldwork, Ahmed, Bilen, Zhala and Mahyar were former ASSIST clients and Nawid, Ako and Juhur were current clients. Juhur asked me if he could participate in the research when he overheard me telling Nawid about the research over coffee and biscuits in the client waiting area. Chish and Daniel are former ASSIST clients. I met Chish through the internal research I conducted for ASSIST. I met Aisha at an event about the Kurdish independence struggle in the city. I met Hiba through Bilen and I met Toran and Jerome through Ako. All names are pseudonymised with the exception of two people who chose to use their own. I asked each participant to choose their own pseudonym, but not all did.

Although I did not explicitly set out to recruit a certain spread of nationalities or educational or class backgrounds, I did aim to recruit a balance of gender that reflects the gendered ratio of asylum applications. The table below shows participants' age, nationality, immigration status, gender and educational background:

Name	Nationality	Age (2019)	Gender	Education	Arrival in Sheffield City Region	Arrival in Britain	Immigration Status (Sept 2019)
Hope	Nigerian	45	F	Primary	2014	2001	Discretionary Leave
Daniel	Ghanaian	52	M	Degree	2012	2008	Refused asylum seeker
Bilen	Eritrean	42	F	Primary	2010	2010	Refused asylum seeker
Mahyar	Iranian	33	M	Master's degree	2016	2016	Refugee status
Zhala	Iranian	56	F	Secondary	2016	2016	Refugee status
Ahmed	Egyptian	67	M	Degree	2014	2005	Refused asylum seeker
Juhur	Oromo (Ethiopia)	38	M	Master's degree	2016	2016	Asylum seeker
Helen	Ethiopian	42	F	Primary	2005	2005	British Citizen

Nawid	Afghan	34	M	Secondary	2016	2016	Asylum seeker
Chish	Zimbabwean	51	M	Secondary	2012	2002	Asylum seeker
Aisha	Kurdish (Iran)	36	F	Degree	2012	2012	Family visa
Jerome	DRC	50s	M	Primary	2018	2011	Asylum seeker
Hiba	Sudanese	28	F	Secondary	2018	2018	Asylum seeker
Toran	Kurdish (Iraq)	31	M	Primary	2016	2016	Asylum seeker
Ako	Kurdish (Iran)	33	M	Secondary	2015	2015	Asylum seeker

Table 1 Participants' backgrounds

My opportunistic and snowballing approach to recruitment meant that I did not set out to recruit a representative sample. This is because I do not intend to represent the experience of all people who have been dispersed but to provide a mindful series of snapshots of how people develop a sense of belonging through my interpretations of experience. While this study may not be generalisable or hold external validity, the findings give insight into belonging in the asylum system and the specificities of dispersal in the city of Sheffield. The only criteria I used in recruitment was that participants were dispersed to the Sheffield City Region in the five years preceding the start of my fieldwork in 2019⁴. This broad criterion reflects the diversity of experiences of asylum dispersal.

Legal status and belonging

As is evident in the table above, the people who took part in this study hold a range of legal statuses. This means that participants' formal belonging to the state differs. However, this does not necessarily mean that participants feel a greater sense of belonging because of (more) secure legal status. As discussed in chapters two and three, I do not wish to equate legal status to belonging or reify legal status as a category of analysis. Instead, I focus on a sense of belonging as comprised of intersecting social locations, identifications and attachments and value systems. This will enable an exploration of how boundaries of difference constructed by specific political projects of belonging can continue to exclude

⁴ With the exception of Bilen and Helen who were dispersed to the Sheffield City Region in 2010 and 2005 respectively but who I asked to participate in the study because of our existing relationships, their gender and their legal status.

after asylum while remaining sensitive to the experiences of each individual. Moreover, the thesis asks the question “how do people who have been made to move...”. The non-specificity of legal status in the research question allows for an exploration of belonging beyond dispersal. That is, what participants choose to do after receiving (more) secure legal status and what this might mean for a sense of belonging to people and place as well as change in the city and individual experiences over time. This approach contributes to studies of asylum dispersal by drawing and considering the impacts of dispersal in participants’ longer-term trajectories after asylum. In chapters five and seven respectively this will allow for engagement with home-making practices and how participants can create change in the city for themselves and others. The subsection below will present pen portraits for each participant before concluding the chapter.

4.6.3 Pen portraits

Hope

Hope is from Nigeria and is a businesswoman who runs a successful hair salon. She is widely known and respected throughout the city. She is a lone parent to a teenage daughter who was born in London. Hope, her former partner and her daughter were dispersed to Sheffield when they applied for asylum in 2014. Hope and her daughter have had to move home four times since dispersal including privately rented, socially rented, emergency local authority and G4S housing. Hope was granted Discretionary Leave for two and a half years at the end of 2016. She applied to extend her Discretionary Leave in mid-2019 but at the time of writing in 2020, this was still being processed. Hope’s daughter is now a British citizen.

Ahmed

Ahmed was once the headteacher of a high school in Egypt. His own background is in geography. Ahmed has two adult children, a computer scientist and a pharmacologist. Following a land dispute and being issued an arrest warrant, Ahmed travelled to England. He applied for asylum several months later and was dispersed to South Shields. After eight years in South Shields, he was re-dispersed to Stoke-on-Trent and then to Barnsley a year later. Ahmed then lived as a refused asylum seeker in Sheffield for three years. When he made further submissions, he waited eight months for S4 support and was re-dispersed to

Leeds. Although his further submissions were refused in August 2019, he was able to stay on in his S4 accommodation because he is too unwell to travel.

Toran

Toran is a Kurdish man in his early 30s who travelled to the UK overland from Iraq in 2016. He was dispersed to Sheffield on arrival. He previously served in the military and suffers from injuries as a result. Toran's nationality is disputed by the Home Office who believe him to be Iranian. In July 2019, Toran's case was refused. At the time of writing, he was waiting for his case to be heard at the upper asylum tribunal. Toran spends most days in Kurdish restaurants.

Bilen

Bilen is an Eritrean woman in her 40s. She enjoys cooking and has a network of friends all across England. Bilen applied for asylum on arrival in 2010. She was dispersed to Rotherham and lived there until her appeal rights were exhausted in 2015. From there, she moved to Sheffield where she lives as a refused asylum seeker moving between hosted accommodation provided by different charities. The Home Office disputes her nationality and believes her to be Ethiopian. Bilen has been unable to find legal representation since July 2019. Since she lost her legal representation, Bilen stopped volunteering and attending college.

Daniel

Daniel is a Ghanaian man in his 50s. He attends church regularly. In addition to volunteering, he spends time at the City of Sanctuary building, at a McDonald's and a leisure centre café. Daniel has been living as a refused asylum seeker in Sheffield since 2012. It is not clear if Daniel has made further progress with his asylum case since. Daniel has spent some time at an Immigration Removal Centre near Portsmouth and some time in Huddersfield. At one time, he was supported by ASSIST. He currently sofa surfs with friends or stays at ASSIST's night shelter.

Mahyar

Mahyar is an Iranian man in his early 30s and trained as a civil engineer. He is currently working as a kitchen porter in an Iranian restaurant in North London while caring for his mother and studying English at college. Mahyar is a convert to Christianity and applied for asylum on arrival with his mother, Zhala. They were dispersed to Sheffield in 2016 and, when their appeal rights were exhausted in late 2017, they were supported by ASSIST and then by Adult Social Care under the Care Act 2014. After making further submissions in 2018, the family were granted Refugee Status in 2019 and moved to London to be closer to Iranian friends they had made at an Initial Accommodation Centre in Wakefield.

Zhala

Zhala is a lone parent to her adult son, Mahyar. Zhala enjoys knitting and Turkish soap operas. Zhala describes herself as middle class. Zhala made friends through the Baptist Church she attended in Sheffield and keeps in touch with them via WhatsApp. Zhala's complex mental and physical health needs mean her mobility is limited and she cannot walk, climb stairs or leave the house unaided.

Nawid

Nawid is from Afghanistan. He is a tailor and particularly enjoys embroidery. He used to be a keen runner. He has a partner and children in Afghanistan who he has been trying to reach through the Red Cross family tracing service. Nawid applied for asylum on arrival in 2016. He was initially sent to an Initial Accommodation Centre in Birmingham before being dispersed to Sheffield. When his appeal rights were exhausted in 2018, he sofa-surfed and stayed at a night shelter before being hosted by ASSIST. Nawid made further submissions in August 2019 but in March 2020, was still waiting for S4 accommodation.

Juhur

Juhur is Ethiopian Oromo. He is a computer scientist, social researcher and activist. Juhur was dispersed to Sheffield after a brief stay at an Initial Accommodation Centre in Wakefield in 2016. Since being dispersed to Sheffield, Juhur has been active in Oromo diaspora politics and volunteered for a digital inclusion charity, the Red Cross and the City of Sanctuary.

When his appeal rights were exhausted in 2017, he stayed at ASSIST's night shelter and later with hosts. In 2019, he made further submissions and was re-dispersed to Huddersfield two months later. After a cancelled hearing, Juhur was given refugee status in November 2019 and moved back to Sheffield. His wife and three young daughters joined him in Sheffield in March 2020.

Chish

Chish is Zimbabwean. He has a background in management and is a keen cyclist. He was an opposition activist in Zimbabwe. He is involved in a wide range of voluntary activities. Chish first travelled to England in 2002 and applied for asylum in 2006. He was initially dispersed to the South of England. He made further submissions and was re-dispersed to Sheffield in 2012. He lived as a refused asylum seeker in Sheffield between 2014 and 2018 and was supported by different charities and hosts. Chish has a large network of friends in Sheffield. He made further submissions in April 2019 and was moved to an Initial Accommodation Centre in Wakefield before being re-dispersed to Huddersfield. Chish's further submissions were refused in August 2019. He awaits Judicial Review but, in the meantime, has secured a place on a degree course at the University of Sheffield starting in 2021.

Hiba

Hiba is a Sudanese woman in her late 20s. Since arriving in Sheffield in early 2018, she has been on a coach trip organised by a charity to Scarborough. She sometimes goes to the park and walks around the shops and has enjoyed visiting Marks and Spencer's and TK Maxx in particular before she felt too uncomfortable to continue spending time there. She arrived in England in late 2017. She was first moved to an Initial Accommodation Centre in Wakefield before being dispersed to Sheffield. She has been in S95 accommodation since then. She has been waiting for her case to be heard by the Upper Tribunal since mid-2019.

Helen

Helen is Ethiopian. She is a business owner in her early 40s. She runs a large Ethiopian restaurant close to a disused train station near the city centre. The area she works in has a number of Ethiopian and Eritrean shops and restaurants. Helen lives in social housing in the

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North of the city with her three children. She was dispersed to the Sheffield City Region in 2005 with her former partner and their appeal rights were exhausted when she was pregnant with her first child. Helen also caters for events in the Ethiopian community. She enjoys going to the gym while her children attend their swimming and gymnastics lessons.

Aisha

Aisha is a Marxist-Leninist and a Kurdish diaspora activist. Aisha is also a published poet. Aisha travelled to England from Iran via Turkey and applied for asylum on arrival in 2012. She was dispersed to Sheffield. Through the Kurdish diaspora, she met her former partner. With her former partner's support, she regularly travelled to his home in Newcastle. She married her former partner and moved to Newcastle in 2014. In 2015, her son was born. Through her partner, Aisha obtained a family visa. Although they separated in 2016 and Aisha moved back to Sheffield, her immigration status still depends on her former partner.

Ako

Ako is a Kurdish man in his early 30s. He enjoys chilling and the Sheffield nightlife. He travelled to England via France where he spent some time in the Calais 'jungle' in 2015. Ako was dispersed to Sheffield in 2015. When his case was refused in 2017, his solicitor missed the deadline for appeal. From 2017 to 2018, Ako lived as a refused asylum seeker and was supported by a charity. He was later hosted by his large network of friends. In early 2019, he made further submissions. In the future, Ako would like to set up a takeaway business, shisha bar or become a plumber.

Jerome

Jerome is from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Before travelling to England, he worked as a handyman in South Africa. He is currently in S95 accommodation in Sheffield having made further submissions that were accepted as a fresh claim in 2018. Jerome applied for asylum in 2007 and was first dispersed to Middlesbrough and then to Birmingham. Jerome is in his 50s. He likes to spend time in areas with free Wi-Fi where he can use his tablet. He sometimes attends community meals in the city centre and at a local church.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter presented the methods and methodological approach of the study. By drawing on a range of methods, I reflect the complexity of belonging. An ethnographic approach has enabled me to be co-present with participants. In addition, mobile interviews have enabled me to be taken to and shown the places where everyday belonging through mundane repetition and routine is enacted. This has led to mapping participants' moves across and beyond the city. Semi-structured interviews have complemented these methods by asking participants where they spend their time, who they spend their time with and how they feel about the places they spend their time. This will shed light on how participants may build a sense of belonging to people through relationships and place through where they spend their time. In addition, sociograms have enabled me to visualise belonging to people and place over time. By bringing these methods together in my analysis, I have been able to build upwards from what participants have shared with me in order to explore my research question.

Chapter two "a hostile environment to belong to: the literature on asylum policy in context" provided the history of immigration and asylum policy. It explored dispersal policy and what it means for lived experience, arguing that it is necessary to bring together policy and lived experience. Chapter three "interrogating belonging: building a conceptual framework from the existing literature", built on this by presenting the conceptual framework. Drawing on Yuval-Davis (2011), I argued that belonging can be seen through the relationship between the politics of belonging and a sense of belonging. This chapter considered the everydayness of belonging at different sites and scales and concluded that belonging can enable an exploration of individual lived experience without losing sight of the structural. Having presented the policy context, conceptual framework and methods used in this thesis, the next four chapters will present the findings.

The first two chapters will consider the barriers to a sense of belonging. The first, "asylum dispersal: time and belonging" will consider the limits to a sense of belonging within and across different cities over time. The second, "Sheffield and its people: a place for belonging" will consider limits to a sense of belonging with a focus on the specificities of life in Sheffield including the location of accommodation, public transport and meeting

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everyday needs in the city. The third and fourth empirical chapters will consider how participants build and practice belonging. Chapter seven will explore the places participants' have created for belonging and its practice and the places they choose to frequent. Chapter eight will explore everyday time and leisure as a means to build a sense of belonging.

Chapter 5. Asylum dispersal: time and belonging

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter identified the methods most appropriate to this study and introduced participants. I argued that an ethnographic approach can reflect the complexity and multi-sitedness of belonging. This is the first of the four empirical chapters. This chapter and the following chapter will explore the ways in which the asylum system can limit and constrain a sense of belonging. In contrast, chapters seven and eight will explore the ways in which participants create places for belonging and practice it.

The politics of belonging exclude people seeking asylum and new refugees from full participation in society. This exclusion can lead to people not being seen to belong by the majority population and in doing so can produce people as unbelonging. This chapter will consider belonging over time through participants' asylum journeys. It will do so by drawing on the longitudinal aspects of the semi-structured interviews. This will serve to orient the reader to participants' progress (or lack thereof) through the asylum system in order to provide insight into lived experience. The chapter will then consider the temporal dynamics of dispersal. I will argue that the asylum system limits a sense of belonging through time. In chapter three, I argued that there is a need to add a temporal dimension to studies on dispersal and belonging. This chapter will begin to address this.

The chapter will proceed in five sections. The first will revisit my discussion of the literature on refugee and asylum seeker belonging in place and time. This will serve to develop my discussion of belonging emerging through mundane, everyday routines and repetitions in place (May, 2016, Lewis and May, 2019) as well as consider the temporal dynamics of the politics of belonging and how they are experienced in the asylum system (Griffiths, 2014). This will serve to contextualise findings on time in the asylum system and beyond.

The second section will follow participants' everyday lives from arrival, refusal, repeat dispersal and the decisions that participants make about where to live after receiving a positive decision on an asylum claim. The third section will explore a sense of belonging and

legal status; it will consider the disruptions to everyday life and relationships as a result of changes in legal status over time. The fourth will engage with how the temporal demands of the asylum system limit a sense of belonging. It will consider how application deadlines, reporting appointments and court hearings can clash with the everyday experience of asylum dispersal and produce uncertainty. The fifth will consider how participants narrate their lives temporally, arguing that waiting leads to participants narrating themselves in line with their perceptions of the political projects of belonging. I will build on this by considering how the political projects of belonging are (re)produced by value systems in humanitarian organisations. I will discuss how volunteering in the asylum system can orient people to future belonging to the nation and state citizenship.

5.2 Time and belonging

There is emerging literature on time and dispersal. Existing studies engage with moments of joy and release in everyday life (Lewis, 2015, Rishbeth et al., 2019), the experience of waiting for the arrival of a letter from the Home Office (Darling, 2014a) and the decisions people make about where to live once they have received a positive outcome on an asylum application (Stewart and Shaffer, 2015, Stewart, 2012, Sim, 2015). Chapter three discussed the everydayness of time as something routine and repetitive in the context of the ambiguities of the asylum system. I drew on studies that conceptualise the temporal experience of asylum as waiting, limbo and uncertainty (Mountz, 2011) and how this can be linked to belonging as an articulation of desire and future orientation (Probyn, 1996, Hage, 2003). In order to develop my engagement with time and belonging and to contribute to the emerging literature, I will briefly deepen my review of the literature on time and belonging among refugees and people seeking asylum. This will further contextualise the findings in this chapter.

For Clayton and Vickers (2019), who consider the temporal dynamics of work in England for EU migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum, time is encountered through uneven power relations, material conditions and established inequality. They argue that time is used for “differential inclusion into national outcomes and politics” (2019, 1476). Time is thus used to demarcate the boundaries of belonging. This is evident in Ramsay’s (2019)

argument that migration status reinforces Otherness through time. This is because the asylum system places people seeking asylum out-of-time with citizens or those who are seen to belong (Griffiths, 2014). This experience creates a tension between the self and everyday experience, or the desire to belong within and against the unbelonging produced by the asylum system. Chronic waiting in the asylum system can thus entail long-term exclusion (McNevin and Missbach, 2018).

Griffiths' (2014) ethnographic study on the experience of time for refused asylum seekers and people in immigration detention in Britain finds that the everyday experience of being made to wait in the asylum system can be one of frenzy, rupture, stickiness and suspension. Frenzy can be seen in having to respond to sudden changes in legal status or circumstance that often come without warning. Rupture follows frenzy and can involve the consequences of forced movement following a change in legal status or circumstance. Stickiness refers to having to wait for a decision on a claim from the Home Office or waiting to make further submissions. Suspension involves lives being put on hold when detained or made to move (Griffiths, 2014). The temporal experience of asylum dispersal is similar and involves frenzy, suspension, rupture and stickiness. People who have been dispersed must wait for a decision; they are often stuck and suspended in the places they are dispersed to and encounter frenzy and rupture through sudden changes in circumstances or legal status. The everyday experience of time in the asylum system can thus be a source of suffering in its own right (Griffiths, 2014, 1995). This is because the temporal demands of the asylum system can disrupt autonomous use of time (Tazzioli, 2018), put life on hold (Thorshaug and Brun, 2020) and lead to the fragmentation of everyday life (Fontanari, 2017). The indefinite and indeterminant nature of applying for asylum is consequently a form of temporal dispossession (Ramsay, 2019). In addition, the experience of waiting in the asylum system can lead to the articulation of a future sense of belonging in line with the perceived demands or expectations of the state (also see: Vathi and King, 2013, McNevin, 2020, Parker, 2020, Wernesjö, 2020 in section 3.4.3). Although the asylum system may exclude through time, this does not mean to say that prolonged waiting cannot be an active experience.

5.2.1 Time and the asylum journey

The process of seeking asylum is not linear. People seeking asylum will often go through several rounds of application. Time in the asylum system can also involve moving through different legal statuses and types of formal (state) and informal support. Someone who has applied for asylum is eligible for S95 support which comprises a weekly payment of £37.75 and dispersal accommodation if an individual can prove they are destitute (gov.uk, 2019b). While a determination of whether someone is destitute is being conducted, they are eligible for S98 support which comprises full-board accommodation in an Initial Accommodation Centre (IAC) with no cash support.

In Sheffield, people who have been refused asylum often access support through ASSIST or the Red Cross. ASSIST provide around 20% of its clients with accommodation through volunteer hosts or in one of the homes they own for up to a year (not including their night shelter) as well as weekly support payments of £10 and a bus pass or £20 (at the time of writing) for up to three years (ASSIST, 2019a). The Red Cross also provide accommodation through volunteer hosts and voucher payments (Red Cross, 2021). Someone who has been refused asylum can be eligible for S4 support which comprises a weekly payment of £35.35 and dispersal accommodation if they are destitute and unable to leave the UK or if they have made further submissions by submitting further evidence for their asylum claim (ASAP, 2016). If the Home Office decides that further submissions constitute a “fresh claim” then an individual will once again become eligible for S95 support. S4 support payments are intentionally lower than S95 payments as a disincentive for people to remain in Britain (Carnet et al., 2010). The £2.36 difference between S4 and S95 reflects a gradation in belonging where the fracturing of the refugee label (Zetter, 2007) is evident in differential inclusion. In this way, the state produces hierarchies in belonging through the administrative differences in types of asylum support. Individuals who apply for S4 can be re-dispersed anywhere in Britain but are usually re-dispersed within the same region and families (depending on the availability of accommodation) are usually re-dispersed within the same city (Hynes, 2009). Those who move back onto S95 support if their further submissions pass the fresh claim test usually remain in the same accommodation they were re-dispersed to under S4 (NAO, 2014).

The cyclical nature of the asylum process which involves long periods of waiting and uncertainty punctuated by sudden ruptures and changes in legal status can disrupt a sense of belonging to people and place over time. Based on this, the following section will consider everyday life in dispersal from arrival to life as a refused asylum seeker, re-dispersal and life after asylum. This will orient the reader, provide insight into lived experience and explore belonging over time. It will also serve to contextualise discussions of different places and everyday life in Sheffield in the following chapter.

5.3 Welcome to Sheffield: the dispersal journey

The longitudinal dimensions of my study, with participant observation over nine months and semi-structured interviews and sociograms spaced six to eight months apart, reflect participants' journeys through the asylum system over time. Participants' range of legal statuses can reveal differentials in belonging at different stages of the asylum journey. For some, it can reveal stickiness and suspension and for others, rupture and frenzy. Introducing participants' experiences of dispersal will allow for a consideration of the complexity of a sense of belonging to people and place over time as well as the pitfalls and challenges of life in the asylum system. The section will begin with arrival in Sheffield before turning to living as a refused asylum seeker, re-dispersal and finally, life after asylum. Although this will be presented chronologically, for many arriving in Sheffield was not the first stage of their asylum journey.

5.3.1 Arrival and rupture

Being picked up in a van, taken to an unknown location and left in a house with strangers with nothing but a photocopied map with directions to the nearest post office and supermarkets can lead to a sense of rupture, dislocation and fear. For Hope, Jerome, Chish, Ahmed and Daniel, dispersal to Sheffield followed time spent in other cities before applying for asylum or time in other dispersal towns and cities. For Juhur, Hiba, Mahyar, Nawid and Zhala, dispersal to Sheffield followed time spent at IACs. The quotes from interviews below illustrate the disorientation that followed the sudden rupture of dispersal and arrival in Sheffield.

Chapter 5. Asylum dispersal: time and belonging

My first day was like I had been mugged and I was worried because I don't know anybody. I don't know where is town, where is bus stop. I got a lot of stress. I stay in the house.

First semi-structured interview with Ako

I will never forget that day, it was the first time I was under a roof after like two years of being on the streets. So, that was my first day. I was coming to a nice accommodation and I didn't know anybody. So, obviously, the first thing for me to do was to try and find out where shops are and I was directed to where Tesco is by other people and obviously, I managed to gradually find my way, but that is how I got to Sheffield.

First semi-structured interview with Chish

Strange, very strange, strange feeling. Everything is changed in my mind, in my eyes. So, I feel that I am stranger in this area. Yes, I just became like asylum seeker, so my situation totally changed.

First semi-structured interview with Ahmed

Whereas place-belongingness can emerge through familiarity and mundane repetitions in a local area (Leach, 2002, Antonsich, 2010, May, 2013), the sudden rupture of dispersal and arrival in an unfamiliar city can disrupt a sense of belonging. For Hope, who once described herself as the "Queen of Woolwich", applying for asylum and being dispersed to Sheffield disrupted her familiarity and sense of belonging in London. As noted in chapter one, it meant that her daughter was taken away from her school friends and suddenly had to adapt to a new life in a new city. This sense of rupture is captured in Ako's description of arrival in Sheffield above. For Ako, arrival in Sheffield was experienced through fear, anxiety and loss. The feeling of being mugged suggests both an attack on his person and having a sense of self or certainty stolen by dispersal. Likewise, for Ahmed, dispersal led to a fundamental shift in both his perceptions of himself and the world around him. It led to him not only feeling like a stranger, or an outsider who does not belong, but to him *becoming* an asylum seeker. The rupture of dispersal thus led to Ahmed's multiple social locations (Yuval-Davis, 2011) being collapsed into the singular imposed legal category of an asylum seeker. A sense

of belonging as a desire to be with certain people or be in certain places (Probyn, 1996), or be at ease with place and people (Miller, 2003), is thus interrupted by the suddenness of arrival. This can limit belonging as a wilful and pleasurable act (Ahmed, 2004) by depriving people of choice over where they live and who they interact with.

Although the physical and temporal dislocation of dispersal can be seen as an interruption and sudden, forced reorientation, for Chish arrival in Sheffield was experienced through a hopeful future orientation. Chish's arrival in Sheffield followed two years of homelessness and living as a refused asylum seeker in the South of England. As a result, he describes his arrival in Sheffield using language that evokes rebuilding, potential and opportunity. In contrast to homelessness, the G4S accommodation became a "nice" and relatively safe space for comfort and security. In spite of having to begin again in an unknown place, his arrival in Sheffield led to an increased sense of agency and control over his time.

Following the rupture of arrival, each of the participants described in this subsection came to know the city and built a sense of belonging to people and place over time. The length of time Chish, Ako, Hope and Ahmed have spent in Sheffield has enabled them to build relationships and develop familiarity in the city. However, this was often punctuated by moments of frenzy and repeat ruptures. Frenzy and rupture undermined the relative stability that the stickiness of waiting for an outcome on an asylum application entailed. The following subsections will explore participants' experiences of refusal and re-dispersal through stickiness, suspension, rupture and frenzy (Griffiths, 2014).

5.3.2 Refusal and stickiness

When their appeal rights were exhausted, Chish and Juhur spent a protracted period of time living as refused asylum seekers – five and two years respectively. Chish described this experience as:

Just another waiting game.

Second semi-structured interview with Chish

Playing the waiting game before making further submissions or waiting for an outcome on an application creates sticky time. Home Office decisions take a long time and are often delayed. Finding a solicitor and gathering new evidence or waiting for one's circumstances to change can also take a long time. This can lead to stickiness both for those waiting for an outcome and for those waiting to re-enter the application process. Griffiths (2014) describes being stuck and having to wait as creating and sustaining marginality in the asylum system. Time in the asylum system is thus used to control (Griffiths, 2014). By placing people out-of-time with the majority population, the asylum system constructs boundaries of belonging that exclude. This exclusion can be compounded by the time-limited nature of informal support for people who have been refused asylum. As Bilén describes:

The ASSIST house was good, but it was only one year. One year is not enough for fresh claim.

First semi-structured interview with Bilén

The time-limited nature of informal asylum support does not align with the protracted wait and uncertainty of the asylum system. This creates multiple temporalities within the asylum system that can undermine belonging by creating an experience that is at once too fast and too slow. It is too fast in how quickly informal support can end and too slow through the time that it takes to prepare further submissions. The experiences of multiple temporalities, however, do not necessarily mean that waiting cannot be active or fulfilling. This is evident in Daniel's experience.

Daniel has been living in Sheffield since 2010 and has been living as a refused asylum seeker since 2012. Like Bilén, he spent a year living in accommodation provided by ASSIST and two years with hosts through the Red Cross. At the time of writing, he was alternately sofa-surfing and staying at ASSIST's night shelter. In spite of being stuck between rounds of applications, Daniel describes his experience of Sheffield as follows:

Sheffield is a friendly city. Not every city has people like ASSIST and City of Sanctuary. Sheffield is a city of sanctuary. I use her for cities. Sheffield, she is a sanctuary, she

has given birth to numerous organisations who support people like me, Daniel, from Ghana.

First semi-structured interview with Daniel

In addition to the sense of attachment and belonging to the city evident above, Daniel's sociogram below illustrates that despite being stuck, he has built rich social connections to people and place over time.

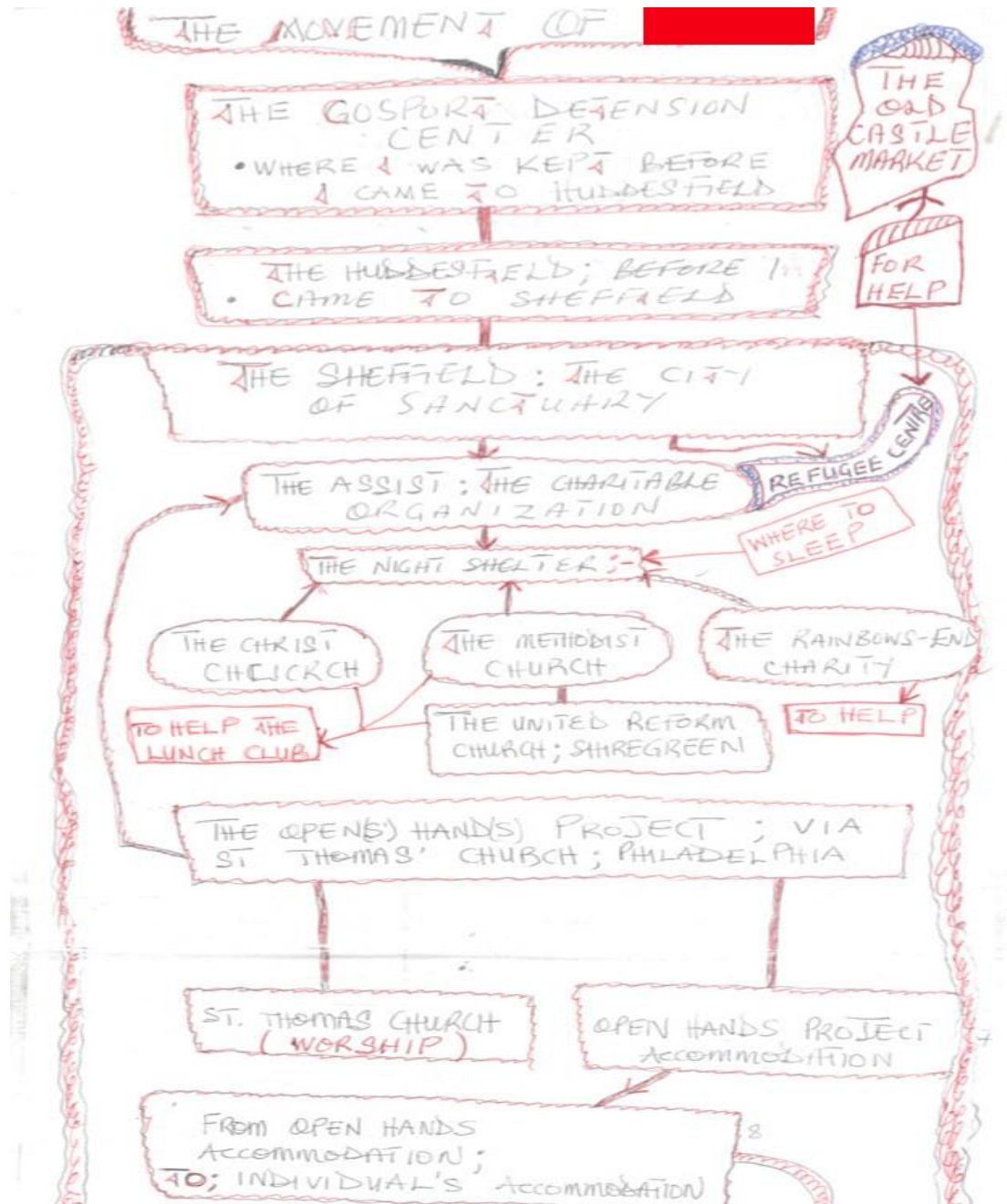


Figure 4 Daniel's first sociogram

Daniel's representation of his time moving across England and specifically, living in Sheffield, emphasises the importance of the social relationships he has built and the organisations he has been supported by and volunteered for. For Daniel, a referral to ASSIST led to his involvement with three different faith-based organisations (FBOs), which in turn led to his involvement in a range of voluntary activities. The connections Daniel made in Sheffield were also instrumental in helping find accommodation. Not only does Daniel describe Sheffield as a city of sanctuary but he emphasises a sense of reciprocity in his involvement in different organisations. The four organisations where he goes "to help" capture the fullness of his everyday life and how he spends his time. In this way, the stickiness of life as someone who has been refused asylum can also be an active experience that leads to new social connections and a sense of belonging to place.

Unlike Daniel's sociogram, which traces his moves across England over time, Juhur's sociogram captures the micro-temporalities of the everyday. Like Daniel's sociogram, Juhur's shows the richness of his everyday time in spite of being stuck. As we sat in the window seat of a chain café in the city centre, Juhur chose to visualise that very Friday as representative of an ordinary day. As he worked, we continued to chat and were briefly interrupted when a family of three came to our table to greet Juhur. Juhur spoke to the mother and we entertained the two small children. When the family left our table, Juhur said that they were friends from the Oromo community and that they had invited him round for dinner that evening.

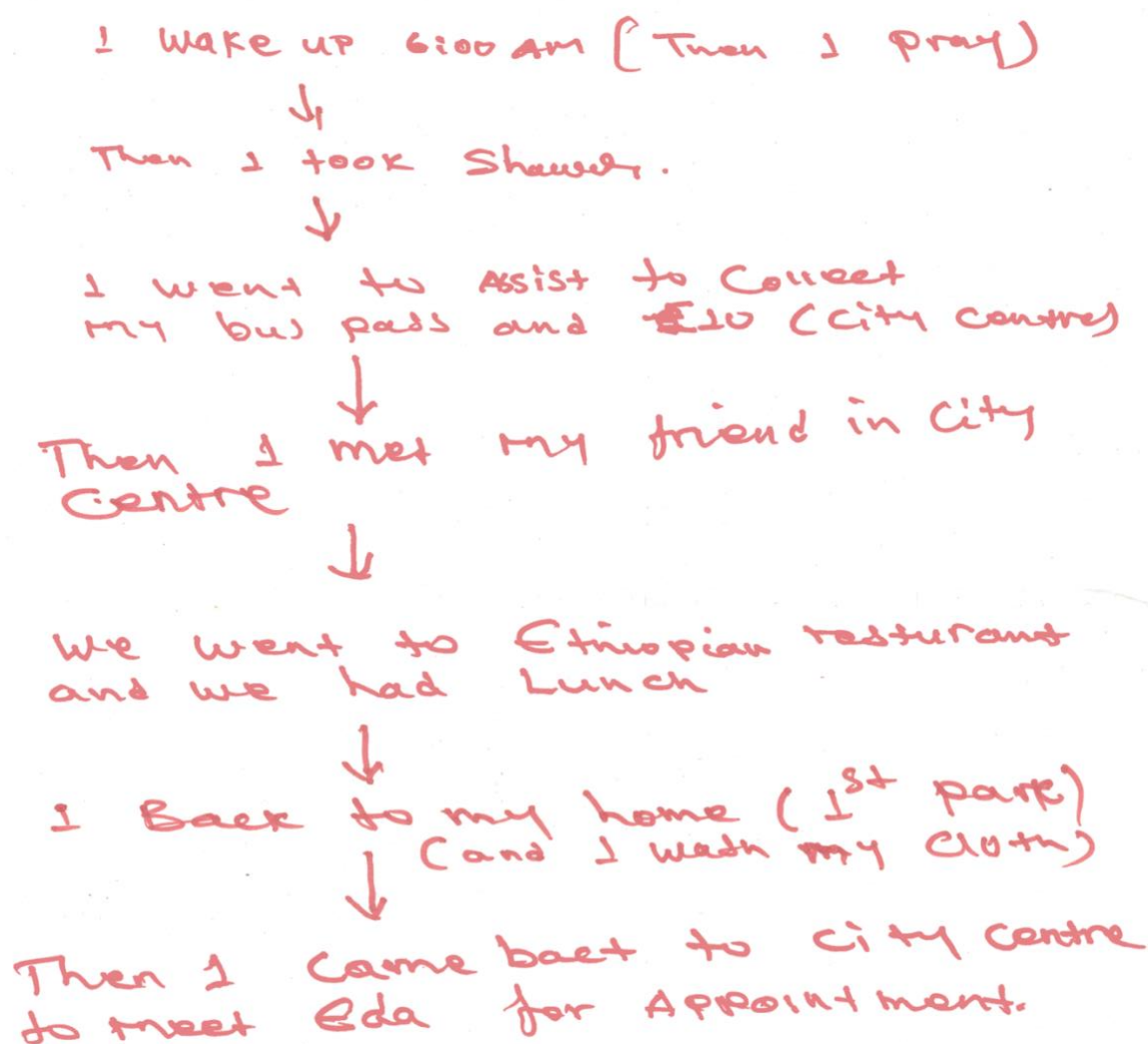


Figure 5 Juhur's first sociogram

Juhur's day included time at ASSIST where he collected his bus pass and support payment; leisure time in the city centre with a friend; a trip to Zeret (an Ethiopian restaurant) for a meal where he and his friend spent much of the afternoon; before returning home for errands; and finally coming back to the city centre in the early evening to meet me where he was invited to an evening meal. In addition to the rich social connections captured in the sociogram above, Juhur also volunteered at the Red Cross, the City of Sanctuary and a digital inclusion charity. He was also heavily involved in diaspora organising in the Oromo community. This shows that in spite of being stuck, Juhur's waiting time was not only active but allowed him to build a sense of belonging. A sense of belonging is evident in how Juhur mobilised his social locations to create new attachments and identifications. Using his professional identity as a computer scientist, Juhur volunteered for a digital inclusion

charity. Similarly, his Oromo identity became both a means to build a sense of belonging to others who share his identity and to build towards an alternative political project of belonging in the Oromo diaspora. This, however, was interrupted by the rupture and frenzy of a change in legal status and re-dispersal.

5.3.3 Re-dispersal, frenzy and rupture: “rolling stones don’t gather any moss”

By the end of the time I spent gathering data, three people had been re-dispersed to different cities following further submissions and applications for S4 support and two people, Nawid and Ako, were waiting to be re-dispersed. Ahmed was re-dispersed to Leeds, Juhur was re-dispersed to Huddersfield and Chish was accommodated at an IAC in Wakefield before being re-dispersed to Huddersfield. In the space of three months, Chish and Juhur’s years of living as refused asylum seekers suddenly came to an end. Between April and July 2019 for example, Chish went from being a refused asylum seeker to a potential asylum seeker and back again. The sudden changes in Chish and Juhur’s legal status and re-dispersal led to both frenzy and rupture. In this way, the temporal experience of asylum can be both too fast and too slow. The sudden speeding up of the asylum system for Juhur and Chish is in contrast to Daniel and Hiba’s experience:

Every day is same. I am waiting.

First semi-structured interview with Hiba

Sudden changes in legal status and re-dispersal interrupted Chish and Juhur’s sense of belonging. In his seven years in Sheffield (both as an asylum seeker and as a refused asylum seeker), Chish built a wide support network through friends, places of worship and Third Sector Organisations (TSOs). Chish’s 50th birthday party in Sheffield, for example, was attended by over 30 people. In Sheffield, Chish regularly went on long cycle tours and played the tuba. He also volunteered with the Salvation Army, Time Builders, the Citizens Advice Bureau and a local charity shop. His re-dispersal away from Sheffield was experienced through frenzy and rupture. It was frenzied through the short notice he was given to pack his bags and say his goodbyes. In addition, his sudden removal from the city caused a rupture in his friendships and social connections. Chish contrasts his time in Sheffield with Huddersfield below:

It's a tough situation to be in because as you know, rolling stones don't gather any moss. Yeah, it's hard because every time you move you're starting again and yeah, I think it's one of the most difficult things because you don't know where you're going to end up at or in. I moved from Petersfield to Sheffield to Wakefield and now to Huddersfield. It's hard. It's just hard because the thing is it's not you wanting to move, you're being forced to move because of your situation. It's really, really difficult.

Second semi-structured interview with Chish

Chish applied for asylum in 2006 after three years living in London on an expired visitor visa and lived in S95 accommodation in Petersfield between 2006 and 2010. He was dispersed to Sheffield on S4 support in 2012. Whereas longer periods of time in a city can allow for a sense of belonging to emerge, this can be disrupted by sudden moves and rupture. In contrast to his hopeful future orientation following his arrival in Sheffield, Chish's description of being a "rolling stone" who does not know where he is going to "end up at or in", suggests a sense of resignation to the "waiting game". This can be seen as being placed in a suspended state (Griffiths, 2014) where one has little agency and it is difficult to begin to build a sense of belonging. A sense of temporal rupture and disorientation is also captured by sudden changes to plans:

I was meant to go to Bradford and on the way the driver was instructed to change plans and I was told I was coming to Huddersfield [...] on the phone he was speaking to whoever he was speaking to and he said "I'm bringing two single guys over here" [...]

Second semi-structured interview with Chish

After arriving in Huddersfield, Chish's everyday life was disrupted by limbo and uncertainty (Mountz, 2011). Although the time he had spent in Sheffield led to a rich everyday life, the liminality of his experience in Huddersfield prevented the establishment of a sense of belonging to a new place:

At the moment I can't do anything because I don't know what's going to happen. I might have to move next week or a month later, it does happen. It's not right but it does happen.

Second semi-structured interview with Chish

Well over a year later, Chish is still living in Huddersfield but he has neither pursued voluntary activities in the city nor has he made new friends. His further submissions were refused in August 2019, but he continues to receive S4 support because he is awaiting Judicial Review (see 2.4). Juhur's experience of re-dispersal to Huddersfield was similar. Juhur made further submissions, was given S4 support and re-dispersed to Huddersfield in April 2019. His further submissions passed the fresh claim test in late June and he was moved onto S95 support. While on S95, he remained in the same accommodation in Huddersfield. Juhur describes Huddersfield below:

I am alone in Huddersfield. I am all alone. Still, if I participate in different charities, I will create and make friends but I'm not really ready to volunteer in Huddersfield because my brain cannot. I'm worried. I am so worried. Truly speaking, I did a lot in Sheffield but in Huddersfield, I can't, my brain can't. I cannot face it. In Sheffield, I volunteered for mental satisfaction and I'm sane and safe because of volunteering in Sheffield. It kept me sane. I know I've helped a lot of people. It is nice to know this. It gives me mental satisfaction. I want to continue doing this in Huddersfield also, but the things have happened to me. The thing that has happened to me is the Home Office. They have disappointed me. I'm just really... I just really need to decide whether I'm ... here or there ... whether my case is seen or not ... whether they dismiss it or not. If they dismissed my case and say, "sorry your case is dismissed", then at least I know. I know already that they say no and then I can do another alternate. At least I'd know.

Second semi-structured interview with Juhur

Not only did his move to Huddersfield deprive Juhur of autonomy over his time (Tazzioli, 2018) but the disruption caused by his move to Huddersfield effectively put his life on hold (Thorshaug and Brun, 2020). By depriving Juhur of autonomy over his everyday time, being

re-dispersed to Huddersfield disrupted his sense of belonging to both people and place in Sheffield and precluded him from seeking new attachments and identifications with people in Huddersfield. In addition to having a sense of belonging to people and place disrupted, the sense of limbo in the asylum system after making further submissions also generates suffering in its own right (Griffiths, 2014) and can be seen as inflicting trauma (Haas, 2017). This is evident in how Juhur describes his mental health and wellbeing. Frenzy and rupture through repeat moves, changes to legal status, sudden disruptions and uncertainty can undermine a sense of belonging by creating a liminal, marginal experience (Hynes, 2011).

The negative impact on wellbeing and limits to belonging through marginality are also evident in Ahmed's experience of re-dispersal. After making further submissions and waiting eight months to be re-dispersed, Ahmed was taken to Leeds. When living in Sheffield, Ahmed accessed a number of different services and had a well-coordinated network of professionals, FBOs and TSOs supporting him with his health needs. In Leeds, Ahmed struggled to access the same services. This not only had a detrimental impact on his health but also led to a significant change in his daily routine. Prior to his re-dispersal, Ahmed would visit the mosque each day as well as help the priest who hosted him in his presbytery with the church's food and clothing bank. In the sociogram below, Ahmed depicts an ordinary day in Leeds:

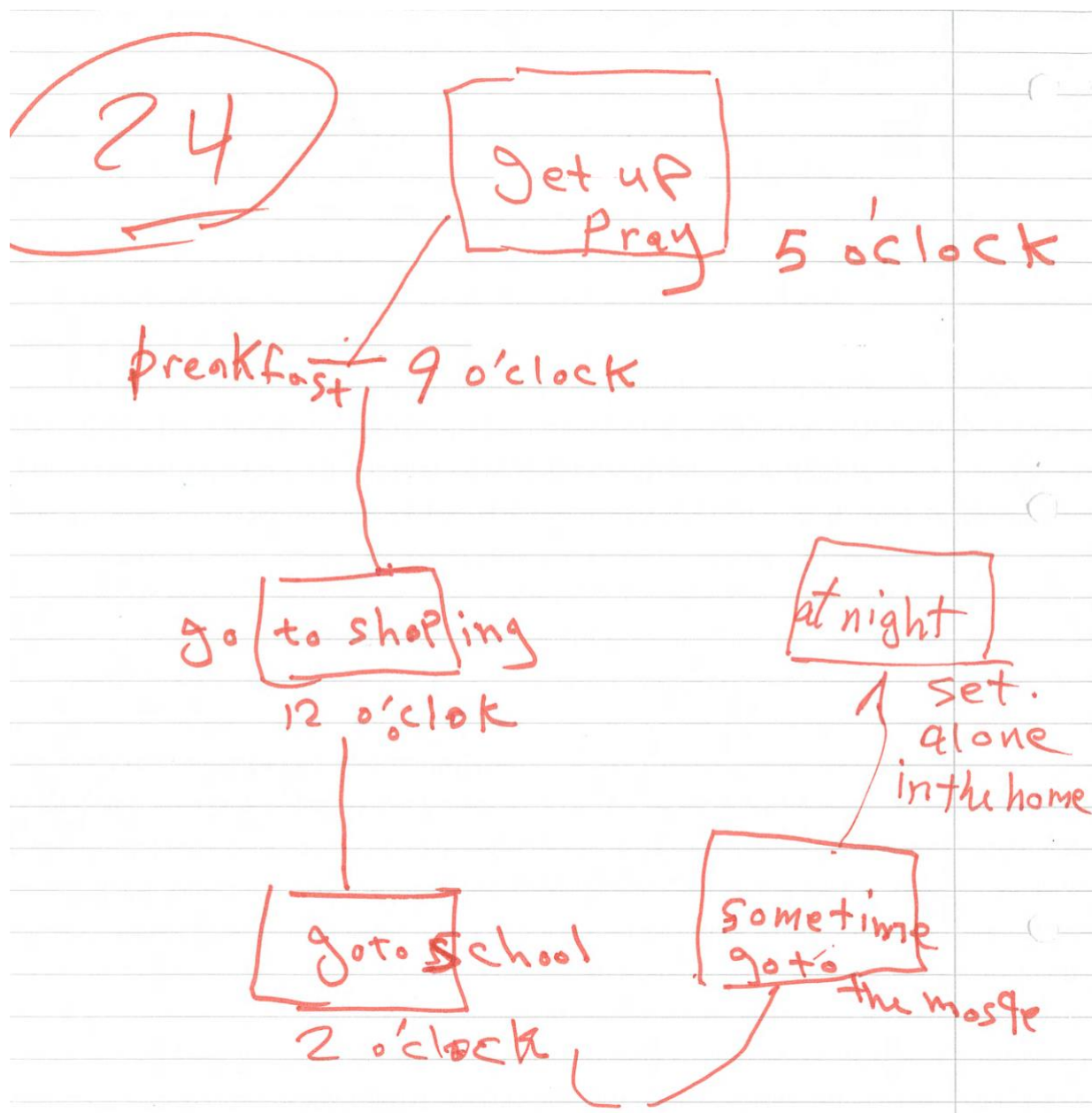


Figure 6 Ahmed's first sociogram

Ahmed's time is marked by stickiness (Griffiths, 2014, 1995). His day-to-day life revolves around: shopping for necessities, "sometimes" going to the mosque, and going to his weekly English class in the city centre. Ahmed spends a great deal of his time at home: "sit alone in the home". Ahmed's everyday time is both stretched and compressed; the impoverishment of the asylum system means there are very few ways in which he can pass his indefinite wait. In this way, Ahmed's everyday routines involve a sense of banal repetition, limit his sense of belonging to both people and place by placing him out-of-time with others and limiting the choice and agency he has over his everyday time. Rather than a sense of

belonging emerging through everyday routine as argued by May (2013), therefore, routine and repetition can limit a sense of belonging through lack of choice and agency over routine.

While Ahmed was drawing his sociogram, I asked him if he speaks with the people he lives with. Ahmed replied that he rarely speaks to them because they are all young men who have different ways to pass their time. As a result, a potential sense of belonging to people was prevented through different social locations (Yuval-Davis, 2011). Ahmed felt unable to develop a sense of belonging through an individual attachment or identification to the people he was made to live with because of his age. In contrast, in Sheffield where he was hosted by a priest, Ahmed and the Father's different social locations but shared commitment to faith led to a sense of closeness and support. This illustrates how different intersecting social locations can deconstruct simplistic notions of ethnic or national collectivities (Yuval-Davis, 2011, 12). As Ahmed continued to work on his sociogram, he described how he experiences time as suffering:

It's a very boring life. I'm waiting for my death, and this whole time I stay at home, only in two days, three days I might go out to shopping, to get something for grocery. Otherwise I stay at home, so I'm waiting just for my death that's all. This is the system for the Home Office, they're killing people gradually. There's no offering the life. The same was happening to me before in South Shields. Well, even I went to MP, but still they are rejecting my case, they didn't help me at all.

First semi-structured interview with Ahmed

The restrictions to Ahmed's daily life and routines amount to a sense of torture: "they're killing people gradually". This is in line with Boochani (2016) who argues that offshore detention in the Australian asylum system amounts to torture through time where people are isolated from others and are placed into a time tunnel. Ahmed's description of the Home Office's attitude to people seeking asylum reveals how he perceives the politics of belonging as producing exclusion through time and uncertainty. This is also evident in how he describes his re-dispersal to Leeds:

They move me to this area. My good life is in Sheffield, and I left good friends there.

So, all the people love me, and I left. I loved them as well in Sheffield.

First semi-structured interview with Ahmed

The loss of loving friends and support network for Ahmed led to suffering and temporal dispossession as a result of spatial displacement (Ramsay, 2019, 1). In August 2019, Ahmed's further submissions were refused but he was able to stay in his S4 accommodation because he is too unwell to travel. Beyond the disruption and uncertainty caused by repeat moves, the length of relatively stable time in a city can influence future orientations to place and belonging. Based on this, the following subsection will consider some of the decisions participants made after their time in the asylum system. This will involve a discussion of how time spent in a city can lead to the decision to remain or return as well as how perceptions of the politics of belonging can shape the decisions people make after receiving a positive outcome on an asylum claim.

5.3.4 After asylum: moving on?

The length of time spent in a city and relative stability can lead to a sense of belonging. This is evident in Chish and Ahmed's desire to return to Sheffield when they can. Participants' future orientation to place as well as the decisions they made after asylum can show the complexity and multi-sidedness of belonging. After their time in the asylum system, two participants – Aisha and Juhur – chose to return to Sheffield, two participants – Helen and Hope – chose to remain in Sheffield and two participants – Mahyar and Zhala – chose to move to London.

For Hope, who was given Discretionary Leave for 30 months, and Helen, who was given Refugee Status for five years, the decision to remain in Sheffield after being given a (more) secure legal status suggests a sense of belonging to both people and place in the city. This was also evident in Aisha's decision to return to Sheffield after separating from her partner. Although decisions about moving on after a positive asylum outcome are complex, Stewart and Shaffer (2015) find that the length of time and relative stability of being in one dispersal site can increase a sense of connection and feeling at home. For Hope and Helen, their children's schools and Helen's church were significant factors in their decision to remain in

Sheffield. Another factor was being able to access social housing by proving a local connection. Both commented on how difficult it is to apply for social housing in cities such as London. This echoes Sim's (2015) findings that having children settled in schools and the availability of housing can lead to people choosing to stay in the city they were dispersed to.

I asked Helen if she was still thinking about seeing if she could swap her council house in Sheffield for one in London. Helen said that she only thought about that very briefly and that it would be dangerous for her teenage son to go to school there. She said that she could never afford to have her own restaurant if she moved to London.

Field diary, participant observation, 27th May 2019

For Helen, the decision to stay in Sheffield is made up of multiple and intersecting social locations, identifications and value systems (Yuval-Davis, 2011). Helen's race, class and professional identity shaped her decision to stay in Sheffield. Her sense of identification with her church and perception of other cities was also important. Helen explained that she thinks schools in London are high risk and dangerous for Black boys. The comparative challenges of living in London including perceptions of crime as well the cost of living contributed to her decision to stay in Sheffield. This suggests that a consideration of the political projects of belonging which shape the everyday experiences and outcomes of working-class Black people in London and the perception of relative value systems in how her son might be judged and encountered in London (Yuval-Davis, 2011) influenced Helen's decision to stay in Sheffield.

In addition, a sense of belonging to home as a domestic space (May, 2013), as a multi-sited place (Sirriyeh, 2013) and as a conscious choice (Ahmed, 2004) was evident in how Hope and Helen have made their homes. Since receiving positive outcomes on their asylum applications, both have, over time, decorated and renovated their homes. This can be seen as part of a sense of emotional attachment to both their domestic home space and the city over time, as well as the exercise of choice and control over a space after having been denied choice in the asylum system:

I have done the living room; I have done the floor. I have done everything. It is nice now, much better.

Second semi-structured interview with Helen

Helen's house was looking amazing. Being in the kitchen was like sitting in the middle of a sunflower. She's created an incredibly bright accent wall by painting giant yellow and orange circles on a vivid green wall. The bright colours and the rich smell of berbere spice from the food she was preparing for us was quite the combination.

Field diary, participant observation, May 27th 2019

Having a (more) secure migration status gave both Hope and Helen choice and autonomy over their home space. This contrasts starkly with the occasion where the G4S van driver who moved Hope and her daughter from their S95 to S4 accommodation threatened to report them for having "too many" possessions. Hope and Helen's home-making practices through careful and painstaking decoration can reflect a sense of safety and security as well as the basis for a claim to belong to Sheffield and Britain through the permanence of paint and material objects such as furniture (Brah, 1996).

Since my last visit, Hope has had her flat re-carpeted. I immediately took off the house shoes Hope had given me at the door and wriggled my toes in its lushness. It feels like a long time since Hope first moved in and we spent hours looking at fancy wallpaper and researching fitted wardrobes [...] Hope said that would like to stay in this house permanently and maybe one day consider going for right-to-buy. First though, she wants to build a house in Lagos.

Field diary, participant observation, June 2nd 2019

A sense of permanence and belonging both to home and the city is evident in the extract from my field diary above. Also evident is how Hope's future orientation to belonging is multiply positioned and encapsulates belonging to her national home spaces: Britain and Nigeria. This shows how a sense of belonging, choice and relative security after receiving a

positive decision on her asylum claim have enabled Hope to develop a future orientation to belonging that encompasses multiple places across national borders.

In contrast to Hope and Helen who chose to stay in Sheffield, Mahyar and Zhala chose to move to London. Their decision to move to London was primarily driven by a desire to be closer to North London's established Iranian community. This echoes Stewart and Shaffer's (2015) finding that the desire to be closer to co-ethnics can influence decision making after asylum. Mahyar and Zhala, however, both reflected that their decision was also driven by class. Both commented that there are not many middle-class Iranians in Sheffield. In addition, Mahyar, who is a civil engineer, said that he does not think he would be able to find work in his sector in Sheffield once he had developed his English. For Mahyar and Zhala, their intersecting social locations of ethnicity, nationality, class, professional background and language led to their decision to move to London. The complexity of these intersections can be used to "deconstruct simplistic notions of national and ethnic collectivities and their boundaries" (Yuval-Davis, 2011, 12). Whereas the Nigerian and Ethiopian national groups in London are bigger than they are in Sheffield, neither Hope nor Helen prioritised this in their decision making, choosing instead to remain where they could afford to set up their own businesses and access social housing and what they consider to be better schools for their children.

Six of the people who took part in this study now have a (more) secure legal status. As discussed above, a (more) secure legal status has enabled some participants to develop and deepen their sense of belonging by having a greater choice about where to live and make plans for the future. For other participants, however, the protracted experience of living as a refused asylum seeker while seeing people around them being given (more) secure legal statuses placed them out-of-time with others and limited a sense of belonging. Based on this, the next section will consider changes in legal status over time.

5.4 Out-of-time with others

This section will consider how being placed out-of-time with others following a change in legal status can limit a sense of belonging by disrupting relationships. Bilen has been living in the Sheffield City Region since 2010 and has been living as a refused asylum seeker since

2015. Over time, many of her friends and acquaintances have been given Refugee Status, Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave while her legal situation remains the same:

Before we cried, and we shared, and we said when, when will our situation change? Do you understand? Now, we connect in different way. The people who get their papers, they don't understand because they forget. People in the same situation, they know, they understand. But when someone is refugee, they forget everything. They forget what asylum is like.

First semi-structured interview with Bilen

When her friends' legal statuses changed, it changed the form and content of Bilen's relationships. As Bilen describes, her friends moved on and forgot what living in the asylum system was like. Their different temporal orientations – future status versus memory – thus determined the way they connected. This increased the isolation Bilen felt. While her friends were still asylum seekers, they were able to connect, cry and share even though their everyday experience of time was different to that of the majority population or people seen to belong to Britain. When her friends were given a (more) secure legal status, Bilen fell out-of-time with them because their everyday time became more in line with the majority population. This temporal dissonance as a result of the asylum system made maintaining relationships more difficult and limited a sense of belonging through stickiness over time. Bilen's experience of a sense of belonging to people changing as a result of changes to legal status over time was also shared by Jerome:

I lost a lot of people, I had different friends in different cities, but when they got their papers I lost them. Birmingham was good, my friends are in Birmingham now, but me, I'm here. The people I lose, they are living. Me, I'm here.

First semi-structured interview with Jerome

The politics of belonging which create a globally stratified system of belonging (Wright, 2014) also create gradations of belonging within the state. In Britain, the progressive racialisation of citizenship and the fracturing of the refugee label (Zetter, 2007) has created a stratified regime of citizenship and formal belonging to the state on a spectrum from

citizen to refused asylum seeker. As is evident in the quotes from Bilen and Jerome above, the hierarchy of formal belonging to the state creates a sense of dissonance in everyday relationships and the experience of time. Whereas the time-limited nature of Refugee Status, Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave can create uncertainty and anxiety about the future, for Bilen and Jerome, those with (more) secure legal status are able to “live” and being able to “live” makes them “forget” what asylum was like. The stratification of rights and formal belonging to the state via citizenship consequently create a stratification in everyday life and a sense of belonging to people. This in turn can limit a sense of belonging to people through differential categorisation. By (re)producing the Other, creating categories to belong to and be seen through, the political projects of belonging manifested in the asylum system limit a sense of belonging to people who may have once shared the same legal status. Over time, this can lead to a sense of loss, stasis and unbelonging for some, while simultaneously being the start of a new life and new opportunities for others.

The next section will consider how less value and worth is given to the time of people in the asylum system. Building on the previous two sections, I will argue that being in the asylum system can limit a sense of belonging through different experiential temporalities. This will be used to explore waiting and everyday life more closely before considering how particular future orientations of belonging are produced.

5.5 Unbelonging through time

As discussed in section 5.3 above, dispersal can be experienced through stickiness, rupture suspension and frenzy. This section will focus on waiting. It will consider bureaucratic and banal delays and their impact on everyday life before exploring how the temporal demands of the asylum system are also evident in TSOs and humanitarian organisations. I will use this to argue that bureaucratic or institutional time can limit a sense of belonging by making people seeking asylum feel like their time is not valuable.

Waiting to be heard

In May 2019, Juhur’s case was supposed to be heard in court. On the day of the hearing, the judge abruptly decided to cancel it. The only explanation given was that there had been a

“technical error”. An expert witness had travelled to Bradford from London to be on time for the 9 am hearing. When the hearing was cancelled, Juhur had to wait four months for it to be rescheduled. He describes his experiences of the cancellation below:

After the day, she [the solicitor] wrote a letter to the Home Office and to the court. She said until then, I should just wait. She said just wait and until now, nothing. She said nothing. Since then I'm waiting. So, we will see. I'm waiting anyhow. I was so confused on that day. I was so sad. I've never had any health problem. I've never had a problem with blood pressure or anything like that so that day, my blood pressure was raised from 120 by 80 to 160 by 110 which is severe case. Now, I'm alive still. Yes, truly speaking, they are making everyone sick. You can't predict what they do, how they work. You can't predict anything. There are no guidelines to predict. You're stuck waiting and it makes you sick. I believe that they came and just want me to die, but they don't offer me any help to change my life. I am feeling that I have no life, life is not this. You know I'm always expecting a letter. Every day, every week I am looking for the letter. Waiting for the post. Either a dismissal or an acceptance or anything but nothing, there's nothing. I will call my solicitor this week.

Second semi-structured interview with Juhur

For several months Juhur's temporal orientation was fixed on his imminent court date. The sudden cancellation of his hearing caused additional rupture. After years of waiting and building towards his court date, the hearing was suddenly cancelled. This led to a lack of control which in turn created anxiety, uncertainty and ill health. Not knowing the reason why his hearing had been cancelled and having no power to influence this decision reduced Juhur's sense of control over his everyday life. This compounded his inability to pursue voluntary activities or build new relationships in place in Huddersfield. As discussed in section 5.3.2, voluntary activities in Sheffield helped keep Juhur “sane and safe”. The worry and uncertainty of waiting in the asylum system, however, prevented him from being able to develop a sense of belonging in place and deprived him of control and choice in his everyday life.

On the one hand, the pace of the asylum system with its simultaneous speed and slowness deprived Juhur of a sense of belonging to people through time and place. On the other, the value placed on his life by the Home Office, like Ahmed, made him feel keenly aware of the politics of belonging in the asylum system: “I believe that they came and just want me to die”. The politics of belonging that produce difference also place less value on the time of the Other. In this way, the rupture, stickiness, suspension and frenzy of the asylum system can lead to a Kafkaesque experience of uncertainty and hopelessness (Griffiths, 2014, 1996). When Juhur’s hearing was eventually rescheduled, he was given Refugee Status. He moved back to Sheffield shortly after and celebrated with a large dinner party. Juhur applied for a family re-unification visa with one of the caseworkers he used to volunteer with at the Red Cross. In March 2020, Juhur was joined in Sheffield by his wife and three young daughters, the youngest of whom he had not seen since she was a few months old. As England entered lockdown, Juhur texted to say:

Amazing news, I am reunited with my family here in Sheffield!!!!

Text from Juhur, 1st April 2020

Although Juhur’s period of limbo came to an end, for other participants the multiple temporalities and a limited sense of belonging in the asylum system persist. The asylum system produces different temporalities which are experienced simultaneously (Ibid, 2001). Periods of inactivity and waiting are interspersed with sudden demands to be on time for appointments or to make appeals. This is evident in reporting appointments, similar to bail reporting (see 2.3.2) where people seeking asylum and refused asylum seekers are expected to report to their nearest Home Office reporting centre or police station daily, weekly or monthly:

Reporting appointments always seem to ask people to attend at very specific times, like 35 minutes past the hour, but when you get there, none of the staff seem to care about timeliness. It can take an age just to get through the metal detector and bag scanner endlessly fishing lighters out of pockets and then you often end up waiting in the central seating area, occasionally watching people disappear through doors that lead to mysterious corridors.

Field Diary, participant observation, 7th June 2019

Simultaneous speed and slowness limit a sense of belonging by placing less value on the time of people seeking asylum. This is evident in the institutional space of the reporting centre. Whereas some are suddenly whisked off down mysterious corridors, others have to wait their turn to walk up to a booth where they place their finger on a fingerprint scanner, receive a new slip of paper with their next reporting appointment time and leave after a curt nod from the uniformed UKVI officer. For Hage (2009) waiting pervades social life. Within the asylum system, waiting and queuing symbolises social order which seeks to discipline and control “the lower classes and the uncivilised and racialised others” (Hage, 2009, 8). The simultaneous speed and slowness of the reporting centre thus produce unbelonging by reminding people that their time is less valuable than that of the state.

The relative value given to people’s time in the asylum system is also evident when people make further submissions. In 2018, Ahmed and I travelled to the Further Submissions Unit in Liverpool together. We set off before 6 am to make it on time for his 9 am appointment. Further submissions must be made in person in Liverpool (see: 2.4). This applies to everyone wishing to make further submissions irrespective of where they live and their circumstances. In Ahmed’s case, ASSIST paid for his train travel and I accompanied him as a caseworker. The lack of value given to Ahmed’s time and the time of people wishing to make further submissions is evident in the difficult circumstances under which people are expected to travel to Liverpool. The unbelonging produced by the Home Office is also evident in other institutional spaces and can show how the state’s political projects of belonging can filter into different sites and scales. Ako’s solicitor, for example, missed the two-week deadline to lodge an appeal for his asylum claim. This left Ako destitute. It took two years for Ako to make further submissions in early 2019 and by the end of the summer, he was still waiting for re-dispersal. Waiting in between making further submissions, applying for S4 support and being re-dispersed can compound the purgatorial experience of time in the asylum system and limit a sense of belonging. This emphasises the dehumanisation of the asylum system (Hynes and Sales, 2009).

The everyday and banal delays

The limits to a sense of belonging imposed by the temporalities of the asylum system are also evident in seemingly banal delays in everyday life. When Juhur was re-dispersed to Huddersfield, there was a delay in him receiving his ASPEN card. After being re-dispersed, he waited two weeks for his ASPEN card to arrive (see glossary and sections 2.4.1 and 2.4.2). In that time, he was given two £20 Tesco vouchers by his G4S housing officer; £15.39 less a week than what he should have received in weekly S4 payments.

Similarly, shortly after Chish was re-dispersed to Huddersfield, the fridge-freezer in his dispersal accommodation stopped working. G4S told him that the fridge would take 28 days to replace. This was in mid-summer. In order to cope with this seemingly banal delay, Chish was able to draw on his network of friends in Sheffield who were able to replace the fridge-freezer with a small, second-hand under-counter fridge-freezer. This meant that when G4S finally replaced the fridge-freezer, he and his three housemates had abundant fridge space and were better able to store cheaper frozen food.

As with the limits to a sense of belonging created by the temporal demands of the asylum system writ large, limits to a sense of belonging through a lack of choice and agency is also experienced in seemingly banal delays. Having to wait for a replacement fridge and having to wait for a new ASPEN card placed limits and constraints on Chish and Juhur's everyday life. In addition, these seemingly banal delays limited a sense of belonging through the relative value given to them as people seeking asylum. These seemingly banal delays can also be used to explore the poor regulation, control and scrutiny within the asylum system between the Home Office, Sodexo and dispersal accommodation providers (Dwyer, 2005, Wren, 2007). Coordination between contracted companies and formal institutions, however, merits further research and is beyond the scope of this study.

Waiting lists

As discussed above, legal organisations can reproduce the unbelonging of the asylum system when they fail to meet deadlines. This is also evident when people are waiting for support from TSOs. Charities supporting people who have been refused asylum or are making a claim for asylum often operate under tight resource and budget constraints. The

constraints to charities' budgets and resources can sometimes reproduce the suspension and stickiness of the asylum system. This can limit a sense of belonging. This was evident in the extract from my field diary below:

Bilen called me. She sounded tearful and asked if we could meet. I said that I was at the University but could head straight down. We met at the City of Sanctuary building. When I arrived, she was visibly upset. I asked what had happened and she explained that she had been to see [the legal charity]. They had told her that they would be unable to help her make further submissions. Bilen showed me the letter they had given her explaining that they were unable to make further submissions on the basis that she has no new evidence.

Field diary, participant observation, 10th July 2019

After a protracted wait for support from the legal charity which has long waiting lists and relies predominantly on volunteer law students, Bilen was told that they would be unable to help her because she did not have any new evidence. Bilen said that everyone wants her to wait for new evidence, but she simply does not have any. In this case, the stickiness of time in the asylum system was reproduced by the legal charity. Bilen had to wait to be told that the charity would be unable to help her. She was then told to wait for new evidence. This meant that Bilen had to wait within a system marked by waiting and limbo, compounding a liminal and purgatorial experience and further limiting a sense of belonging. In this way, waiting for support from TSOs can inadvertently replicate the temporal experience of waiting in the asylum system. The limited budgets and resources with which TSOs operate as a result of successive cuts to grant funding can create a sense of temporal dissonance by introducing additional layers of hope, loss and waiting-within-waiting. Bilen's upset and disappointment led to the perception that she was not valued by either the well-intentioned legal charity or by the Home Office. As a result, this shaped how she felt she was perceived by society (May, 2013) and the value systems through which she was encountered (Yuval-Davis, 2011) where the expectation is that people seeking asylum should be able to withstand or cope with waiting for charitable support.

This section has argued that the asylum system produces unbelonging through time. I argued that the asylum system limits a sense of belonging by placing less value on the time of people in the asylum system. The section explored this through the temporal demands of court hearings, reporting appointments and application deadlines as well as seemingly banal everyday delays. It then considered how the budget and resource constraints of TSOs can reproduce the unbelonging of the asylum system. The following section will explore how time in the asylum system can shape the way people narrate themselves and their future orientations of belonging to the state.

5.6 Future orientations to belonging

This section will argue that the temporal demands of the asylum system can affect self-expression which, as discussed in chapter three, can be part of a sense of belonging (Miller, 2003). Although self-expression can lead to a sense of belonging through individual action, agency and choice, the asylum system can also produce particular modes of self-expression. These modes of self-expression can lead to particular future orientations towards belonging. The section will then consider how the value systems through which people seeking asylum are encountered can lead to the production of an obedient citizen-subject in waiting who has the capacity for future belonging to the state.

5.6.1 Narrating the self and the political projects of belonging

The assumption that people applying for asylum are undeserving of protection is prevalent in the asylum system (Hynes, 2011). Case managers working in UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) often look for minor, often temporal, inconsistencies in applications in order to reject claims and can assume that applications are bogus (Hynes and Sales, 2009). In Initial Asylum Screening and Substantive Asylum interviews, people applying for asylum are expected to construct a coherent narrative of their lives in order to counteract a culture of disbelief and have their 'story' believed (McFadyen, 2019). These interviews demand detailed temporal as well as biographical information (Brux et al., 2019, 1438). The demand for detailed temporal information combined with the culture of disbelief can have an impact on how people narrate their own lives.

When designing this study (see 4.3), I chose semi-structured interviews to avoid replicating the dynamics of Initial Asylum Screening and Substantive Asylum Interviews (Back and

Sinha, 2018). Despite this, when conducting semi-structured interviews, I noticed that participants' registers sometimes shifted to the tone used when responding to interview questions from solicitors, service providers or UKVI officials. In our first interview, Aisha described some of her experiences as follows:

Because of my political activities in Iran, I was in hiding; my country was dangerous to me. I stayed 16 days in Turkey, and I couldn't return to my country because the government realised that I had left the country and said they would arrest me. It was dangerous for me to return. It was 27 March 2012.

First semi-structured interview with Aisha

Aisha gave detailed temporal information. This level of temporal detail reflects and replicates the temporal detail demanded by the Home Office and other institutions. As our research relationship developed and the more ethnographic mode enabled us to spend more time together sociably, we reviewed her first transcript and I asked her about the detailed temporal information she gave. Aisha responded that she thought that I would need this level of detail for my research.

In order to seek formal recognition and belonging to the state, people seeking asylum are expected to provide exact and detailed temporal information. The level of temporal detail Aisha gave in our first interview can be used to suggest that the demands of the asylum system lead to people narrating their lives to all people who are seen to belong to Britain in line with institutional expectations. This was also evident in one of mine and Daniel's earliest conversations:

He asked me to read reference letters he had brought in a folder from lots of different voluntary organisations and FBOs that looked like they came from his further submissions bundle. He used the words testimony and truth a lot. I felt that he was very focused on 'proving' what he was saying and making sure I knew that what he was saying was the truth. He also said something about being a good contributor to society, which made me think about belonging and deservingness.

Field diary, participant observation, 16th January 2019

The level of detail people provided to me when we first met seemed to replicate some of the temporal and narrative demands of interactions with officials. Although this can be seen as a methodological reflection that changed as my research relationships developed, the way Daniel and Aisha narrated themselves can also be used to argue that the asylum system produces particular modes of self-expression. Daniel and Aisha's temporal self-expression and narration can be used to suggest that the process of seeking formal belonging to the state produces a particular subjectivity. By embodying the subject position of asylum seeker, people begin to narrate themselves in line with the demands of the state in order to assert legitimacy or the right to belong. This was particularly evident in my interaction with Daniel and his use of the language of contribution.

In my field diary, I wrote that I felt that Daniel narrated himself in a way that adhered to discourses of deservingness. Although this is based on my own reflections, it can nonetheless be used to argue that the temporal demands of the asylum system can be seen to contribute to subject formation where the demands of the asylum system create the singular subject position of asylum seeker (Calhoun, 1999). As a result, the demands of the asylum system can shape and determine self-expression and belonging as self-actualisation, desire or future longing to be (Probyn, 1996, Miller, 2003) and lead to attachment and self-expression predicated on the expectations of the state. This confirms Wernesjö's (2020) findings that young refugees in Sweden express future belonging with respect to the state. Where future belonging to the state is predicated on the acquisition of citizenship (Vathi and King, 2013), the way in which people seeking asylum choose to narrate and express themselves can lead to particular modes of self-expression that are in line with the perceived politics of belonging. Belonging as a wilful act (Ahmed, 2004) or as a means of self-expression is thus deeply related to the politics of belonging. This can show how belonging connects the self to society (May, 2013) and how the political projects of belonging produce a sense of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2011). The expectations and demands placed on people seeking asylum are also evident in the value systems through which people seeking asylum are encountered in TSOs.

5.6.2 Volunteering and being a good citizen-in-waiting

This subsection will consider how waiting time in the asylum system through discourses of support and care can limit a sense of belonging by producing citizen-subjects in waiting who have the potential to belong. I will argue that humanitarian organisations can contribute to preparing people seeking asylum for future belonging to the state via citizenship. I will first consider this in light of the existing literature on TSOs in the refugee and asylum sector before relating it to my own findings.

The work of charities can reproduce images of good and worthy citizens as figures deserving of sanctuary (Darling and Squire, 2012, 194). This can discursively normalise the precarity of the refugee experience (Bauder, 2019, 33) and in doing so regularise and depoliticise a “violent temporality of waiting” (Bagelman, 2013, 50). This can lead to a situation where humanitarian organisations inadvertently encourage refugees and asylum seekers to passively endure indefinite and indeterminate waiting. For Bagelman, this can incite a “commitment to the rules of the game, where one willingly submits and indeed invests in the prolonging of the precarious conditions in which refugees and asylum seekers are situated” (Ibid, 56). In this way, the value systems wherein someone seeking asylum is an object of compassion can reproduce political projects of belonging to the state via citizenship where future belonging is predicated on potential contributions to society.

The Home Office encourages people seeking asylum to undertake voluntary activities with “a charity or public sector organisation to contribute to their local community” (Home Office, 2020, 48). Although voluntary work very rarely has a positive impact on asylum applications, people who have received a positive decision on their asylum application and are able to apply for naturalisation⁵ must meet the good character requirement in order to be naturalised (Yeo, 2019). There is no definition of good character in the Nationality Act but good behaviour, including charity work or service in the armed forces, can be positive considerations (Ibid).

⁵ Someone who has Refugee Status or Humanitarian Protection can apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) after five years’ continuous residence in the UK. Twelve months after receiving ILR, it is possible to apply for naturalisation as a British Citizen. It costs £1330 to apply for naturalisation in addition to the costs of sitting the Life in the UK Test and Secure English Language Test (gov.uk, 2021).

In addition to the Home Office encouraging people who seek asylum to volunteer, many TSOs do so too. Although TSOs may encourage people to volunteer as a means of supporting them to find fulfilling ways to pass the time and for many, Juhur included, volunteering can be a way of keeping oneself “sane and safe” (see 5.3.3), the encouragement to volunteer can also reproduce discourses of good or worthy potential citizens deserving of support and in doing so, create a particular future orientation of belonging in line with the political projects of belonging:

Most things with [the charity] were good. The only disappointment was that they encourage you to interact – they got me to volunteer and do lots of activities and then, in the end, because I’m able and outgoing, they said that I couldn’t be supported because I was able and outgoing. They encouraged me to do things, they told me that I was able then stopped supporting me because I had too many networks. They ended support because I had too much going for me. If I wasn’t outgoing, they would have supported me!

What they want to see is someone who is on the street, who is not able to speak to people, who can’t do anything really, who just waits for their support. I suppose that is the kind of person they will go straightaway, “no, we must take care of this person.” If you are someone who is like me, outgoing and all that stuff, then you don’t ... you need to fit in their category. I can understand there are a lot of people to support and all that stuff but the fact that they tell you that we can’t support you because of what you are, that is a bit insulting. Do you know what I mean?

First semi-structured interview with Chish

The length of time people spend in the asylum system is a “slow elongated process that enacts a hostile politics by holding some in an indefinite sense of waiting” (Bagelman, 2016, 7). For Bagelman, charitable support can create a particular future orientation of becoming a good citizen (2016, 98). In this way, the work of TSOs can reproduce political projects of belonging which demand loyalty and the demonstration of a good character by encouraging people who are made to wait in the asylum system to use their time “productively” (Bagelman, 2016, 8). In addition, as is evident in the quote above, charitable organisations

may seek a particular type of person to support. This is often someone who is an abject object of compassion (Sirriyeh, 2018) as opposed to an “outgoing and able” active agent.

Although voluntary activities can lead to a sense of belonging, voluntary activities can also produce “compliant waiting subjects while assuaging the very problem of indefinite deferral” (Bagelman, 2016, 94). Compliant, waiting subjects are thus those who use their time productively and in so doing, demonstrate their good character and potential to belong, often many years before they can even consider applying for naturalisation. However, as is evident in the quote from Chish above, volunteering and using time productively can also lead to people being deemed unworthy of support because they do not need someone who belongs to the state to “care for” them. This creates a double-bind in which one must be both in need of “care” in order to receive TSO support and able to demonstrate that they are good and productive (Bagelman, 2016, 98) citizen-in-waiting.

In addition to creating a double-bind, using time productively while volunteering can also produce an orientation to future belonging that adheres to the expectations of the state. As discussed in 3.4.3, Fakhrashrafi et al. (2019) argue that the work of humanitarian organisations seeking to support refugees and asylum seekers in Canada can produce subjects who align themselves with the politics of belonging. Fakhrashrafi et al., (2019) connect this to Canada’s colonial history. Their findings were evident in the extract from my field diary below:

He had been asked to speak at a big public fundraising event. He said that one of the charity’s staff members at the time said something truly awful to him. Apparently, she said that colonialism wasn’t so bad after all and that colonialism at least brought infrastructure and education to the lands it colonised. He said he was furious at this flagrant bit of racism and enraged that someone who works for the charity would say something like that. He said that he was truly deeply outraged. I asked if he reported it. He said that he didn’t. He explained that he just bottled up his anger and carried on with the presentation.

Field diary, mobile interview, 11th July 2019

Although the colonialities of the politics of belonging is beyond the scope of this study, the extract above demonstrates that this is an interesting avenue for future research. In addition to confirming Fakhrashrafi et al.'s (2019) findings, the above extract can be used to argue that the political projects of belonging which produce people seeking asylum as unbelonging can both limit a sense of belonging for recipients of support and reproduce assumptions about what it means to belong. In other words, primordialist or essentialist assumptions about belonging to nation can reproduce a globally stratified system of belonging (Wright, 2014) through which both the distant and the proximate Other need saving or compassion. It is through this that humanitarian or charitable work, however well-intentioned, can "hold people in place" (Bagelman, 2016, 98). Support and care in the asylum system can consequently make it "harder to disentangle the managerial exercise of migrant care from the more pernicious acts of border security" (McNevin and Missbach, 2018, 13). In this way, the value systems through which people seeking asylum are encountered at TSOs can limit a sense of belonging.

While this is an area of enquiry that merits further research, by encouraging people to volunteer and pass their time productively, charities can contribute to reproducing the temporal demands of the asylum system. This can simultaneously limit a sense of belonging and produce a future orientation to belonging in keeping with particular political projects of belonging. In other words, although encouraging people to volunteer can be positive, it can also orient people to become good citizen-subjects in waiting who have the potential to belong to the state through the demonstration of loyalty and commitment to British values (Yuval-Davis, 2011).

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter has focused on time in asylum dispersal. It introduced participants and their asylum journeys over time by considering progress (or lack thereof) through different legal statuses and life after asylum. This was used to explore, in line with Griffiths (2014), the stickiness, suspension, frenzy and rupture of the asylum system and how it played out in participants' everyday lives. Following this, I first argued that changes in legal status over time and formal belonging to the state can affect a sense of belonging to people. Second, that the temporal demands of the asylum system simultaneously produce unbelonging and

produce particular future orientations to belonging. I considered how changes in legal status can disrupt and limit a sense of belonging by placing people out-of-time with others (Griffiths, 2014). I built on this by considering how the temporal demands of the asylum system can determine the way in which people narrate and express themselves. This can involve narrating the self in terms of the perceived politics of belonging. I also considered how the temporal demands of the asylum system can limit a sense of belonging over time. Finally, I argued that TSOs can reproduce political projects of belonging to the state via citizenship.

Chapters two and three argued that there is a need to explore the temporalities of asylum dispersal. This chapter has added to the emerging literature in this field by focusing on the temporal experiences of asylum dispersal in Britain. This has added a temporal element to existing studies on belonging to people and place in asylum dispersal (see for example Hynes, 2011, Huizinga and van Hoven, 2018, van Liempt and Staring, 2020) as well as adding a specific focus on dispersal in Britain to existing studies of the temporalities of asylum (see for example Griffiths, 2014, McNevin and Missbach, 2018, Clayton and Vickers, 2019, Ramsay, 2019, McNevin, 2020).

The following chapter will develop this one by considering the limits to belonging in different places in the city of Sheffield. It will explore how the challenges of dispersal through access to food and public transport can constrain participants' sense of belonging to places in the city. It will do this by first considering how specific historical political projects of belonging have contributed to racialised deprivation through housing.

Chapter 6. Sheffield and its people: a place for belonging

6.1 Introduction

Chapter three considered how the politics of belonging construct boundaries of difference and inclusion/exclusion within specific collectivities (Yuval-Davis, 2011). I focused on the political projects of belonging to the nation and state citizenship as these determine asylum policy and can label people seeking asylum as ‘unbelonging’ through exclusion. This chapter will consider how being designated as unbelonging can limit a sense of belonging to places in the city as well as the nation. The focus on place in this chapter will enable me to explore the specificities of asylum dispersal in Sheffield and further contextualise discussions of participants’ experiences of dispersal in the previous chapter.

Asylum accommodation in Sheffield is often in peripheral neighbourhoods and around half of the people who took part in this study were dispersed to areas that are not within walking distance of the city centre, thus fixing people in place. This can limit everyday access to different places and can have an effect on participants’ ability to form and develop social relationships. In order to make this argument, I will draw primarily on interview data. In addition to this, I will present two of the mobility maps I created for participants based on a synthesis of mobile interviews, sociograms and field diary data in order to visualise disruptions to a sense of belonging as a result of repeat moves within the city and proximity to services and social networks. The focus in this chapter will be the location of dispersal accommodation.

The chapter will be divided into four sections. The first will map the location of dispersal accommodation in Sheffield. I will consider what patterns of deprivation and housing might reveal about historical and contemporary political projects of belonging, how they interact with social locations through different axes of difference (Yuval-Davis, 2011) and how they intersect with different areas of social policy. The second section will build on this with a focused consideration of two participants’ multiple moves and fixity within Sheffield. In the third section, I will argue that poor access to transport in relatively peripheral areas can limit a sense of belonging. The fourth section will consider how the location of dispersal

accommodation can limit access to food shops. The experience of dispersal can be one of both fixity and repeat movement. Being fixed in place by being dispersed to a relatively peripheral neighbourhood can create challenges in many aspects of participants' lives including: experiences of racism, access to food, education and transport. The repeat moves and ruptures discussed in the previous chapter can exacerbate these challenges. Combined, they can create barriers to belonging.

6.2 Mapping the city

In order to add depth to the introduction to Sheffield in section 1.4 and discussion of asylum dispersal in Sheffield in section 2.4.3, I will present two maps in order to visualise inequality in the city. I will then present a third map of the city to illustrate the correlation between where people who took part in this study have lived and deprivation in Sheffield. This will enable me to contextualise my data and situate participants' experiences of housing in the city. The aim of this will be to argue that historical political projects of belonging to Britain have produced areas of persistent disadvantage in the city and that this can create multiple challenges for people who have been dispersed and in doing so limit a sense of belonging to places in the city.

6.2.1 Inequality in Sheffield

Inequality in Sheffield is stark, and the city is one of the most socially and economically polarised in England. There is a clear dividing line between the affluent west of the city and the poorer east (Sheffield Fairness Commission, 2017). Much of the north and the east of the city were former industrial areas and so were mostly 19th Century workers' terraces and steelworks. In contrast, most of the west of the city, uphill and upwind of the city's industrial centres, was settled by industrialists in larger homes. The east and north of the city were also the hardest hit by de-industrialisation in the 1970s (Thomas, 2016). Many of these areas are still recovering from the effects of de-industrialisation. The following three maps illustrate inequality in Sheffield and how they correlate with participants' accommodation.

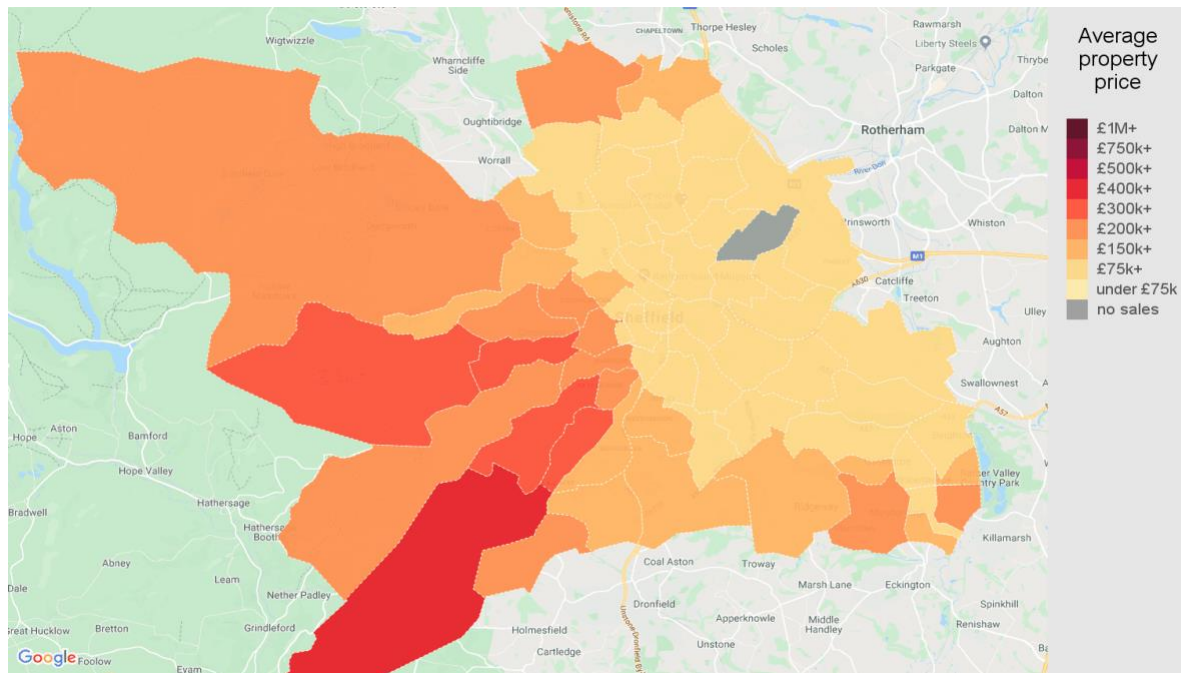


Figure 7 Heat map of house prices in Sheffield

Source: Zoopla, 2020

As shown in the map above, housing stock in the east and north of the city is significantly cheaper than the south and the west⁶. This is a draw for the companies contracted to provide asylum accommodation (Darling, 2016b). The cost of housing can be used to illustrate the city's economic divides in a way that reflects continuities from the 19th Century as much of the low cost housing above is in former industrial areas. The map above can be brought into sharper focus using the map below which represents the density of people who self-identified as ethnic minority in the 2011 census:

⁶ Note that the two areas identified as having “no sales” are predominantly non-residential areas made up of warehouses and a large out-of-town shopping centre.

is echoed by Beider and Netto (2012) and Phillips and Harrison (2010) who respectively argue that there is persistent discrimination in housing for racialised minorities and racialised negative perceptions of areas where people who are considered to be racially Other live. This can be seen as a product of what Yuval-Davis (2011) describes as a historical British political project of belonging which saw descent as the ultimate criterion of belonging and led to the racialisation of both British citizenship and access to work, housing and welfare. Although policies to promote cohesion have reduced discrimination and improved choice in social housing for established migrants and racialised minorities, the dual policy approach (see section 2.3.2) has increased systemic disadvantage in housing for ‘new migrants’ as a result of asylum dispersal (Phillips and Harrison, 2010). In other words, whereas established migrants are seen as having the potential to belong to Britain, new migrants and people seeking asylum do not belong and thus do not need to be the target of policies aimed at reducing discrimination or housing disadvantage.

6.2.2 Dispersal accommodation and deprivation

The COMPASS contracts operated on a basis where participating local authorities and accommodation providers agreed that there would be a “cluster limit” of no more than one in 200 people seeking asylum (based on 2001 census data) in any given local authority (NAO, 2005). However, in Yorkshire and the Humber, G4S did not always adhere to this and did not always share data with local authorities (NAO, 2014). In addition, although accommodation providers are supposed to take local service provision and availability into account, there is little communication between local authorities and accommodation providers and no robust mechanism to ensure compliance with the obligation to take local service capacity into account during property procurement (Stewart and Shaffer, 2015). In Sheffield, this has meant that dispersal accommodation is predominantly in areas with low cost housing in areas experiencing multiple deprivation with poor access to services. This can compound existing deprivation as illustrated below.

In the map below, I overlay the areas in which the people who took part in this study have lived with deprivation as measured by the English Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). The coloured dots indicate where participants have lived and their types of housing tenure including privately rented, socially rented, temporary local authority provision or dispersal

accommodation. The map excludes places where people who took part in this study have 'sofa-surfed' or have stayed in housing owned, run or supported by Third Sector Organisations (TSOs) as the pace of change in this form of accommodation is difficult to capture and reflect on a map.

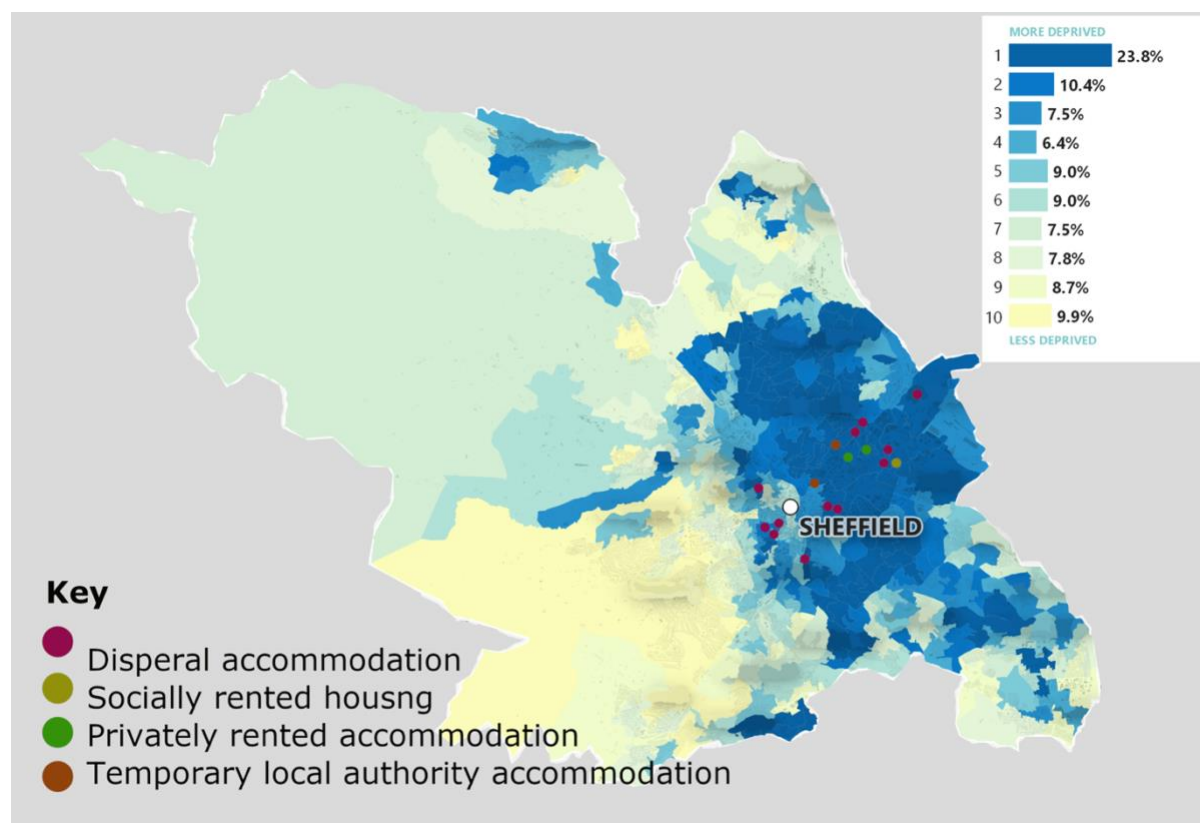


Figure 9 Map of Sheffield: IMD and accommodation

This map shows that the areas in which people who took part in this study have lived are largely concentrated in the more deprived parts of the city (as measured by income; employment; education; health; crime; housing and barriers to services; and living environment (DCLG, 2019)). Around half of the dispersal accommodation participants in this study have stayed in more peripheral areas of the city (where travel times to the city centre can be an hour or more by public transport) with the other half in deprived inner-city areas. The areas people have lived correlate with the yellow and dark green areas in figures seven and eight above. This indicates that the political project of belonging to the nation has manifested in housing discrimination from the post-war period of migration onwards, and has led to people who are racialised as Other being concentrated in certain

neighbourhoods. This confirms Phillips' (2006) findings that asylum dispersal has led to people being clustered in wards experiencing multiple deprivation.

The informal colour bar erected against post-war migrants, especially in the areas of work and welfare meant that Black citizens seeking to claim social housing were "met with officers who tended to judge their standard of civilisation as inadequate to the task of caring for properties" (Shilliam, 2018, 92). This racialisation of belonging to Britain for Black British citizens led to systemic exclusion from universal welfare and their concentration in substandard, overcrowded accommodation no longer deemed fit for the native working class (Ibid). The progressive racialisation of citizenship and the separation of asylum from welfare can be seen as a continuation of this (Bloch et al., 2013). In line with Yuval-Davis' (2011) descriptions of the British political projects of belonging which include descent, loyalty and autochthony (see section 3.2.2) it is possible to see how the political projects of belonging have, over time, created areas of persistent disadvantage by excluding and peripheralising those racially marked as Other. With regards to contemporary asylum dispersal, the historical political projects of belonging that created areas of persistent disadvantage in parts of the city "no longer deemed fit for the native working class" (Shilliam, 2018, 92) intersect with the desire to pursue cost efficiencies in the provision of asylum accommodation by dispersing a group who by definition do not belong to the nation or the state via citizenship to largely peripheral areas already experiencing deprivation (Dwyer, 2005, Wren, 2007).

These historical trends, as well as the data visualised in figures 7-9, can be brought into sharper focus by considering participants' experiences of being made to live in the areas identified above. Based on this, the following section will consider participants' everyday experiences of being housed in relatively peripheral areas and how this can limit a sense of belonging. I will focus primarily on peripheral areas in this chapter because accommodation providers contracted by the Home Office are expected to house people in areas within walking distance of city centres (Home Office, 2018a). The aim of this will be to explore the specific experiences of dispersal in Sheffield and to add a more focused engagement with place to the discussion of the asylum journey over time in the previous chapter.

6.3 Dispersal in the city

For participants who were dispersed to peripheral areas of the city, a sense of belonging to place was precluded both by being housed away from the city centre, and perceptions of these areas. Hope, Mahyar, Zhala, Jerome, Juhur, Aisha and Hiba were all dispersed to relatively peripheral areas of the city experiencing persistent disadvantage. This section will develop my discussion of how the political projects of belonging have, over time, created persistent disadvantage in certain areas of the city by initially considering two participants' experience of being made to move to such areas and how this can limit or constrain a sense of belonging. I will use Mahyar's detailed account of his experiences in different areas of the city to argue that the asylum system produces unbelonging by socially fixing people in peripheral areas. Although these experiences were not unique to Mahyar, and similar views were expressed by Hiba, Bilen and Jerome, the subsection will focus on Mahyar because of the richness of his descriptions. This section will lead onto a discussion of access to public transport and food in the subsequent sections.

When Mahyar and Zhala applied for asylum on arrival in early 2016, they were accommodated in an Initial Accommodation Centre (IAC) in Wakefield. As discussed in section 2.4.1 and in the previous chapter, people are accommodated in IACs while a decision about entitlement to S95 support is being made. That is, while a determination on whether or not someone is destitute and therefore able to access S95 asylum support (comprised of dispersal accommodation and a weekly payment of £37.75) is being conducted. After their time at the IAC, Mahyar and Zhala were dispersed to a terrace with a steep staircase on the northern edge of the city. Zhala's disabilities mean that she cannot climb stairs unaided. Advocacy by their solicitor meant that the family were moved to single-level dispersal accommodation just south of the city centre. When their appeal rights were exhausted, the family were evicted from their dispersal accommodation. After being referred to the charity ASSIST, they were briefly accommodated by volunteer hosts. Following advocacy by ASSIST and the Red Cross, Zhala's disabilities were recognised as meeting the threshold for support under the Care Act 2014 (see section 2.4.2). As a result, they were given a room with two single beds on the top floor of a guesthouse contracted by the Local Authority. In June 2018, the family made further submissions, were granted S4 support (comprised of dispersal accommodation and a weekly payment of £35.39) and were

dispersed to another terrace in the north east of the city. When their further submissions passed the fresh claim test, they were moved back onto S95 support but remained in the same accommodation. They stayed there until they were granted Refugee Status in February 2019 when they chose, as noted in section 5.3.4, to move to London to be closer to friends they made while staying in the IAC.

In their time in Sheffield, Mahyar and Zhala moved multiple times both as a result in changes in legal status and as a result of positive advocacy by TSOs and their solicitor. Three of the places they have stayed in were in peripheral areas to the east and north east of the city with poor transport links and limited shops and services. When I asked Mahyar how he felt about these areas, he described his experiences in terms of the social locations of race and class. Speaking about the dispersal accommodation in the inner-city area they were moved to as a result of positive advocacy he said:

Even within the population, you can see that there is one thing on the surface and another thing behind it. When you see the native people walk past each other, they smile, they nod, they say nice things but when they see a Black man, they don't smile, or they give a different type of smile. If they say hello, they might nod but they say nothing back.

First semi-structured interview with Mahyar

Speaking about the guesthouse area, he said the following:

The guesthouse area was horrible, it was dirty, not hygienic at all. It was horrible full of rubbish, there were rats. No one cared about hygiene, no one cared about the area or the streets. The streets were full of rubbish. It was really horrible. We were scared and feeling unsafe a lot.

In the S4 postcode, you can't see it as much because everyone is foreign, and everyone is poor. Other parts of the city S8, S10, you can see class differences, you can see all the class inequality, and, in those areas, you can strongly feel the racism and class inequality. This is the social norm; you can feel the race and class

everywhere [...] This is an unwritten law. It's a social norm that doesn't change wherever you go.

First semi-structured interview with Mahyar

Mahyar's perception of racism and class in the S8 and S10 postcode areas show how the social locations of race and class and the value systems through which people are judged and encountered can affect a sense of belonging to place. This can show how the politics of belonging which construct boundaries of inclusion/exclusion in certain areas can affect how people feel moving through them. Everyday racism is the experiential cumulative experience of racism as something that is infused into familiar practices and involves socialised attitudes and behaviour (Essed, 1991, 3). Everyday racism can be thought of in terms of the value systems through which one is judged and encountered and consequently reflects how the politics of belonging filter into everyday life. As Mahyar describes, he is keenly aware of how his race leads to him being perceived by the white majority population and how he encounters others in his everyday interactions. This was echoed by Hiba who explained that she did not feel comfortable in wealthier parts of the city and in department stores:

I went a lot to Marks and Spencer, but I stopped it. I looked at clothes, walked around but I stopped it. People looked at me, had eyes on me. Maybe they think I was a thief. Now I sit at home.

First semi-structured interview with Hiba

In Hiba's case what she described as being thought of as a thief led to her staying at home. This can lead to feeling Othered. As Mahyar describes below:

I am not respected as a human. I'm the wrong colour, you have a lot of racism, but this isn't supposed to be a racist country. Even if their behaviour follows the law, their thoughts and their insides are racist. They follow laws around racism, they're forced to follow the law, but they don't believe the anti-racism in themselves. They're racist.

First semi-structured interview with Mahyar

This quotation shows how Mahyar is produced as an unbelonging Other. This can be seen within the frame of Yuval-Davis et al.'s (2018) argument that autochthony, or true indigeneity, has become the dominant political project of belonging in Britain. That is, even though overt racism is no longer considered acceptable, there is a belief that people who are visibly Other because of their race do not belong in Britain. The experience Mahyar describes resonates with Fanon's description of how Black bodies become Other (Fanon, 2008, 82). By moving through places, the Black body comes to take on meaning where the white body is assumed to be the default body (Subramanian, 2008, 43). Mahyar's experience in the more affluent postcode areas limited a sense of belonging. His race in the more affluent area was written onto his body through everyday racism. In line with Fanon ([1952] 2008), Mahyar became Other through his encounters with the white majority population and the value systems through which he felt he was judged. This had a profound impact on his sense of belonging in these more affluent areas. Mahyar contrasts this with a) legal or bureaucratic expectations of non-discrimination and b) how these expectations clash with everyday experiences.

The legal and bureaucratic expectations of non-discrimination confirm Bakker et al.'s (2016) arguments about the dual policy approach through which social movements led to strategies to promote cohesion for those already there on the one hand and social exclusion for people seeking asylum on the other. Whereas those who have the potential to belong to Britain by proving their solidarity and loyalty to the state may not be the overt target of exclusionary practice (Yuval-Davis, 2011), the confluence of peripheralisation in certain areas of the city; the social locations of race and class and the value systems through which people are judged and encountered can limit a sense of belonging by making people feel like they are unwanted. As Mahyar describes, everyone in the S4 postcode is "foreign" and he notes that his and others' deliberate placement there is not driven by needs but a particular treatment of refugees:

This comes from being a refugee and usually this feeling is with you, you can feel it [...] the institutions, the bureaucracy they follow the law, but you can see and feel they don't want you in their area [...] They don't consider our needs, they don't

consider what support my mum needs. We need accommodation near the city centre because my mum has lots of doctors' appointments in the city centre – with doctors, with the hospital. But we have been granted an accommodation that's got two floors, and this is horrible for my mum because she can't walk [...] they don't care. They don't listen. They just ignore us. The ignorance, being ignored is the worst thing. It kills you.

First semi-structured interview with Mahyar

Mahyar feels he and Zhala were dispersed to a particular area because of their legal status. All of the places he and Zhala were housed in are areas experiencing persistent disadvantage. The pursuit of cost efficiencies that lead to people seeking asylum being placed in these areas can compound existing disadvantage in housing as a result of historical political projects of belonging. Not only were Mahyar and Zhala fixed in these relatively peripheral areas, they felt that this was because of their intersecting social locations of legal status and race.

Overall, the political projects of belonging which led to persistent disadvantage in housing in the post-war period through to the present are also evident in the location of dispersal accommodation. The prioritisation of cost over need in asylum dispersal has led to people seeking asylum being dispersed to areas already experiencing multiple deprivation. In this way, dispersal can dehumanise people (Hynes and Sales, 2009), entrench existing disadvantage and (re)produce areas of multiple deprivation within the city (Darling, 2016b). Moreover, the lack of coordination and regulatory oversight of G4S' housing procurement decisions (Stewart and Shaffer, 2015) can lead to poor scrutiny within the dispersal system at the local level (Dwyer, 2005, Wren, 2007, Darling, 2020). The following section will develop the focus on place and the location of dispersal accommodation by presenting mobility maps for Hope and Mahyar and Zhala. This will enable a consideration of the wider impacts of being dispersed to relatively peripheral areas upon everyday life.

6.4 Stuck and on the move: transport

This section will consider how being dispersed to relatively peripheral areas intersects with other areas of social policy, with a focus on transport. I will discuss repeat moves within the

asylum system for three participants and explore how both being forced to move repeatedly and having to live in peripheral areas can constrain a sense of belonging. I will argue that the political projects of belonging that produce areas of persistent disadvantage are also evident in transport policy.

The following maps synthesise mobile interviews, sociograms and field diary data. I produced them as part of data analysis (see 4.3.6). The maps, which I describe as mobility maps, visualise movements over time for Hope and Mahyar and Zhala. The mobility map below traces Mahyar and Zhala's multiple moves across the city. The red dots denote where they have stayed relative to the city centre which is indicated by the light green circle. The red dots correlate with low-cost housing, ethnicity and deprivation in figures seven to nine. In addition, the distance of housing to the city centre can be used to consider barriers to accessing and meeting everyday needs. In particular, the mobility map represents the distance from Mahyar and Zhala's accommodation to their church, health services and the TSOs that supported them.

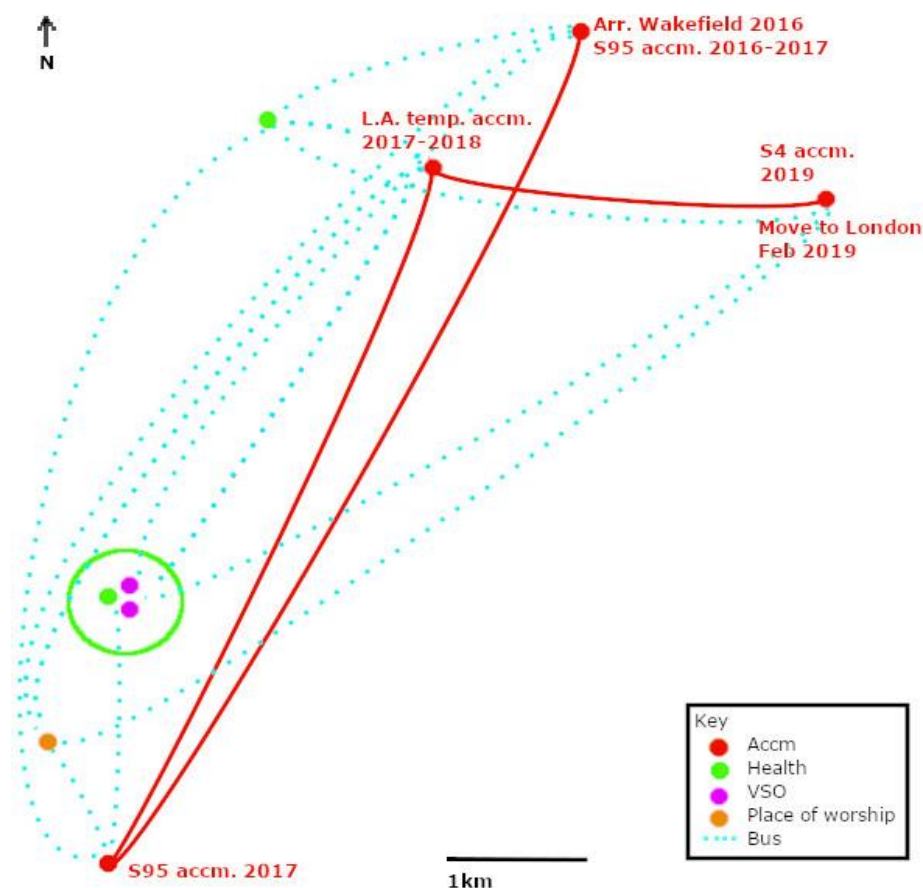


Figure 10 Mobility map for Mahyar and Zhala

The blue lines indicate bus travel. The trace lines on this map, combined with semi-structured interview data above, can help visualise belonging in the city and provide further insight into the data presented in the previous section. Mahyar and Zhala were effectively stuck in their local area and did not leave except for essential journeys. Travel times from the guesthouse and their S4 accommodation to the city centre were an hour and an hour and ten minutes respectively.

From this guesthouse to the bus stop was a 15-minute walk and this was the worst part of our daily life. The bus was really bad, so the bus would come only once an hour and sometimes it never came. So, if we wanted to go to the city centre we had to take a 45minute bus just to get to the city centre.

Interview with Mahyar

Their journey to church involved two buses and took an hour and 15 minutes and hour and a half from the guesthouse and S4 accommodation respectively. This limited the relationships they were able to build and prevented any non-essential travel:

My relationship with people around me was really good because I love everyone, wherever they come from, Black, white, Iranian, non-Iranian. I love every human being and then I did communicate very easily. Now, usually, I communicate on the phone with the church, people in the church. When I have an appointment with the doctor, I go to the city centre but Mahyar, he does all of my jobs. He is all I have in this world. Cooking, eating, knitting, watching movies on my phone. That is it. This is what I do.

First semi-structured interview with Zhala

The ability to move with ease within a city is connected to a sense of belonging (Fallov et al., 2013). Before receiving support from ASSIST to apply for a disabled person's bus pass and carer's card, Mahyar and Zhala had to pay for travel. In 2018, the cost of a single bus ticket from their guesthouse to the city centre was £3. Even though access to free bus travel removed the cost barrier to travel, being on the periphery of the city and the lack of a reliable bus service to the city centre limited their ability to build a sense of belonging to place through fixity.

Fallov et al. (2013) argue that a sense of belonging to a place includes the ability to move between places and neighbourhoods as a condition of social relations. For Zhala and Mahyar, the constraints to movement beyond their accommodation constrained their social relationships. In spite of this, Zhala was able to maintain and build relationships with people who share her religious identity online via WhatsApp. The barriers to a sense of belonging to a place as a result of poor transport can be used to extend May's (2013) arguments about a sense of belonging to place emerging through familiarity. Everyday familiarity in different places is precluded by lack of access. A sense of belonging to a place being contingent upon ease of mobility and access to different places in a city reveals the spatialities of belonging (Antonsich, 2010).

The way in which Mahyar and Zhala were fixed in place resonates with Urry's description of the fortress city, where richer societies break away from poorer ones into fortified enclaves (2014, 26). The process of breaking away is also manifest in historical political projects of belonging which have created areas of persistent disadvantage, and in contemporary political projects of belonging that exclude and concentrate people seeking asylum in particular areas. Although there are no visible fortifications, travel times and the lack of efficient or affordable public transport to the city centre effectively create fortified enclaves by indirectly controlling and containing movement and marginalising people seeking asylum.

Barriers to everyday travel are also evident in Hope and her daughter's repeated moves. Hope and her daughter moved four times following their initial dispersal to Sheffield. They were first dispersed to a house in the north east of the city in the shadow of the M1 motorway viaduct. When their application for asylum was refused, they made further submissions and were moved to dispersal accommodation in a one-bedroom flat in the east of the city. Shortly after being granted Discretionary Leave with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) at the end of 2016, the family were given temporary accommodation in the same guesthouse as Mahyar and Zhala, in the east of the city, under the Children's Act 1989 (see section 2.4.2). In March 2017, the family moved into a privately rented two-bedroom flat also in the north east of city and finally, in October 2017, they moved into a two-bedroom socially rented flat nearby. As above, the red denotes where the family lived, and the light green circle represents the city centre. The dark green dots on the map show the location of Hope's daughter's primary and secondary schools. Of particular note is the distance between the family's accommodation and schools.

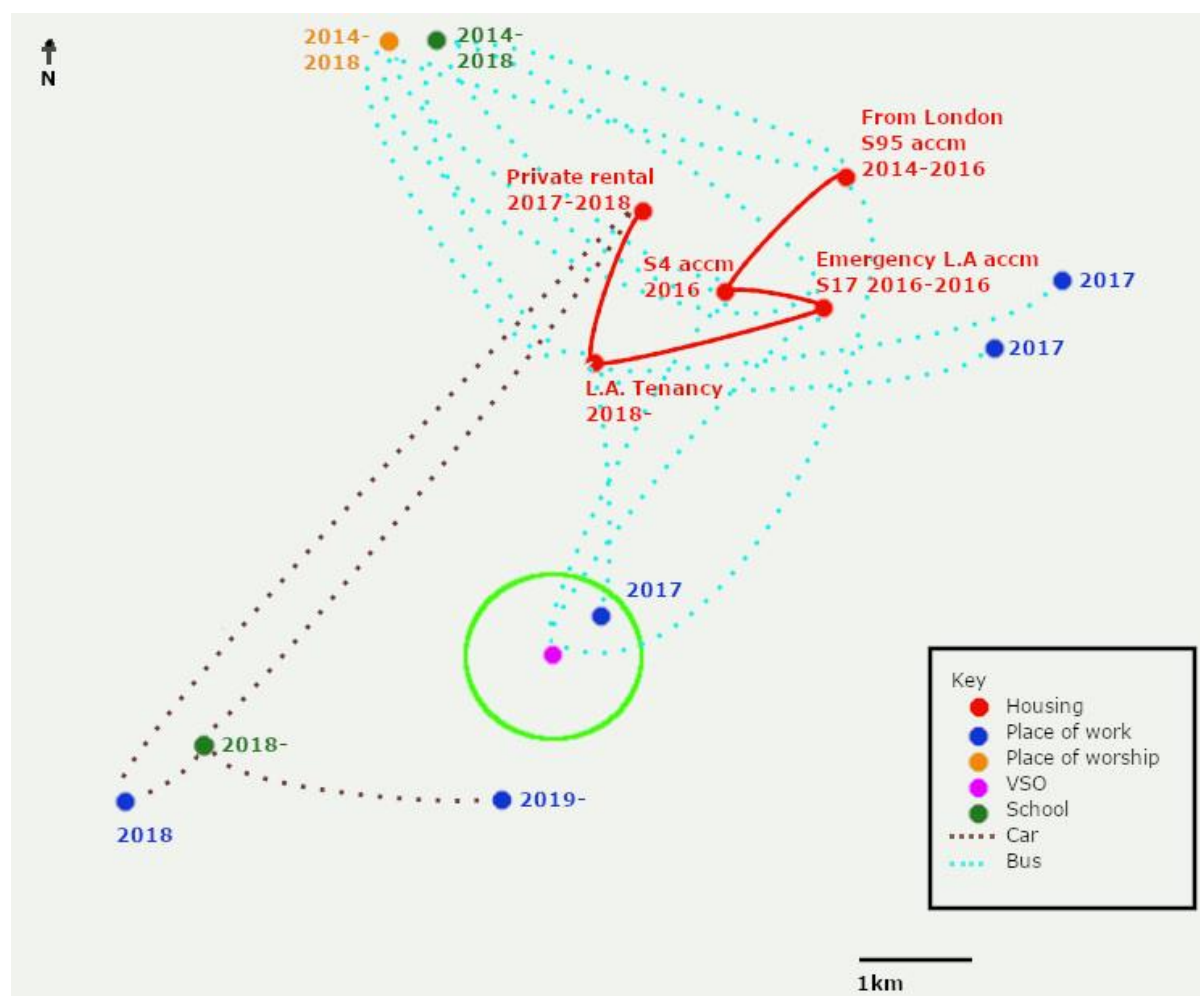


Figure 11 Mobility map for Hope

The blue lines which represent bus travel show how far the family had to travel each day. Covering large distances each day limited their ability to develop relationships and travel beyond essential destinations. In both their dispersal accommodations and at the guesthouse, Hope had to travel for many hours each day to get her daughter to school. It took 1 hour and 10 minutes to travel to school from their first dispersal accommodation and 40 and 45 minutes respectively from their second (S4) dispersal accommodation and guesthouse. As a result, the everyday act of doing the school run could take up to 4 hours and 40 minutes each day. This made it very difficult to travel into the city centre for food and reporting appointments at the Home Office. This is captured in Hope's description of her first few weeks in the city:

Every day we keep on going out but that was hard because that money they gave to us, we have to buy a bus pass. They didn't give us bus pass. We had to buy bus pass from that money they gave to us every day. In London where we came from, my daughter doesn't pay bus pass because she was seven. When we came to Sheffield, I think from five years you have to start paying bus pass, so we had to pay bus pass for her as well.

First semi-structured interview with Hope

Not only was Hope's time constrained by travelling to and from her daughter's school each day, but spending 30% of their £95, and later, £4 payments to get to school and back had an adverse effect on their ability to meet their basic needs as well as their ability to build and maintain relationships. This shows how asylum policy produces unbelonging by design. In spite of this, Hope was able to overcome some of these constraints by drawing on her relationships with friends in London. For example, friends in London helped to cover the costs of Hope's daughter's school uniform as she was unable to receive support from the school or local authority (see McIntyre and Hall, 2020). Although she was able to draw on support from friends, Hope reported that she would not allow her daughter to go to her classmates' birthday parties because she would be unable to buy presents. This had an adverse impact on Hope's daughter's ability to build a sense of belonging through relationships with her peers. The distance between the school and their accommodation also meant that Hope declined invitations to after-school activities and playdates. However, this was mitigated by a sense of belonging through religious identification and attachment. Hope advocated for her daughter to attend a Catholic school in North West Sheffield in order to meet their religious needs. This led to Hope developing a relationship with the church that the school was connected to and their priest, who supported them with their further submissions. Hope's religious identification enabled her to make social connections and develop a sense of belonging to her fellow congregants, despite the unbelonging produced by travel times and the constraints to her daughter's relationships outside of school with her classmates. Attending a Catholic primary school also enabled Hope's daughter to secure a place at a Catholic secondary school – one of the most successful state schools in the city – in the affluent South West.

Over time, Hope developed a social relationship with Helen, another parent at her daughter's school. Although caring for her daughter presented obstacles to Hope's daily life, child-based sociality opened up new opportunities. For Erel and Ryan (2018), caring for children can create opportunities for migrant women to build new social networks and access support and resources over time. Similarly, Spicer (2008) finds that refugee children's social relationships can lead to a sense of belonging for their parents. Although travel times and financial constraints limited Hope's daughter's sense of belonging, the relationship that Hope developed with Helen did mitigate some of these constraints and reflect a transformative practice of belonging based on an everyday ethics of care (Yuval-Davis, 2011, Bennett, 2015). Helen's middle child and Hope's daughter were in the same class and were the only Black children in the class. Hope and Helen met in the playground and over time, Hope opened up to Helen about her immigration status and Helen shared her own experiences with Hope. This relationship began to develop through sharing the school run:

If I saw her, if I turned right, if I saw her at the bus stop, I would just change my indicator, go to her, pick her up from the bus stop and drop her to her house. Sometimes she is hiding herself because she doesn't want it. But for me, I can't pass. So, that is the way, asking her how is she, what is she doing. I think that's for her, the first person to become close to her and say welcome to her. So, I am happy to talk to her, I am happy to help her. That is the way we start, but after that, you know, we have long things. Even today.

First semi-structured interview with Helen

Helen later began driving Hope and her daughter from the primary school to their dispersal accommodation most days. Helen and Hope are now close friends and often share childcare responsibilities. Helen also took on additional responsibility for caring for Hope's daughter when they feared deportation and when they were staying at the guesthouse. Hope also styles Helen's daughters' hair. This illustrates a reciprocal and participatory ethics of care, which creates a sense of belonging (Hage, 2003). Shared experience of the asylum system led to Hope and Helen becoming close. In addition, being lone parents as well as being parents to the only two Black children in the class is likely to have been a contributing

factor, due to their shared social locations and shared experiences of the asylum system.

Hope and Helen's daughters now attend the same secondary school.

6.4.1 Transport and belonging

Hope and Ako were both able to overcome barriers to transport through their social relationships. For Ako, being driven in his friends' cars enabled him to access different parts of the city:

All my friends have a car, only I don't have car. My friends always comes and takes me by car, everywhere, when I want. Every person needs a car.

Second semi-structured interview with Ako

The difficulty of access to reliable motorised transport can reveal how the boundaries of belonging can exclude. The peripheralisation of racialised minorities in Sheffield can be linked to the provision of public transport. In section 6.2.1, I discussed how the history of housing policy in Britain has led to the concentration of people racialised as Other in the east and north of the city of Sheffield. In section 6.2.2, I linked this to G4S' procurement of low-cost housing and how this is likely to have intensified disadvantage and deprivation. This can also be seen in light of urban planning.

Urban planning and the procurement of transport services can marginalise low income and minority public transport users and impede the mobility of marginalised people (Sheller, 2018, 76). The political economy of transport can entrench and reproduce racial and economic inequalities (Verlinghieri and Schwanen, 2020). Sheller (2018) argues that transport commissioning privileges able-bodied, often white, middle class and male commuters. In other words, commissioning privileges those who are seen to belong to Britain and who have greater social power relative to others as a result of the social locations of race, class and gender. In Sheffield, deprivation to the east and north of the city intersects with race and transport. There are fewer bus routes serving the east and north of the city than there are in the west and south, and the bus routes that serve the east and north are not as regular as those serving the west and south (TSY, 2020). In addition, in 2019 FirstGroup (one of the two major bus companies in the city) announced drastic cuts to the

bus system: reducing services, cutting some routes entirely and leaving some areas with bus stops but no buses (ACORN, 2019). These cuts predominantly affected areas of multiple deprivation in the east and north of the city. This is illustrative of the way in which transport commissioning privileges those who are deemed to belong, and can constrain a sense of belonging for those who are not. Transport commissioning can compound existing disadvantage, thus limiting a sense of belonging for people seeking asylum by exacerbating challenges in everyday life.

As with a lack of accountability for asylum accommodation providers to local authorities, bus companies are not accountable to local politicians or the regional transport authority (Sheffield City Region, 2020). Bus operators are not required to provide a comprehensive network (Ibid). The commercial interests of transport operators, much like the commercial interests of asylum accommodation providers, can lead to the concentration of people in areas of low-cost housing experiencing multiple deprivation and trap people in these areas because local income levels and deprivation make bus some routes less commercially viable. This creates a vicious cycle where groups of people who are not seen to belong are concentrated and constrained in certain areas.

Weekly asylum support payments for both S95 (for people who have an ongoing asylum claim) and S4 payments (for people who have been refused asylum or are making further submissions) do not include travel as essential (Home Office, 2018b). Although the COMPASS contracts intended to disperse people to areas within walking distance of city centres (NAO, 2014), as I have shown, this has not always been the case in Sheffield. As discussed above, a lack of reliable and affordable public transport can hinder the development of a sense of belonging. For the participants discussed above, barriers to transport were primarily overcome as a result of either advocacy from TSOs or through relationships and a sense of belonging through the everyday ethics of care. So far, this chapter has shown that the political projects of belonging have, over time, created areas of persistent disadvantage and that these are reproduced by different aspects of social policy including transport. The following section will build on the arguments made so far by considering how relative peripheralisation can limit a sense of belonging by presenting barriers to meeting everyday needs. The focus will be on access to food.

6.5 Dispersal and food

This section will explore access to food. It will consider how being dispersed to relatively peripheral areas can present challenges in everyday life and in doing so, limit a sense of belonging. The section will first consider peripheralisation and food deserts before turning to familiarity with place and sharing practices. The second half of the section will thus focus on how participants have overcome some of the everyday challenges of life in dispersal.

Mayblin (2019) argues that the suffering inflicted by the everyday poverty of subsisting on asylum support payments (S95/S4) is an articulation of a hierarchical view of human worth. Letting people suffer through impoverishment is possible because the state does not value lives equally. Mayblin (2019) explores everyday life in the asylum system through shopping, eating, personal grooming and transport, arguing that the limitations to everyday life through the violence and impoverishment of the asylum system is resisted in a number of ways: through mundane or quiet resistance in everyday consumer strategies, or through defiant resistance (Mayblin, 2019, 103-104). My findings confirm this. Like Mayblin (2019), I will consider how local knowledge can enable people to survive on asylum support and how relationships can lead to new coping strategies through familiarity with place (Mathisen and Cele, 2020).

6.5.1 Food deserts

One in ten deprived areas in Britain are food deserts. Food deserts are areas inadequately served by retail outlets offering affordable food close to where people live (Blake, 2018). Food deserts are defined as areas with two or fewer supermarkets or convenience stores within walking distance. Deprived food deserts are areas in the top 25% most deprived areas according to the IMD. Normal areas are those in which there are between three and seven supermarkets or convenience stores in walking distance (Ibid). Food deserts are primarily served by small and relatively expensive food stores (Ibid). Living in a food desert can increase reliance on expensive public transport to access affordable food and limit less healthy options. All of the areas participants were dispersed to with the exception of those in the inner-city correspond with the definition of food deserts. Six participants were at one time dispersed to deprived food deserts. All of these areas are in the top 20% of the most

deprived in England (Rae, 2011) and two are among the top 10% of the most deprived in England (DCLG, 2019). Although the inner-city dispersal locations have good access to supermarkets, convenience stores and markets, food deserts and dispersal in Sheffield are worthy of consideration because the two wards that receive the highest number of dispersed people (Goran, 2017, 35) are both deprived food deserts. For participants in this study, living in food deserts increased the difficulty of surviving on S95/S4 payments or support payments through TSOs. Mahyar describes his experience of access to food when living in his final dispersal accommodation:

There's only one supermarket from which I never shop because it's so expensive and they don't have any of the things that we need. There's no Aldi, no Tesco, no Asda. Nothing. With the kind of income we have, this accommodation is not suitable for us.

First semi-structured interview with Mahyar

Hope similarly describes her access to food whilst living in her first dispersal accommodation:

I think the first one month. I can say the first one month we really lose weight because there was no food; there are no shops in that area.

First semi-structured interview with Hope

Hope, Mahyar, Zhala, Juhur, Aisha, Hiba and Jerome were all dispersed to areas where the closest chain supermarkets were over 1.6km away. For Hope, Juhur, Mahyar and Zhala, the closest chain supermarkets were over 2.5km away. For Hope, the distance from her accommodation to the market where she could buy culturally familiar foods was 8km away. For Zhala, her disabilities meant that she was reliant on her son to go shopping for food. The lack of access to affordable food nearby compounded the challenges faced by participants who were dispersed to deprived food deserts. For many participants, however, knowledge of where to buy affordable food was both a survival strategy and contributed to a sense of belonging through knowledge of the local area (Huizinga and van Hoven, 2018).

6.5.2 Knowing where to shop for food and a sense of belonging to place

For many participants, knowledge of where to shop was part of their everyday familiarity and sense of belonging to the city. In spite of the difficulty of meeting essential needs on S95 or S4 payments, knowledge of where to shop and how to shop contributed to a sense of everyday familiarity in the city:

So, I had no idea about Aldi. Aldi is very near to my house at the time, so I was shopping at Özmen [a Turkish supermarket]. Everything there is a little bit expensive, more than Aldi and more than other brand. Then one old guy from G4S house showed me Aldi, he said “Özmen is not good for you, that is too much money”. So, I started going to Aldi and it was good, it is cheaper.

First semi-structured interview with Nawid

First place you might think is Lidl, but Aldi has the cheapest prices, the [City of] Sanctuary in the city centre there is a lot of things you can get there for lunch and then there is big Tesco in Spital Hill. These three.

First semi-structured interview with Juhur

I buy meat, halal meat at Özmen. This is better for me, I know where to go.

Second semi-structured interview with Toran

All three participants above describe how they gained knowledge of the city through shopping for food. Amongst the challenges posed by living on an extremely constrained budget, shopping “becomes a matter of knowledge, expertise and planning, devising strategies which rely upon good local knowledge” (Mayblin, 2019, 104). Not only can a sense of belonging develop through routine and knowledge of places in the city (Mathisen and Cele, 2020), but feeling as though you have knowledge of a city can also be empowering. This was evident when Bilen took me to an Ethiopian restaurant to buy *injera* (a fermented flat bread) and gave me the recipe for *Misir Wot* (a lentil stew) which, as she explained, can be made cheaply with a tin of tomatoes, an onion and lentils.

Knowledge of where to shop for food can be a survival strategy and lead to a sense of familiarity. For Huizinga and van Hoven (2018) in their study of dispersal in the Netherlands, knowing where to access Halal shops, for example, can lead to a sense of belonging through home-making practices. In addition, knowledge of the local area, and culturally familiar supermarkets in particular, can lead to a sense of belonging to a place and the development of everyday social relationships (Ibid). However, as I have shown, this sense of belonging can also be precluded or curtailed by distance and living in food deserts. Relationships are crucial to forming a sense of belonging through shopping for food. Local knowledge is shared among people and, when acquired, can help people to better manage their limited budgets through collaboration (Mayblin, 2019, 104). This was evident in how the “old guy” in Nawid’s dispersal accommodation recommended Aldi. It was also evident in chance encounters and sharing strategies.

6.5.3 Food and a sense of belonging to people

For Hope in her first few weeks in the city, a chance encounter with a woman who had refugee status enabled her to find out where to buy culturally familiar foods:

Yeah, we went to city centre. We want to know how the city. When we were standing, we saw one Black lady so approach the lady like “ooh we are new, we don’t know anywhere. How can we get African food? How can we get some food?”. She was like, “how can you get your food? I will take you guys to Moor Market”. So, she said, “in case, if you want to go to Home Office to sign, this is Home Office”, because she knew!

First semi-structured interview with Hope

As this chance encounter developed into a friendship, the woman, who was also Nigerian, started driving Hope to Costco (a wholesalers) once a month where she had a membership card to buy cheaper food at wholesale prices. They were able to buy and share bulk items such as rice and toilet paper between them. The support network that Hope developed at this time enabled her to mitigate the constraints of the asylum system and build relationships and familiarity with the city, thus building a sense of belonging. Relevant to

this are shared social locations and experiences, such as her friend's experience of the asylum system and shared national and gender identities.

Bilen and other participants were able to make the food they bought using vouchers or support payments from TSOs or S4/S95 payments go further by sharing food. Sometimes, this was also an opportunity for socialising. Below, Bilen describes a picnic with other women in the "same situation":

I took juice and cucumber salad and cheese that I bought with my friend. We are one lady they bring the chicken and fruit salad. We are eating and enjoying together

Second semi-structured interview with Bilen

Sharing food can lead to a sense of belonging. Sharing a meal, spending time with people who share the same legal status, and socialising together can enhance relationships and develop a sense of familiarity to places in the city. It can enable new identifications and attachments which emerge jointly with others and lead to a sense of comfort and security (Yuval-Davis, 2011). It can also enable people to share experiences based on particular social locations (Yuval-Davis, 2011). Moreover, the everyday routine of eating and sharing food can lead to a sense of belonging through familiarity (May, 2013, Mathisen and Cele, 2020). Knowledge of where to shop can also lead to a sense of belonging through what Antonsich (2010) describes as place-belongingness.

Beginning with food deserts, this section has considered how deprivation and the location of housing influences access to food. I argued that deprived food deserts intersect with poor transport provision as well as areas of low-cost housing. This creates additional challenges in the asylum system that can make it difficult to develop a sense of belonging to a place through familiarity and for social relationships to emerge. Following this, I discussed how participants have navigated the city and how they accessed food. In line with Mayblin (2019), I argued that food strategies can reflect intimate knowledge of the city and considered the ways in which participants share food strategies. I argued that local knowledge and sharing strategies can lead to a sense of belonging to both people and place (Huizinga and van Hoven, 2018).

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter has focused on how the asylum system can limit a sense of belonging. The historical political projects of belonging have, over time, created areas of persistent disadvantage in the city of Sheffield. Today, many people seeking asylum are dispersed to these areas of persistent disadvantage. Being dispersed to disadvantaged and relatively peripheral areas of the city can create everyday challenges that can limit a sense of belonging. These include everyday experiences of racism and lack of inclusion in different parts of the city; limited access to transport and long travel times and poor access to food. These challenges can be exacerbated by repeated moves in the asylum system.

The chapter began by exploring inequality in the city. I argued that historical political projects of belonging to Britain, where descent was the ultimate criterion for belonging, (Yuval-Davis, 2011) have created areas of persistent disadvantage in the city. Although this has changed over time, and the dual policy approach (Bakker et al., 2016) can mean that more established migrants are seen as having the potential to belong by expressing solidarity and loyalty to the British state (Yuval-Davis, 2011), disadvantage and deprivation still persist. I have argued that the pursuit of cost efficiencies and limited regulatory oversight in the asylum system have led to people who are seeking asylum being dispersed to relatively peripheral and deprived areas. I have argued that being dispersed to these areas can limit a sense of belonging by constraining relationships and limiting mobility. As I have shown, this intersects with other areas of social policy including transport. By presenting mobility maps, I considered the everyday challenges of travel when living in relatively peripheral areas. I then considered how the location of asylum accommodation can affect access to shops. In spite of this, as I have shown, the people who have taken part in this study have developed a range of ways to cope with the unbelonging created by the asylum system and have fostered a sense of belonging to both people and place in the city. This was evident in strategies for food shopping as well as the relationships people built in different places over time.

Darling (2020) calls for a need to consider the conditions of urban life in studies on asylum dispersal. In this chapter, I have considered how dispersal produces deprivation and

insecurity (Phillips, 2006) and how this can limit a sense of belonging (Hynes, 2011). I have done this through a specific consideration of how asylum dispersal is experienced at the everyday level in Sheffield in light of social policy and social policy history. I have linked experiences of belonging in place in asylum dispersal (van Liempt and Staring, 2020, Huizinga and van Hoven, 2018) to the political projects of belonging which produce people seeking asylum as unbelonging.

This chapter and the previous chapter focused on the limits to a sense of belonging. The previous chapter focused on time and participants' journeys through the asylum system. This chapter has focused on place, specifically the everyday challenges caused by the location of dispersal accommodation. The next two chapters will turn to the places in which participants build a sense of belonging and practice it over time.

Chapter 7. Making places to belong: the practice of belonging

7.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters explored the constraints to a sense of belonging caused by the asylum system. Chapter five interrogated the limits to a sense of belonging over time and chapter six focused on the limits to a sense of belonging to people and place in the city of Sheffield. This chapter builds on chapter six by considering how places for belonging are made in the city. It also builds on the findings of chapter five by considering how belonging is practised and how its practice over time can transform places in the city. The chapter will engage with the places for belonging that people create – with a focus on migrant-owned businesses – and consider how they cut across intersecting social locations and may allow for the emergence of an ethics of care as an alternative political project of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2011). I will then consider belonging in place in a chain restaurant, betting shop and leisure centre café and consider how everyday familiarity can lead to a sense of belonging. The core argument of the chapter is that the practice of belonging can create places that are a means to articulate the self (Miller, 2003) against that which is imposed. In other words, I will argue that the everyday practice of belonging as a wilful act has transformative potential.

The chapter will proceed in three sections. The first will return to my discussion of life after asylum in section 5.3.4. The aim of this will be to provide context to my discussion of Hope and Helen's businesses. I will discuss how Hope and Helen set up their businesses as well as Mahyar's current place of work. This will allow me to consider the challenges of life after asylum, thereby extending the arguments made in chapter five as well as introducing section two. The second section will turn to specific places for belonging created and frequented by participants in this study. I will discuss Hope's hair salon as place for solidarity and solace; Helen's restaurant as a place for belonging that cuts across simplistic notions of national and ethnic collectivities (Yuval-Davis, 2006); an Ethiopian restaurant as a key site for Oromo organising and a sense of national belonging in the city; and the Kurdish restaurant in which Ako and Toran spend their time as a familiar place of participatory belonging. I will argue that the places of belonging that people create after asylum can lead

to the emergence of new communities (Sim and Bowes, 2007) and can transform the city when people who have received a positive outcome on an asylum claim seek new opportunities for work (Phillimore and Goodson, 2006) and the practice of belonging. Having discussed migrant-owned businesses, the third section will consider betting shops, chain restaurants and a leisure centre café. I will argue that acquaintance with a place can lead to a sense of belonging. Drawing on Jones et al. (2015) I will argue that these places allow for a sense of belonging to people and place through their familiarity and quiet sociability. Based on this, I will argue that a sense of belonging to place is often part of an active process of choosing where to spend one's time and that being together in a place has transformative potential. Throughout the chapter, I will primarily use interview and field diary data as well as reflect briefly on my own sense of belonging as a guest and researcher at the salon and one of the restaurants.

7.2 Life after asylum: seeking places to belong

In chapter five, I examined how the complexity of belonging made up of social locations, identifications and value systems shaped Hope, Helen and Mahyar and Zhala's trajectories after asylum. I considered what their choices after asylum show about their sense of belonging. This was primarily focused on decision making about where to live and home-making practices. In order to develop this and contextualise my findings below, I will briefly consider the challenges faced after asylum and how this can lead to different practices of belonging, understood as an everyday ethics of care (see: 3.3.3), in different places. I consider life after asylum because it can show how exclusion and unbelonging can persist; what the choices people make can mean for the sense of belonging for people still in the asylum system; and how the choices people make after asylum can reflect future orientations to belonging.

As McNevin (2020) argues, citizenship is not the end point of belonging. This is because the production of Otherness through race, class and gender, among other intersecting social locations, does not mean that formal belonging to the state equates with inclusion or acceptance (Yuval-Davis, 2011). The political projects of belonging to the nation and state citizenship do not end when one become a citizen (Ibid). This is evident in autochthonic political projects of belonging which draw on "true indigeneity" as the precursor for

belonging (Yuval-Davis et al., 2018) as well political projects of belonging which privilege loyalty to the British nation. Even if someone has become a citizen, political projects of belonging to the nation can still lead to everyday exclusion and a sense of unbelonging through racism or the perception of Otherness.

Moreover, the fracturing of the refugee label (Zetter, 2007) and the stratification of citizenship in Britain means that, in addition to citizenship not being the end point of belonging, the different types of legal status given after asylum can create additional uncertainty, precarity and unbelonging. Limits to a sense of belonging as a result of legal status after asylum can reveal how the political projects of belonging to state citizenship produce the Other by prolonging exclusion from the citizen majority. As discussed in section 5.6.2, the period between being given (more) secure legal status and being able to apply for ILR and subsequently, naturalisation, introduces additional waiting, uncertainty and new conditionalities (such as meeting the “good character” requirement and passing the Life in the UK test). In this way, the state-led political projects of belonging are maintained after asylum through the hostile environment suite of policies and can limit or constrain a sense of belonging through shifts in the delineation of the boundaries of belonging to the nation, and the reproduction of unbelonging in everyday life (Yuval-Davis, 2011, 25). This is evident in how the end of asylum can mean moving from “one category of undeserving poor to another” (Mayblin, 2019, 139).

As discussed in section 2.4.2, finding housing, finding a job and accessing welfare after asylum poses new challenges, particularly within the time constraints of the 28-day “move on period” (Potter, 2018). In addition, welfare conditionalities such as benefits sanctions can mean that people granted (more) secure legal status do not become “privileged citizens with access to a wealth of resources” but “benefit dependent welfare ‘scroungers’ popularly construed as lazy and undeserving of the support they receive” (Mayblin, 2019, 140). In this way, becoming stigmatised and abject within the welfare system (Tyler, 2013) leads to both more secure and formal belonging to the state through legal status on the one hand, but limits a sense of belonging as a result of the value systems through which one is encountered on the other. In other words, being perceived as undeserving as a result of the media and popular discourse around welfare, where value systems (as a component of

belonging) place less worth on those in receipt of welfare, can limit a sense of belonging. This can be compounded by the classed, gendered and racialised dynamics of work and is evident in Hope, Helen and Mahyar's experiences after asylum.

After being given Discretionary Leave for 30 months with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF), Hope worked as a server in a fast food chain; as an order picker for a large online retailer; a hairdresser in customers' homes; and as a housekeeper for a hotel in the affluent south west of the city. All of these jobs (with the exception of hairdressing in customer's homes) paid minimum wage, and all were zero hours contracts with variable shift patterns. Once she was able to access Universal Credit following an appeal supported by a local women's charity, Hope struggled to balance its conditionalities – in terms of number of hours worked per week – with childcare and shift patterns. Helen similarly worked as a carer on the minimum wage on a zero-hour contract alongside catering for events in the Ethiopian community from her kitchen at home. Likewise, Mahyar began work on the minimum wage as a kitchen porter for an Iranian restaurant in London. All three faced challenges in moving on after asylum whether in terms of housing, work or welfare:

So, we stay with kids all day at the council, they kick us out. So, we go to different friend's houses. We go back the next day and the same situation, same story. So, the next day we went to council, until the closing time, they left us to stay there all day. So, around 5 o'clock, in closing time, they give us somewhere to stay overnight, like a hostel. We stayed there for a couple of days. After that, they gave us temporary accommodation, where to live, so when we were in that temporary accommodation, we started bidding a house. So, after that, we get house.

First semi-structured interview with Helen

Hope said that the housekeeping job was excellent, and the people were really nice, but it was zero hours and some weeks they didn't give her any shifts which made it really difficult with Universal Credit, so she left. She said she had to leave the fast food restaurant because she couldn't fit it in around childcare. She said that even though the warehouse job was perfect, it was only ever a Christmas temp position.

Field diary, mobile interview, 23rd March 2019

After college, finish college, I'm taking a study for civil engineering, I have masters for civil engineering, but it will take long time here. I need this for new work and search for a new work and a study. Because there is no time for rest, work and the study are together. It's better for future, yes, but now not good because work not good. No choice for work, after learn English it's better. At restaurant, I sometimes just tidying and clean and wash and preparation and any work, not very, ah, not connect to customer, just in kitchen.

Second semi-structured interview with Mahyar

For Hope, Helen and Mahyar, (more) secure legal status presented new challenges which in turn limited a sense of belonging through multiple and intersecting social locations, identifications, attachments and value systems (Yuval-Davis, 2011). Whereas Helen was “kicked out” of the council’s offices when she found herself homeless, Hope found it difficult to balance welfare conditionality, insecure work and childcare. Mahyar faced the new challenge of not being able to work in the sector he trained in. These challenges reflect how receiving (more) secure status does not necessarily mean that one is seen to belong or feel that they belong. Indeed, the racialised, classed and gendered dynamics of work and welfare can reveal how unbelonging can be reproduced in everyday life after asylum. For Hope, a sense of belonging was arguably limited by the value systems that view welfare recipients as undeserving alongside the experience of being a working class, Black, lone parent. For Helen, having to persist and advocate for herself in order to access the universal right of housing reflects how she may have been perceived as unbelonging or undeserving of state support; and finally, for Mahyar, being confined to a back-of-house role in spite of his education, training and perception of his own class position limited a sense of belonging relative to the majority population. These experiences can reveal how political projects of belonging to the nation can exclude those who are seen to be Other due to different intersecting social locations and limit a sense of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2011).

For all three participants, belonging as an impulse for both future attachment (Probyn, 1996) and as a means to make a future life (Wood and Waite, 2011) can reflect autochthonic political projects of belonging that exclude, as well as how a sense of and

practice of belonging can resist and transform those dynamics. Whereas Mahyar is excluded from the sector he trained in, he plans to develop his English in order to return to work as a civil engineer. For Hope and Helen, the exclusions and experience of unbelonging through work and welfare led to their desire to establish their own businesses and Sheffield's low rents and many boarded-up shops made this possible.

At the time that they received their (more) secure legal status, Hope, Helen and Mahyar were able to draw upon their networks for support. Helen for example helped Hope with childcare when she first started working; Mahyar and Zhala accessed help from friends they made at the IAC they stayed in to raise a rental deposit and move to London; and Helen was able to stay with friends until the Local Authority gave her temporary accommodation. Over time, Hope and Helen reciprocated the support they received through their own practice of belonging as an ethics of care (Yuval-Davis, 2011). Hope, for example, accommodated a homeless Nigerian woman and her infant son who she met at a bus stop and helped them access support from Children's Social Care. Similarly, Helen often gives free meals to Ethiopian people seeking asylum at her restaurant. Their practice of belonging is an active choice against the political projects of belonging to the nation and state citizenship. They created an alternative political project of belonging through an ethics of care that has the potential to lead to an everyday transformation of both the self and society through relationships. For both Hope and Helen, starting their own businesses was an expression of their own sense of belonging and an active choice against the limitations imposed by work and welfare. Starting their own businesses also meant that they created new places for belonging and its practice.

Hope and Helen drew informal loans and bank loans to set up their businesses. This is in line with Bloch and McKay's (2014) finding that migrant-owned businesses often draw on social networks and family ties to finance new businesses. In addition, for both, starting a business was a gendered choice because it allowed them to balance work and childcare (Bloch and McKay, 2014). Helen chose to open her restaurant with a friend which meant that they were able to share childcare:

If I have the restaurant on my own, it is going to take all my time, so I don't have time for my kids. So, I opened the restaurant with my friend so now I have a sharing one day after school now, and then the next day, she goes to the kids. Like one day off, one day on, because I don't like to leave them when I am focused on the work.

Second semi-structured interview with Helen

Although self-employment “in and of itself, is not necessarily or always, an effective means of countering social exclusion” (Anthias and Mehta, 2003, 114), by setting up their own businesses both women were able to build a sense of belonging as ease or accord with their environment (Miller, 2003). A secondary outcome of this was that they created places for belonging. Based on this, I will discuss the ways in which their businesses created both a place to belong and a place to practice belonging as well as consider how relative social power and axes of difference through social locations can limit as well as build a sense of belonging.

7.3 Creating places to belong

Setting up their own businesses allowed both Hope and Helen to pursue belonging as an impulse for attachment (Probyn, 1996). This involved an impulse for attachment in the city by creating new places within it and becoming businesswomen as opposed to precariously employed workers. This in a large part was possible because of the particularities of the city of Sheffield as somewhere still recovering from post-industrial decline. As Hope explained, she pays £400pcm in rent for her salon, whereas a similar salon in London where she used to live could easily cost £3000pcm.

This section will consider the places created by Hope and Helen's businesses as well as some of the business places, also established by migrants, which other participants frequented. Although there is a rich literature on migrant-owned businesses (see for example Light et al., 1994, Werbner, 2001, Bloch and McKay, 2012, Bloch and McKay, 2014, Gao-Miles, 2017, Pécoud, 2017), the aim of this section is not to consider migrant-owned businesses *as* migrant-owned businesses but as places where belonging can be practised. Based on this, my focus will be on how migrant-owned businesses can create places for belonging and its practice and in doing so hold transformative potential. This will also enable an engagement

with the particularities of Sheffield as a city and how people who were once dispersed have transformed and regenerated it. Doing so will allow me to address how people who have been dispersed to Sheffield build a sense of belonging to people and place both while in the asylum system and after.

The section will be broken down into two subsections. In the first, I will explore Hope's salon as a place for solidarity and solace. I will consider how the salon creates a place for belonging. Central to this will be discussion of how Hope practices belonging through her "speech" and its ambivalences. The second subsection will build on this, I will consider Helen's restaurant as a place for belonging that transcends ethnic or national collectivities. Following this, I will consider the time Toran and Ako spend at Azadi Grill, a Kurdish restaurant in the city, and how another Ethiopian restaurant, Zeret, was central to Oromo organising in the city. In doing so, I will consider these places for belonging both as business places that have the potential to transform the city and as places for belonging that reflect its complexity.

7.3.1 Belonging at the salon: solidarity and solace

Hope's salon is on a busy arterial road in the inner-city. Bright signage hangs above the salon, making it stand out between the *hajj* travel agency to its left and second-hand white goods shop to its right. As you enter, there is a black leather three-seater sofa facing the black leather backs of three hairdresser's chairs. In the corner, a TV screen usually showing the BBC news channel looks down over customers and anyone who has dropped by. On the back wall is a display of hair extensions, wigs and accessories.

In the time I spent at Hope's salon, I would introduce myself to customers both as Hope's friend and as a PhD researcher. I would explain my role in the salon and talk to people about my study. I often felt very aware of being a white woman in a Black space and sometimes felt like I was intruding. Whenever I introduced myself at the salon, Hope would supplement my introduction with comments like "Eda was born here but her parents came from Turkey" or when, for example, conversations about migration would take place, she would draw me into discussions by saying things like: "how long did it take for you to get your passport?" In this way, although I may have neither been seen to belong nor felt myself to belong at the

salon, Hope's discursive act of welcome drew on belonging in order to normalise my presence and include me in some of the conversations that took place. Rather than instrumentalising my own social locations and performing belonging (see 4.6.2), Hope's discursive act created a shared place for belonging by positioning me not just as a researcher or a friend but as someone who may have shared similar experiences. The way Hope enabled me to feel at ease by drawing me into conversation reveals the complexities of belonging and how they are produced. Whereas the way I am encountered and judged by others based on my appearance and behaviour (Yuval-Davis, 2006) may lead to me being seen to belong to the British nation, Hope drew upon shared social locations to emphasise how the political projects of belonging produce difference. Despite my experience of the political projects of belonging to nation and state citizenship differing from Hope's because of my different social locations, by emphasising the exclusions inherent in the asylum system, Hope created a place for solidarity and belonging that drew upon a shared experience (however limited) and oppositional politics.

The way in which Hope's discursively practiced belonging was also evident in the following:

The conversation moved from the Home Office to the DWP. At one point, the three women were discussing what they had written on their asylum applications. A lot of this conversation centred on the question of time, with getting a British passport as an end point. The conversation then moved on to applications for Universal Credit during which Hope offered advice and suggestions about how to use the online portal and how to speak with officers at the Job Centre.

Field diary, participant observation, 16th April 2019

In the extract above, the salon became a place where Black women from different countries and backgrounds co-created a place for participation (Cruz-Gutiérrez, 2019, 69). The salon became a place where women shared advice and gave each other mutual support. This resonates with hooks' description of Black women's hair salons as "a space of consciousness raising, a space where Black women shared life stories—hardship, trials, gossip; a place where one could be comforted and one's spirit renewed" (2007). By sharing strategies to cope with and respond to asylum and welfare, the salon became a "place for fostering the

production of counter-discursive narratives” (Cruz-Gutiérrez, 2019, 69). In this way, conversation at the salon via an ethics of care (Yuval-Davis, 2011, 157) created a place for belonging, with people caring for each other within and against the state-led political projects of belonging to the nation and state citizenship. This can be seen both as a habitually performed practice of belonging (Bennett, 2014) and as a means to create places of familiarity through a participatory form of belonging in place (Hage, 2003).

The ease with which asylum and welfare were discussed at the salon allowed the women there to “speak freely” (Hill Collins 2000). By creating a safe social place where Black women can speak freely, Hope’s salon could be understood as a place for Black women’s resistance (Hill Collins, 2000). For Miller (2003), the ability to speak freely is a condition of belonging. By creating a shared place for belonging where strategies and experiences can be shared, the salon can be seen as a place where “belonging as social justice eked out of the day-to-day” (Schein, 2009, 811) occurs. By creating a new place in the city and thereby transforming it, the salon has the potential to be a place for the oppositional politics of everyday life (Ibid) where a sense of belonging is fostered against the political projects of belonging that produce unbelonging and exclusion for those who are seen to be Other. This is also evident in how Hope describes her role at the salon:

At my shop, I’m a psychologist and a teacher

Second semi-structured interview with Hope

Hope describes her salon as a therapeutic space where women, through beauty and self-care are able to feel relaxed and beautiful. Chat in the salon, which often ranges from politics to parenting and romantic relationships, also allows Hope to “not only engage with [her] clients but also to treat clients’ psychological, thus cognitive needs” (Majors, 2003). Hairdressers listen as a function of their work (Hanson, 2019). At her salon, Hope creates a place for comfort and ease that cuts across different social locations by actively caring for her customers (Yuval-Davis, 2011). This relationality, however, is not necessarily symmetrical (Yuval-Davis, 2011) and indeed although Hope’s practice of belonging in the salon has the potential to create a sense of ease, accord and belonging for her customers

and non-customers alike, this is also imbued with shifting relations of power (Yuval-Davis, 2011).

Although Hope's salon could be seen to create a place for an everyday ethics of care, this dynamic is not always straightforward. A range of people frequent Hope's salon. On one afternoon, customers and non-customers included: a university student; two secondary school pupils; an older nurse; and a young, recently dispersed, woman with her toddler. The diversity of people purchasing services from Hope or simply using the salon as a space to hang out (as in the case of the recently dispersed woman and the secondary school pupils) demonstrate the complexity of shared places for belonging. Hope's relative social locations and those of the people who use the salon confirm the argument that Black women's hair salons are not only a place of "bonding but a site of continuous identity negotiation" (Cruz-Gutiérrez, 2019, 70). At the salon, Hope must negotiate her own and her customers' social locations, identifications and value systems. The most striking example of this is how Hope must balance an ethic of care to both current and potential future customers (in the case of those who were simply 'hanging out'), emotional labour and the need to generate profit. As Hope describes in the quotation below, she must entertain with her speech:

I'm a professional hairdresser, I am gifted. It's a gift from God and I never learned it. I never studied it. I never practice it. I'm just gifted. So, because I know how to do, and I like doing hair and I love talking and I talk for a long, long time and I meet different people every day if I will do your hair today and trust me tomorrow you will love to come back, and I will entertain you with my speech. You see! I will entertain you with my speech! I will make you feel more comfortable, make you feel relax.

Second semi-structured interview with Hope

Hope's speech can enable customers (and non-customers) to feel relaxed and comfortable through her practice of belonging. The practice of belonging as an ethics of care, however, is part of the labour that Hope must perform in order to generate a profit. The salon is consequently both a place for a belonging and its practice as well as a site where belonging and its practice are contested. Hope's practice of belonging involves the emotional cost of dealing with clients' demands and affective needs while performing skilled physical labour,

alongside managing her own emotions and sense of belonging relative to her customers' (Sharma and Black, 2001). The unrecognised and often undervalued gendered nature of emotional labour at the salon (Toerien and Kitzinger, 2007) means that Hope must create a place for belonging, within a gendered and relatively low-paid sector that is vulnerable to exploitation. Hope's practice of belonging therefore sits within classed and gendered social locations and value systems where hairdressers' work and worth are perceived in particular ways by different customers. In this way, the place for belonging that Hope creates is also an ambivalent place for belonging. As discussed above, opening the salon generated a sense of belonging for Hope by connecting her to the city and giving her a "professional" identity. Although the salon created a place for belonging that cuts across simplistic notions of ethnic and national collectivities by building a safe place for differently socially positioned Black women, Hope's work as a hairdresser also reveals the contested nature of belonging. This is evident in the quotation below about her experience of working as a hairdresser in customers' homes:

I love making people hair and I love making people beautiful, so I just say, "oh hi, my name is this, if you want to do your hair, I do people hair and I love to do hair, do you want me to do your hair". So, some people, they are really nice naturally some will ask you to come to their house and they will treat you nicely. Some will ask you to come to their house and they will treat you like a slave. You know, sometimes you go to people's house and you come back home crying.

Second semi-structured interview with Hope

While the encounter Hope describes took place outside the salon, it reveals that belonging sits at the intersection between the sociology of power and the sociology of emotion (Yuval-Davis, 2011). Whereas the emotional labour of care as a hairdresser can be a means to practice belonging and build towards an ethics of care as an alternative political project of belonging, it can also reveal potential limits to belonging as a result of people's different social locations and the value systems through which people are judged and encountered. In the quotation above, Hope felt she was treated "like a slave" by another Black woman to whom she was providing a paid service. This can reveal how the relative social locations of class, nationality or legal status may influence the way in which others are encountered.

This highlights the complexity of belonging where unbelonging is not just something produced by the state or the majority population but can involve a range of actors, all involved in boundary-making in different, multiple and overlapping ways. Hope's everyday negotiation of contested belongings is also evident in the relative insecurity of Hope's legal status in comparison to that of some of her customers.

In mid-2019, Hope had to apply to have her Discretionary Leave extended. This process took well over a year and while her Discretionary Leave was extended by another 30 months in late 2020, in early 2021, the Home Office had still not returned her passport. On one occasion, Hope commented that even though she likes to help people who are in the asylum system, being around customers with more secure legal status who may flaunt their citizenship can be distressing. This shows how the political projects of belonging to the state via citizenship can be reproduced in everyday life in the workplace and create a sense of dissonance or resentment towards others, thus limiting a sense of belonging to people in place. Although the practice of belonging has transformative potential, the care that Hope provides – whether at her salon or by extending support to a stranger at the bus stop – is contingent on the political projects of belonging that produce difference and unbelonging for people with insecure legal status. While the practice of belonging can lead to social change through everyday relationships, it does not necessarily overcome the production of insecurity and precarity after asylum through gradations in legal status, or the perceptions of belonging to the nation and the state via citizenship.

This section so far has explored how Hope's business has created a place for belonging and its practice as well as its ambivalences. I have argued that differing social locations and value systems influence the practice and experience of belonging at the salon. In the following subsection, I will build on this by considering Helen's Ethiopian restaurant and two other migrant-owned restaurants as places for belonging.

7.3.2 Belonging at the restaurant

Like Hope's salon, Helen's restaurant, Lalibela, creates a place for belonging. This subsection will first discuss Helen's restaurant as creating a place for belonging with a particular emphasis on its diverse clientele as well as how it creates a place for belonging that cuts

across race, nationality and ethnicity. Following this, I will turn to two other restaurants, Zeret and Azadi Grill. I will consider Zeret as a place for organising in the Oromo diaspora as well as Ako and Toran's experience of Azadi Grill as a shared place for participatory belonging. This will enable me to consider how migrant-owned businesses both create a place for belonging and have the potential to transform the city.

Making a place for "different different people"

Helen's restaurant, Lalibela, is double fronted and off an A-road near a disused train station on the edge of the city's former industrial heartland. The signage boldly announces the restaurant's name and a smaller sign in the window states that it is an Ethiopian and Eritrean restaurant. The exterior windows are hung with pictures of Ethiopian and European food and images depicting Ethiopian coffee ceremonies. The interior is slick and contemporary with high backed leather chairs with tapered steel legs and glass topped dining tables. An accent wall to the left is covered with grey stone wall effect paper and to the back of the restaurant is a bar with a large print of the city of Rome. The restaurant took over an existing Eritrean restaurant and is opposite a large African and Caribbean supermarket.

The restaurant's generous kitchen has enabled Helen and her business partner to develop the catering side of the business and they often cater to large events such as weddings and parties in the Ethiopian community. This builds a transnational sense of belonging through the provision of familiar food as well as connecting customers to a sense of home (Abbots, 2016). In Hage's (1997) ethnographic study of ethnic food and migrant home-building among Lebanese migrants in Australia, being at home is the building of a feeling, it is an affective construct. Within this, food has the potential to evoke nostalgic feelings that can be the building blocks of belonging in new places (Hage, 1997). Catering to parties can build this sense of nostalgia and multiply positioned home-building and belonging to homes past, present and future. As Lewis (2009) argues in findings from a study focused on asylum dispersal and community in Leeds, food can be central to migrant praxis, generating belonging and actively creating new life in the present. Catering for large events means that Helen's business can contribute to a sense of coming together in the Ethiopian community by actively creating a sense of belonging to people and place. This sense of coming together

is also evident in how the restaurant attracts customers from the Ethiopian, Eritrean and Oromo communities. A sense of homeliness for a range of national and cultural groupings can show how consuming familiar foods can create a place for belonging for different cultural, national and linguistic groups within a region (Boccagni, 2016). Attracting a range of customers from the Eritrean and Oromo communities also suggest that the restaurant is a place where everyday belonging through the consumption of food can challenge the political projects of belonging that produce conflict between Ethiopian, Eritrean, Tigrayan and Oromo people. As Juhur noted, the presence of Ethiopian and Eritrean restaurants in the city when he first arrived was “truly so nice to see”. The micro-politics of everyday life at Helen’s restaurant is both a site of belonging and has the potential to be a site of contestation and transformation of the political projects of belonging in diaspora. The diverse clientele at Helen’s restaurant is evident in the quotation below:

The day before yesterday, Arab people they come, and they asked for different different things on one plate. They eat, they were so happy, and the rest they took take away. They say they are going to come back again. Saturday, they came Polish people, they come, they eat *injera*, they eat our traditional food, they drink beer, they were happy. They said they were going to come back. So, all the time, it is different. There are lots of people who come here from the Ethiopian community, from Eritrean people and for example Oromo people they are from Ethiopia, but they speak a different language, they have a different culture. Different different people you meet every day different people

Second semi-structured interview with Helen

The diversity of customers at Helen’s restaurant including “Polish people” and “Arab people” suggests that the restaurant has become a familiar place among different ethnic and national groups. The everyday multiculturalism of Helen’s restaurant suggests that it is a site where assumptions about difference can be contested and remade (Neal and Murji, 2015). By drawing in a range of customers from different backgrounds, Helen’s restaurant may provide insight into how the processes of social change take place in the city. By establishing her restaurant, Helen has, in an everyday way, transformed the city and challenged assumptions about the so-called death of multiculturalism (Bloch et al., 2013), as

well as the assumption that racialised Others lead parallel lives (see section 2.3). Helen's clientele can thus reveal how the ideal of "multicultural citizenship plays out in situated contexts and upon the mundane ways in which cultural difference is constructed, experienced and enacted" (Wise and Velayutham, 2009, 15).

The way in which Helen's restaurant creates a place for intermingling amongst different communities is also evident in its décor. Miranda-Nieto and Boccagni (2020) in their ethnographic study of Ecuadorian restaurants in Madrid consider how material culture displays a sense of home. They argue that the display of Ecuadorian identity in restaurants can project a sense of belonging and familiarity through décor. They consider this largely in terms of displays of flags, touristic posters and homely back-bars. At Helen's restaurant, however, the desire to create a place for belonging and wanting to attract customers who are: "mixed, very mixed people" (Interview with Helen) was evident in both décor and soundscapes. In addition to drawing on European, Ethiopian and Eritrean visual cultures through its window display and interior décor, Helen mostly plays music from the *Éthiopiennes* record label featuring Ethiopian jazz, folk and blues from the 60s and 70s. Helen thus exhibits a desire to use music to create a sense of belonging that cuts across different social locations, identifications and attachments in the city (Yuval-Davis, 2011) as well as to create a sense of nostalgia and familiarity (Hage, 1997) for her customers from Ethiopia, many of whom have been dispersed or have come to Sheffield through the Gateway Protection Programme.

As noted above, a sense of familiarity and belonging in Ethiopian restaurants was also evident in Juhur's discussion of restaurants in Sheffield:

We talked quite a bit about Ethiopian restaurants in Sheffield. Juhur said that he used to go often and that before the Oromo community in Sheffield set up its own office and children's Saturday school, a lot of their organising happened in Zeret.

Field diary, mobile interview, 5th April 2019

Zeret restaurant (run by Helen's youngest daughter's godmother) is both a place for belonging and a place where a desire for future belonging is enacted. Zeret was an

important site for organising within the Oromo community, which led to the establishment of a permanent office for an Oromo community organisation in the city. This provides an example of how “everyday commercial sites like ethnic restaurants point to possibilities for the promotion of social inclusion” (Lee, 2019, 79). In other words, places which provide a sense of belonging can lead to new and alternative political projects of belonging. Lee’s (2019) ethnographic study which focuses on the experiences of belonging in Asian restaurants in suburban California finds that the places created by migrant-owned businesses exert a claim over the city, create new ways to promote the material, affective and bodily dimensions of belonging and, in doing so, transform the city. By using Zeret as a place to express a sense of national belonging and to organise to create an Oromo RCO, the restaurant became a site with generative potential for new and established Oromo migrants in the city. Zeret and Lalibela have created sites for future transformation in different ways. Lalibela has become a place where everyday belonging can be enacted whilst Zeret, as a site for Oromo organising, has developed transformative potential for Oromo people in the city. This transformative potential was also evident in Ako and Toran’s experiences of Kurdish restaurants and specifically, Azadi Grill.

Another cup of tea?

The busy arterial road where Hope’s salon is located is also home to Azadi Grill. Both Hope’s salon and Azadi Grill are within a ten-minute walk of my home. Early on in my fieldwork:

I was walking past Azadi Grill and Ako popped out and ushered me in. He asked me if I’d had dinner yet and I explained that I was on my way home for dinner. Ako proceeded to insist that we have a kebab together. Once we were seated and Ako had introduced me to everyone he knew there, towards the end of our meal, he showed me a new letter from the Home Office and another letter that a friend of his at the same table had received. I suggested that he book in for a casework appointment with his new caseworker and referred his friend to another local organisation.

Field diary, participant observation, 6th February 2019

Much like Hope’s salon, Azadi Grill is a place where people, usually men, gather and socialise. While Ako, his friend and I shared a meal, strategies to deal with and respond to

the Home Office were discussed. Photographed letters were swapped and translated on Google Translate and asylum stories of acquaintances and acquaintances' acquaintances were shared. At the end of the meal, we lingered for some time. We ordered tea to our table and kept chatting. Occasionally, Ako or other customers would see friends or acquaintances walking past on the main road outside. Some would wave through the window and others, like Ako, would invite them in – whether for a full meal, a bowl of lentil soup or a cup of tea. In this sense, the restaurant was a shared social space. Like Hope's salon, Azadi Grill created a place for sociability, co-presence and belonging:

I sit in here. Sometime all day, they give soup and tea.

First semi-structured interview with Toran

I met Toran through Ako at Azadi Grill. At the time of writing, Toran was living in dispersal accommodation near the restaurant. Toran spends most daytimes sitting at a corner table at Azadi Grill. He also spends time in other Kurdish restaurants in the city. The owners of the restaurant give him free soup and tea throughout the day, an example of the practice of belonging through an ethics of care. The restaurant is warm and Toran often sees acquaintances who sometimes stop by to share a cup of tea with him. Although it is common for shop and restaurant owners throughout the Middle East to give their customers complimentary cups of tea, by giving Toran cups of tea and soup, the restaurant owners also enable him to pass his time sociably and make his S95 payments go further. As with Helen's restaurant, the affective construct of home and consumption of home food created a sense of familiarity for Toran (Hage, 1997). By creating a homely feeling, the restaurant helped build a sense of belonging. Belonging as an ethic of care practised at Azadi Grill was a form of participatory belonging for Toran and other customers such as Ako who were able to invite friends and acquaintances in and use the restaurant to share strategies, aspirations and future plans. For Toran, spending time at Azadi Grill enabled him to pass otherwise empty days and manage his relative isolation. For Ako inviting me in for a meal enabled him to share a sense of belonging through the act of welcome and participation.

In spite of this, a sense of and the practice of belonging in migrant-owned businesses can be ambivalent for those who work there. Mahyar for example was able to find work at an Iranian restaurant through contacts in the Iranian community, though this is something he considers an interim measure. Despite the opportunities it presents, as Lewis et al. (2014) in their study of migrant work and precarity find, restaurant work also carries with it the risk of exploitation. Indeed, workers in this sector can sometimes be rendered disposable (Bloch and McKay, 2014) and progression within the sector can often depend on time spent in the country and language ability (Bloch and McKay, 2012). Migrant-owned businesses as a place for belonging reveal the relationship between a sense of belonging and the political projects of belonging. Although they can be places where belonging is practised, the need to generate a profit within and against unbelonging and the exclusions of the state can mean that they can be precarious places for this belonging. That is, they can be places where people are employed insecurely or where the need to generate profit can mean that free meals cannot be guaranteed as a long-term form of support or solidarity. While migrant-owned businesses can hold transformative potential, they can also replicate and reproduce unbelonging and exclusion within society.

Overall, Azadi Grill, much like Hope's salon, creates a place for the practice of belonging through an ethics of care. This is also the case in Helen's restaurant where she sometimes gives free meals to Ethiopian people seeking asylum and lets them pass the day in the restaurant. The ethics of care in these businesses can also function as a form of solidarity and an alternative political project of belonging based on shared experiences of unbelonging and exclusion in the asylum system. The transformation of the city by people who were once dispersed such as Hope and Helen can provide insight into everyday belonging and its complexities, as well as transformation and change in the city. As Lee argues, migrant-owned businesses create new places in the city that "improvise their own inclusion, belonging and rights" (2019, 79). Although this is not straightforwardly positive, it can have positive outcomes for new arrivals and the city as a whole. Based on this, the next section will consider the potential for transformation and change in the city.

7.3.3 Transforming the city

Dispersal has transformed many cities through the businesses people establish after asylum and many cities have seen the arrival of new businesses catering to the needs of recent arrivals (Lewis, 2009). Glick-Schiller and Çağlar (2013) argue that it is necessary to consider migrant-owned businesses not *as* migrant-owned businesses but as part of processes of urban change. A focus on the urban can allow for the consideration of the particularities of specific cities as well as avoid methodological nationalism, understood as the assumption that the nation is the proper unit of analysis or place to belong.

In their later (2018) comparative study of urban transformation and migrant-owned businesses in three cities in Germany, the US and Turkey, Çağlar and Glick-Schiller find that small business ownership in the German city of Halle was fostered by relative decline in the city and low rents. They find that migrant-owned businesses in Halle initially flourished as a result of relative economic decay because Western chain stores were comparatively more expensive. They argue that over time, urban regeneration and redevelopment has priced migrant entrepreneurs out of the city and created barriers to belonging. As is evident in Hope and Helen's businesses as well as my discussion of places like Azadi Grill and Zeret, Sheffield's low rents have led to people making the decision to stay in Sheffield after asylum and, over time, transforming the city by establishing new businesses. This has the potential to promote growth, positive change and regeneration in the city. While a more focused engagement with urban citizenship and change in the city as a result of dispersal is beyond the scope of my study, it is evident from my findings above that migrant-owned businesses can create new places for belonging by changing the city. In this way, a sense of belonging and its practice holds potential for urban transformation (Hall, 2015). This, however, is an area of enquiry that warrants further longitudinal research, particularly in light of precarity and the risk of exploitation.

I have so far focused on migrant-owned businesses and their transformative potential. This however, is contingent on relative power and exclusion within wider society. In the following section, I will consider a sense of belonging to place and the practice of belonging in a chain restaurant, betting shop and leisure centre café. I will argue that these places

create quiet sites for belonging and its practice. The aim of this will be to consider practices of belonging in different places.

7.4 Places for belonging: betting shops, fast food restaurants and leisure centres

In the previous section, I discussed the familiarity, comfort and sense of belonging participants such as Toran and Ako felt in one of the city's many Kurdish restaurants. While certain migrant-owned businesses are easily identifiable as a familiar space for some people seeking asylum and provide a place to meet others and develop a sense of belonging to people and place in the city, these places are not necessarily frequented by all. Based on this, I will consider some of the places that participants such as Daniel and Jerome spent their time in. I will discuss the time Daniel spends at McDonald's and in the café area of a leisure centre as well as the time Jerome spends at a betting shop. I will consider these places in light of Jones et al.'s (2015) study of chain cafés and fast food restaurants and Hall's (2009) study of belonging in a London 'caff'. I will argue that the familiarity, quiet co-presence and sociability practised in these places also create a place where a sense of belonging can emerge.

When he is not volunteering, Daniel often spends time at the City of Sanctuary building, in the café area of a leisure centre in the city centre and at the McDonald's in the city centre. I will focus on the leisure centre and McDonald's as sites for everyday sociability and quiet co-presence.

Sometimes I go to McDonald's. If I can get a voucher from a bus ticket, I will sit there all day. There's a toilet and Internet and a charger. Sometimes people know my face and they say: "oh hi".

Second semi-structured interview with Daniel

Although Daniel and I never visited McDonald's together, I know the city centre McDonald's to be a multi-aged, multi-ethnic place. In any visit to the city centre McDonald's, one may come across workers in high-vis jackets buying a meal to take away; families sitting down together with happy meals; school pupils on their lunch break or stopping off for fries on their way home; shoppers resting and people who would have been waiting at the bus stops

outside buying tea in order to take shelter from the rain. The multiple uses of McDonald's can reveal that it can be a place to "escape, restore, catch-up, be alone or pass the time" (Jones et al., 2015, 651). As Jones et al. argue, the multiple uses of places like McDonald's can generate social interaction and encounters with unknown ethnically and socially different others (2015, 652).

For Daniel, McDonald's is a warm place with access to Wi-Fi, chargers and toilets to pass the time before returning to either the night shelter or a friend's sofa. In addition, Sheffield bus tickets, which often have McDonald's vouchers on the reverse, enable him to buy fries and a burger for £1.99 instead of the usual cost of £4.78. This can facilitate access to food that is both cheap and familiar. As Daniel notes, his regular presence at the city centre McDonald's means that people sometimes recognise him. This echoes Jones et al.'s (2015) findings wherein a sense of continuity, recognition and polite exchange can create a small-scale localism. In addition, the sense of regularity can foster a sense of belonging (Hall, 2009) through mundane, everyday routines and in doing so lead to a sense of belonging to people through familiarity over time (Mathisen and Cele, 2020).

In contrast to places like Lalibela which also attract a diverse clientele, the familiarity of McDonald's, where people know and are comfortable with its systems and etiquette, may "generate confidence in visiting and being in such spaces precisely because they are easy to know and invite in no particular crowd" (Jones et al., 2015, 653). In this way, neither being a visible minority, nor being uncertain of what and how to order, has led to McDonald's being a place for belonging for Daniel. Although his interactions at the restaurant may not be rich, it is a place where he can spend much of the day unchallenged by staff and where he can build a sense of belonging which, as Huizinga and van Hoven (2018) describe, emerges through everyday social relationships including polite nods with neighbours. For Daniel, this sense of neighbourliness involves everyday interactions with staff, other regulars or customers at the next table.

Daniel and I often met in the café area of a leisure centre. The café occupies a large curving space on a mezzanine floor with sofas, tables and chairs that overlook the trampoline area on one side and on the other, the swimming pools. The café operates on a canteen basis

and is often frequented by older adults sat in groups drinking cups of tea; parents observing their children's swimming or trampoline lessons; and customers from a range of different ethnic and national backgrounds having an all-day breakfast or jacket potato. Meals at the café cost between £1.40 for a sandwich and £3.95 for a burger, chips and salad. Daniel describes the leisure centre as follows:

Everyone here knows my face. The manager here knows me, those ladies behind me, look, they're smiling.

Second semi-structured interview with Daniel

For Daniel, spending time at the leisure centre café, where like at McDonald's he is able to access Wi-Fi, toilets and can spend much of the day without being asked to purchase anything by staff members, creates a sense of day-to-day belonging (Hall, 2009). Hall's (2009) ethnography of a London 'caff' finds that the caff is a space of intermingling across different groups and individuals where belonging occurs as a process dependent not on class, ethnicity or race but on shared forms of sociability. Like the London caff, for Daniel, the leisure centre café is somewhere where familiarity, belonging and intercultural life can be encountered. The positivity with which Daniel describes the time he spends at both the leisure centre café and at McDonald's suggests that these are both places of belonging, where belonging may emerge through everyday familiarity and sociability. Similarly, Jerome spends time at a betting shop:

I'd never been in a betting shop before, but Jerome took me to a Coral in the city centre opposite a pawn shop. We sat at the high stools facing the screens and notice boards. It was quite early in the day but there were a few other men, mostly middle aged and hunched over in big coats [...] Jerome explained that it's a warm place to sit, that there is free tea and coffee, Wi-Fi and a toilet. He said that no one ever asks him to leave.

Field diary, mobile interview, 2nd March 2019

Jerome described seeing regulars at the betting shop throughout the day and exchanging nods and smiles. However, as Jerome explained, the primary draw of the betting shop was

that there was free tea and coffee and crucially, Wi-Fi so that he could use his tablet. When he explained this, I mentioned that the leisure centre also has free Wi-Fi, inadvertently imparting my classed and cultural assumptions about betting shops. Jerome's response was that he prefers the betting shop because it is often quiet, and the people there recognise him. Like Daniel's experience of the leisure centre and McDonald's, the betting shop is a quiet space in which one can be solitary in others' company (Hall, 2009). The betting shop also provides a wilful space where Jerome can choose to spend his time rather than at his no-choice dispersal accommodation. Everyday familiarity and Jerome's choice to spend his time at the betting shop suggests that it is a place where he feels a sense of belonging. In addition, Jerome explained that he often spent time in betting shops when he was living in Birmingham and Middlesbrough. This suggests that the familiarity of the betting shop creates a place for a sense of belonging because of its standardisation.

There are a number of factors that may influence where Daniel and Jerome choose to spend their time. As I have argued in this section, McDonald's, Coral and the leisure centre café all provide a familiar place for belonging. In addition, they provide a warm space with access to Wi-Fi and free or more affordable food and drink. The sense of quiet and being alone together in these places may be a reprieve from Daniel's voluntary activities or from the time Jerome spends at church and at community meals. In contrast to time spent at community meals for people seeking asylum or at the City of Sanctuary building, Daniel and Jerome can pass their time in these commercial places without either being recognised as people who are seeking asylum and without having to engage in conversation if they do not want to. In this way, in the absence of a comfortable home or private environment, places like McDonald's and Coral become sites for an everyday sense of belonging and its practice expressed in nods and smiles.

The sense of quiet and being alone together contrasts Ako and Toran's experience at Azadi Grill. Although Coral, McDonald's and the leisure centre café lead to a sense of belonging through everyday familiarity, places such as Azadi Grill may lead to richer or more supportive social connections – as was evident in Ako's use of Azadi Grill. There are a number of possible explanatory factors for why Jerome and Daniel choose to spend their time elsewhere. For both, places such as Azadi Grill are less familiar. Their crowd is less

'known' and as such may be less accessible. Whereas Helen's restaurant attracts a diverse clientele and Hope's salon attracts Black women from across the city of Sheffield and beyond, for Daniel and Jerome such places were less familiar and accessible along gendered and raced lines. For Daniel and Jerome, betting shops and franchised fast food restaurants were more familiar and accessible. Intersecting social locations and a sense of belonging to national, linguistic or cultural groups may also contribute to this.

Daniel is Ghanaian, and Jerome is from the Democratic Republic of Congo. These national groups are not as prevalent in the city of Sheffield, nor are there many places that are instantly recognisable as places for belonging for these national groups. While, as discussed in chapter three, this is not to say that there are fewer places to belong because of a relative lack of people who may share a national, linguistic or cultural background (Pemberton and Phillimore, 2018), it is possible that particular social locations influence an individual sense of belonging to place; ease or accord in an environment; or decisions about where people spend their time. This, however, can be countered by Daniel's description of himself:

My manner is always courteous and polite because of this, I interlock freely with others.

First semi-structured interview with Daniel

Therefore, it could be argued that whereas migrant-owned businesses create a place for belonging for some, for others places for belonging are found in places of quiet, often unknowing sociability, where belonging is practised through nods, smiles and a shared use of place. As such the places for belonging in the city are both a choice for the people who establish them and for those who prefer to frequent or spend time in one place over another. Decisions about where to spend time thus reveal that a sense of belonging can be both about seeking the familiar and building deep connections, sharing strategies and organising, and about everyday, quiet co-presence, sociability or a sense of reprieve from more involved social encounters.

In this section, I considered a sense of belonging emerging from co-presence and quiet sociability. I argued that for some participants, places such as McDonald's provide a place

for the minor practice of belonging through nods and smiles and that these places create accessible sites to be alone together. Rather than suggest that a sense of belonging found in migrant-owned businesses is central to a sense of belonging in the city, I have considered the range of places in which participants choose to spend their time where a sense of belonging can be found. This can show how co-presence in places like McDonald's is not necessarily about people relating to others as us/them or self/Other but as neutral places where people simply live side-by-side and interact sometimes (Allsopp and Yuval-Davis, 2012).

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has built on chapters five and six which respectively argued that the experience of time in the asylum system can produce unbelonging and that repeat moves within the asylum system can limit a sense of belonging. Rather than focus on the limits or constraints to belonging, this chapter has centred how people create places for belonging and its practice. The central argument I have made in this chapter is that the places participants choose to create and the places in which participants choose to spend time can be a means to articulate a sense of belonging against that which is imposed.

The chapter began by building upon the temporal dynamics of asylum. I considered how the political projects of belonging can produce unbelonging after asylum. However, I argued that the decisions participants make and their future orientations can challenge this and build a sense of belonging. I argued that this is evident in Mahyar's plans to return to the sector he trained in and Helen and Hope's decision to set up their own businesses. I then turned to Hope and Helen's businesses. I argued that both places can create a sense of belonging, provide a space for the practice of belonging and, in doing so, transform the city. Although Hope practices an everyday ethics of care in her salon which could be an alternative political project of belonging, I argued that this is imbued with relative power and emotional labour. When considering Helen's restaurant, I found that her restaurant creates a place for everyday belonging that cuts across different the social locations of race, nationality and ethnicity. I built on this drawing on data from other participants' experiences of migrant-owned businesses. I found that Azadi Grill and Zeret create places for belonging by creating a form of participatory belonging through which Ako and Toran built a sense of

belonging to people in place. I also found that Zeret was an important site for organising and building an RCO for Oromo people in the city. Moving away from migrant-owned businesses, I contrasted the sense of belonging in places such as Lalibela, Azadi Grill, Zeret and Hope's salon with McDonald's, a leisure centre café and a betting shop. Drawing on Hall (2009) and Jones et al. (2015) I argued that the choice of spending time in familiar, known and sociable places can be site for the practice of everyday belonging through routine and everyday recognition.

Overall, this chapter has argued that people who have been dispersed in the asylum system can and do create places for belonging and its practice. I have shown that this can be empowering (as in the case of Hope and Helen), enable participants access to everyday support and guidance (as in the case of Ako and Toran) and allow for the development of familiarity and comfort in different places. The places for belonging and the mundane everyday practices of this in places such as cafés, restaurants, salons and betting shops reveal how belonging is context dependent and can be a useful frame for considering change in the city over time. Drawing on Glick-Schiller and Çağlar (2018), I argued that this is an area that warrants further research. This has the potential to draw together Darling's (2020) call for "seeing like a city" with respect to asylum dispersal and engaging with the processes of change and belonging. This chapter has begun to address this.

Chapter eight "making time to belong: belonging in Sheffield" will be the last of my four empirical chapters. It will build on the place-based findings of this chapter by exploring participants' leisure practices and how this can create a sense of belonging to people and place over time. This chapter has touched on access to Wi-Fi. The following chapter will closely consider life online and belonging in digital spaces. It will also present findings on green spaces as a place for belonging. Chapter eight will thus deepen my engagement with the places for belonging in this chapter by adding in leisure and belonging to people over time.

Chapter 8. Making time to belong: everyday time and belonging in Sheffield

8.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the places for belonging that participants create and frequent. I argued that the places participants choose to create and spend time in can be a means to articulate a sense of belonging within and against the political projects of belonging that exclude. I focused on how Helen and Hope's businesses have created places for belonging and its practice and considered how migrant-owned businesses have transformative potential in the city. I then turned to some of the other places in which participants spend their time, arguing that choice is central to a sense of belonging and that time spent in places like McDonald's can allow for a sense of belonging through quiet sociability, familiarity and co-presence. Like the previous chapter, this chapter will engage with how people build a sense of belonging and practice it in spite of the constraints of the asylum system. Unlike chapters five and six which centred on the limitations to a sense of belonging, this chapter will focus on how leisure and the use of everyday time can be a means to articulate a sense of belonging. I will focus on leisure time and how people are able to exert control over time in their everyday lives.

This chapter will build on chapter six which focused on the barriers to accessing different places and building relationships in the city, by considering how Internet connectivity can facilitate a sense of belonging to people and place within and against relative peripheralisation, poor access to transport and repeat moves. It will also build on chapter five by engaging with how participants manage and respond to the value systems through which they are encountered in Third Sector Organisations (TSOs). Building on the previous chapter, I will explore how places for comfort and familiarity which are accessed daily can generate a sense of belonging. This will also serve to develop my discussion about access to Wi-Fi.

The chapter will be divided into three sections. The first section will focus on access to the Internet by engaging with digital spaces, online entertainment and leisure time. I will argue that access to the Internet can lead to a sense of belonging to both people and place because time spent online can facilitate a sense of belonging in new physical places, as well as develop and foster a sense of belonging to people both online and offline. I will use this to challenge the idea of time spent online as passive. The second section will explore the time participants make for leisure when they have no right to work. This will enable me to consider the distinction between work and leisure time and how it relates to a sense of belonging in the lives of people seeking asylum. It will also enable me to engage with the expectations of belonging and the value systems through which people seeking asylum are encountered. The third section will turn to participants' experiences of parks and green spaces as places for belonging. I will engage with a sense of belonging in parks and green spaces through the gendered, classed and racialised attitudes towards green spaces as well as the gendered temporalities of care. This will bring socially reproductive time into my discussion of leisure time. I will conclude that the time people seeking asylum make for leisure can build a sense of belonging to people and place within and against the constraints to a sense of belonging. Throughout the chapter, I will draw on interviews, sociograms and mobile interview data.

8.2 Time spent online

In this section, I will explore how access to the Internet facilitates a sense of belonging to people and place. I will begin with a brief review of some of the extant literature on access to the Internet for refugees and people seeking asylum. This will allow me to discuss how Internet access led to Nawid and Mahyar building a sense of belonging to place in the city before considering how Internet access facilitated a sense of belonging to people in different places and to differing extents for Bilen, Chish and Juhur. I will argue that consideration of belonging to a place should also include digital spaces, as well as how time spent online can reflect the complexity of belonging as something that occurs in multiple sites and at different scales.

Lloyd and Wilkinson (2017), in their study of refugee youth and everyday spaces (both digital and physical) found that access to the Internet can lead to new knowledge. Access to the Internet enabled participants to feel empowered and maintain connections with a range of family and friends, and in doing so both “extend and anchor their world” (2017, 255). In this way, Internet access can lead to a sense of belonging across different sites and at different scales: locally, nationally and transnationally. In doing so it can facilitate a sense of connection and belonging through participation in digital spaces. This is echoed by Christensen (2012) who argues that digital practice creates new places for belonging among Turkish women in Stockholm. For Christensen (2012), a sense of belonging online can challenge closure and exclusion from physical places and create new practices of belonging, thus challenging our conceptualisation of place and leading to an engagement with place as not simply a given location but a product of social relationships (Massey, 2005) both online and offline. As Georgiou (2019) notes, however, digital networks among refugees in Athens, London and Berlin, while leading to opportunities for recognition, are constrained by surveillance, demands to comply with the state and persistent inequalities in the city. As such, a sense of belonging through digital practices can be constrained by various political projects of belonging that exclude refugees and people seeking asylum. This was evident in the experiences of the participants in this study.

8.2.1. Internet access and a sense of belonging to people and place

The Peace Gardens is a public square in the heart of Sheffield’s City Centre. Flanked by the Town Hall, the Winter Gardens, shops and cafés, the square is a landscaped green space. In the summer months, children play in its central fountain and paddle in the channels of water that represent the city’s rivers and flow into the centre of the square. Many of Nawid’s early experiences of the city centre began with the Peace Gardens and since arriving in Sheffield in 2016, it is still somewhere he spends a lot of time. I first met Nawid in June 2018. On one April morning in 2019, we sat outside one of the cafés facing the square’s central fountain to conduct our first semi-structured interview, during which Nawid recounted his experiences of his first day in the city and the importance of Internet access:

On the first day, I used postcodes. I used postcode and Google Maps for everything. I remember on the way back from post office my phone had no charge. I was lost and

very scared. I was laughed at by two, three guys when I said, “where is London Road?” It took more than one hour to find my home.

First semi-structured interview with Nawid

Access to the Internet enabled Nawid to navigate a new city. Although Google Maps increased his speed of access to new places and allowed him to orient himself in the city, his dependence on his phone’s battery life and access to Wi-Fi was also a barrier to navigating and getting to know the city. When his phone ran out of battery, it became difficult for Nawid to find his home.

Access to the Internet has the potential to facilitate a sense of belonging in place by enabling people to develop a sense of familiarity. As May (2013) argues, a sense of belonging to place and an identification with a place arises through familiarity. This is echoed by Mathisen and Cele (2020) who find that a sense of belonging can arise through knowledge of places within a city. Similar to Nawid, for Mahyar, Google Maps facilitated his mobility across the city but this in turn was constrained by the reliability of public transport:

Yes, I research everything on the Google Map and get which number bus and where is it going, yes.

First semi-structured interview with Mahyar

Google Maps increased access to new places and acted as a “friend” (Lintner, 2020, 16). It may have facilitated a sense of belonging because a sense of belonging to place includes the ability to move with ease across a city (Fallov et al., 2013). However, this was arguably constrained by the image of the ideal or imagined user of Google Maps and those who are deemed to be the rightful bearers of belonging by the producers of such applications. For Nawid, being without access to Google Maps led to fear and humiliation when he asked for directions, whilst for Hope, using Google Maps to look for places to buy food within walking distance on her first day in Sheffield led her to a large out-of-town shopping centre that only had a prohibitively expensive Marks and Spencer’s food hall and food court with chain restaurants. The kinds of results that applications like Google Maps can yield can be seen to be based on an imaginary wealthy, able-bodied, white and male consumer (Noble, 2018).

This can reflect the political projects of belonging within multinational companies that see certain bodies as *the* body and the idealised target of their products. The exclusions and perceptions of belonging built into applications like Google Maps can thus reproduce political projects of belonging that do not value the needs of people seeking asylum and position them as unbelonging. Search results on Google Maps are more likely to privilege more expensive chain stores rather than cheap, small or independent businesses. This can mean that an application like Google Maps might not be able to facilitate access to an independent grocer selling cow peas (in Hope's case) or okra (in Nawid's case). Applications like Google Maps can thus reproduce the limits to a sense of belonging produced by living in food deserts or through lack of access to reliable public transport (as discussed in chapter five).

The ability of Google Maps to act as a "friend" (Lintner, 2020, 16) and facilitate a sense of belonging to place is also constrained by access to the Internet. This was evident in Hiba's experience. Hiba said she was afraid to ask passers-by for directions. Although she would prefer to use Google Maps, she depends upon public Wi-Fi hotspots to do so. Hiba described feeling hyperaware of stopping or sitting in outdoor hotspot areas. This is because she felt that she would be seen as out of place or as loitering. Being visibly different in public Wi-Fi hotspots can lead to people staying at home (Lintner, 2020, 11). Access to an application like Google Maps can therefore limit a sense of belonging to place. This is because digital practices in the city are constrained by the political projects of belonging that produce people seeking asylum as unbelonging along different axes of social difference (Yuval-Davis, 2011). These can manifest in everyday experiences of exclusion, unbelonging and inequality in the city (Georgiou, 2019).

For many of the people who took part in this study, access to the Internet was not only an important navigational tool but also a means to build a sense of belonging to people by engaging in activism, meeting new people and maintaining social connections.

The library computer here [Huddersfield] is one hour. In Sheffield is two hours and most of the time I don't have data. I don't have enough data. I only use £10 a month

for my phone so I only have 5GB of data. That's not enough. I just Google things, I can't use Skype or video.

Second semi-structured interview with Juhur

Yeah so in Wakefield I would go to the library just for the Wi-Fi. I must say it's a godsend. You're allowed to use the computers for two hours and if there's nobody waiting you can extend and if there are no computers, you can take your tablet.

There are really nice seating areas and you can just sit there for as long as you want using the Wi-Fi it was a relief, it was good.

Second semi-structured interview with Chish

Outside some café has Wi-Fi for example here, Sanctuary, has Wi-Fi. For example, I go to Starbucks. There is Wi-Fi at Starbucks, I use it there but McDonald's no, they want take email address, but I can't give it.

Second semi-structured interview with Bilén

Both Juhur and Chish emphasised the time-limited nature of computer and Wi-Fi access in public libraries. This determined the amount of time that they were able to spend online and what they were able to do with their time. For Chish, this limited the time he could spend updating his blog as a diaspora activist. For Juhur, time-limited access to library computers combined with limited mobile data prevented him from using video calls to speak with his wife and children in Ethiopia. In this way, access to the Internet was an important way to maintain a sense of belonging to nation and to people transnationally. For Bilén, access to Wi-Fi was important for keeping in touch with friends in London and Manchester but was limited by concerns around surveillance and having to disclose personal information when accessing public Wi-Fi hotspots. Fear of surveillance and data privacy is highlighted by Alencar (2020) who argues that for people seeking asylum, concerns around online surveillance and data security are compounded by fear of monitoring by border agencies and home country governments. This is particularly relevant to Britain as the Home Office can and does use online surveillance to monitor and verify claims (Marlowe, 2020). Although access to the Internet can enable people to connect and can help build a sense of belonging to people and place, limitations to access through both

fear of surveillance and availability can constrain use and in doing so narrow windows of opportunity for building a sense of belonging to people and place. This can in turn limit how people spend their time, make new connections and fulfil affective needs (Marlowe, 2020, 276).

Late in the summer, Nawid and I returned to our now usual spot in the Peace Gardens for our second semi-structured interview. As we watched children playing in the fountain, Nawid described how he was able to negotiate access to Wi-Fi when he first arrived in Sheffield and how this led to him meeting new people in the city:

Before, I would go everywhere for free Wi-Fi, for more than one year, I would try to find somewhere for Wi-Fi. I remember in the share house one guy had some data left and they make for the hotspot. In that time, I was on London Road and lots of Pakistani guys – shops and takeaways have Wi-Fi. Because I know Urdu as well, I meet with them I went to them and sometimes for half an hour, an hour they are giving me Wi-Fi password. One Pakistani guy, I told him I am in this country new and he gave me Wi-Fi and, in the share house from downstairs, I use that shop Wi-Fi.

Second semi-structured interview with Nawid

Local shop owners were willing to share their Wi-Fi passwords with Nawid in order to help him maintain existing social connections and develop new ones when he first arrived in the city. His G4S accommodation in a diverse area meant that he was able to use shared social locations, identifications and attachments (Yuval-Davis, 2011) to share his experiences and gain access to the Internet. This enabled him greater access to the city, provided him with a means to pass the time and gave him a way to build a sense of belonging to people beyond the people he was made to live with. Before being dispersed to Sheffield, Nawid spent a month in an IAC in Birmingham. Connecting with people he met in Birmingham online helped him build a sense of belonging in Sheffield:

When I was in Birmingham, we are around 15 Afghani⁷ in one area. So, when I moved from there and came here, I play some games online. On that game, we can track each other. So, when I moved here my friend said, “where are you now?”, I said, “in Sheffield.” On the game, in the chat room, he said, “oh my family is there. Can you send me a postcode?” Then I send my postcode, then exactly that guy who was in Sheffield, he also spent time in the game. So, starting on chat first on the game, “where are you living?” I said, “I am in London Road; this is my postcode and my number”, and then after, he said, “I am near to London Road.” On the chat room, he says, “just give me ten minutes”. After ten minutes, he is coming. He came in my house, so with him I went first to Peace Gardens then Victoria Hall, the library, the books, he showed me all.

Second semi-structured interview with Nawid

Access to the Internet can lead to a sense of belonging to people and place both online and offline. It can lead to the creation of new places for belonging online as well as trouble the distinction between physical and digital place (Christensen, 2012). It can enable us to see place not simply as a given location (Massey, 2005). This is because time spent online can provide both a means to socialise and a means to access physical places and meet new people offline. The person Nawid met online soon became a close friend and, on his first day in the city, it was this friend who enabled him to access the city centre, its green spaces, and a multi-agency drop-in for refugees and people seeking asylum. Among people seeking asylum in Italy, Lintner found that “connectivity widely compensates for the spaces of action, spaces of learning, spaces of interaction and spaces for information that are missing offline in the process of emplacing themselves in a new environment” (Lintner, 2020, 1). However for Nawid, Internet connectivity allowed him to make a new friend online which in turn led to them meeting in person and accessing new spaces for interaction, learning and information together.

As our online and offline lives become more entangled, not having access to the Internet can preclude access to places for belonging offline. Just as digital connectivity can

⁷ Nawid used the word Afghani. However, Afghan correctly describes people from Afghanistan.

compensate for lack of access to physical places, it can also enhance or facilitate access to physical places and vice versa. This is evident in how Zhala used WhatsApp to connect with people she knew through church, because her physical disabilities as well as her peripheral location in the city of Sheffield prevented her from regularly physically accessing church services. Whereas access to the Internet helped to build a sense of belonging for Nawid and Zhala, a sense of belonging online is also shaped by social locations along axes of difference. Unlike Nawid, a woman in a similar situation may not feel as comfortable meeting someone they have met while gaming online in person and inviting them into their home. In addition, ease of access and use of the Internet is shaped by factors including class, education and levels of literacy. In this way, technological capacity and the ability to build a sense of belonging online is determined by power differentials embedded at the community and neighbourhood scales (Gilbert, 2010), as well as the idealised target market for different applications (Noble, 2018). This is important when considering online only applications to Universal Credit or, since March 2020, online only appointments with solicitors.

The same set of power relations constitute our online and offline worlds and the “political agendas rooted in white power connect across national boundaries via the internet” (Daniels, 2012, 710). How the same set of power relations constitute our offline and online worlds and consequently (re)produce political projects of belonging can be seen at the everyday level. Zhala for example spends most of her time online watching Turkish soap operas and speaking to friends, family and fellow congregants on WhatsApp. Limitations to a sense of belonging as a result of being dispersed to relatively peripheral areas, her disabilities and poor access to public transport meant that she was more dependent than most on socialising online. Similarly, the financial constraints of living on S4/S95 support or living as a refused asylum seeker can limit time spent online. In this way, the unbelonging produced by the asylum system can be reproduced in digital spaces. The relationship between a sense of belonging and the political projects of belonging that exclude people seeking asylum and fix them in place can therefore reveal how our online and offline selves as well as our movement in online and offline spaces are deeply intertwined. The increasingly porous nature of the online/offline divide shows how the dynamics that shape our movements through physical places also shape our movements through digital ones.

In addition to influencing a sense of belonging to people and place, time spent online can also involve future orientation (Probyn, 1996, Hage, 2003) and wanting to build or find a sense of belonging over time. Time spent online can provide temporal escape which can nurture a sense of belonging as a future orientation (Twig, 2018). The curated online social self can provide diversion and temporal orientation towards future belongings whether online or offline through the version of the self an individual may choose to portray online (Smets, 2019). Just as different versions of the self may be presented in different physical places (Goffman, 1959), digital spaces can also be used to instrumentally present different versions of the self. Internet use can thus be a powerful means to practice multiple belongings online where Internet use can be a strategic means to both connect and disconnect (Dhoest, 2019). This is evident in Nawid's strategic presentation of his new Christian faith online.

Nawid told me about how great his new church is and how important it is to him. He's joined a sewing group there and is using his experience as a tailor to teach others. He also spoke about being involved with the church on social media and an online bible group but said that he has two separate accounts so not everyone can see that he's converted to Christianity.

Field diary, participant observation, 22nd May 2019

I have so far considered time spent online as a means to build a sense of belonging to people and place (both physical and digital). As Lloyd and Wilkinson argue (2017) time spent online can be empowering because it can lead to people accessing new knowledge, maintaining a sense of belonging and building a new sense of belonging to people and place. Indeed, as Marlowe (2020) finds in a digital ethnography among refugees in New Zealand, time spent online has the means to create a sense of belonging to people and place that transcends national borders. Time spent online can enable us to consider the digital spaces in which belonging can be practised and how these intersect with physical places. In spite of this, as I have shown, Internet access and time spent online can be constrained by the political projects of belonging that exclude by limiting people's financial resource and therefore their ability to participate in digital society. In the following subsection, I will consider the value systems through which time spent online may be encountered.

8.2.2 Internet access and online leisure time

Time spent online can lead to a sense of belonging to people and place. However, time spent online and how it is differentially perceived can also reveal the value systems through which a sense of belonging and the political projects of belonging can be (re)produced. This is evident in online leisure practices. Leisure is commonly conceived of as a freely chosen, self-actualising experience (Wearing and Wearing, 1988) and can include enjoyable and meaningful pursuits (Stebbins and Graham, 2004) or learning experiences (Stack and Iwasaki, 2009). Leisure practices can consequently be viewed as means to practice or enact a sense of belonging where this sense of belonging, as Ahmed defines (2004) is seen as a wilful, or pleasurable act. Likewise, for Miller (2003) for whom a sense of belonging is a sense of ease or accord, leisure practices can lead to a form of self-expression or self-actualisation and can increase a sense of belonging. However, leisure as a form of freely chosen, self-actualising time is often seen within the frame of a tension between productive work and unproductive leisure. The majority of people seeking asylum have no right to work and this can trouble some of the assumptions inherent to the work/leisure binary (Amara et al., 2005). This can reveal the political projects of belonging to the nation and state citizenship which are arguably inherent to the work/leisure binary, as well as the production of people seeking asylum as unbelonging.

As discussed in chapter five, the asylum system creates unbelonging by placing people seeking asylum out-of-time with the majority or citizen population (Griffiths, 2014). Depriving people of the right to work and expanding everyday time can both create enforced passivity (Lintner, 2020) and lead to the perception that people seeking asylum are lazy scroungers (Mayblin, 2019, 140). This can limit a sense of belonging as a result of the value systems through which people seeking asylum are encountered.

Time spent online can be a pleasurable and self-actualising experience for people seeking asylum. It can be a means to build a sense of belonging and, as is evident in the time Chish spends online writing political blogs, can act as a site where alternative political projects of belonging are practised (Yuval-Davis, 2011). According to Lintner (2020), Internet use by people seeking asylum can be a way to cope with enforced passivity. By focusing on people

spending entire days ‘passively’ watching YouTube videos, streaming TV shows or browsing the Internet, however, Lintner’s findings suggest that people seeking asylum are placed in a position where they cope with enforced passivity by ‘passively’ spending time online (2020, 15). This approach, perpetuates the binary of leisure time as the “mirror image of labour time” (Willis, 1999, 250) and denies the productive or self-actualising potential of so-called passive time. In Nawid’s experience, a ‘passive’ passing of time by playing games online led to him meeting people and accessing new spaces in the city. For Zhala, passing time online gave her a means to connect with people she was unable to physically see. Likewise, for Jerome, spending time on YouTube listening to music enabled a sense of home-making through nostalgia (Smets, 2019). This shows that temporal suspension does not imply passivity but that it is often highly generative (Conlon, 2011, Khosravi, 2014). This calls for a need to question both the binary of work/leisure and how time spent on the Internet is perceived.

Whereas those who are seen to belong by having the right to work may use the Internet productively – giving up leisure time in order to be able to respond to emails at all hours or finalising the next big PowerPoint presentation – time spent online for the unbelonging Other can be presented as ‘too much screen time’ or a passive ‘waste of time’. This conceptualisation of leisure/work and Internet use can limit a sense of belonging for people seeking asylum by assuming passivity. People seeking asylum are often cast as passive recipients of aid or distant objects of compassion, whether in terms of popular press or policy (Goodman et al., 2017). The work/leisure binary can thus entrench unbelonging for people seeking asylum because everyday time for people seeking asylum may be viewed as unproductive. As discussed in chapter five, this can lead to TSOs encouraging people seeking asylum to use their time productively by seeking volunteering opportunities.

Understanding leisure time and practices can thus offer an insight into belonging beyond functional spaces and recognise people’s agency in negotiating belonging (Lewis, 2015). Seeing leisure time as productive can help disrupt the work-leisure binary and provide opportunities to challenge the temporal angst imposed by the asylum system (Griffiths, 2014). Based on this, I will explore how Nawid’s time spent online gaming led to a sense of belonging to people and place and how this in turn led to new leisure practices. Such a

trajectory, as I will argue, can lead to the practice of belonging through an ethics of care (Yuval-Davis, 2011) or a participatory practice of belonging (Hage, 2003) in everyday life.

Shortly after our first semi-structured interview, Nawid and I sat in the Peace Gardens to develop his first sociogram. He asked if I could scribe as he talked about the relationships he built and the places he spent his time.

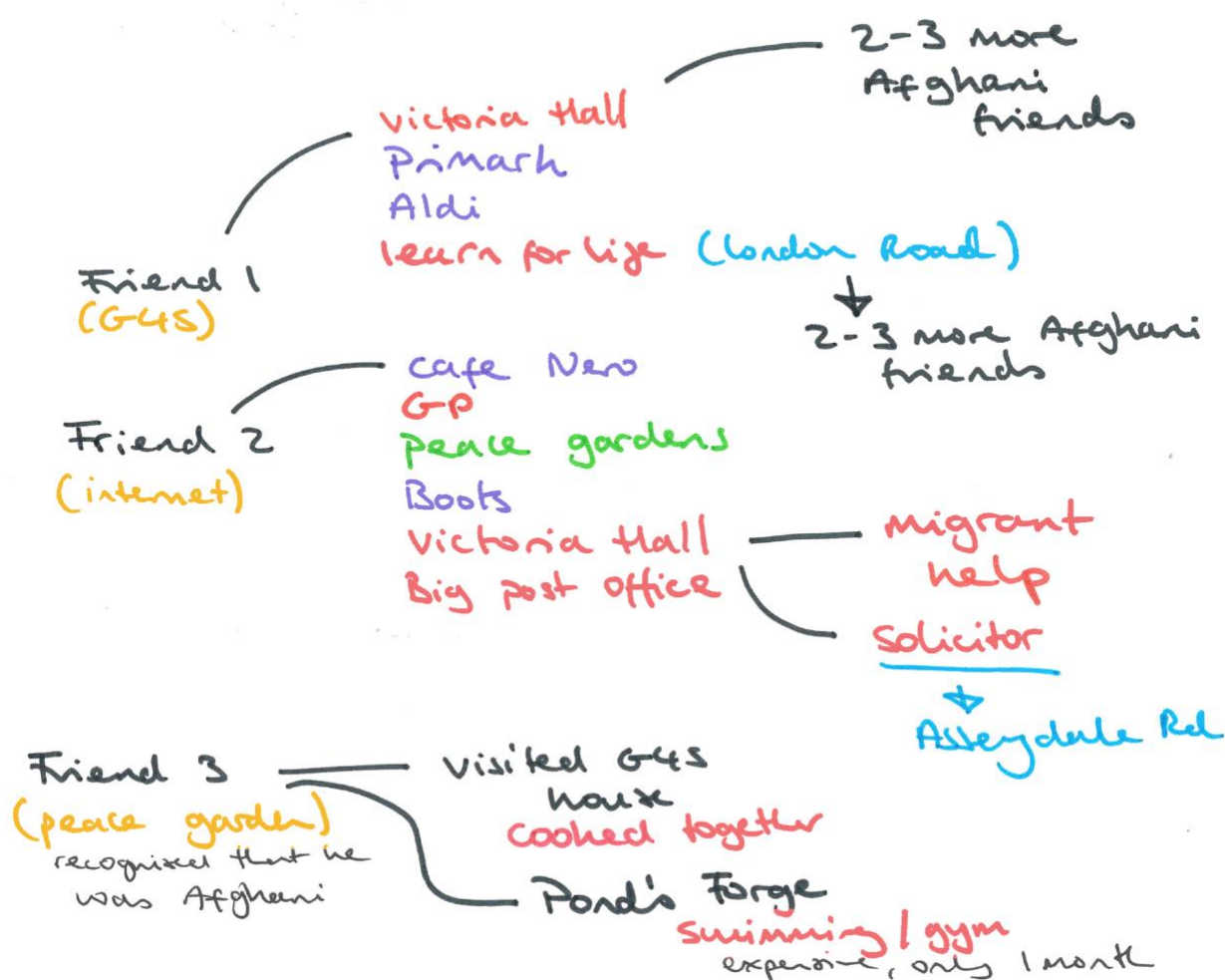


Figure 12 Nawid's first sociogram

The person Nawid met through the online game, "Friend 2", accompanied him to the multi-agency drop-in for refugees and asylum seekers where he was able to speak to someone from Migrant Help and find a new solicitor. The friend Nawid made online led him to access shops and services including the big post office, health services and cafés. Friend 2 also

introduced Nawid to the Peace Gardens and it is at the Peace Gardens that he made Friend 3, with whom he spent leisure time, both at the leisure centre and Friend 3's dispersal accommodation. Likewise, meeting Friend 1, who Nawid met at his dispersal accommodation, led him to make more friends through ESOL classes and, as discussed in chapter six, led to Nawid accessing a cheaper supermarket. The sociogram shows how leisure time spent online led to Nawid meeting new people, accessing shops and services and pursuing leisure activities.

Nawid's second sociogram completed four months later captured some of the changes in his relationships over time. Whereas the first sociogram depicts Nawid's early days in Sheffield in 2016, the second one is a snapshot of his life in 2019. It highlights continuities in some relationships as well as the formation of new ones.

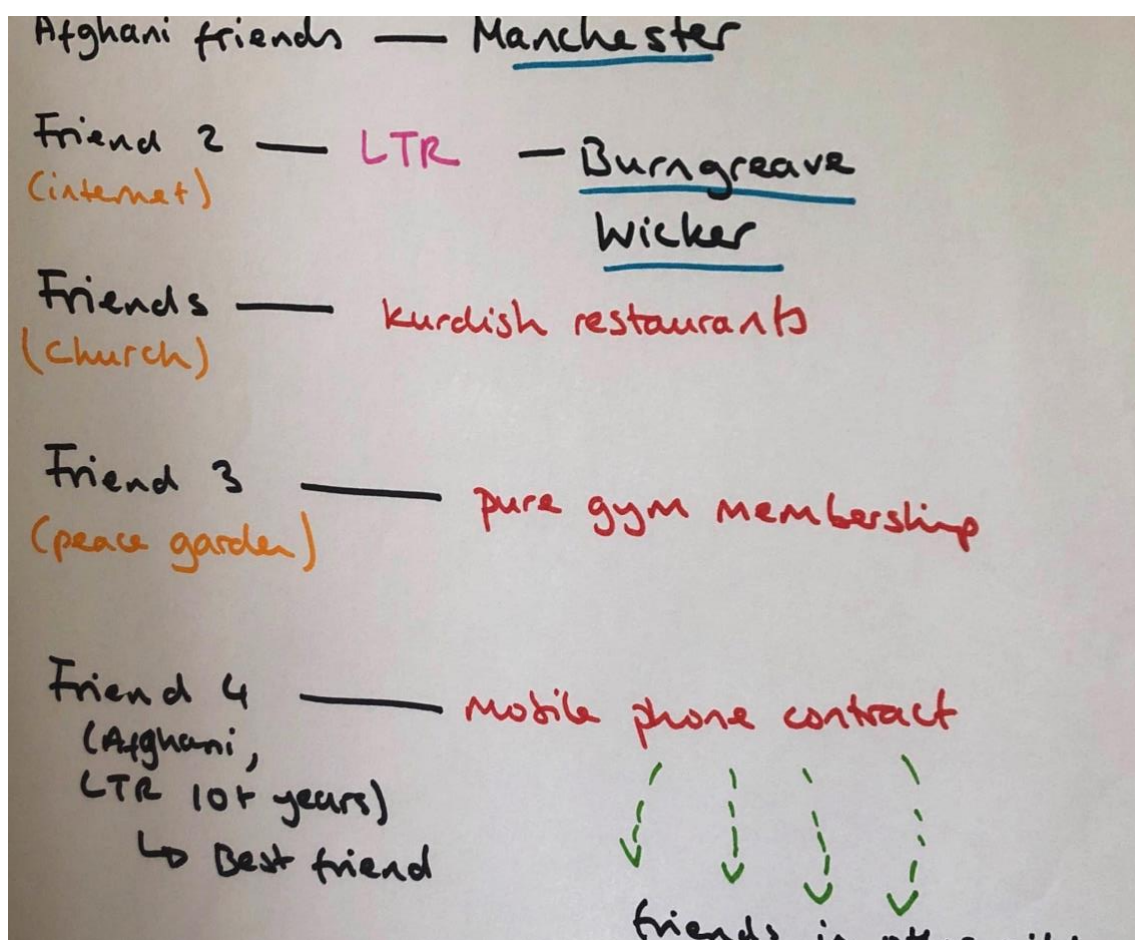


Figure 13 Nawid's second sociogram

Between 2016 and 2019, Friend 2, who Nawid met through online gaming, was given Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR). Nawid showed me a video and photos of them celebrating.

There was one clip of Friend 2 opening the envelope containing the letter granting ILR and a few pictures of Nawid and some other friends celebrating at Friend 2's home. In the time between the two sociograms, Nawid had expanded his social connections. Friend 2 introduced him to new areas of the city where Nawid began to spend more of his time. Nawid and Friend 3 stopped going to the larger leisure centre in the city centre and found a much cheaper gym on the periphery of the city centre. They chose to share a membership there. Through the Afghan friends Nawid made at his ESOL class, he was introduced to new Afghan friends in Manchester, one of whom runs a restaurant. The friend he made at the ESOL class sometimes drives Nawid to Manchester. Nawid also developed his social networks through church and started visiting fellow congregants at a Kurdish restaurant in the city. Friend 3 later introduced Nawid to Friend 4. Friend 4 has lived in Britain for more than 10 years. Meeting Friend 4 had a significant impact on Nawid's social connections as he took a mobile contract out for him:

But now, actually I use, you know, my friend they take for me contract. I have data, everything, unlimited everything. My friend is here more than 10 years, they take for me contract.

Second semi-structured interview with Nawid

Without a permanent address, credit history or bank account, it is almost impossible to access the cheaper rates that come with pay-monthly phone contracts. At the time Friend 4 took out a mobile phone contract for him, Nawid was living as a refused asylum seeker and had no source of income or banking facility. For those in receipt of S95/S4 support, ASPEN cards only work for chip and pin transactions in shops and at ATMs (those in receipt of S4 cannot use their ASPEN cards at ATMs). ASPEN cards cannot be used for online transactions or regular payments such as direct debits or standing orders (Refugee Council, 2018). This can mean that people in the asylum system are dependent on more expensive pay-as-you-go or rolling mobile phone tariffs. The greater cost of these tariffs can mean greater limits to data, minutes and text messages. This can restrict leisure time spent online, time spent online with friends and family both in Britain and abroad and time spent speaking on the phone or texting friends and family in Britain. In 2016, when he first arrived in Sheffield, Nawid would search the city for access to Wi-Fi. In 2019, through friends and contacts he

had made both online and offline, Nawid had a mobile phone contract with “unlimited everything”. The first connection that Nawid made while playing an online game led to a range of new social connections and access to new places over time. As a result, Nawid’s online leisure time allowed him to develop a sense of belonging to people and place, as well as enabling him to expand his leisure practices by going to the gym and meeting friends in restaurants.

The gift of an unlimited mobile phone contract can be seen as an example of the ethics of care acting as an alternative political project of belonging, based on trust and mutual respect (Yuval-Davis, 2011). Gifts and acts of support by friends can both build a sense of belonging and challenge the hegemonic political projects of belonging, by transcending or overcoming imposed social divisions such as legal status. Unlimited, contracted tariffs can cost as little as £13 a month (Compare the Market, 2020), or around 1% of the monthly real-living wage⁸. For Nawid, such a tariff would have been inaccessible as someone who had been refused asylum. The small gift of an unlimited tariff has been transformative for Nawid. He is now able to spend as much time as he wants playing online games on his phone and as much time as he wants connecting with friends and family in Britain and abroad. This meant that Nawid has been able to maintain existing relationships and build new ones locally, nationally and transnationally. The gaming platforms Nawid uses are international which has meant that he has been able to develop and sustain transnational relationships. Increased time for leisure and socialising has consequently led to an increased sense of belonging and Nawid describes having “unlimited everything” as important for his “happiness”.

Overall, the places Nawid accesses both online and offline encompass leisure, learning and social time. They also enable him to access key services and tools to navigate the asylum system. Nawid’s experiences are consistent with Stack and Iwasaki’s findings that leisure is not only a means of helping people adapt but also a means of providing opportunities for celebration, problem solving, learning and development (2009, 239). The range of different places he has accessed have also enabled him to build a sense of belonging within and

⁸ As calculated by the Living Wage Foundation.

against the exclusions of the asylum system. The sociograms above illustrate that rather than spending time passively, the way in which Nawid has chosen to spend his time (beginning with time spent online) has been highly productive and generative. The next section will turn to leisure time with a specific focus on clubbing, parties, drinking and smoking. I will use data from mobile and semi-structured interviews I conducted with Ako and Nawid.

8.3 Leisure and belonging

Within the asylum system, the temporal dissonance between the periods of intense activity which follow, for example, the arrival of a letter from the Home Office and protracted periods of waiting, can limit the mental or physical space for wellbeing, recreation or playfulness (Rishbeth et al., 2019, 128). This section will thus focus on the time participants create for wellbeing, recreation and playfulness and how leisure practices can lead to a sense of belonging to people and place over time. In line with Mata-Codesal (2015), I will go beyond the prevailing focus on targeted interventions where leisure activities are seen as a way to promote integration or adaptation. Instead, I will focus on leisure activities such as partying and drinking as a means to build a sense of belonging. I will then turn to how leisure time can lead to the practice of belonging by discussing how Nawid invited me into his social circles. Time spent playing snooker, drinking and partying in clubs and bars can lead to sociability that cuts across different social locations and can lead to a sense of belonging through everyday multiculturalism, as well as challenging the imposed unbelonging of being categorised by the state as an asylum seeker.

8.3.1 “Living that’s what we do”: partying, smoking and drinking

I begin with some of Ako’s experiences. When I asked him how he spends his time, Ako explained:

Vallah, I go to pub, I go to play snooker, I go to party, or doing sometimes small party at home, singing, music, living that’s what we do. I play snooker in West Street, they have a good place. It’s nice and quiet. Smoking not allowed inside, I like that and sometimes play snooker in Darnall, but I don’t like really in there because you can

smoke and loads of people smoke inside and I don't want smoke inside. Loads and loads of people from different country inside there but the West Street, no, it's not like that in West Street. Sometimes I play snooker in Eccelsall Road. That's all student people who go in there and you must have student ID to go in there and after that all student can go in there and play. If you don't have a college ID, you can't play. I use my college ID and my friend has college ID as well, I can use that. Sometimes I go to Oh My Gosh pub and that place on the corner, I don't know what you call it, that big one at the top. When you go inside, they charge you £2 or £3. The drinks are alright, not cheap but I can buy.

Second semi-structured interview with Ako

The time Ako spends partying is an engagement with a group of people living in the here and now; it is an escape from the insecurities and depersonalising effects of the asylum system (Lewis, 2015). Ako's leisure time spent playing snooker, going to bars and attending house parties can be seen as a form of resistance to the unbelonging of the asylum system as well as the perception that people seeking asylum are either abject recipients of humanitarian aid or a threat to control. Ako prefers to go to city centre venues popular with students and does not like to spend his time at venues in relatively deprived and peripheral areas, where customers are not predominantly British but from "different countries" and can smoke inside. Ako's choice about where he spends his leisure time cuts across social locations and axes of difference and leads to a sense of belonging in a place. Similar to the London caff in Hall's (2009) study, everyday belonging is not dependent on class, ethnicity or race but on shared forms of sociability. It was at one of these venues that Ako met his former partner, a Russian woman on a Tier 2 work visa in the city. The decisions Ako makes about where to spend his leisure time thus challenge assumptions made about people seeking asylum. Moreover, his leisure time has enabled him to develop a sense of belonging to people and place in the city across and beyond different social locations. Nevertheless, Ako's leisure practices are predicated on his own social locations – as a single, straight man in his early 30s - as well as on some of the survival strategies he uses but asked me to exclude from my analysis (see section 4.5.2).

Like Ako, Nawid also spoke about his leisure practices. Our mobile interview took us from our now usual haunt – the Peace Gardens – to the gardens of the Cholera Monument to the East of the City Centre with its sweeping hilltop views. Our conversation spanned from online card games and social media to rural Sheffield and making further submissions. At one point, the conversation turned to smoking and drinking:

When we got to the amphitheatre, we each had a cigarette. Nawid had a packet with Cyrillic writing on it. He said that they were bootleg cigarettes. I wanted to know where they were from. Nawid told me where they were from but said that I wouldn't just be able to rock up and buy them. He said that they'd take one look at my face and think I'm a cop. He said that he could pick some up for me or take me there if I wanted.

We chatted a bit; Nawid said that he quit smoking for seven years. When he was working as a tailor for the US army, he said that one of the older American soldiers encouraged him to take up running and quit smoking. He said that thanks to that military person, he managed to quit. Nawid said that the only reason he started again was his asylum claim. Now he smokes to take time out, think and relax. I'm not sure how, but our conversation at one point drifted to drinking. Nawid suggested that we come back to the amphitheatre one evening with some of his friends to share a few beers but only if my partner joined us.

Field diary, mobile interview, 22nd July 2019

I felt that Nawid's offer to take me to the shop where he buys untaxed cigarettes was a practice of belonging in that he was offering to facilitate my access into a space where I would not be seen to belong. He also drew on shared belongings as well as a transformative practice of belonging by suggesting that we remake our social relations and create new attachments, by inviting me to meet his friends and share a few beers (Probyn, 1996, Yuval-Davis, 2011). The way he made his invitation seemed to acknowledge some of our shared and divergent social locations. By asking my partner to join us, Nawid recognised some of the gendered dynamics of inviting a woman into a predominantly male social circle, thus

practising an ethics of care based on my own social locations through gender, as well as the shared social location of our Islamic heritage.

As we sat on the grass, Nawid offered me one of his cigarettes. This shared practice contributed to building our sense of rapport. For us, smoking became a shared pastime and means to discuss common experiences. While smoking can be thought of as a pleasurable way to pass the time, it is also a means to regulate emotions and to cope with stressors (Cullen, 2010). For Nawid, being in the asylum system brought a seven-year smoke-free period to an end. It also had an adverse impact on his running. Nawid's experience of smoking exemplifies the health implications of being in the asylum system where stress, limbo and uncertainty can lead to the resurgence of addictive behaviours and limit the time spent pursuing other hobbies. It also draws attention to how the unbelonging and exclusion of the asylum system pushes people into situations where addiction can only be sustained through illegalised means, and into circumstances where it is not possible to access addiction services⁹. Although smoking can be a meditative or reflexive leisure practice, for Nawid, it was an old behaviour brought back into his present as a result of the everyday challenges of living in the asylum system.

For both Ako and Nawid smoking, drinking and partying has been an act of release and has offered a means for self-realisation and self-expression. The way they choose to spend their leisure time has taken them out of the experiential temporalities of the asylum system (Griffiths, 2014) and enabled them to live in the here and now (Lewis, 2015). So far, I have argued that leisure time has the potential to resist the unbelonging imposed by the asylum system, develop a sense of belonging that cuts across social locations and practice belonging by remaking social relationships.

8.3.2 Leisure and the self: within and against unbelonging

Ako's vibrant and active social life is in direct contrast to the production of the ideal compliant, citizen-subject in waiting by TSOs discussed in chapter five. The imagined figure

⁹ People who have been refused asylum in England are not eligible for secondary healthcare. Many smoking cessation services are run by the NHS which means that people who have been refused asylum cannot access them.

of the 'needy' asylum seeker and the idealised recipient of support is one that Ako critiqued extensively in one of our interviews:

When I go to charity, I wear my worst clothes... but at the weekend, at the club, I dress slick like this... The charity, yeah, they support everybody when people are getting homeless. Every week they are giving people money £15 and a bus pass and people need that money. Homeless people need that money for food but sometimes, people have cigarette like me, sometimes people drinking, myself, sometimes I go to Aldi, I need a drink, but they don't like that.

Second semi-structured interview with Ako

The quotation above illustrates Ako's perceptions of the value systems through which he is encountered as well as his strategic means to cope with them. This is evident in how he dresses. Ako likes to "dress slick". Ako presents as effortlessly confident and is always wearing the latest styles. Clothing can play an important role in the negotiation of similarity and difference as well as the accrual of social value (Mason, 2018, 1129). For Ako, "dressing slick" is a strategic presentation of the self that marks inclusion (Lewis, 2015). In this way, Ako's self-presentation is a means to build a sense of belonging and to be seen as belonging by others in everyday life. This is contrast to his self-presentation at the charity. By wearing his "worst clothes" Ako performs belonging (Bell, 1999) to an imposed legal category that he sees as meeting the expectations of the subject position of asylum seeker by the charity workers. As such, Ako instrumentalises perceived value systems in order to perform belonging to an ascribed legal category. Ako's decision to wear his worst clothes chimes with what Chish, as discussed in chapter five, perceives charity workers want to see:

[...] someone who is on the street, who is not able to speak to people, who can't do anything really, who just waits for their support

First semi-structured interview with Chish

As discussed in chapter five, the value systems wherein someone seeking asylum is seen as an abject, thoroughly Other recipient of support can lead to the (often inadvertent) reproduction of the political projects of belonging to the nation and state citizenship. The

charity Ako describes uses a points-based system to allocate its limited resources to clients. Points are awarded based on whether someone's accommodation is stable, the number of meals they eat each day and whether they have adequate clothing for the weather, among other indicators, before being sent to a panel for review. Support can also be withdrawn from people who are known to be working. Although points are assessed in conjunction with qualitative reporting, knowledge of the assessment process may lead to the perceived expectation of abjectness, leading Ako to turn up in his "worst clothes". The form of assessment the charity uses is likely to be necessary data for writing successful grant applications, grant monitoring and for ensuring consistency across and within teams. Although the intentions of workers and volunteers may be against the asylum system, the systemic demands placed on charities can lead to them becoming a site where political projects of belonging to the nation and state citizenship are reproduced. In other words, the demands placed on charities can lead to a reproduction of the image of people seeking asylum as either vulnerable and in need of saving, or in need of control because they do not belong or are seen as unable to belong to the nation or the state via citizenship.

Whilst leisure practices including drinking and smoking can lead to a sense of belonging and its practice, as I have argued, when talking about smoking and drinking, Ako says "they don't like that", referring to a generalised or imagined group of charity workers. This can be used to suggest, as with Ako's strategic self-presentation, that he perceives the value systems through which he is encountered in a particular way. For Swain (2017), leisure practices are often assumed to promote civilised and rational behaviour. In contrast, the leisure practices that Ako chooses to pursue challenge the social and cultural orthodoxies of leisure (Rojek, 1999). This, as discussed in chapter five, suggest that the value systems that make up a sense of belonging, (Yuval-Davis, 2011) and through which Ako is encountered and judged at the charity, seek to produce a good and productive citizen-subject in waiting who is also able to contribute to society. This, however, is an area that warrants future research with a more sustained focus on perceptions around homelessness, alcohol use (Dailey, 2017) and agency over money (Whiteford, 2010) across different social locations among people seeking asylum.

In this subsection, I have explored drinking, smoking and partying as leisure practices and have considered them in light of how Ako has positioned himself and his own sense of belonging based on his perception of the value systems through which he is encountered. I have argued that the strategic presentation of the self can be a way to perform belonging as a means to access services, while also challenging assumptions produced by the unbelonging of the asylum system. The following section will develop my engagement with leisure by considering leisure and a sense of belonging in green spaces.

8.4 Leisure and belonging in green spaces

This section will explore leisure time and belonging using mobile interview data. I will briefly discuss the significance of city centre green spaces before turning to leisure and gender. I will then focus on participants' experiences of the Peak District National Park. The aim of this will be to consider gender and belonging to people and place in the city, as well as how participants use green spaces as places for belonging in the city.

Many of my research encounters began with the Peace Gardens. Sometimes it was a location I suggested, but most often participants suggested it as an easily accessible, central and largely non-commercial space to meet and spend time together. As Rishbeth et al. (2019) find, not only are there lots of places to sit and linger in the Peace Gardens but the different ways the space is used – from children playing in the fountains, to shoppers resting and school children hanging out – mean that the gardens allow for a “comfortable lingering” (Ganji and Rishbeth, 2020) and consequently a quiet space for co-presence and belonging:

Sometime I just here in Peace Garden and watch the people

Second semi-structured interview with Toran

In this way, green spaces such as the Peace Gardens are elective spaces, where public sociability is regularly enacted and can animate social practices that increase possibilities of encounter and create places for belonging through everyday contact and proximity (Neal et al., 2015). This is also echoed in Barker et al.'s (2014) study of Bradford City Park which finds

that the park is a central, welcoming hub that attracts a diverse crowd. The use and sense of belonging in green spaces is gendered, however.

8.4.1 Time, gender and green spaces

With the exception of Zhala, whose disabilities meant that we spent extra time knitting together instead of going out, every one of my mobile interviews with women participants centred on a particular purpose. This ranged from running errands to childcare. With Helen, we drove from her home to the local leisure centre for her children's swimming and gymnastics lessons and then walked around the nearby park until it was time to pick them up; with Bilen, Aisha and Hiba I helped to run errands, walking around local shops and picking up groceries and with Hope, I drove from her work to do the school run and back. In contrast, the walking interviews I conducted with men participants can be grouped into four types:

1. Trips to warm, semi-public spaces to pass the time such as the local leisure centre or, in Jerome's case, a betting shop
2. Trips to functional spaces such as food banks and charities
3. Co-exploration of new cities or parts of cities as in the case of Mahyar, Juhur and Ahmed
4. Walks and a cycle around parks and green spaces

For the women who took part in this study, leisure time was often spent indoors or was superseded by caring responsibilities. This emphasises the gendered temporalities of leisure. If leisure time is time free of obligation (Zuzanek, 2006), then leisure is gendered by virtue of the gendered division of labour and social reproduction. Within the work/leisure binary, men's time is more clearly segmented between work and non-work activities and men seem to have more time for leisure activities and relaxation (Henderson, 2006). For people seeking asylum however, both leisure and socially reproductive time are complicated by the vast majority having no right to work. Care work and socially reproductive labour disproportionately falls on women. This limits the time for leisure as freely chosen, self-actualising experiences (Wearing and Wearing, 1988).

The mobile interviews I conducted with women revealed many of the mundane, repetitive and socially reproductive tasks that need to be carried out as well as how these interact with a sense of belonging. Gendered dynamics are a significant factor in leisure time (Tsai and Coleman, 1999). For the women with dependent children who took part in this study, leisure time was often built around childcare and socially reproductive labour. While we waited for Helen's children's swimming and gymnastics lessons to end by walking around the park, I asked her about how she spends her leisure time. Her response was that she regularly uses the gym at the leisure centre to pass the time while her children attend their swimming and gymnastics lessons. For Aisha, Hope and Helen, leisure time often revolves around their caring responsibilities: whether organising children's celebrations, or having brief periods of respite while children are at school, nursery or extracurricular activities. The time spent caring for children has changed how Hope, Aisha and Helen see their time. They subject and re-orient their time to accord with the needs of their children (Wajcman and Dodd, 2016). In this way, as discussed in chapter six, child-based sociality (Erel and Ryan, 2018) have allowed women participants to make new connections and a build a sense of belonging to people in place as a result of gendered care and familiar, everyday care routines (May, 2013). However, women's self-actualising time and ability to build a sense of belonging has been arguably constrained by both the gendered temporalities of care and the limitations to a sense of belonging imposed by the asylum system.

For Hiba, a sense of belonging to people and place has been constrained by gendered feelings of comfort and safety in different places. Although green spaces have been largely functional for the women who took part in this study in that they offer a play space for children, for Hiba, the nearby park also offers a sense of respite and wellbeing (Neal et al., 2015). She has been able to spend her time there reflecting and watching the world go by in good weather. It has also given her the opportunity to spend time away from her accommodation. However, she noted that this is not something that she does very often. As Rishbeth et al. (2019) argue, it is harder for women to spend time alone in public spaces. Although the sociability and co-presence of the park can lead to a sense of belonging to people and place and a means to spend leisure time, Hiba's leisure time has been constrained by feeling that she does not belong in public places and through fear of leaving her home:

Hiba often walks from Page Hall to Burngreave where she can shop for food. She said she's frightened of the area that she lives in, but she sometimes likes to walk to Firth Park where she likes to sit on a bench, relax and watch children play in the playground.

Field Diary, mobile interview, 28th May 2019

While time spent outdoors or caring for children can lead to a sense of belonging to people and place, this is shaped by gendered dynamics and limitations to a sense of belonging that may cut across different social locations, including gender and legal status. Existing scholarship on the gendered temporalities of care, work and leisure consequently need to be brought into dialogue with the specific experiences of people in the asylum system. This presents an exciting avenue for future research as the data presented here is limited to only a few women.

8.4.2 "Going there for chilling"

Whereas women's time spent in green spaces was predominantly structured around care, for men participants, outdoor green spaces allowed for a range of practices that generated a sense of belonging through the emergence of supportive networks as well as wellbeing through self-care (Aquino et al., 2020). This is evident in the centrality of the Peace Gardens in several participants' lives and how spending time in the Peace Gardens led to new social connections and a sense of belonging to both people and place. In this subsection, however, I will focus on the Peak District National Park.

The Peak District National Park, which receives 13.5million visitors every year (peakdistrict.gov, 2020), is only a few miles from the city centre. For the majority of participants, it was either impractical to access or entirely unknown. Only three people who took part in this study spoke about visiting the Peak District. Academic research in this area tends to highlight racialised minorities' lack of access to green spaces and national parks (e.g. Xiao et al., 2017, Rishbeth and Finney, 2006, Stodolska et al., 2017). This often leads to targeted interventions often focused on walking to increase access to the countryside (Rishbeth et al., 2017). In addition, as discussed in chapter six, poor public transport

provision can also be a barrier to access (Stodolska et al., 2017). In spite of this, the way in which participants used the Peak District National Park show how the different use of places can facilitate belonging and transformation.

Outdoor leisure activities such as walking and hiking are commonly seen as ‘white’ activities. National Parks are constructed as white (Therriault and Mowatt, 2020). Particular expectations of use in outdoor spaces are shaped by the value systems through which the unbelonging Other may be encountered. Outdoor spaces, particularly where there are only a few walkers, may attract the racist gaze and access to the outdoors is limited by racialised norms around how people ought to spend time – such as the expectation of walking or hiking for white communities (Goodrid, 2018). For Ako, in contrast, the Peak District is a space for chilling:

I go out with friends, just chilling, chilling sometimes it’s all loads of people going to Ladybower¹⁰ for barbecues, drinking, you know between Manchester and Sheffield. In the Peak District and it’s nice, so nice there and sometimes I go to Rother Valley as well that place is nice, I like it. It looks like this, when I am free I go there for chilling.

Second semi-structured interview with Ako

When being picked up and taken to visit friends in Manchester by car, Nawid similarly stops off in the Peak District for photos, smoking shisha and barbecues. While for some, using green spaces for food-based leisure is normalised (Kloek et al., 2017), non-dominant forms of use may limit a sense of belonging though feelings of consternation. Nawid and Ako’s leisure practices in the Peak District, however, have transformative potential through their different, non-dominant uses of the National Park (Hall, 2015). Not only does the Peak District thus become a place for belonging but it can also transform how green spaces are used.

Chish’s experience of the Peak District was very different to Nawid and Ako’s. When he lived in Sheffield, Chish volunteered for the Salvation Army through which he helped organise walks in the countryside for residents of the Salvation Army Hostel. With one of his fellow

¹⁰ A large reservoir in the Peak District National Park.

volunteers, Chish also began to go on regular cycling trips to the Peak District. It was Chish's suggestion that we cycled for our mobile interview. We cycled from the inner-city ring road and along one of the main arteries out of the city eight miles uphill to Surprise View, a popular hilltop beauty spot. As we sat on a rock, looking out at the view and sharing some fruit, Chish spoke about how important cycling is to his health and wellbeing. Chish described how he feels more connected to Sheffield because of how green it is. This aligns with Rishbeth et al.'s (2019) findings on green space as being able to promote wellbeing and provide respite. Chish spoke about cycling and walking with people being a great way to socialise and get away from the city. For Chish, access to green space promotes both wellbeing and belonging (Hurly and Walker, 2019). In accordance with Rishbeth et al. (2019) and Aquino et al. (2020) green spaces for Chish are a place for belonging through self-care and leisure.

Participants' different experiences can thus show that a range of ways of using green space can lead to a sense of belonging to people and place. This suggests that while targeted interventions aimed at increasing access to green spaces such as National Parks through improved transport or organised walks can be beneficial and build a sense of belonging to people and place, the diverse use and choice over leisure practices in these places can also facilitate a sense of belonging while holding transformative potential, which can challenge dominant assumptions about how greenspaces ought to be used.

8.5 Conclusion

This chapter developed aspects of chapter six by considering how some of the constraints to a sense of belonging as a result of being dispersed to relatively peripheral areas can be challenged and transformed by time spent online. I also built on chapter five by taking some of my discussions about how TSOs may reproduce the political projects of belonging by considering Ako's perceptions of how he is encountered when he visits a charity for support. By focusing on how participants choose to spend their time, I extended my interrogation of choice and where participants spend their time in chapter seven.

The core argument of this chapter is that leisure practices can build a sense of belonging within and against the unbelonging of the asylum system. By exploring everyday time and leisure, I considered the way in which people use their self-actualising leisure time as an expression of a sense of belonging, to build a sense of belonging and to practice it. In the first section, I argued that access to the Internet can facilitate a sense of belonging to both people and place but that this is constrained and limited by the design of certain applications, a lack of Internet access in asylum dispersal accommodation and the political projects of belonging that lead to the production of people seeking asylum as not deserving or needing telecommunications. I developed this aspect of my findings by considering how leisure time spent online led to Nawid meeting a range of new people and developing a sense of belonging to both people and place. This enabled me to begin to engage with the delineations between work and leisure for people who have no right to work. In the second section of the chapter, I argued that the way people choose to spend their time can challenge dominant assumptions and expectations of how people seeking asylum should pass the time. I explored this in light of how one participant instrumentalises his own social locations and performs belonging based on his perceptions of the expectations of TSOs. The final section explored time spent in greenspaces with a particular focus on gendered temporalities and leisure. This led to me proposing further study on gender, leisure and caring practices in the asylum system. I also engaged with how leisure as self-chosen, self-actualising time can transform dominant or majority assumptions about how green spaces should be used and in doing so can create new ways for belonging in place.

The next chapter will conclude my thesis. It will present a summary of the thesis and my findings overall, highlight my contributions to the literature as well as point to avenues for future research. I will also reflect on the findings of this thesis in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Chapter 9. Conclusion: belonging against unbelonging

9.1 Introduction

This study was inspired by a personal and sociological interest in people's experience of asylum dispersal. It was born out of a close personal friendship with Hope who, over time, created and built a sense of belonging to people and place in the city, as well my experience of activism and volunteering with people who have been refused asylum in Sheffield. My sociological focus on belonging developed through an interest in how people who have been dispersed to Sheffield build rich lives and connections to people and place in spite of a suite of policies that actively seek to deter, create discomfort and exclude. This combined with the discursive representation of people seeking asylum as either vulnerable and needing protection or a threat in need of control (Sirriyeh, 2014) led to my central research question, which centres everyday life while also seeking to gain insight into processes of change and power in society (Yuval-Davis, 2011).

This concluding chapter will be divided into five sections. The first will summarise the thesis. It will revisit the opening chapters, reconsidering the aims and rationale before summarising the policy context and conceptual framework. It will do this in relation to how the politics of belonging lead to policies that produce unbelonging for people seeking asylum. It will then move on to the methodological approach that framed the data collection process before summarising the findings of the four empirical chapters. It will consider how the findings address the research question.

Building on this, the second section will develop the findings by outlining how they contribute to debates on belonging in the context of the British asylum system and sociological debates on the practice of and transformative potential of belonging with respect to people in the asylum system. The fourth section will explore potential future avenues for research in light of the findings. Following this, the fifth section will turn to the Covid-19 pandemic. Although the pandemic began after fieldwork was completed, Covid-19 has loomed large over the writing stage of this thesis. The section will therefore briefly

discuss some of the experiences of the pandemic that participants shared in context of the findings. The final section will end with concluding remarks.

9.2 Summary of the thesis

This summary is divided into two subsections. The first lays the foundations of this study and the second considers the findings in the empirical chapters. In order to explore the question of how people who are made to move within the asylum system develop a sense of belonging to people and place over time, chapter two, “a hostile environment to belong to: the literature on asylum policy in context”, provided the policy context of this thesis. Chapter three, “interrogating belonging: building a conceptual framework from the existing literature”, laid the conceptual foundation of belonging. Chapter four, “uncovering belonging”, outlined the methods most appropriate for this study.

In the empirical chapters five and six, “asylum dispersal: time and belonging” and “Sheffield and its people: a place for belonging”, I focused on the limitations and constraints of building a sense of belonging for people who have been dispersed to Sheffield in the asylum system. In contrast, chapters seven and eight: “making places to belong: the practice of belonging” and “making time to belong: everyday time and belonging”, focused on how people who have been dispersed to Sheffield build a sense of belonging to people and place within and against the asylum system.

9.2.1 Summary of the conceptual and methodological approach

Chapter two considered how the history of immigration and asylum policy has led to the emergence of the present-day image of the asylum seeker and traced the emergence of contemporary asylum dispersal as being part of a history of racialised social policy interventions (Bloch and Schuster, 2005). These policies were designed with deterrence, discomfort, (dis)integration and the privileging of market forces at their core (e.g. Phillips, 2006, Wren, 2007, Sim and Bowes, 2007, Darling, 2016a). In this chapter I identified three salient themes in the extant literature on asylum dispersal in Britain since the introduction of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. These involve a focus on: a) how dispersal seeks to regulate and control people seeking asylum through disempowerment, dehumanisation and liminality (e.g. Hynes and Sales, 2009, Darling, 2011); b) how people who have been

dispersed can and do lead rich and fulfilling lives within a system that seeks to discomfort and exclude (e.g. Hynes, 2011, Lewis, 2015); and c) the need for a focus on how the conditions of urban life shape refugee experiences and change cities (Darling, 2020). Based on this, I argued for a framework based on belonging which has the potential to draw together the ways the asylum system excludes, how individuals build a sense of belonging and how this interacts with place over time.

Chapter three presented the conceptual framework. I described Yuval-Davis' (2011) conceptualisation of the politics of belonging and belonging in order to consider how the asylum system excludes and how people build a sense of belonging within and against it. In this chapter I considered a sense of belonging as a feeling or impulse for attachment (Probyn, 1996) composed of intersecting social locations, identifications, attachments and value systems (Yuval-Davis, 2011). I then focused on the political projects of belonging to the nation and the state via citizenship as specific projects that drive immigration and asylum policy. I argued that the relationship between a sense of belonging and the politics of belonging allow for an engagement with the systemic factors that inform policy instruments targeted towards people seeking asylum and new refugees, and how these filter into everyday life in place, while centring lived experience. In this chapter I then reviewed studies of refugee and asylum seeker belonging in place and argued that there is need for a more sustained engagement with a) time, belonging and asylum dispersal; b) the practice of belonging among refugees and people seeking asylum; and c) belonging and place in asylum dispersal. I concluded the chapter by arguing that a conceptual framework based on belonging has the potential to bring together individual everyday lived experience and the systemic, while maintaining a focus on place and time.

The fourth chapter outlined my chosen methods and methodology. It also provided an interpretive self-reflection of my own sense of belonging to the study (Probyn, 1993, Lichterman, 2017). I argued that the complexity of belonging requires an approach that is sensitive to the individual, the complexity of place as a product of social relations and of the politics of belonging. Based on this, I designed an ethnographic approach because it has the potential to reveal the multi-layered and relative belongings of both participants and myself as a researcher as well as reveal the everyday, micro-practices of belonging without losing

sight of the structural (Back, 2015). I drew on participant observation to capture the routine, prosaic and taken for granted aspects of belonging in place. The semi-structured interviews elicited responses on how (if at all) participants developed a sense of belonging to the city of Sheffield over time. Mobile interviews led by participants were designed to capture a dynamic sense of belonging to place over time. Participant-led sociograms were produced in order to visualise and map belonging. By bringing these methods together, I have been able to build upwards from what participants have shared with me in order to answer the research question, highlight some of the challenges of ethnographic research and build towards a mindful representation of what I have observed (Neal and Walters, 2006).

9.2.2 Summary of findings

Building on the above, the following subsections will turn to the four empirical chapters in order to articulate the research findings. I will pay particular attention to how the findings relate to the conceptual and methodological approach summarised above. The first two empirical chapters considered the limitations and constraints to belonging. The second two considered how participants built and practised belonging.

Limitations and constraints to a sense of belonging

The literature on time and asylum dispersal is still emerging. Chapter five began to address this topic by focusing on dispersal and belonging over time. This served to introduce the reader to participants' journeys over time. Using Griffiths' (2014) description of time in the asylum as marked by stickiness, suspension, frenzy and rupture, the chapter considered participants' everyday experiences of time in asylum dispersal. This began with arrival and followed participants through to refusal, re-dispersal and life after asylum. The findings showed that repeat ruptures, frenzy, stickiness and suspension can limit a sense of belonging by precluding and disrupting everyday attachments and identifications with people and place. It then considered how the decision about where to live after asylum is shaped by multiple intersecting social locations, identifications, attachments and value systems (Yuval-Davis, 2011). This part of the chapter contributed to studies of asylum dispersal by moving through different legal statuses, including life after asylum. This allowed for an engagement with the longer-term effects of asylum dispersal as well as the impacts of re-dispersal. This enabled me to build on existing studies on onward migration after

asylum (Stewart, 2012, Stewart and Shaffer, 2015, Sim, 2015) by adding ethnographic analysis and a conceptual focus on belonging. It also enabled me to develop engagement with re-dispersal, by building on Hynes' (2009) discussion of the disruption of re-dispersal by adding a specific engagement with belonging.

The second half of the chapter made two new arguments. First, that changes in legal status over time can affect a sense of belonging to people by placing participants out-of-time both with others (Griffiths, 2014) who may have once shared the same legal status, and with the majority population. Second, that the temporal demands of the asylum system simultaneously produce unbelonging through exclusion and particular future orientations to belonging. I found that application deadlines, reporting appointments and court hearings can clash with the everyday experience of asylum dispersal, produce everyday uncertainty and in doing so, limit a sense of belonging. I also found that the temporal demands of the asylum system can determine the way in which people narrate and express themselves. This can involve positioning the self in terms of future orientations of belonging to the state and expressing oneself in line with the perceived political projects of belonging. In addition, I argued Third Sector Organisations (TSOs) can contribute to reproducing the temporal demands of the asylum system. I found that TSOs can orientate people towards becoming good citizen-subjects in waiting (Bagelman, 2016) who have the potential to belong to the state through the demonstration of loyalty and commitment to British values (Yuval-Davis, 2011). Overall, chapter five found that dispersal can limit a sense of belonging to people and places, as well as produce particular forms of self-narration and future orientations to belonging.

Chapter six began with the history of housing in Sheffield with the aim of considering the particularities of the location of dispersal accommodation in the city. It began by presenting demographic data about Sheffield. This served to discuss some of the historical political projects of belonging that have created areas of persistent disadvantage in the city. Drawing on Yuval-Davis (2011), I argued that the historical political projects of belonging which, in the post-war period, relied on descent as the ultimate criterion of belonging, have shaped patterns of housing allocation and the concentration of racialised minorities in the East and North of the city, based on the availability of low-cost housing in the private rented sector.

This confirms the findings of Beider and Netto (2012) and Phillips and Harrison (2010) who argue that there is persistent discrimination in housing for racialised minorities. I showed that dispersal accommodation is predominantly in areas with high IMD scores and that it is often in peripheral areas of the city where travel time to the city centre can take an hour or more by public transport. This confirms Darling's (2016b) argument that companies contracted to provide dispersal accommodation are drawn to areas of low-cost housing and Stewart and Shaffer's (2015) finding that asylum accommodation contractors do not always comply with the obligation to take local service capacity and distance to the city centre into consideration when procuring housing. Drawing these two threads together, I argued that the historical political projects of belonging combined with the desire to pursue cost efficiencies in the asylum system (Dwyer, 2005, Wren, 2007) have led to people dispersed to Sheffield being housed in deprived, peripheral areas of the city.

The subsequent sections built on the focus upon the location of dispersal accommodation by exploring the experience of being dispersed to relatively peripheral areas. I did this by considering individual perceptions of particular areas, travel and access to food. I found that being dispersed to relatively peripheral areas can limit a sense of belonging to people and place. This is because the perceptions of inequality as well as the everyday experience of moving between places produces a sense of Otherness where unbelonging and difference is written onto the body (Fanon, 2008). This was evident in Mahyar's comment that "when you see the native people walk past each other, they smile, they nod, they say nice things but when they see a Black man, they don't smile, or they give a different type of smile". The everyday perceptions of different places and the value systems through which one is encountered reproduce unbelonging and limit the development of a sense of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2011).

Being dispersed to relatively peripheral areas can limit a sense of belonging through constraints to mobility. Repeat moves in the city can prevent a sense of belonging emerging through disruptions to relationships and familiarity to place. This finding led me to consider how the historical political projects of belonging that create areas of persistent deprivation and the contemporary political projects that produce people seeking asylum as unbelonging intersect with transport policy. I added an engagement with asylum dispersal to Fallov et

al.'s (2013) finding that a sense of belonging to place includes the ability to move between places and neighbourhoods as a condition of social relations. In doing so, I found that the prohibitive cost of travel, the lack of transport provision and the long distances that participants have to travel in order to meet basic needs limit a sense of belonging. I illustrated this using mobility maps that synthesised the different types of data I gathered. Following this, I turned to how being dispersed to relatively peripheral areas can create everyday challenges in shopping for food. I found that being dispersed to deprived food deserts (Blake, 2018) can add to the difficulties of everyday life in the asylum system. The multiple challenges of the location of dispersal accommodation, transport and access to food can limit a sense of belonging by constraining familiarity with different places in the city and making it harder to build relationships. This having been said, in line with Mayblin (2019) I found that over time, some participants did develop strategies to cope with the impoverishment of asylum. I found that the knowledge of where to shop for food and sharing strategies for this can lead to a sense of belonging to people and place. Overall, this chapter considered the limitations and constraints to a sense of belonging to people and place with a focus on the particularities of dispersal in the city of Sheffield.

Making and practising belonging

Having analysed the limitations and constraints to a sense of belonging in terms of time and place, chapters seven and eight turned to how participants built a sense of belonging to people and place over time. Chapter seven developed chapters five and six. It built on chapter six by considering how the particularities of Sheffield as a city still recovering from post-industrial decline may have facilitated the establishment of migrant-owned businesses (Çağlar and Glick-Schiller, 2018). It built on chapter five by considering the ways in which the choices people make after receiving a positive decision on an asylum claim can lead to growth, positive change and new opportunities for people in the city (Sim and Bowes, 2007, Phillimore and Goodson, 2008). The core argument in this chapter was that the practice of belonging can create places that produce the means to articulate the self against that which is imposed. In other words, the everyday practice of belonging as a wilful act has transformative potential.

The first half of the chapter considered migrant-owned businesses. I argued that these can be places of empowerment where the practice of belonging as an ethics of care and an alternative political project of belonging can occur (Yuval-Davis, 2011). Within this, I drew on critical interpretive self-reflection of my own sense of belonging relative to the research and how participants created places for belonging by inviting me into places where I would not otherwise be seen to or feel that I belong. I then considered the ambivalences of belonging. With a particular focus on the salon, I found that although the places for belonging that participants create can lead to the practice of belonging as an ethics of care, this is shaped by the complexity of belonging where labour and relative belonging, including social locations along different axes of power and value systems, can limit both a sense of and the practice of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2011). This is in line with Bloch and McKay (2014) who find that a fluid range of circumstances can influence working conditions and employment practices in migrant-owned businesses including social networks, policy and immigration status among others. Following this, I considered how migrant-owned restaurants can create places for participatory belonging that can lead to everyday multiculturalism (Wise and Velayutham, 2009) and in doing so transform the city (Hall, 2015). I found that migrant-owned restaurants can be places where different national political projects of belonging can be contested in diaspora; where people can organise for change; access support and where notions of ethnic or national collectivities can be challenged and transformed (Yuval-Davis, 2011). I note, however, that this is alongside migrant-owned restaurants being potential sites of low pay and exploitation (Bloch and McKay, 2012). In line with Darling (2020), I proposed that greater attention needs to be paid by sociologists to how the city is reworked and that Glick-Shiller and Çağlar's (2018) study provides a promising means through which to do so.

The second half of the chapter turned to the time participants spend in chain restaurants, a leisure centre café and a betting shop. Drawing on Hall (2009) and Jones et al. (2015), I argued that the choice of spending time in familiar, known and sociable places can be sites for the practice of everyday belonging through routine and everyday recognition. Through this, I found that accessible sites to be alone together show that a sense of belonging does not always involve relating to others or rearranging relationships, but can also be about simply living side-by-side and interacting at times (Allsopp and Yuval-Davis, 2012). Overall,

chapter seven argued that people who have been dispersed in the asylum system can and do create places for belonging and its practice, in spite of the unbelonging and exclusion of the asylum system.

Chapter eight built on both chapters five and six as well as extended some of the arguments made in chapter seven. It developed chapter six by considering how access to the Internet can help challenge and transform the experience of being dispersed to peripheral areas. In addition, it enriched the themes in chapter five by discussing how TSOs can reproduce unbelonging in the asylum system by considering one participant's perceptions of value systems and strategic performance of belonging (Bell, 1999). The core focus of the chapter was that leisure practices can enable a sense of belonging to people and place within and against the unbelonging of the asylum system. As in chapter seven, a core dimension of this was choice, in particular how people choose to spend their time.

In the first section, I found that time spent online and access to the Internet can lead to a sense of belonging to both people and place. This is because time spent online can facilitate a sense of belonging in new physical places as well as develop and foster a sense of belonging to people both online and offline: "I would go to the library just for the Wi-Fi. I must say it's a godsend" (interview with Chish). This having been said, I noted in accordance with Georgiou (2019) that a sense of belonging through digital practices can be constrained by the political projects of belonging to the nation and state citizenship and how these manifest in everyday life. I have contributed to the emerging literature on Internet use and access among refugees and people seeking asylum by arguing that a) studies of belonging to place should also consider digital spaces and b) how the perceptions of time spent online are shaped by different value systems (Yuval-Davis, 2011).

With respect to value systems, I considered leisure as self-actualising time and argued that time spent online is not passive because it can encompass leisure, learning and social time, as well as facilitate access to key services and tools to navigate the asylum system. Building on this, I turned to leisure practices with a focus on partying, smoking and drinking. I found that leisure practices can take participants out of the experiential temporalities of the asylum system (Griffiths, 2014) as well as enable participants to live in the here and now

(Lewis, 2015) in ways that cut across social locations as well as remake and transform social relations in different places (Yuval-Davis, 2011). As in chapter seven, I reflected on how an ethnographic approach enabled for the creation of mutual ground while recognising that mutuality may be fragile or unstable (Probyn, 1993).

I then turned to leisure and green spaces. In line with Neal et al. (2015), I found that green spaces are elective places that can increase possibilities of encounter and create a sense of belonging through everyday contact and proximity. Building on this, I found that the use of green spaces is gendered and that this calls for a more focused engagement with women's leisure and socially reproductive time within the asylum system. I concluded the section with the finding that the diverse use and choice over leisure practices in green spaces can facilitate a sense of belonging while holding transformative potential. I argued that this can challenge dominant or majority assumptions about how green spaces ought to be used. Overall, I found that leisure as self-actualising time can be an expression of a sense of belonging, can build a sense of belonging and can allow for its practice.

This section has outlined the research findings in line with the research question. It has also highlighted how the tensions between a sense of belonging and the political projects of belonging animate everyday life in the asylum system, thereby bringing the systemic into conversation with lived experience in place. The complexity of belonging has allowed me to discuss how participants can and do build a sense of belonging within a system that produces unbelonging, as well as the limitations of this. This section has pointed to some of the ways the study builds on existing studies and contributes to emerging fields. Based on this, the following section will outline the contributions my findings make specifically to understandings of belonging for people who have been dispersed in the asylum system in Britain.

9.3 Contributions

Yuval-Davis (2011) argues that studies of belonging should not be limited to the marginal experiences of marginalised peoples. Although people seeking asylum are marginalised, as I have found in this thesis, this does not mean that their experiences are always marginal. By

focusing on how the politics of belonging produce marginality and how people who are marginalised develop a sense of belonging and practice it in spite of marginality, I have been able to consider the lives of people seeking asylum not as marginal but as holding both transformative potential and contributing to an alternative political project of belonging based on an ethics of care. In this way, I have contributed to sociological debates on belonging with respect to people seeking asylum by attempting to go beyond imposed legal categories, in order to explore how people can and do develop a sense of belonging within and against the political projects of belonging that seek to exclude. I have thus been able to use Yuval-Davis' (2011) framework, as well as the more utopian alternatives proposed in Yuval-Davis' (2011) consideration of belonging as an ethics of care, to contribute to existing studies of belonging in the lives of people seeking asylum. In doing so, I have recognised the challenges and constraints of life in the asylum system while paying attention to the rich lives that people can lead in spite of being produced as unbelonging.

As discussed in chapter three, migrant belonging can often appear as a problem to solve (Youkhana, 2015) and attempts to do so often do little more than entrench exclusion (Wood and Waite, 2011). A sense of belonging for people in place has been widely used in migration studies (e.g. Valentine et al., 2009, Correa-Velez et al., 2010, Smith, 2016, Dromgold-Sermen, 2020, Parker, 2020). This thesis has sought to build on such studies by considering the practice of belonging. In doing so, I have brought engagement with the practice of belonging as something that can lead to social change (Schein, 2009, Wright, 2014, Bennett, 2015) into the debates on belonging among people seeking asylum. I have used Yuval-Davis' (2011) framework for belonging in order to consider how belonging connects the self to society (May, 2013). This has particular significance for the question of urban transformation over time, as well as engagement with solidarity and mutual support. Moreover, studies concerned with building or promoting a sense of belonging among refugees and people seeking asylum are often focused on targeted interventions (e.g. Kale et al., 2020, Woodhouse and Conricode, 2017, Rishbeth et al., 2017, McDonald et al., 2019). By considering belonging and leisure as self-actualising time, however, I have begun to point towards a potential shift towards studies focused on the self-directed everyday practice of belonging.

Hynes (2011) explores how the asylum system can limit belonging and identifies exclusion as a deliberate outcome of dispersal. Alongside this, Hynes' (2011) findings point to the way in which a sense of belonging can emerge through the fluid, dynamic relationships that people build in place. My study confirms Hynes's (2011) findings (the fieldwork for which was conducted in the early 2000s) and builds on them by providing a more up-to-date picture of asylum dispersal and belonging in light of changes to dispersal contracts, as well as how dispersal over time has led to the creation of places for belonging by people with experience of the asylum system. In addition, by focusing on one city, I have been able to bring a more focused consideration of place to bear on Hynes' (2011) exploration of relationships and social networks. My focus on place has built on approaches to asylum dispersal in political geography (e.g. Darling, 2011, Darling 2016b, Darling, 2020) and has used a focus on place and ethnography in the city to provide a sociological account of belonging to place (Bennett, 2015) in Sheffield. This has enabled me to consider place as a product of social relations (Massey, 2005) in light of the particularities of the city of Sheffield, participants' everyday experiences and sense of belonging.

More recent studies which have explicitly engaged with belonging and asylum dispersal focus on dispersal in the Netherlands (Huizinga and van Hoven, 2018, van Liempt and Staring, 2020). My study draws on Huizinga and van Hoven (2018) and van Liempt and Staring's (2020) respective arguments that belonging is a) relational and b) emerges through everyday familiarity, by considering how a sense of belonging to people and place over time can be limited and constrained using Yuval-Davis' (2011) approach to belonging. Finally, this thesis adds to considerations of the temporalities of the asylum system in Britain (e.g. Griffiths, 2014, Clayton and Vickers, 2019, McNevin, 2020) via a specific engagement with the temporalities of asylum dispersal and its impact on a sense of belonging in everyday life. In this way, my study has aimed to bring the issue of unbelonging generated by both policy and lived experience to existing studies on asylum dispersal.

Overall, this thesis has introduced debates on the practice of belonging to studies of belonging for people in the asylum system, by presenting findings on the places people build for belonging as well as how freely chosen, self-actualising time can lead to the practice of belonging. In addition, I have shown how studying belonging among people seeking asylum

can reveal the production of unbelonging and marginality, while also revealing how a sense of belonging to people and place over time can emerge. I have done this by considering the relationship between the political projects of belonging and the lived experience of a sense of belonging in one city. This provides a focused case study of belonging and everyday life by drawing on Yuval-Davis' (2011) framework, and shows how the complexity of belonging includes experiences of relative belonging among people seeking asylum through everyday micro-practices, without losing sight of the structural or systemic production of unbelonging.

The following subsection will build upon my contributions by presenting specific recommendations which stem from my findings for practitioners and activists working with people seeking asylum. Following this, I will turn to recommendations for future research in light of my findings and contributions.

9.3.1 Recommendations for practitioners and activists

With an increasingly restrictive policy environment, policy recommendations aimed at facilitating or promoting belonging for people seeking asylum within a system that actively produces unbelonging in England are inappropriate¹¹. Despite this, some of the findings of this thesis may lead to useful recommendations for practitioners or activists working with people seeking asylum. In this subsection, I will make two recommendations for practitioners or activists.

Bus passes

In chapter six, I considered the prohibitive cost of travel, poor public transport provision and dispersal to relatively peripheral areas of the city. Access to motorised transport is increasingly considered essential for meeting basic needs (Sheller, 2018). In Sheffield, the charity ASSIST provides the option of a weekly bus pass to the people it supports. This

¹¹ It is worth noting that the Welsh Government's Nation of Sanctuary plan and the Scottish Government's New Scots Integration Strategy could lead to policy interventions that aim to promote belonging for people seeking asylum and new refugees. Some of the findings in this thesis, although focused on dispersal in England, could have policy relevance in Scotland and Wales. The findings in this thesis also point to future avenues for research in Scotland and Wales, where belonging could become a part of either the Nation of Sanctuary plan or the New Scots Integration Strategy.

enables people who have been refused asylum to travel across the city and build a sense of belonging to people and place (Fallov et al., 2013).

ASSIST clients have described weekly bus passes as “the most important thing... because it gives you freedom”, saying that, “with the bus pass, you can stay on the bus all day. You can relax for a few hours on the bus and keep warm. This is important” (ASSIST, 2019b). If funding were to allow the provision of bus passes, which in Sheffield cost £15 a week, to people in receipt of S95/S4 support through TSOs, the effects could be transformative. Provision of bus passes to people who have been refused asylum would also be something for organisations similar to ASSIST in other cities to consider. This is because access to bus travel could give people the ability to access health and other social services, friends, solicitors, places of worship, voluntary and social activities in the city – and in doing so contribute to a sense of belonging. A related recommendation is that community unions and organisations develop their organising and campaigning efforts around the provision of integrated and affordable transport. In particular, this could involve campaigning for greater regulatory oversight over transport provision by local authorities (Sheffield City Region, 2020).

Internet access

In chapter eight, I found that access to the Internet can facilitate a sense of belonging to people and place both online and offline. Dispersal accommodation and IACs do not provide Wi-Fi. This is because the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 does not consider communication to be an essential need. The 20 years since the introduction of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, as well as the ongoing impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, however, have brought into sharp relief the importance of Internet access as a basic need. Indeed, the UK government has a policy of Digital by Default that includes access to the Internet and digital devices as part of the agreed minimum income standard (Coote and Percy, 2020). Although the exclusion of people seeking asylum from this is part of the production of unbelonging, TSOs and activists should develop campaigning efforts in these areas.

In Sheffield, the South Yorkshire Asylum and Migration Action Group (SYMAAG) have been campaigning for Wi-Fi access in dispersal accommodation and IACs since the start of the first Covid-19 lockdown (SYMAAG, 2020). In addition, a number of community organisations and TSOs provide refurbished smart phones and phone credit to refugees and people seeking asylum (PC4R, 2016, Care4Calais, 2020). Similarly, since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, the City of Sanctuary in Sheffield has launched a campaign to provide laptops to the children of people seeking asylum for home schooling (City of Sanctuary Sheffield, 2020). One way to develop and support this work is for activists and TSOs to work to facilitate access to mobile data, phone credit and digital devices for people seeking asylum and people who have been refused asylum. This could involve, for example, TSOs offering support payments that cover the cost of phone credit or mobile data. This could also involve supporting the work of organisations like SYMAAG, which campaigns for Wi-Fi access in dispersal accommodation and IACs, as well as supporting unions such as the Camp Residents of Penally (a union formed by residents of a former army barracks used as an IAC in South Wales) who organised to campaign for better conditions and eventually the closure of the camp via WhatsApp and Zoom (Corporate Watch, 2020, Wells, 2021).

9.4 Future avenues for research

As is the case with many focused ethnographic studies, this thesis presents a number of unanswered questions that would benefit from further exploration. In addition, despite the in-depth nature of my findings, the sample size presents an issue of external validity (Bryman, 2015). I did not set out for the study to be widely transferable but instead, as discussed in section 4.6.2, I intended to provide a mindful series of snapshots of participants' experiences of dispersal. Some of my findings, particularly where I have drawn on the experiences of a small number of participants, merit further research. This section will present two particularly promising avenues for future research based on my findings. However, as I have indicated throughout the empirical chapters, this thesis presents a number of other avenues for future enquiry.

9.4.1 Peripheralisation and dispersal

In chapter six, I considered the relative peripheralisation of asylum dispersal accommodation in Sheffield. I found that being dispersed to peripheral areas can limit and

constrain a sense of belonging. Darling (2020) argues that it is important for studies on asylum dispersal to engage with and foreground the nature of urban politics, and in doing so focus on the complexity of the local operation of asylum dispersal and its multiple actors. In chapter six, drawing on my sample size of 15, I found that around half of the participants were dispersed to peripheral areas in deprived food deserts, with poor access to services including public transport. This confirms findings that the majority of people who are dispersed to Sheffield are dispersed to just two electoral wards, both of which are not within walking distance of the city centre and experience high levels of deprivation (Greenwood in Goran, 2017). However, this data is not comprehensive or necessarily accurate because asylum accommodation contractors do not always share data on the location of asylum accommodation with local authorities (NAO, 2014). In addition, the transition from the COMPASS contracts to the AASC contracts in 2019 (see section 2.4.1) may have created additional issues with information sharing and regulatory oversight.

One way to build on the findings of this study is to work towards collaborative research with the Local Authority's Cohesion and Migration Partnership Group and Sheffield City Council as a part of their Cohesion Charter. In section 2.4.3, I discussed the Cohesion and Migration Partnership Group and the City Council's Cohesion Charter's commitment to support the most vulnerable asylum seekers and refugees in the city (Greenwood, 2018). A more quantitative study on the location of dispersal accommodation in the city could lead to collaborative work with the Local Authority who are amenable to supporting the facilitation of a sense of belonging for refugees and people seeking asylum. Such a study could involve mapping dispersal accommodation using Freedom of Information requests and documentary analysis of existing services (including supermarkets and convenience stores) in particular wards, alongside qualitative data on belonging and the experience of dispersal to peripheral areas in order to "promote a shared future vision and sense of belonging" (Greenwood, 2018, 22) in the city.

Collaborative research with agencies in Sheffield could lead to pressure being placed on asylum accommodation contractors to meet their contractual obligation of providing accommodation that is within walking distance of the city centre and to areas where there is adequate local service provision (NAO, 2014, Stewart and Shaffer, 2015). Such a study

could provide findings that could lead to the further instrumentalisation of devolution deals under the Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016. It could also draw on funds such as the Cohesion Grant Fund to promote a sense of belonging for people who have been dispersed to Sheffield, within and against national policy.

9.4.2 Migrant-owned businesses, regeneration and change

In line with my focus on the city of Sheffield in the proposed research above, one future avenue for research could explore the role of migrant-owned businesses in the city. In chapter seven, I found that migrant-owned businesses hold transformative potential. This is because they can create a place for belonging; create everyday multiculturalism by cutting across different social locations and create a place for the practice of belonging. In addition, the businesses people establish after asylum has been granted have the potential to regenerate cities (Sim and Bowes, 2007, Phillimore and Goodson, 2008, Lewis, 2009). Despite this, as I briefly noted, these businesses can also replicate and reproduce unbelonging and exclusion in society, through exploitative labour practices (Lewis et al., 2014).

Based on this and in line with Çağlar and Glick-Schiller's (2018) study of urban change and migrant-owned businesses in three cities over time, a longitudinal ethnographic study of migrant-owned businesses in the city of Sheffield could provide insight into processes of urban change and transformation. Such a study could draw on archival research into the history of businesses in a specific part of the city to track change over time and provide insight into urban transformation in Sheffield, as a post-industrial city that has experienced different periods of migration. In addition, as Hall points out (2015), ethnographic mapping of businesses in a specific part of a city, as well as participant observation, could provide insight into how migrant-owned businesses contribute to processes of change and can generate a sense of belonging to people and place. This, combined with more focused data on the experiences of customers, workers and businesses owners, could complement findings with an insight into consumption, employment practices, and the limitations to a sense of belonging experienced by workers. These three strands of enquiry combined could lead to findings that have the potential to shed light on urban regeneration, growth and labour practices. It could also lead to findings on how migration has led to change through

investment in Sheffield following industrial decline, the impacts of gentrification, and could feed into the Sheffield Inclusive Growth Strategy (Beatty et al., 2019). In addition, in light of the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, such a study could generate findings on changing business practices and the differential impacts of the pandemic.

This section has presented two potential avenues for future research that build on my consideration of belonging to people and place over time in the city of Sheffield in light of my findings. This is alongside other areas for future research identified in the empirical chapters including: the gendered temporalities of care and leisure for women in the asylum system; more focused engagement with belonging; Internet access and digital practices among people in the asylum system; sustained ethnographic engagement with belonging and the decisions people make about where to live after receiving a positive outcome on an asylum application. The second proposed avenue for future research on migrant-owned businesses, as well as my recommendations for practitioners and activists above, have touched upon the Covid-19 pandemic. Although the pandemic began after I completed my fieldwork, several participants have shared their experiences of Covid-19 with me. Based on this and the implications Covid-19 has for my findings, the following section will provide a coda to this study by considering the coronavirus pandemic.

9.5 Covid-19, a Coda: “the Home Office is the virus”

The ongoing impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic have far reaching consequences for the people who took part in this study. Moreover, the pandemic has brought the production of people seeking asylum as unbelonging in social policy into ever sharper relief. This section will briefly reflect on participants’ experiences of Covid-19 in light of my findings.

Covid-19 has brought significant changes to everyday life. Successive lockdowns have disrupted belonging and connections to people and place. For many, Covid-19 is likely to have led to a decreased sense of belonging alongside a heightened awareness of the political projects of belonging that produce unbelonging and exclude. Hope and Helen, for example, now fear for the future of their businesses and that the ongoing impacts of the pandemic may undo the time they have spent building a sense of belonging and places for

belonging in the city. For those dispersed to deprived food deserts, access to food remains dependent on public transport, thus increasing the risk of contracting the virus in the absence of being able to use ASPEN cards to make purchases online. In addition, the more deprived areas of the city have had disproportionately high infection rates (gov.uk, 2021a).

Covid-19 has posed additional challenges to people who have been refused asylum and rely on accommodation through friends and TSOs, thus jeopardising a sense of belonging to people and place. In Sheffield, the pandemic has also led to the temporary closure of the multi-agency drop-in for refugees and asylum seekers (ASSIST, 2021). Bilen for example commented on the absence of support for people in her situation. Although Daniel was able to access accommodation through the “everyone in” scheme launched for rough sleepers (BBC, 2020), he was only able to do this because Sheffield City Council made exceptions to his immigration status. However, this support ended in May 2020; revealing how inclusive policies are often contingent and time-limited.

In contrast, for some, successive lockdowns have not brought significant changes. As discussed in chapter five, re-dispersal can limit a sense of belonging through disruptions to everyday life. In the first few months of the pandemic, Ahmed commented that the conditions imposed by lockdown have not changed his everyday life. He still “sits alone in the home” (see: 5.3.2) and occasionally goes out for groceries. Ahmed said that for him, “the Home Office is the virus”. This suggests that the restrictions and limitations to a sense of belonging experienced in the asylum system mirror and replicate the restrictions and limitations of lockdown measures. In respect to findings in chapter eight, the lack of Wi-Fi access in dispersal accommodation and IACs also reveals how the asylum system produces unbelonging, by excluding people from participating in life online.

Overall, the impact of Covid-19, particularly in light of developments in policy since the start of the pandemic, are likely to produce a wealth of future research, including but not limited to the use of former army barracks unfit for human habitation as IACs (Grierson, 2020); outbreaks of Covid-19 in IRCs and IACs (Mistry, 2020); the impact of having NRPF (Singh, 2020); the withdrawal of the Gateway Protection Programme (gov.uk, 2020c); access to vital health services (gov.uk, 2021b) and new policy proposals including offshore detention and

the withdrawal of the right to asylum for those deemed to have entered the UK by “illegal means” (Solomon, 2021). There is no doubt that the challenges since the start of the first lockdown in England in March 2020 will have far reaching consequences for people seeking asylum and a profound impact on how people develop a sense of belonging to people and place within and against a system predicated on unbelonging.

9.6 Concluding remarks

This chapter has given an overview of my research findings and recommendations. In response to the central research question, I have found that people who have been dispersed in the asylum system can and do find ways to build a sense of belonging within and against a system designed to exclude. This study has found that relationships with people in the same place over time can lead to familiarity and support through participatory, place-based belonging against unbelonging. Moreover, I have found that the choices participants have made about where and how to spend their time, as well as the places that they build and create, can lead to a sense of belonging as well as ease and accord with a place. Overall, I hope that the time I have spent with participants and my findings throughout the thesis accurately represent and reflect participants’ lives, views and feelings.

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