EXPLORING A SENSE OF BELONGING AMONGST AFRICAN REFUGEES IN THE NORTH OF ENGLAND: WHAT INFLUENCES PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

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Contents page number

Acknowledgement 4

Abstract 5

Chapter 1. introduction 6

Chapter 2. Literature review 11

2.1 Belonging 11

2.2 Transnational belonging 14

2.3 'Othering' 16

2.4 media and political representations of refugees and asylum seekers 18

2.5 Asylum policies 22

2.5.1 forced dispersals 22

2.5.2 employment 24

2.6 citizenship as belonging 25

Chapter 3. Methodology 32

3.1 philosophical underpinnings 32

3.2 social Constructionism 32

3.3 Interpretivism 33

3.4 Qualitative approach 34

Chapter 4. Methods 36

4.1 Access to participants 36

4.2 Data collection 36

4.3 Data analysis 38

4.4 Ethical considerations 39

4.5 Reflexivity 42

Chapter 5. Discussion and findings 48

5.1 Belonging 48

5.1.1 Discrimination 48

Refuge-ness 49

'Race' 51

Religious identity 54

5.1.2 contextualising spaces of belonging 56

Employment 57

Sport 58

School grounds and university 59

Religious spaces 61

5.1.3 Transnational belonging 63

Between two camps 63

Communication 65

Remittances 66

5.2 The impact of media and political representations on belonging 69

5.2.1 Labelling 69

5.2.2 selective reporting 74

5.2.3 generalisation of news reports on asylum seekers and refugees 76

5.3 impact of policies on belonging 80

5.3.1 process of seeking asylum and length of stay 81

5.3.2 forced dispersals 83

5.3.3 education 85

5.3.4 detention 86

5.3.5 employment 88

5.4 citizenship 89

5.4.1 freedom to travel 90

5.4.2 rights and access to services 92

5.4.3 citizenship requirements 94

Chapter 6. Conclusion 97

References 100

Appendices 133

1. **Ethics form** 133
2. **Consent form** 139
3. **Participant information sheet** 141
4. **Interview guide** 143

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to explore a sense of belonging amongst African refugees in the North of England and what facilitates their participation and engagement. Using a narrative approach, auto-recorded semi structured interviews lasting between an hour to an hour and thirty minutes were conducted with 12 participants. Participants were accessed through two refugee organisations in two urban cities in the North of England. The findings from a thematic data analysis indicated participants express an orientation towards belonging in the UK. However, experiences of discrimination based on their perceived 'refugee-ness', 'race' and religious faith are expressed as barriers to developing a sense of belonging. The findings also suggested interactions and participating in certain spaces and places facilitate a sense of belonging. These include employment, sport arenas, school grounds and university, and religious spaces. Analysis also indicated a transnational belonging amongst participants by expressing simultaneous attachments to both their countries of origin and the UK. Media and political representations of refugees and asylum seekers were reported as a hindrance towards developing a sense of belonging due to labelling, selective reporting and generalisation of news reports on asylum seekers and refugees. Exclusionary asylum policies such as limited length of stay, detentions, restrictions on work and higher education are a barrier to participation and engagement in the UK. The notion of citizenship was not found to facilitate a sense of belonging. Participants perceptions and meaning of citizenship attainment are focused on the freedom to travel, rights and access to services and the citizenship requirements. The research findings illustrate the need for a focus on addressing the feelings of exclusion and discrimination to facilitate social cohesion rather than the implementations and imposition of stringent and exclusionary policies with the hope of facilitating social cohesion.

Chapter 1 Introduction

The United Nation Convention (1951) defines a refugee as a person:

'Owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country' (United Nation Convention, 1951, p.8).

Asylum seekers are people who apply to state governments for international protection and are awaiting recognition of their claim of being persons unwilling or unable to return to their countries due to fear of persecution. The term 'refugee' is used commonly in describing individuals who has been forced to flee their countries but in legal and government policy context the meaning is more technical. It applies to individuals who have obtained the legal status which allows them to either be brought into a country by the government or allow to stay in a country and receive certain benefits (Bohmer & Shuman, 2008). However, the declaration of universal human rights in 1948, the 1951 United Nations Convention on the status of refugees do not bestow the right to asylum but only to seek asylum. Thus, individuals only enjoy the rights enshrined in these declarations provided states grant it to them. The right to Seeking asylum then does not automatically mean a right to asylum (Hanna, 2006). As noted by Hovil (2016) the rigours of social science dictates the utilisation of useful terms such as refugees in targeting and keeping a focus on a legally categorised individuals experiencing the realities of their circumstances. However, it should be noted that refugees do have multiple identities and varying responses to their circumstances (Zetter, 2014).

By the end of 2016 the worldwide number of individuals displaced by persecution, violence, conflicts and human right violations was 65.5 million and the overall refugee population in the United Kingdom was 188,995(UNHCR, 2016). The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Somalia, Eritrea, Zimbabwe and Sudan have the highest number of people fleeing persecution from Africa. While most flee to refugee camps in neighbouring countries such as the two largest refugee camps in the world situated in Kenya, some manage a much longer journey to seek protection in Europe and other countries under the United Nations Refugee Convention of 1951. In the UK these African countries are amongst the top ten countries of

origin of asylum seekers and refugees in recent years (Refugee Council, 2012; Amnesty International, 2016).

However, states have resorted to measures to ensure they do not have to consider granting protection to those who international refugee law seek to protect by outsourcing border controls, offshore detention centres, extraterritorial controls and the deployment of new technologies as a form of a buffer against refugee producing countries in a no contact approach to refugees (Gammeltoft-Hansen, 2011; Tholen, 2010). This approach has created a consequential moral distance between states bureaucracy and those seeking protection (Gill, 2016). The chances of status being granted in these first entry countries are becoming increasingly limited while applicants end up in a limbo leading to them being categorised as 'illegal migrants '(Schuster, 2011). Successive British governments have habitually reiterated rights of those seeking refuge while simultaneously curtailing their ability to arrive at the borders to register such claims (Layton-Henry, 2004). Such barriers have made it very difficult for refugees to gain entry into Britain's fortified borders. According to the then United Nations commissioner for refugee, now United Nations secretary general, these large number of forced migrants are increasingly facing closed borders, hostility and pushbacks (Guterres, 2015), including in the UK. There has recently been a heightened debate in refugee receiving countries on notions of belonging, relating to questions of border control, state security and social cohesion making it an important aspect of groups, individual's and political life (Anthias, 2006). While the lack of a proper response to those seeking sanctuary impacts on the internal politics of the EU, radical far right groups consolidated their popularity across Europe based on a disturbing anti- immigrant and anti-refugee platforms (Peters & Besley, 2015).

For refugees, this is much more important due to the nature of their relationship with the host country. Compared to other migrants, refugees' choice of return to their home country is in most cases not an immediate possibility (Hein, 1993; Refugee Council, 2012) due to a times protracted war situations (Crisp, 2003). A migrant is a person who travels from his or her country into another for job opportunities or other reasons including joining family. Such movements are mostly voluntary but individuals may also be compelled to move due to economic hardship in country of origin. It involves regular migration with permission to reside and work in a country or irregular migration without legal permission to reside and work in a country (Amnesty International, 2016, UNHCR, 2016).

In light of such a hostile atmosphere towards refugees, the concept of belonging has become a salient topic as immigration and the integration of minorities occupies media and political agendas in European countries. The current political atmosphere involves how to control the numbers of immigrants of certain countries perceived as less useful and harder to integrate including refugees, to ensure social cohesion (Houtum & Pijpers, 2007). Recent events such as the refugee crisis, discussions on the UK's membership of the European Union and contagious rise of far right populist politics in Europe and the United states makes the concept of belonging a worthwhile topic of investigation. This is especially important for those who have lost the countries to which they belonged (Knott, 2017). Such uncertainties about belongingness are indeed an aspect of the experiences of new immigrants (Lewin, 1976), including refugees

While a sense of belonging is an important aspect in facilitating social cohesion and integration with regards to social justice and equity (Markus, 2010), discussions around these concepts often focus on expectations of fitting into the dominant identity (Wille, 2011). Speer, Jackson and Peterson (2001, p. 717) defines social cohesion as "the level of engagement and social trust among community members". Thus this study will address the importance of a sense of belonging, trust and engagement as requirements for the materialisation of an effective social cohesion in a society. Individuals and groups within a community or a nation have to perceive each other as belonging for an effective social cohesion. However, implicit references to the ills of a diverse society in social cohesion discourse ignores the complexities of certain groups belonging experiences (Hules & Stone, 2007; Yuval-Davis, Anthias & Kofman, 2005). An identity can be hardly claimed by individuals and groups without relating such claims to the acceptance of those in the wider community (Valentine and Skelton, 2007). According to Hagerty, Williams, Coyne and Early (1996), a sense of belonging is linked to a sense of being accepted through an involvement that is valued in which individuals and groups feel needed and loved. In other words, a feeling of not being accepted because of the perceived lack of the shared attributes of fit, has a negative impact on a sense of belonging. Refugees' experiences in their interactions within the host community impacts on their feeling of belonging and the integration processes that help them flourish (Correa- Velez, Gifford & Barnett, 2010; Mesch, Turjeman & Fishman, 2008). Thus, examining their experiences and perception of interaction in host societies is important in understanding their sense of belonging

Research that is focus on general experiences of refugees easily slide into a homogenous understanding of their experiences, leaving out key aspect of these experiences such as racialization (Kumasi, 2006). However, Studies of Feelings of belonging amongst refugees in the UK either involves a focus on refugees' choices in becoming British citizens or not and the impacts of such decisions on their integration process done in Scotland (Stewart, 2012), first and second generation African migrants (Waite, 2011), limited to the role of the press on feelings of asylum seekers and refugees' belonging (Khan, 2013), boundaries of belonging in higher education for refugees (Morrice, 2013). Research on asylum seekers also tend to be more focused on the important but limited issues around access to services, education, health and housing. There are limited studies that focus on the general feelings of belonging (Oneil & Hubbard, 2010), especially amongst African refugees in Britain.

The research acknowledges the fact that there are indeed conceptual complexities and contestations, as to what entails being African (Tettey, 2001). Most West African immigrants are likely black, this does not automatically apply to South, North and East Africans who are also likely to be either White, Indian or Arabs (Mensah, 2002). However, participants in this study are black Africans. The study also acknowledges that there is no homogeneity within the African refugee population in the United Kingdom. Refugee experiences also include the intersectionality of other social categories and marginalisation such as race, gender, religious affiliations and ethnicity (Rees & Pease, 2007) that merit attention. However, some of these categories will not be covered in this research not because of their insignificance but rather due to limitation of time and space.

The research will draw on the analytical framework of belonging of Yuval-Davis (2006a), Anthias (2013) and Antonsich (2010). In this framework, belonging is conceptualised as a means of self-identification (personal belonging) and also through the politics of belonging which involves exclusionary practices and narratives that demarcates boundaries of belonging (social belonging). This theoretical framework offers a suitable analytical tool in relation to the study's aims and objectives due to its encompassing conceptualisation of belonging in terms of both the personal and social. The first objective of the study is to explore participants understanding and perceptions of belonging in the UK. The second objective of this study is to explore the effect of attainment of citizenship on participants' sense of belonging, a notion that is worth investigating in understanding the experiences of those who are likely to experience marginalisation (Khan and McNamara, 2017).

The thesis is structured into six chapters. Following from the introduction on chapter 1, chapter 2 covers the literature on the concept of belonging, transnationalism, othering processes, media and political representations of asylum seekers and refugees, asylum policies and citizenship. Chapter 3 examines the methodological approach of the research, chapter 4 presents the appropriate methods applied in carrying out the research. Chapter 5 presents the research findings related to the participants' sense of belonging. Chapter 6 concludes with main arguments of the research including its contribution to the understanding of refugee belonging.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

This chapter comprises of six sections. The first section considers the theoretical conceptualisation in understanding the forms of belonging in regards to its personal aspect and social aspects. The next section considers the significance of transnationalism in understanding refugees' sense of belonging. The third section explores the processes of 'othering' as a means of denying belonging to certain groups such as refugees. Then section four looks at the media and political representations of refugees and asylum seekers as a practice 'othering'. The fifth section outline some asylum policies as examples of exclusion. Finally, section six explores the notion of citizenship as a form of belonging.

2.1 Belonging

'Where you belong is where you are safe; and where you are safe is where you belong (Ignatief, 1994 p.6)

Ignatief (1994) highlights the link between a feeling of security and safety and a sense of belonging of individuals and groups. The Ignatief (1994) quotation highlights the importance of a feeling of belonging to individuals and groups for their feeling of safety and security. There is an increase focus on the integration of newcomers into refugee receiving countries and the social cohesion of these societies as a whole. However, for integration and social cohesion to emerge there should be a guarantee of feelings of safety and security for new comers. In other words, to facilitate integration and social cohesion there should be a sense of belonging, making it an important concept to investigate especially for refugees. This study will argue that the focus on the need for integrating newcomers and a social cohesion between members of a society without addressing individuals and groups sense of belonging is problematic (Markus, 2010). The perceived consequences of cultural contacts and increased mobility has highlighted the importance of the notion of belonging in terms of political governance, rights, responsibilities and the everyday aspects of people's lives (Anthias & Kofman, 2005; Morell, 2009; Morrice, 2016; Valentine, Sporton & Nielsen, 2009 Yuval-Davis 2006). The significance of these processes and their representations highlights the importance of their exploration in understanding modern societies (Creswell, 2014; Sheller, 2014; Sheller and Urry, 2006).

Belonging is an important aspect of human existence because the need to belong is the essence of being human (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Mcdonald & Leary, 2005) and a mode of identifying with the in-group through the perception of a common essence (Demoulin, Cortes, Viki, Rodriguez, Rodriguez, Paladino & Leyens, 2009) with real implications on peoples' lives (Walton & Cohen, 2011). It is also complex and multidimensional with regards to an identification with places, groups and context. Hence, it involves the processes of the 'self' engaging the social in identifying 'similarities' and 'difference. In other words, self-construction is a process that involves interacting with others (May, 2011). Notions of belonging and un-belonging are not only expressed through legal borders of states. They are also expressed through exclusionary discourses and racialized practices that portray certain spaces as homogenous and out of bounds for those viewed as 'others' such as minorities, migrants and certain religious groups through social boundaries (Arber, 2008; Cloke, 2006; Hubinette & Tigervall, 2009; Sibley; 2006; Youdell, 2006).

According to Pollini (2005), territorial belonging is the feeling of being connected to a particular place and a socio-territorial belonging entails the possibility of belonging to more than one place. A socio-territorial belonging thus implies a sense of belonging to a given place does not necessarily mean the impossibility of a sense of belonging to another place simultaneously. Though analytically distinct both territorial and socio-territorial aspects of belonging are empirically related (Pollini, 2005). Social categorisation has been argued to involve identifying the in group by comparing them with the outgroup 'others' (Tajfel, 1978). National identification then involves differentiating those who belong from those who do not belong (Condor & Abel, 2016), to the 'imagine communities' (Anderson, 1983). For refugees then, the notion of belonging becomes both conceptually and literally very important, as their experiences involves either inclusion or expulsion in their host societies (Hanna, 2006) or in what Hynes (2011) described as a state of 'liminality' (p.2)

Jones and Krzyzanowski (2011) maintained that the notion of belonging is relevant not only in the critique of the notion of identity but also in the development of a contextual and coherent theoretical model that will facilitate empirical research in social sciences. Belonging is where the personal meets collective identities and where contestations and negotiations occurs in locating individuals position in relations to their country of origin and their new societies. Conceptually, belonging is about the relationship between individuals' identity and that of the collective identity. personal belonging is dependable on individuals' perceptions of the aims and values of the collective. In other words, individuals sense of belonging to a

society depends on their perceptions of the aims of that society. The theory of belonging maintain that the construction of identity involves an internal self-representation and externally by the representation and characterisations of a powerful other. Such powerful others include institutions that set requirements for formal membership through citizenship. This conceptualisation of belonging aptly encompasses this study's participants as African refugees and their sense of belonging both personally, socially and in relation to their country of origin and residence.

Yuval-Davis (2006) offered an analytical framework in the understanding of belonging. For Yuval-Davis, there is a distinction between belonging and the politics of belonging. The notion of belonging in this framework can either be a means of self-identification or one's identification by others through processes that can be stable, transient or contested. Yuval-Davis (2006) maintained that there are some social divisions that have more impacts on some individuals' position at certain historical contexts in relation to their social construction. Ethnicity, class, gender and lifecycle stages shapes most peoples' lives worldwide compared to caste, indigenous people or being a refugee. However, the visibility and burden of each of these social divisions should be recognised as crucial in the axes of social power at particular historical moments and contexts. The second level involves identification and emotional attachment narratives that individuals tell themselves and others about what it means to be who they are, and directly or indirectly who they are not. These narratives of belonging involve a selective construction and reproduction of the 'self' and the 'other'. The third analytical level are ethical values, ideologies and practices used to construct and demarcate exclusionary boundaries of identity.

Anthias (2013) engaged the notions of belonging and identity as conceptual tools and how they are utilised in political discourse particularly with regards to integration and diversity with a special focus on Britain. Anthias (2013) noted that belonging and identity simultaneously raise questions relating to boundaries of difference, which differences count and how they are politically evaluated and struggled over. Antonsich (2010) maintained that belonging is often vaguely defined and taken for granted. Antonsich offer an analysis of belonging that encompasses both the personal aspect of belonging that is intimate and involves a feeling of being at home, and the political aspect of belonging that involves discourses over the social constructs of claims, justifications and resistance to forms of inclusion and exclusion. Focusing on one aspect without the other risks a partly analysis of the concept of belonging. The personal aspect of place belonging is interconnected to the

social aspect of belonging or the 'politics of belonging' (Yuval-Davis, 2006) in the processes of seeking and granting of belonging. The concept of belonging is then a process that is fluid, multifaceted and hybrid (Anthias, 2013; Antonsich, 2010; Yuval- Davis, 2006).

To ensure a more comprehensive understanding of the processes of belonging which encompasses individuals and groups whose experiences include cross border and multiple geographical locations, the concept of 'transnational belonging' was proposed in migration studies (Antonsich, 2010; Ehrkamp & Leitner, 2006, Vertovec, 2001). As in the case with other migrants, refugees' identities are shaped by numerous socio-cultural references (Morell 2009). It is the transnational constitution of those references that warrant an interest in understanding that dimension of refugees' sense of belonging

2.2 Transnational belonging

Transnationalism as a concept offers insights into the understanding of how migrants simultaneously maintain their connections to their places of origin while adapting to their host countries complimentarily (Ehrkamp, 2005). According to Morawska (2003) transnationalism has both a theoretical and empirical significance within different strands of immigration research. 'Home' for the migrant often includes links that are entangled with social networks in both their countries of origin and countries of residence. It is experienced not only as a location but also as a set of relationships by which their identities and feelings of belonging are shaped (Ralph & Staeheli, 2011). Such relationships include participation in social and political networks across countries of origin and residence (Faist, 2010). The process of migrants' adaptation involves both getting to grips with the new while at the same time trying to work at holding on to the familiar ways of being *(*Berry, 1997). Expectations of migrants letting go of all what they knew for the new is an over-expectation that goes against their experiences of belonging that is simultaneous and fluid. The notion of the nation state being the space that contains social, political and economic processes have been challenged by transnational migrant communities (Vertovec, 2001). However, Westwood and Phizacklea (2001) questioned the idea of the decline of state due to transnationalism. They argued, it is instead a simultaneous process of the importance of the emotional attachments to the nation state and the participation in cross border transnational activities.

There is discomfort in the generalisation of every connection to country of origin as practices of transnationalism. Portes, Luis, Guarzino (1999) admonished against broad definitions and a more focus definition based on the regularity and sustainability of such practices. Based on

Survey analysis of Albanian migrants and asylum seekers in Switzerland, Dahinden (2005) study of Albanian migrants and asylum seekers in Switzerland suggest migrants' transnational ties has limited social relevance in regards to their country of residence and an insignificant number has transnational contacts outside. Waldinger (2008) study of Latin American migrants in the United states also found no transnational practices in migrants' cross- state activities. Similarly, Boccagni (2012) suggest there is unanimity in recent literature on the low levels of migrants transnational practices and further go on to offer possible reference points of identifying transnational practices. These include migrants' interpersonal connections with family, interacting with institutions back home, symbolic and emotional attachment to past experiences leading to frequent contacts to their countries of origin and 'hybridized' sense of belonging. This scepticism is however based on survey analysis rather than qualitative approaches that will ensure an in depth understanding of participant transnational ties.

Qualitative research on immigrants' identification suggest immigrants often have a multiple identification and experience that involve both their country of origin and host country (Erel, 2016; Liempt, 2011; Valentine, Sporton & Nielsen). Valentine, Sporton and Nielsen (2009) study of the relationship between identity, belonging and place among young Somali asylum seekers and refugees in Denmark and UK found that possibilities of an integration process that offers the possibility of participation in the host society without the need to deny their transnational links to their country of origin and religion, providing a more secure sense of belonging. The study suggests any narrow categorisation in an attempt to limit migrants' identities threaten and restrict the space which facilitates their ability to define their identity. Rather than facilitating a recognition and respect for the need of immigrants, an ill-defined and restricted notion of Britishness is argued risk legitimising the host communities' hostile attitudes towards migrants' cultures (Valentine, Sporton & Nielsen,2009).

Waite (2012) study demonstrated that transnational migrants expressed a simultaneous feeling of belonging to multiple places rather than the UK government's explicit desire for a single attachment to the United Kingdom through the incorporation of a notion of belonging into citizenship policies. However, participants were both first and second generation African migrants rather than a study of refugees' meanings of belonging.

Liempt (2011) study of 33 young Somalis with Dutch citizenship living in the UK found that interviewees orientated towards the Netherlands where some were born or resided for over a

decade. They also orientated towards the UK as their new home and also Somalia where some of them were born or their parents grew up. This study suggested a web of complex links of citizenship, belonging and identities in a globalised world. It highlights varied meanings and practices of citizenship and identification. Oneill and Hubbard (2010) participatory action research and arts practise exploring asylum seekers, refugees and undocumented migrants' sense of belonging also found a double consciousness of belonging 'here' and 'there' amongst participants. These studies suggest immigrants including refugees' sense of belonging are not fixed to a single place with a define border but rather multi-layered and transnational (Vertovec, 2004, 2009; Wilding, 2012). However, these studies mostly involve refugees from the same country origin rather than participants from different African countries. This study's narrative approach will explore whether participants from different African countries express transnational belonging. This link between the experiences of forced migration and transnational ties rather than the often common sense notion of singular belonging to a place has often been utilised in the perceived 'otherness' of refugees and double 'otherness' of African refugees (Dandy & Pe-Pua, 2015). Belonging involves struggles of inclusion and exclusion (Anthias, 2006,2013; Antonsich, 2010; Yuval-Davis, 2006), making 'othering' an important aspect in the understanding of belonging.

2.3 Othering

Understanding 'othering' processes help in exploring the experiences of refugees in regards to their sense of belonging. Othering processes are the means through which demarcations are made between those who belong and those who do not. 'Othering' is the "identification of another person on the basis of some real or imagined visible, difference that is used to sustain and maintain inequities in power" (Merskin, 2011, p.31). It is referred to as the process by which individuals and groups are constructed and objectified while ignoring their subjectivities and complexities (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2003). It also involves defining and securing one's own identity as normal while differentiating other's as deviant, leading to their marginalisation, exclusion and disempowerment (Grove & Zwi, 2006). Othering process often involves the racialisation of those perceived not to belong by tying their perceived cultures to their bodies (Murji & Solomos, 2005). Garner (2012) defines racialisation as the process by which inherent characteristics and cultural practices, values and norms can be

attributed to a group as a means of differentiating them from those of other groups, especially those of the dominant group. Othering processes and racialisation can then be tools through which social actors can be defined as either belonging or not.

Garner (2012) study involving 50 White UK participants in provincial cities, interview and focus group data show participants deploy moral ethics and culture as a means of distinguishing and measuring the national belonging of those perceived as others. Clothing, religion, language and behaviours are mentioned as a means of depicting a cultural mismatch between themselves and others who they perceived as invaders of their national space. Englishness is also claimed as an authentic identity in place of Britishness. Yuval-Davis (2006) refer to these requirements of belonging as the 'requisites of belonging' p.209, with those relating to social locations such as the myths of common descent, 'race' and birth place being the least permeable and most racialized in the contestations of the politics of belonging.

The othering of asylum seekers and refugees also include being connected to their perceived security threat and the fear of terrorism. There has been a direct connection made between asylum seekers, Muslims and cultural and security threat (Cienski, 2017; Crowley, 2017). The politicisation and mis/representation of Islam has indeed impacted on Muslims, including all those perceived as such. However, Muslim asylum seekers and refugees' experiences and identities has seen immense transformation. Their categorisation has been transformed in the public's imagination from an emphasis on their 'refugee-ness' as either 'bogus' or 'genuine' to paramount concerns on their 'Muslim-ness' as a social and security threat (Qasmiyeh and Qasmiyeh 2010)

A main source for the legitimisation and framing of dominant societal attitudes is the media (Caldas-Coulthard, 2003; Khosravnik, 2010) and this influence on attitudes are expected where citizens rely on the news as the main source of information on certain issues (Norris, 2000). The media occupies a privilege position in initiating the processes of differentiating between 'Them' and 'Us' (Arcimaviciene & Baglama, 2018). It is argued to be particularly salient in terms of information regarding asylum seekers and refugees, which are mostly negative constructions and representations (Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008). The next section of the literature review will illustrate these media and political representations of asylum seekers and refugees.

2.4 Media and political representations of asylum seekers and refugees

> 'whenever people speak or listen or write or read, they do so in ways which are determined socially and have social effects' (Fairclough, 2001, p.19)

In order to understand the processes of inclusion and exclusion, the issues around power in relations to the access to the powerful weapon of discourse should be carefully considered. Discourse refers to communications on public culture of public concern which affects groups and individuals in a given society. Such concerns are often initiated by certain institutions and political leaders (Gap, 2017). Michel Foucault (1980) examined the power of discourse on individuals and groups in a society. For Foucault, power is not the natural monopoly of some people over others but rather power relations are shaped by discursive outcomes. In other words, the ability to control the tools of discourse gives one the chance of wielding power over those who do not. According to Richardson (1996) Foucault's notion of 'truth' and 'power' does not focus on ascertaining which 'truth' should be viewed as ultimate, but rather how, why and who is able to deploy certain arguments in the game of 'truth'. Foucault's focus then is the practices through which power is produced and the impact and restrictions it produces by defining what are acceptable rules (Schirato, Danaher and Webb, 2012). In regards to asylum seekers and refugees the media has an influence over the dominate discourse and constructions of the acceptable rules of society (Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008). There is a wealth of literature regarding media representation of asylum seekers and refugees. However, these studies are mostly based on analysis of newspapers and media contents analysis covering news on asylum seekers and refugees rather than the perceptions of asylum seekers and refugees.

Esses, Medianu and Lawson (2013) study in Canada examined the impact of media portrayals of immigrant and refugees on their dehumanisation and the consequential support for implementing relevant policy responses. The study argued that the media does not only promote their dehumanization through depictions of potential threat to the host community but also offers a justification for their dehumanization. Depictions included 'bogus' claims and terrorist threats. The study also demonstrates that representation of a group of asylum seekers can translate into a negative perception of refugees as a whole. Esses, Medianu and Lawson (2013) study suggest a connection between media representation of refugees and

asylum seekers and more draconian legislative responses. Asylum seeker and refugee representation also includes negative visual depictions (Banks, 2012).

Bleiker, Campbell, Hutchison, Nicholson (2013) content analysis study that examines images on Australian newspapers argued that dehumanising depictions of asylum seekers framed the conditions of the political debates on asylum. Such depictions they argued, often ignored the complexities and realities of fleeing persecution and war. Political and media discourse are conducted in distorted and emotive language and images rather than as humanitarian events that deserve compassion.

Mckay, Thomas and Kneebone (2012) mixed method survey research on Australians' attitudes and opinions of asylum seekers and influences on public attitudes found respondents were influenced by an interplay of media reports, political rhetoric and personal perceptions. Respondents believe asylum seekers exploit a system that is 'too soft' and came for 'a better life' rather than humanitarian protection. They also perceived asylum seekers as a threat to Australia's values, culture and its security. This study was also however based on respondents of a self- selective postal survey rather based on the perceptions of asylum seekers and refugees.

In their exploration of the relationship between media coverage of asylum seekers and refugee issues and how it shapes public opinion in the UK, Philo, Briant and Donald (2013) used thematic analysis on case studies of media contents in 2006 and 2011. The study identified a persistent and overwhelming hostility towards refugee and asylum seekers, confusing accounts that conflates refugees and asylum seekers and other migrants using terms such as 'economic migrants' and 'illegal migrants'. Myths and misconceptions were also highlighted such as claims of western countries being flooded while in reality eighty percent of refugees actually end up in neighbouring countries of their home countries. The authors also addressed the perceived notion of criminality in seeking asylum through the media use of terminology by highlighting the fact that the Refugee Convention grants the universal right to seek asylum in any country. The study also shows the racial connotations in the British media's coverage in their characterisation of refugees and asylum seekers while neglecting counter narratives that highlight the problem faced by refugees as reasons for seeking asylum. Finally, the impact of such coverage on different established migrant communities are also highlighted.

Lewis (2005) focus group analysis found that participants who express hostility to asylum seekers see them as a threat to their British way of life, identity and a degradation of their communities. These perceptions were based on lack of information and confusion about definition of an asylum seeker from economic migrants.

Lenette and Cleland (2016) visual analysis of four photographs depicting refugee journeys found that there are usually limited sympathy for refugees during crisis due to visual representations. However, such sympathy in public discourse on asylum seekers and refugees is often short lived rather than eradicate negative and damaging representations.

Political debates, government policy and media representations has been argued to affect public perception of asylum seekers and refugees (Patel & Mahtani, 2007). The political atmosphere and context has been found to shape the way the public consume media content (Boomgaarden, 2007). Van Dijk (1991) study on western European media portrayal of Tamil refugees in 1985 highlighted how government sources initially portrayed them as 'economic migrants' which later changed into a territorial threat of criminality and terrorism. Van Dijk (1991) illustrated the link between government monopolisation of information sources for the media and how negative media coverage eventually affected the public leading to resentment and panic. The consequent negative public perceptions were then utilised for tough immigration policies.

Klocker and Dunn (2003) also examined the link between government negative portrayal of asylum seekers and the media's dependence and utilisation of government statements in their news coverage in Australia. Media content analysis between 2001 to 2002 found that the media portrayals are based on government references. Even though this study found a slight tangent of the media from government references during key events' there was a link between government portrayals of asylum seekers and media reports

In the UK, Khosravinik (2009) critical discourse analysis(CDA) study into the representation of asylum seekers and refugees during the Balkan conflict of 1999 and the 2005 British general elections found that the difference in the negative or positive presentations depended on their proximity to the UK. The Kosovans representations were mostly positive and sympathetic in all newspapers. This study found that the important factor that impacted on the presentation of asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants during the 2005 general elections was the ideological and political rivalry of the main political parties. The ideological and political rivalry atmosphere made immigration a core issue of British politics.

Such representations included asylum figures, threat to cultural identity and values and danger. This suggest that the political discourse on migration always slips into debate around asylum seekers and refugees often conflated topics (Lindstrom, 2005)

Krzyzanowski, Triandafyllidou and Wodak (2018) argued that these politicization and problematizing of immigration has a trickle- down effect into the public arena, especially the media. Even in the limited studies that found positive coverage of refugees and asylum seekers, reports are mostly dominated by reporters, while ignoring the voices of refugees and asylum seekers, suggesting their lack of agency in the framing of their stories (Cooper, Olejniczak, & Lenette, 2017). Cooper, Olejniczak & Lennette (2017) local media content analysis in Australia found humanising representations that help in facilitating community cohesion compared to dehumanising coverages in national newspapers. However, such positive media coverages are not found to be prevalent. As the literature has indicated, representations often include conflating asylum seekers and refugees with economic migrants who are perceived to be searching for a better life rather than fleeing from persecution and conflicts. Even though this 'soft touch' discourse on asylum has been dispelled by studies (Gill, 2016; Robinson & Sergot, 2002). Nevertheless, the power of discourse to shape perceptions has more impact than the reality of events (Butler, 2015, Mills, 2014). They are often also linked to foreign criminality and terrorism in populist media and political debates in the United Kingdom (Bhui, 2013; Bosworth, 2007; 2008; Cooper, 2009; Malloch & Stanley, 2005; Rudiger, 2007). Rhetoric often involve discursive deracialised statements (Augoustinos & Avery) but actually racialized imageries notwithstanding the diversity of those seeking sanctuary (Garner, 2013; Hubbard, 2005a, 2005b).

For asylum seekers and refugees, the experiences and meanings of such representations and their consequent stigma impacts on how they negotiate their sense of belonging in Britain. This challenge leaves them with a more fragile and unstable sense of belonging and national identity (Sales, 2007) due to these "impassable symbolic boundaries" (Hall, 1992, p. 225). National borders are a persistent feature in the presentation and construction of the 'other' with refugees and asylum seekers particularly visible in the dichotomy of the 'us' and 'them' (Bailey & Harindranath, 2005). The figure of the refugee and asylum seeker occupies demonizing discourse of invasion in denoting their deviancy (Pickering, 2008). There are links to be drawn from the literature between the media, and refugee and asylum seekers representations. However, these studies are all based on media content analysis of asylum seeker and refugees' representations or host communities' perceptions of these media

contents (Dandy & Pe-Pua (2015). There is a lack of research on refugees' perceptions on the impact of such representations on their sense of belonging. This study will endeavour to fill that gap in research.

These negative media and political representations of refugees and asylum seekers often leads to justification and legitimisation of tough policies in an attempt to discourage potential asylum seekers and refugees who are then targeted as the new 'others' in normalised exclusionary political, institutional and media discourse (Delanty, Wodak and Jones, 2011; Mulvey, 2010). Hence, despite the numerical insignificance of asylum seekers and refugees in relation to the overall immigration figures they remain prominent in the public's mind (Migration Observatory, 2011). According to Griffiths, Sigona and Zetter (2005) immigration and asylum domestic policies in the United Kingdom are often based on short term electoral success, worries over asylum welfare costs and a means to manage migration (Kofman, 2005). Korac (2003) highlighted the importance of examining refugees' experiences of refugee policies because their situation involves on one side the state and a lack of voice on the side of refugees. These policies include forced dispersals, detentions and the exemption of asylum seekers from employment and education. However, due to the limitation of space, only the impact of the exclusionary policies of forced dispersals and employment restrictions on asylum seekers and refugees will be covered here.

2.5 Asylum policies

2.5.1 Forced dispersals

Prior to the implementation of forced dispersal, asylum seekers arriving in receiving countries settled in areas with already existing communities and friends and family. Such settlement decisions were made based on valuable social and community networks (Bloch and Schuster, 2005). In 1999, The Home Office introduced forced dispersal as a response to the increasing cost of housing asylum seekers on local authorities in the south east of England with scarce and expensive housing cost (Bloch and Schuster,2005; Cheung and Phillimore, 2017) in a move to spread the burden (Darling, 2016a). It can also be viewed as a move by government to regulate and limit the level of difference that will be introduced into the host communities (Gedalof, 2007). The limitation of difference has been implemented in the past in the dispersal of black children from perceived black concentrated schools, bussing them to other schools within local education authority areas (Grosvenor, 1997). Forced dispersal is an

integral aspect in asylum seekers and refugees' migration experiences which negatively affects their ability in maintaining links and contacts with relatives and friends, an important aspect of refugee settlement (Bloch, 2002; Cheung and Phillimore, 2017; Koser, 1997). Cheung and Phillimore (2014) highlighted the negative impacts of a lack of social networks on refugees' employment chances. Refugees that were forcibly dispersed away from friends and relatives unsurprisingly had to turn to religious and other groups for support instead.

Hynes (2011) noted that though asylum seekers can refuse to be dispersed, most asylum seekers have no choice but to dispersed where friends and relatives lack the ability to offer financial support and accommodation. Asylum seekers that decided to opt for subsistence support to avoid forced dispersal and ensure they choose where they reside, ultimately become a burden on friends and families (Bloch and Schuster, 2005). Hynes (2011) found an informal and formal exclusion of dispersed asylum seekers impacting on their ability to access services and maintaining social networks. This had a negative impact on their chances of a sense of belonging, a notion perceived in UK policy terms as akin to integration or facilitating social cohesion.

Spicer (2008) qualitative study of asylum seeker families, families with recent refugee status and voluntary workers in England found that parents expressed difficulties in forming social bonds in areas with few ethnic minority families. few ethnic minority families. They also faced difficulties establishing social bridges due to being cautious approaching white majority ethnic families leading to social exclusion. Social bonds in inclusive neighbourhoods were suggested to offer emotional support which helped in offsetting stress, anxiety and depression

The instabilities and insecurities that has been a part of asylum seeker dispersal has recently been extended. Accommodation provision for asylum seekers has been shifted from social housing association, local authorities and private providers to three private contractors together referred to as Commercial and Operating Managers Procuring Asylum support (COMPASS). However, this shift of provision was not about improving asylum dispersals, but primarily about extending austerity and reduction of expenditure in asylum support and a form of reproach to those perceived as economically unproductive. Privatisation of accommodation provision meant a continuation of a system that is increasingly unstable due to the marginalisation of support organisations and local authorities expertise (Darling, 2016b)

The policy of detention and deportation are a form of physical exclusion of individuals and forced dispersal has an element of both psychological and social exclusion (Bloch and Schuster, 2005). The exclusionary nature of such policies impacts individuals and groups sense of belonging leaving them in between belonging and exclusion (Hynes, 2011).

2.5.2 Employment

In terms of employment, the UK government policy is the exclusion of all asylum seekers from work until they are granted leave to remain (Home office, 2017). Between 1986 and 2002 asylum seekers were allowed to work if their cases were not processed within six months (Gower, 2016). However, this right was totally withdrawn in 2002(Da Lomba, 2010) and currently they are allowed to work only if their application is outstanding for over a year (Home office, 2017). However, such cases are rare because their applications are rejected before the one-year period, triggering the often protracted appeal processes (Davies, 2018). Phillimore and Goodson (2006) argued that dispersed asylum seekers that are prohibited from economic activity will inevitably experience high levels of exclusion. Highly skilled and motivated refugees will be left frustrated, demotivated with limited opportunities for positive mixing with indigenous communities. Asylum seekers dispersal areas will then have the potential for large scale frustration, racial segregation and disaffection. Phillimore and Goodson (2006) study of refugees and asylum seekers found high motivation to work if permitted to work. However, the lack of language ability and lack of recognition of refugees past work experiences and qualifications negatively impacting employment. Unemployment among refugees limits opportunities of mixing with the locals impacting their integration.

Bloch (2008) noted that refugees are likely to experience unemployment and a lack of social networks due to the policy of dispersal which meant their inability to relocate to areas of job opportunities. Barriers also include refugee related experiences of stress and trauma from torture and being separated from relatives. Bloch (2008) study found refugee women to be less likely to be in employment compared to their male counterparts. Obtaining a UK qualification and language abilities increases the chance of employment while employer discrimination a barrier to employment.

Burchette and Mathesson (2010) small scale study on a single participant shows the negative impact of legislative restriction on asylum seekers seeking employment. The study found that restriction from work has a negative impact on their ability to reinforce their identity leaving

them frustrated and being viewed as valueless within their host society. Work prohibition also increases social isolation and demotivation, while limiting opportunities to establish and develop an occupational identity and a sense of belonging.

Fleary, Hartley, and Kenny (2013) study examined asylum seekers and refugees that were released from prolonged detention in ten Australian cities. The study found the right to employment as the most challenging concern for interviewees. Motivation to work does not only include self- independence but also self-worth, dignity and the need for social inclusion.

Refusal of asylum claims means termination of financial support which can be particularly risky for women asylum seekers leaving them in destitution and high risk of violence. With no right to work and in a desperation may turn to other survival strategies such as illegal work, entering and staying in exploitative relationships, transactional sex, begging and prostitution (Refugee Council, 2012). According to the Home office (2017) the objectives of work restriction for asylum is to discourage economic migration and protect the resident community. However, this exclusionary policy has a negative impact on refugees' job prospect. They become deskilled and lacking of knowledge on UK work culture caused by long term restriction on employment (Bloch, 2000; 2004 Bloch, 2008; Stewart, 2003; Valtonen, 1994). The attainment of citizenship has been argued to help facilitate participation in a society (Baubock, 2010) and rights to access employment and residency (Brubaker, 1992). The potential for citizenship to facilitate participation in a society makes it a worthwhile notion to examine in terms of an understanding of belonging.

2.6 Citizenship as belonging

The demise of the nation state as a means of defining collective identity has been heralded due to the profound consequences of globalisation and international human rights on migration and belonging. Despite these predictions, however, it still remains a dominant force which guides the source of both political and social life, as citizenship and legal residence are still mostly conferred by the nation state (Baubock, 2010; Bloch & Chimienti, 2012; Brubaker, 2010; Papastergiadis, 2013). It is a state's recognition of legal territorial belonging, which makes citizenship a vital relationship between individuals and the state (Bhaba, 2009). It defines members of a community and those who are classed as foreigners (Triandafyllidou, 1998). Brubaker (1992) highlighted the importance of the notion of citizenship for modern societies. The importance of citizenship Brubaker (1992) argued stems from the fact that it

does not only confer political rights but also the unconditional right of access and residence in a country, its welfare benefits, and right to employment. The global structural inequalities between nations makes attainment of citizenship a decisive feature in shaping the life chances of individuals and groups (Brubaker, 1992). Thus citizenship is a concept that should be interrogated in the understanding of refugees' sense of belonging. Immigrants' willingness to naturalised has been often used as a yardstick in measuring their sense of belonging in the country of residence (Chow, 2007).

Citizenship is defined as a form of both belonging in a geographic and political community, a legal status conferred on individuals by states which gives them legal rights but also obligations that comes with such rights (Bauböck, 2010) and also a facilitator of participation in the political sphere of a society (Bauböck, 2010; Bloemraad, Korteweg & Yurdakul, 2008). Bloemraad, Korteweg and Yurdakul (2008) argued that these dimensions of citizenship can reinforce or undermine the boundaries that are inherently present in the contents of the notion of citizenship. The concept of citizenship involves processes of inclusion and exclusion by not only defining those who are members of a polity but also by conferring or denying eligibility to membership (Kivisto and Faist (2007). Thus, it is the concept through which states make definitions of belonging by defining the insiders and outsiders of a nation (Hovil, 2016; Khan & McNamara, 2017).

However, the definition of collective identity itself is argued to depend on possession of certain common markers such as language, culture and dress code which differentiates those who are perceived not to possess such features (Smith, 1991). This aspect of collective identity throws up challenges in multi-cultural and multi-ethnic societies where immigrants identifications involves their racial, ethnic and more recently religious 'difference' (Alba, 2005). Uberoi and Modood (2013) stated that though unclear what Britishness is, politicians of all dispensations have expressed a willingness for an inclusive Britishness and if based on a civic notion of Britishness, it can be shared by individuals and groups regardless of their ethnicity. It becomes especially difficult when the cultural diversity and transnational links of migrants are perceived as a threat to an allegiance to the host country, followed by moves that put the responsibility of integration singly on immigrants including refugees (Amas and Crossland, 2011; Kofman, 2005)

Citizenship can be acquired through birth (jus soli), descent through parental origins (jus sanguinis) or a combination of both. For those who do not qualify through birth or decent

such as migrants and refugees, though requirements differ from country to country, it is acquired through the path of naturalisation with basic requirements of a minimum years of residing in the host country, country knowledge and language proficiency (Bloemraad, 2006a, ICAR, 2010). Britishness is itself a contested and historically shifting notion with a different meaning for different people (Sales, 2010) with divergence in its meaning within its devolved territories (Andrews & Mycock, 2008)

Macgregor and Bailey (2012) divided the theoretical concepts behind ideas of what citizenship should entail into a communitarian notion of citizenship based on shared values to ensure a unified identity which is perceived to bring about social cohesion. The other is a cosmopolitan, post-liberal and multicultural approach to citizenship. This concept of citizenship argues that integration policies based on particular norms and values highlights the difference of newcomers who are expected to aspire to such ideals of citizenship. Morell (2009) also provided two parameters in understanding the evolvement of citizenship. A libertarian theoretical position that argues that certain aspects of human nature are universal, thus the individual's rights based on universal values and norms should be paramount above groups' rights. The communitarian position perceives human nature as determined by traditions, norms and values that emerge from a particular place, time and context. Consequently, this understanding of citizenship demands that rights are conditional on responsibilities to the community.

Citizenship for refugees is a final step in the often long journey towards substantial sanctuary (ICAR, 2010) as its rights and legality has been stated as part of the process towards belonging (Ager & Strang, 2004, 2008). However, refugees' situation has been made more precarious due to shift from conferring indefinite leave to remain which is seen as a stepping stone towards citizenship, to an initial temporary five years' refugee status in the UK which came into effect in 2005 (Da Lomba, 2010, ICAR, 2010). Inclusion for the asylum seekers and refugees has been argued to mean accessing and participating in the provision of services and interacting with members of the host community both locally and the wider public (Richmond, 2002). Not being able to fully exercise such rights due to being disadvantaged, vulnerable and marginal, diminishes individuals' membership and belonging (Valtonen, 2008).

Formal citizenship in itself has not been found to guarantee unquestionable everyday kinds of belonging (Waite & Cooke, 2011) because the notion of citizenship as an access to equal

rights has not managed to resolve the question of turning formal citizenship into meaningful equality or a determinative substantial citizenship (Bloemraad, Korteweg & Yurdakul, 2008; Hovil, 2016). Yuval- Davis (2006) argues that belonging and entitlement are not an automatic feature of citizenship because the question of who belongs, who does not belong, what are the commonalities with regards to people's origin, behaviour and culture have become the requirements for belonging. Yuval Davis referred to these contestations as 'the politics of belonging'.

The link between citizenship and inclusion has been debated in immigration and asylum scholarship through an in depth analysis of some exclusionary citizenship requirements policies and how they function as forms of discrimination, exclusion or barriers including cost of naturalisation compared to benefits, bureaucratic hassles, language and country knowledge tests (Bloemraad, 2006b, ICAR, 2010, Kostakopolou, 2010a). These Civic integration policies are a form of state defined requirements for national membership and belonging (Goodman, 2011; Kostakopoulou, 2010b), Such requirements coincide with an increase in ethnic diversity, debates over national identity, border controls (Mcnamara & Shohamy, 2008,), values, security, who belongs and qualifies for citizenship and who does not (Morrice, 2016).

In the UK, the focus has been on the need for citizenship tests on English and cultural knowledge in an attempt to foster a feeling of belonging and British identification amongst immigrants including refugees (McGhee, 2009; Waite, 2012). These policies came out of New Labour's attempt at encouraging a pro-active citizenship based on expectations and responsibilities on the part of new citizens to foster social cohesion and a sense of belonging into a notion of 'Britishness' (Fortier, 2010; Home Office, 2001, 2002a, 2002b, 2008; 2013; Morrice, 2016). Fortier (2010) noted that this notion of citizenship fails to acknowledge experiences of differences, not necessarily that of 'identity' but a difference with regards to variations in experiencing relational, material and cultural symbols and the power relations that creates in a society. Such differences, Fortier (2010) argued are the spaces of identification that socially constructs and position individuals and groups, which has the potential to shape their sense of identity.

Macgregor & Bailey (2012) interviews and focus group study of 20 non-EU British citizens found that rather than fostering a feeling of belonging among participants it only reinforces 'othering' due to its focus on English and cultural tests rather than encouraging a positive

view of multiculturalism and newcomers. Yuval- Davis, Anthias and Kofman (2005) noted that government focus in Britain has been the linking of citizenship to a sense of belonging by establishing it as a requirement for attaining formal citizenship, problematizing the issue of social cohesion rather than the practices of exclusion. This is perceived as a response to the failures and problems blamed on multiculturalism (Lo¨wenheim Gazit, 2009), which was supposedly manifested in the 2001 unrests in the north of England, blamed on communities living parallel lives (Cantle 2001).

This approach to Citizenship is no longer only about legal status and a responsibility to the political community and its laws, but also being responsible towards the wider community through perceived common British norms and values that views ethnic diversity as a threat to social cohesion (Etzioni, 2007; Kundnani, 2007; McGregor & Bailey 2012). However, Morrice (2016) argued that the UK citizenship tests are based on a political project of belonging and an evolutionary critique of the tests show how the test has been revised three times making it much more stringent, limiting applicants' chances of passing the test. Applicants from richer countries and countries where English is the official language have higher rate of passes compared to applicants from countries where English is not the official language and low income countries. Rather than fulfilling government claims that such policies will help foster integration and a more inclusive sense of citizenship, it has been argued that they might just do the opposite. It is creating a sense of exclusion and having a negative impact on some people's sense of belonging in the UK as the test are exclusively for immigrants and their children in response to anti- immigrant sentiments (Cooke, 2009, Etzioni, 2007). Fortier (2010) noted that the tests disadvantages applicants from refugee producing countries whose performance is often far less in terms of cultural and economic capital than applicants from other countries. Rather than easing the path to naturalisation and citizenship as required by the 1951 Geneva Convention they place further barriers towards attainment of citizenship for refugees (JCWI, 2009). Even in cases of attainment of technical citizenship it does not necessarily mean substantial citizenship for refugees' equal participation or feelings of belonging (Stewart & Mulvey, 2014).

Nunn, McMichael, Gifford and Correa-Velez (2016) study of 51 young people from refugee background in Australia found that formal state citizenship is valued and important to refugees due to the right of mobility and security it brings. The findings suggest the possibilities of travelling freely and protection from the insecurities of displacement of the refugee experience makes attaining citizenship a vital goal for interviewees in the study.

However, though attainment of citizenship helps refugees feel secure in their host countries and facilitates their mobility, it fell short of governments' expectations of meanings of citizenship that involves belongingness.

Studies on refugee citizenship in the UK mostly suggest attainment of citizenship does not actually translate into a sense of belonging. Rutter, Cooley, Reynolds and Sheldon (2007) research of 30 refugees found that participants' express dual identities that includes a British identity however, despite the long period of attaining citizenship, participants still self-identify as refugees. Feelings of rejection from the host community and structural barriers relating to social inclusion and exclusion were also expressed. One Participants express feelings of security provided by citizenship, however they did not express feeling British. The attainment of a legal status of citizenship does not bring about a sense of belonging and British identity.

Morell (2009) mixed-method study of refugees and non-refugee participants including 18 refugees or asylum seekers. The study identified three different types of 'refugee citizens' the 'indifferent', whose attitude towards citizenship are mostly based on practical benefits and do gained those practical benefits, the 'pragmatic' who opted for citizenship on practical reasons but gained both practical and emotional benefits and the contented' whose reason for citizenship are both practical and emotional and did experience both. The reasons for becoming citizen include freedom of movement, obtaining work and education, the expectations of a better treatment while accessing services and their inability to choose to return to country of origin.

Stewart & Mulvey (2014) in depth qualitative study of 30 refugees in Scotland on the impact of asylum and citizenship policies found that an uncertain immigration status and constant policy changes does have a negative impact on their integration process and also creates fear, pushing them to opt for naturalisation as a means of eradicating uncertainties. Rather than government's focus on creating cohesion through citizenship, participants were mostly opting for citizenship because of the security it offers beyond seeking refuge. Empirical accounts of refugee citizenship in the UK suggests citizenship attainment decisions are not about social cohesion but rather about attaining a sense of equality rather than belonging.

Morris (2009) study on voluntary and civil society groups' legal challenges to government withdrawal of asylum seekers' welfare support explores how such actions may be utilised as a basis of cosmopolitan citizenship. The study suggests such engagements can become a

means of ‘civil repair’ in the assertion of the rights of groups that are marginalised and excluded from citizenship based on cosmopolitan virtues. As the literature on refugee citizenship suggest, citizenship is more than a legal status that is formally conferred on individuals but also involves complex aspects including the recognition of other members within a state and its exclusionary requirements (Antonsich, 2010). The feeling of full citizenship then emanates from the meanings, experiences of the migrant in relationships and interactions in the host community, rather than a piece of paper conferred by the state (Ong, 2003). The sociological exploration of citizenship then goes further than just legal documentations and granting of status but also the discourses around the everyday social constructions of citizenship (Glenn, 2011).

This chapter outlined the conceptual understanding of belonging as both a personal and social concept that is fluid, multifaceted and hybrid that also involves narratives of contestations in the construction of the ‘self’ from the ‘other’. The transnational aspect of belonging is then presented in considering belonging that straddles across national borders. The notion of ‘othering’ was highlighted as a process that different those that belong and those that don’t belong. Next the practice of ‘othering’ is shown is practice through the media and political representation of refugees and asylum seekers. Some exclusionary asylum policies are then presented in highlighting the consequences of representations. Finally, an interrogation of the concept of citizenship was presented in examining the notion as a form of belonging.

Chapter 3 Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodological approach of the research, explaining the suitability of such of an approach in terms of what it sets out to investigate and it will also explain the methods implemented and how these methods are linked in with the chosen methodology. It will also outline the study's ontological and epistemological position It will explain how a social constructionist and interpretivist approach fits in with the methods implemented in accessing participants, data collection methods, data analysis. A reflexivity section reflects an effort to shed light on the relationship between the researcher, research topic and research participants and the likely impact this might have had on the research.

3.1 Philosophical underpinnings

The decisions on a research approach relating to its design and implementation are guided by the research problem, the researcher's perspectives on what constitutes knowledge and the expected audience of the research (Creswell, 2014). The fundamental questions that guide such decisions are based on an interconnection between one's ontological, epistemological and methodological stance in the pursuit of knowledge (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). An ontological assumption constitutes the nature and form of reality, epistemological assumptions refers to the nature of the relationship between the researcher and the topic being studied and the methodology involves how the researcher goes about investigating what is being investigated (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Tuli, 2011).

3.2 Social constructionism

The framework guiding this research is a social constructionist view of the nature of reality, which posits that rather than the existence of absolute reality, there are instead a multiplicity of conflicting but yet valid realities (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Ponterotto & Grieger, 2007). Social constructionism refers to the social aspect of meaning making as meaning making is an outcome of social interactions (Burr, 2015). Meaningful realities for individuals are socially constructed from meaningful symbols of the society they live in, which guides behaviour and thoughts. Such symbolic meanings are expressed through interactions between the 'self' and the 'other'. They are socially constructed, maintained and reproduced through social interactions. Thus, even in relation to the study of the same phenomenon, individuals' construction of meaning and interpretations may be different from one individual to another (Crotty, 1998). Social constructionism is concerned with individuals' everyday social

interactions and how language is utilised in constructing meanings, realities and the societal significance of such meanings (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). The social constructionist position also involves the view that knowledge creation is a socially co-constructive endeavour through the interactions between the researcher and research participants. In other words, knowledge is a product of social processes (Ben-Ari & Enosh, 2011; Burr, 2015; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Thus, the interpretations of interviewees' meanings and perspectives are shaped and influenced by my positionalities as both a research student and someone with similar characteristics and personal experiences of the asylum seeking context and its process in the UK. A social constructionist approach thus lends itself to the exploration of African refugees' subjective sense of belonging and how the social constructions of belonging in the UK impacts on their sense of belonging

3.3 Interpretivism

Narratives by themselves are not transparent presentations of individuals' social reality. In order to understand people's narratives about themselves, they need to be interpreted in relation to the contexts of their social and political circumstances through which those narratives were shaped (Eastmond, 2007). The construction of the social world comes from peoples' interpretations of it and their actions are a result of such interpretations (Mills & Birks, 2014). Social realities are not independent occurrences away from individuals' experiences and how they understand them (Grix, 2010). Thus the research employs an interpretivist approach as the social world and human actions such as their motives, beliefs, values and discourse are shaped by social meanings (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). An interpretive approach facilitates an understanding of the social world through the perspectives and subjectivities of the participants who actually participate in the social world (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Individuals construct an identity of themselves and others through social interaction and their interpretation of such interactions (Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1934). Interpretivist epistemology also acknowledges that establishment of knowledge is not value free. Thus a researcher's choice of a research topic, how to go about investigating a topic and how data is subsequently interpreted is value laden (Edge & Richards, 1998). The research does not attempt to isolate the researchers' social experiences from the choice of the topic, the chosen method of investigation and interpretation of participants' meanings and understanding of belonging.

This study does not set out to establish participants' behaviour which can then be generalised in predicting patterns of behaviour of an entire population regarding the phenomenon being investigated (Neuman, 2003). It is rather to gain an in depth contextual understanding (Fanzafar, 2005; Tolley, Ulin, Mack, Robinson & Succop, 2016; Ulin, Robinson & Trolley, 2004), of the sense of belonging of African refugees in the North of England. The positivist notion of establishing causalities between variables and human actions is an insufficient approach in the understanding of such human experiences and situations (Edge & Richards, 1998). A reliance on statistical data does not offer a full understanding in studying the life experiences of refugees and asylum seekers (Valentine, Sporton & Nielsen, 2009)

Constructionism posits that knowledge is not passively received by humans, it is rather actively constructed, and interpretivism emphasizes the importance of human interpretation in the understanding of the social world. Thus both emphasize that an understanding of human lived experiences can only be achieved through accessing the views of those who actually lived it (Shwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). A qualitative methodology reflected this by offering methods that had the potential to ensure an in depth understanding of research participants' views and actions in their holistic contexts in their own words (Ormstrom, Spencer, Barnard & Snape, 2014; Schwandt, 1994).

3.4 Qualitative approach

A research methodology is the strategy implemented in translating the researchers' ontological and epistemological position into the guidelines through which the research will be conducted (Sarantakos, 2005). A qualitative methodology is a suitable methodology for an interpretive research approach because it seeks to understand a phenomenon directly from the perspectives of participants, their interactions and the context in which they find themselves (Creswell, 2009).

A qualitative methodology was applied because of its suitability in exploring views and perceptions of individuals and groups which may be different from dominant cultures, giving such groups and individuals a chance to express such views in their own words (Berkowitz, 1996). The study focuses on exploring human subjects and their behaviours and interactions, making an empirical qualitative approach more suitable (Alsup, 2004; Silverman, 2013) as it is an ethically and desirable approach in studying the subjective perspectives of refugees (Rodgers, 2004).

The approach taken depend on its methodological appropriateness in terms of the research questions (Patton, 1990). A quantitative methodological approach would have been limited in accessing an in depth understanding of participants' subjective meanings of belonging, rather than facilitating the study's participants' ability to freely offer personal illuminating accounts in their own words (Patton, 2015). An ethnographic approach helped in ensuring the study reflects participants' meanings, views and perception on their feelings of belonging. It emphasizes building a rapport between participants and researcher to create a conducive environment while being mindful of researcher's positionality through the study (Heyl, 2001; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010).

This study sought to explore African refugees' perceptions and interpretations of their everyday lived experiences of belonging and a qualitative approach such as narratives will help ensure participants retell such subjective experiences in their own voices (Robinson, 1998). It is through the construction of everyday lived experiences that individuals construct narratives of themselves and their identities (Anthias 2002; Bruner, 1990), not only of past experiences but also in the context of their present lives (Eastmond, 2007). Narrative approaches help illuminate participants' processes of identity construction and the outcomes of such constructions (Mclean, Pasupathi & Pals, 2007; Syed & Azmitia, 2008; 2010; Pasupathi, Wainryb & Tiwali, 2012). Through the narration of lived experiences individuals do not only offer accounts of such experiences but also offer meanings to their significance, self-perception and their perceptions of their social group (Pasupathi, Wainrayb & Twali). Narratives also help in dispelling stereotypical notions about immigrant populations, by highlight the realities and complexities of their lived experiences (De Fina, 2003).)

A narrative data collection approach is a more culturally appropriate method in studying non-western populations such as African refugees, because of its relatedness to story-telling rather than approaches that are based on western values, assumptions and norms (Ahearn, 2000). Oral traditions are a vital cultural resource within African refugee populations due to the value they attach to story-telling, songs, proverbs and information sharing within communities (Lightfoot, Blevins, Lum & Dube, 2016, McMahon, 2007). Narratives do not only shed light on participants' experiences and their self – constructions but also help in understanding how they are impacted by the predominant discourses and presumptions of society (Miller, 2017). Hence, it is an encompassing approach in grasping the plight of refugees (Eastmond, 2007) through the collection of rich in-depth data from individuals with lived experiences of the research topic (Ponterroto & Grieger, 2007). The notion of belonging

is a process that involves past and present experiences, making an approach that captures past and present narratives an appropriate methodology (Ghorashi, 2008) in bringing out participants' understanding, perceptions, and meanings of belonging and the structural impact on their agencies.

Chapter 4 Methods

4.1 Access to participants

Participants were accessed through refugee organisations in two urban areas in Yorkshire, North of England. Researching refugees in itself involves challenges of accessing participants (Temple & Moran, 2006) which necessitates approaching refugee organisations to help with accessing participants for the study. Despite my position as someone with similar characteristics and experiences as the participants, access to participants in itself was a challenge (Temple & Moran, 2006). Getting into contact with research participants with refugee status in the UK can be challenging (Stewart, 2005). Twelve Participants, eight males and four female African refugees were accessed through Refugee Organisations in the North of England. Accessing participants through refugee organisations meant gate keepers consent has to be taken into consideration in determining the process of data collection and one on one semi structured interviews rather than any other data collection methods was agreed upon.

4.2 Data collection

Semi-structured Interviews

In depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with twelve participants, eight males and four female African refugees, to access how participants make meaning of their lived experiences and how such meanings guide their actions (Hammersley & Atkinson). Participants narratives are revealed through responses to interview questions on the research topic (Eastmond, 2007). Since the study aim is to understand participants' perceptions and meaning making of their experiences of belonging, semi-structured interviews were conducted to encourage narrative accounts that highlighted how they perceived themselves and make sense of their experiences regarding their sense of belonging. Such a question can

fittingly be answered through semi structured qualitative methods which is suitable for bringing out themes in the exploration of a phenomenon (Silverman, 2013).

Interviews were conducted in English with different level of proficiency among participants. However, conducting interviews in English was not a major issue in the quality of data collected, as participants were articulate enough for the purpose of the research. Semi structured interviews ensures an inclusion of open ended questions and also questions that spontaneously emerge during the interview process (Diccicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). It allows for an incorporation of open ended questions and theoretically guided questions. This facilitates acquiring data that covers the experiences of research participants and also existing literature guided questions around research questions (Galletta, 2013). This helped in covering questions pertaining to theoretical aspects of belonging but also exploring questions covering participants' particular experiences of belonging.

Due to the flexibility of the semi- structured data collection method, interview questions can be clarified, rephrased, using prompts and probes to suit each participant (Leech, 2002; Cargan, 2007). It allows participants to freely give an in depth account on their understanding, meanings and experiences (Diccico-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). The choice of a qualitative methodological approach and a semi-structured interview data collection method is a reflection of the research question (Bloch, 2007; Schmidt, 2007). It could be argued that lived experiences can be accessed through other methods such as observation and the reading of artefacts (Silverman, 2007). However, when the aim of research is to understand the meanings research participants make of such lived experiences then, a necessary and sufficiently appropriate method is interviews (Seidman, 2013).

This study did not set out to statistically describe trends in opinions and attitudes (Creswell, 2009) of African refugees' sense of belonging in the UK, which rendered a quantitative approach unsuitable. Questionnaires and standardized interviews are closed to further elaborations (Berg, 2009; Ryan, Coughlan & Cronin, 2009) and participant observation approach are more time consuming and financially costly (Friesen, 2010). Thus, both these data collection methods would have been inappropriate for this research due to the methodological inappropriateness of questionnaires and the resource inappropriateness of a participant observation.

The interview schedule included questions that are specified and closed such as socio-demographic information and open ended questions that allow for probing, clarifications and

elaboration on responses from interviewees in a dialogical manner allowing participants the latitude to respond freely (see appendix 4). Both content and context of interview were considered as part of the process to account for issues that may arise in face to face interviews such as 'social approval' and 'interviewer effect' due to the sociodemographic backgrounds of both researcher and interviewees (Brewer, 2000; May, 2001).

4.3 Data analysis

Thematic analysis is an appropriate data analysis method for research conducted with in social constructionist approach to present accounts of participants' meanings of their experiences (Braun & Clarke, 200). Tape recorded data was transcribed for analysis. A thematic analysis was carried out on transcribed data, coded to identify common and prevalent themes identified as evidence and presented in text form (Creswell, 2013; Mills, 2014) pertaining to meanings and experiences of belonging of participants. The flexibility of this method allowed for adjusting to follow up emerging themes throughout the data analysis process (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2008). It is also a suitable method for qualitative data such as semi-structured interviews (Boyatzis, 1998; Joffe, 2012).

This study used Braun and Clarke's (2006) analytical procedure of thematic analysis. Transcribed data were repeatedly read and initial findings were written in an attempt to ensure familiarising with data. Then codes pertaining to the research aims and objectives were then initially identified from the data and then grouped under different subthemes which were then developed into different overarching themes. Study findings include excerpts of illuminating quotations regarding participants' feelings and experiences of belonging (Corden & Sainsbury, 2006) including a discussion regarding their noticeable similarity and their theoretical significance. A thematic analysis method helped in organising aspects of the data into emerging patterns of participants' responses which facilitated an interpretation of their experiences and meanings (Braun & Clark, 2006) of belonging. Simultaneously analysing interview data during data collection helped guide and facilitate a more thorough coverage of the topic being researched (Sarantakos, 2005).

4.4 Ethical considerations

The research was guided by The British Sociological Associations' (2002, 2017) guidelines on ethical practice. An application for ethical approval was submitted to the Huddersfield University School of Human and Health Sciences Research Ethics Panel (SREP) (see appendix 1), which was approved prior to commencing data collection. Robust ethical consideration helps to guarantee attention is given to an important aspect in relation to doing research with vulnerable groups (Mertens, 2012) such as refugees, special attention should be given to avoid anything that could harm their social condition such as further exclusion. Decisions should be taken throughout the process as dilemmas will arise in this balancing act (Abbot & Sapsford, 2006). Ethics should not be considered a static issue but rather considered throughout the research process from the conception of the research proposal itself, data collection and ultimately disseminating of findings (Bilger & Van Liempt, 2009). A thorough consideration was given to the topic to be studied, the appropriate interview questions and making sure participants' confidentiality and anonymity is not breached through divulging information that may inadvertently reveal the identity of the research participants.

Informed consent was not only sought as a single event at the beginning of the process but an effort was made to guarantee participants' agency and choice of involvement or termination at every stage and throughout the research. A research information sheet (see appendix 3) was designed to give details of the research to help participants not only decide whether to take part but also give permission for their personal information to be handled and disseminated before signing a consent form (Gobo, 2008). This included informing them about the inclusion of direct quotations from participants' interviews and an inclusion of contact numbers if participants decided to either withdraw participation or make a complaint.

An important aspect of the process of acquiring consent was the clarification of the issue of anonymity and confidentiality. Acquiring informed consent (see appendix 2) also involved a clarification that participation is voluntary and will not affect participants' refugee status or any application for refugee status. While the process of acquiring institutional ethical approval (in the case of this study a University ethics panel) required a clear statement on guaranteeing confidentiality, such guidelines still fell short in addressing ethical concerns that may arise in investigating something as complex and shifting as the social world (Block, Warr, Gibbs & Riggs, 2013; Brijnath & Crockett, 2010; Czymoniewicz-Klippel,). This is a

dilemma highlighted by Guillemin and Gillam (2004) as the 'procedural ethics' of ethics committees and the 'ethics in practice' that demands attention as they unexpectedly arise during the flow of the research process. The latter demands continuous scrutiny of oneself in regards to the research participants and environment. One such issue was that of how much demographic data be included in the findings (Sarantakos, 2005). Special attention was given to this issue in the study to avoid a possible betrayal of participants' identity in such a small scale qualitative study.

The purpose, benefits and how the research would be conducted was fully explained to avoid participants misunderstanding of the purpose of the research (Abbot & Sapsford, 2006; Henn et al, 2006; Hugman et al, 2011). Informed consent prior to commencing interviews involves explaining and clarifying every risk and anything that is likely to influence participants' decision to take part in the research (Ballinger & Wiles, 2006). The research information sheets (see appendix 3) was handed to participants and the purpose of research fully explained. This did not only help informed participants but also helped in showing the potential of the research to give them a voice. Harrell-Bond and Voutira (2007) recommended participants' cooperation can be sought by showing them an acknowledgement of the authenticity and relevance of their stories.

In this study I clarified and explained even though at the back of my mind the questions asked by some participants may seem to be a likely reason for refusing to agree to be recorded. Some participants asked questions unrelated to the research such as what type of work I do apart from engaging in the research. I suspected these questions were a means of making sure they cleared their suspicion about the purpose of the research. For some my explanations were still not good enough and they refused to be recorded even after informing them that I experienced the asylum process myself. My position as a researcher from University automatically made me an outsider in their eyes as I oscillate between 'sameness' and 'difference' and 'insider' and 'outsider' (Wray & Bartholomew,2010). The refugee experience is one of being mistrusted and in turn mistrusting everyone encountered from pre-flight, fleeing and place of asylum including government, immigration and uniformed officials (Hynes, 2003). Mistrust is often employed as a survival (Hynes, 2009) and a protective strategy (Ní Raghallaigh, 2013). For some participants however, they were comfortable with my links to an institution such as a university and knowledge about my personal experiences of the asylum system was all they needed to dispel their suspicions. As noted by Duvell, Triandafyllidou and Vollmer (2008), research participants may be

apprehensive over the social and psychological impact due to their involvement but may also view their participation in interviews as therapeutically beneficial and a means of carthasis (Hutchinson, Wilson & Wilson, 1994; Smith,1999). Thus an explanation of the aims, objectives and the research process was given to participants to weigh the risk and benefits of participating in the study.

Participants' real names and name of locations were replaced with pseudonyms in an effort to ensure anonymity and confidentiality in protecting participants' identities. Participants were given the choice to choose a name for the study. This approach did not only ensure anonymity but was also an act of recognising the power significance of naming and also avoid making the mistake of choosing names that may not be in agreement with perception of their background (Allen & Wiles, 2016). This decision at the initial stages of the interviews was also a confidence and rapport building exercise which is important in qualitative interviews (King & Horrocks, 2010). Participants were also reminded about their right to refuse to answer questions they are not comfortable answering.

Constructionism posits the creation of knowledge is socially constitutive through interactions between participants, researcher and the topic being researched (Ben- Ari & Enosh, 2011; Burr, 2015), thus an inclusion of a reflexivity section is necessary as a part of the methodological approach in this research. Research is not necessarily a value free endeavour but rather involves how social experiences shapes our meanings and perceptions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

The next section will outline the potential influences of the researcher on the research process and the research's influences through some reflexive moments of the research process. A reflexivity section will help shed light on the relationship between the researcher, participants and the topic being researched and the impact of such dynamics on the research (Gobo, 2008; Probst & Benson, 2014).

4.5 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is the process through which a researcher maintains an awareness of their influence on their research, the research participants and the influence they had on the researcher (Gobo, 2008; Probst & Benson, 2014). My position as a researcher from an institution like a university with all its socially inscribed meanings may indeed have positioned me as an 'outsider' for some of the research participants. However, I also do share some characteristics and experiences with the immigration process that may be similar to those of the study participants which made me an 'insider'. In empirical qualitative research that necessitates interaction with participants, there should be a constant awareness of instances where power dynamics in the relations between participants and researcher come into play (Mackenzie et al, 2007; Maiter et al, 2008). An explicit identification of the researcher's social characteristics, the values that such characteristics may confer and how they shape interpretations during the study should also be considered (Creswell, 2014; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). There is no attempt to deny the researcher may share some social experience and characteristics with the research participants. This meant a conscious attempt was made not to let this affect the research.

Reflexivity helps to ensure a consideration is given to positionalities in the research process, their dynamics and their impact on the research as a whole (Gobo, 2008; Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Talbot, 1998; Wray & Bartholomew, 2011). Reflexivity is a concept that takes into account the researchers' background not turning it into "neither an opportunity to wallow in subjectivity nor permission to engage in legitimised emoting" (Finlay, 1998, p. 455). In other words, a look at the relationship between a researcher and the topic being studied (Brannick & Coglan, 2006) without making it all about the researcher. While considering the effect of the similarities of the experiences of the researcher with that of the participants on the research, I was also aware of socio-historical positions and how they may shape interests and values in regards to the research topic. The researcher is also encouraged to consciously and explicitly analyse the dynamics between himself and research participants (Gobo, 2008; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). However, at the same time one has to be cautious of the slippery slope of not realising that the meanings and interpretations of such experiences are also subjective. The awareness of such subjectivities helped me guard the balancing act that considered the risk of the research being all about the researcher while allowing for participants' perspectives to be the focus of the study.

My experiences of the asylum system and my personal questions about my sense of belonging informs my interest in the research topic. Are my feelings about some of these questions the same as the participants' or are mine different from theirs, and is my approach and understanding of belonging the same as theirs'? My personal experiences gave me moments of a sense of belonging and a times an acute sense of not belonging. I also know that my initial experiences of the asylum system left an indelible feeling of not belonging that can take time to wipe away. However, as the concept of belonging is subjective I am also aware of the likely differences in experiences.

The similarities in experiences with the research participants is something I could not change but was viewed as something that could help me position myself throughout the research. This level of self- awareness helped in identifying the shifting and complex moments that highlighted my different roles as a research student, someone with experiences of the asylum process, as a partner and a father. The constant shifting between the boundaries of an 'insider' and 'outsider is part of researching a population and topic that is also partly a researcher's' story (Ghorashi, 2008). I had a feeling my refugee background had an effect on how comfortable participants were in revealing certain aspects of their experiences. However, there are instances where even refugee researchers can in an instance become 'outsiders' with all the potential difficulties that brings (Mestheneos, 2011). As noted by Ramji (2008), Perceived similarities between researcher and participant also seemed to have its drawback in the dynamics of the interview context when participants presumed I am supposed to understand what they are alluding to without clarifying due to my perceived 'insider-ness'. As this short excerpts illustrates:

> *"I can say I belong here to you and you will know what I mean, you know. Other people don't understand what I will mean"*
>
> *"you acting like you don't know what I'm talking about"*

I had to make a decision whether to still ask what they mean or agree that I know what they mean while contemplating how that affect how much more information they will either withhold or continue to offer.

Miller (2003) highlighted the important issue of building a relationship of trust with research participants when researching refugee communities to ensure 'backstage' access which helps in collecting data that truly reflects participants' experiences. An atmosphere of trust helps in getting through possible protective walls erected due to the mistrust that comes with the

experience of forced migration (Hynes, 2003). This issue became apparent when a potential participant insisted on going to his house where all his friends were waiting and refused to come with me to the neutral venue agreed earlier for the interview. Even though the need to do the interview was vital the extreme level of suspicion and fear exhibited warranted a decision not to pursue an interview with him. He was not comfortable and uncomfortable participants are potentially not rich data material and also an ethical breach potential. There is a fine line between providing a platform for research participants and making sure research does not become exploitative.

This event was an eye opener and a bit of a shock because I thought my background was enough to put potential participants at ease. It immediately became clear to me that while my background may put some participants at ease, it was not enough for every potential participant. Explaining the research to gain informed consent became a problem in this case. However, this is a line I was not comfortable crossing but rather chose to stay within. I could not view myself as an ethical researcher if I had based my decisions only on obtaining interviews without considerations on interviewees' unwillingness to proceed. My initial assumptions about my position as an 'insider' were challenged and my position as a University student researcher 'outsider' became apparent.

The issue of trust and mistrust should be given utmost consideration in the study of refugees (Hynes, 2003). The encounter with the suspicious potential participants reminded me of the years when I mistrusted and suspicious of almost everyone. For example, being questioned about my health by a doctor, it felt like I was actually being questioned as a means of getting information for the Home office. More suspiciously, the housing officer's unexpected visit was viewed as trying to gain information on one's daily movements rather than a review of my accommodation. The world of the asylum seeker and a refugee is understandably full of suspicion and mistrust because of societal representations and not so smooth daily interactions with others.

The cultural specificity of what is defined as ethical can be a challenge in circumstances where ethics in research guidelines contradicts ethics in research participants culture. This dilemma demands a very careful balancing act in research with refugees (Birman, 2006). Some of my interviewees did not understand why they have to sign a consent form before commencing interviews. In their mind 'a word of mouth' is sufficient while a signing of some document was viewed as only for legal matters. I had to carefully explain while making sure I

do not alienate the research participants without whom this research would not have been possible. As the process of asylum application involves interviews to determine qualification for refugee status, for some participants an association was made between refugee application interviews and a formal research interview (Ellis, Kia-Keating, Yusuf, Lincoln & Knur, 2007), and some participants actually asked the question whether this has anything to do with their status (A participant actually mentioned he had refugee status already and whether he needs to take part in an interview at all).

Another issue that had to be considered during interviews was about when to say something and when to remain silent. Instances of participant's pauses and hesitations required a decision to either go on to the next question, be silent for a bit longer or utter something to encourage them to continue talking. Being silent for a bit longer when participants gave their responses that seemed incomplete helped as a form of encouragement for them to keep talking. Jumping straight to the next question on the other hand might have given the impression that I had heard enough about that particular issue. Narrative approach interviews involves listening attentively (Kelly, 2010), and the interviewer's silence can help give participants the required impression that the interviews are all about what they have to say rather than the interviewer (Seidman, 2013). Interviews did take longer but it was worth it at the end as more information in open interviews can only mean a good thing. An on the spot decision had to be made when a participant forgot the fact that I am not only a student but have been through the asylum system myself. I was eager to hear more about their thoughts on that, so I decided to be silent. He compared my situation as someone who came to the UK as a student to be in a better position of safety and peace of mind compared to asylum seekers and refugees with all the negative representations and harassment from the authorities. In that world the feeling is that the asylum seeker and refugee's experiences on the one hand are different from the experiences of those that are not. At that moment I considered whether to remind them I came just like them or keep quiet until they finished sharing their perspective.

I am happy I chose not to remind them that I had similar experiences because the participant offered a lot of information on that issue. An interviewer's silence can indeed become a form of a probe (Sarantakos, 2005) as this instance proved. However, this encounter also suddenly challenges the notion of the all -powerful expert researcher as the participant challenges my knowledge of their experiences, asking me questions about how do I think they feel. In that instance the interview context was suddenly switched from that of power to that of vulnerability for me. My willingness to remind them that I too had been an asylum seeker

appeared to enhance the level of rapport I had with some participants. However, this disclosure created an emotionally charged atmosphere due to the similarities of experiences with participants.

I was indeed mindful of potential emotional distress and vulnerability of both participants and myself due to the sensitivity of the topic when conducting interviews as they covered shared emotional experiences (Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen & Liamputong, 2009; Lee, 1993; Lee & Ranzetti, 1993). Support mechanisms for dealing with emotional distress were set out in the participants' information sheet. This included providing information about counselling services available (see appendix 4). Making the decision to pursue a topic that is as personal as refugee belonging itself triggered some deep thoughts about how my experiences of this process might affect me (Gilgun, 2008). My initial conclusion on this important aspect of researching a population with similar characteristics and experiences, is that I am possibly desensitised against any emotional aspects of its experiences. However, I immediately realised when commencing interviews that this research will potentially lead to a reliving of the hurt and pain involved in the process of seeking asylum itself. This is evidenced in an excerpt from my research diary which reads:

First set of interviews out of the way. A surprisingly interesting but also some surprisingly very difficult interview with a Zimbabwean lady. Her daughter not able to access student loans for university was really upsetting for her but also brought memories of helpless years of waiting to access loans. Tears flowed from both participant and interviewer while keeping an eye on the door at such a potentially embarrassing moment

In this excerpt my response to this participant's responses are both of someone who went through similar experiences of being denied educational opportunities while an asylum seeker and also as a father. Thus I could relate to such feelings of helplessness. Such a distressing moment prompted an immediate stop to assess whether both the participant and I were emotionally alright before carrying on with the interview. Another consideration was that someone from the centre might walk in to the interview room and terminate the interview.

My reflections on the personal meanings of participants' experiences, I believe, helped create a deep connection with them which helped in their willingness to open up further. The motivations behind participants agreeing to take part in research interviews impacts on participants' level of revelation and quality of the data collected (Grang & Cook, 2007). Talking to someone who they believe understood this important aspect of their lives and who

they are, makes the process worthwhile. They frequently expressed the lack of understanding of the concept of seeking asylum and being a refugee in wider society. Our social experiences and situated-ness in the world we live in do influence our constructions and interpretations. Researchers are affected by their topic of inquiry and research participants are also affected by researchers (Finlay, 2006; Gray, 2014, Silverman, 2013).

There was this constant awareness of the dynamics between the researcher and the participants and how this impacts the process itself (Gobo, 2008). There was an awareness that my sharing might affect the process in terms of what participants became willing to share. The interview process involved a constant weighing up of my level of self-revelation (Crang & Cook, 2007) and how that helped or hindered participants' feeling comfortable in revealing more about their experiences. This included how much do I reveal about my experiences and when, and the effect this may or may not have on the dynamics of the interviews. I was a bit surprised at my level of self- revelation. As interviews become more relaxed I found myself revealing more about my own experiences.

An important aspect of the interview process with participants was revisiting accounts of past experiences. The similarities in experiences between myself and the research participants may have provided me with the knowledge of how much probing to apply on certain issues and when to hold back. The understanding of the movements in this intricate dance was vital in creating a much more comfortable environment for both interviewer and interviewee- a prerequisite for good interviews.

Explaining the process of the research was a bit awkward as I was concerned participants might feel I was explaining too much. The responsibility of clarifications was balanced with the worry not to give an impression of the all- knowing researcher and its consequent impact on the quality of rapport. All these decisions were made based on what would have been of concern and worry to me if I were to be approached to take part in any interviews about my personal experiences.

In this chapter I have outlined the appropriate methodological approach that ensured a thorough exploration of the research question and the methods that were applied in doing so. I also provided the considerations that were taken in ensuring an ethically sound research in the study of a refugee population. Finally, a reflexivity section that shed light on the relationship between the researcher, the participant and the research topic. The next chapter presents the research findings

Chapter 5 Discussion and findings

In this chapter the findings of research will be presented including direct quotes from participants' narratives to highlight the four main themes that emerge from analysis of interviews in participants own words. The first section deals with the first theme which deals with participants' sense of belonging. The second section presents the findings of the impact of media and political representations on their sense of belonging, the third section deals with the impact of asylum policies on their sense of belonging and finally the findings on the notion of citizenship as a form of belonging.

5.1 Belonging

The research aims to explore participants sense of belonging and what facilitates social cohesion. To answer this question, Participants were asked the question whether they feel they belong in the UK. Participants meanings and understanding of belonging are expressed through the perceived discriminatory barriers that impede their sense of belonging. They express their perceptions of discrimination in relation to their refugee identity, racial identity, and religious identity. Belonging is also expressed in regards to place and context and finally belonging is also expressed in transnational and simultaneous terms between the UK as the host country and also their country of origin.

5.1.1 Discrimination-Barriers to belonging

Participants interview narratives included references to their experiences of discrimination as a barrier to their sense of belonging. They related these experiences to their refugee 'identity', racial 'identity' and 'religious identity'.

Refuge-ness

Participants related their experience of discrimination in terms of their perceived identity as refugees and the rejections and discrimination that comes with the label. These experiences are expressed as barriers to their sense of belonging.

> *"Even though it seems I have my freedom but it's not. We don't, we are treated differently from others because the name refugee or asylum seeker, as soon as that comes, you are looked at different, not wanted anymore or something. Even though we are normal human beings like everyone…That's where the paper thing comes from. I'm giving you something and say 'hey do whatever you want then if things get difficult then you think maybe they don't want me here. If you don't make me safe, confident to express my freedom to do what I wanted. Even though it seems I have my freedom but it's not." (Abdul from Ivory Coast)*

> *"The problem is not you or me, the problem is, do this people accept we are part of this country. Do you think they see us as part of England?... The people in this country see us as a foreigner, you acting like you don't know what I'm talking about… Refugees and asylum seekers are seen as a problem. If somebody see you as a problem, then you are not welcome. When did you hear 'oh we don't have enough refugees this year, we want more refugee'. All you hear 'send them back where they come from, this country is full' (Adam from Ethiopia)*

Abdul utilises the universal notion of humanity to dispel and contest their dehumanisation which includes not being able to fully enjoy the expression of freedom to do whatever he wants like others in the community. Rather than a means to freedom having legal refugee status is being associated with a lack of freedom. Restrictions to participate in the things that are collective social norms that connect the 'self' to society are perceived as a form of exclusion (May, 2011). The perceptions of the 'problematic' refugees are also perceived as the signifiers and justifications for their discrimination and exclusion. This can be related to Foucault (cited in Rabinow, 1994) concept of 'problematisation'. Refugees are 'marked' as a 'problem' to society and then their exclusion is justified as a solution.

> *"Also I think if you are refugee, refugees can never belong here…the first time you come they start telling you don't belong here, so it's hard to forget these things. You are rejected from day one, you can only do this and you are not allowed to do so many things. If you believe somebody don't want you in this country it become very, very difficult to say you belong here. I actually think me and my family are only here because we have been given papers but having papers don't mean you belong in this country. It only means you are here but belonging is different. They have to want you to belong here first" (Cecilia from Zimbabwe).*

Rachel referred to the initial experiences of the legal restrictions to what they were allowed to do as asylum seekers as rejection which left a lasting impact on her sense of belonging. Participant's narratives include the usage of both asylum seeker and refugee interchangeably indicating a slippage of language relating to how refugees and asylum seekers are conflated in immigration discourse. This underscore the importance of their experiences as asylum seekers which informs aspects of their self-construction and identity as a group that are discriminated against and perceived as not belonging. Belonging is more than legal refugee status to reside in the country but related to experiences of discrimination. The discourse on asylum and refugee issues are perceived to be parallel to those around European migrants which include their perceived competition for housing and employment.

> *"Of course. I feel I'm not welcome. They are talking about migrants. So I know they are talking about me. It's the same things, jobs, houses. What they say about Brexit, is what they say about asylum" (Roger from Uganda).*
>
> *"Before it was only about asylum seeker and refugees. Now it's different, asylum seeker and Brexit together. Every day you hear somebody was attack when this thing start, it is worse now, if you are not white person I think you, I think someone will attack you now because every day you hear something. Some people want everybody to go back where they come from, this country change you know." (Margaret from Burundi)*

Participants narratives illustrate how the discourse on immigration around Brexit and the increased level of hate crime (Bulman, 2017; Burnett, 2017; Caporaso, 2018; Goodwin & Milazzo, 2017), left an added level of insecurity for refugees in terms of belonging and fear for physical safety. This suggest any exclusionary and discriminatory discourse over immigration in society diminishes feelings of belonging of individuals and groups with an insecure sense of belonging (Grant, 2016). Another source of their perceived 'difference' and discrimination expressed in participants' narratives is their 'race'.

Race

Participants also referred to their 'race' as a source of their discrimination and exclusion from belonging

> *"It's not easy for black people because if you are black they think he is not from here (Imran from Sudan).*

> *"When people say that they know it's not full, they mean it's full of different people they don't want. This is the problem and you can't hide it. If I am white refugee maybe is different but with this colour, where you going to hide" (Adam from Ethiopia).*

The visual difference of skin colour and 'race' are perceived to be difficult to escape. Historically, racialized notions of 'difference' has been expressed as a justification in the categorisations of belonging and exclusion in 1950s Britain. 'Coloured' colonial immigrants were perceived as not absorbable while white emigrants are argued to be easily absorbable (Hampshire, 2005). This suggest the perceived 'difference' of 'race' is has always been a constant narrative in immigration discourse.

> *"I belong here yes. I am British. If you ask my children where they from they always say they are British and its true. I don't have a problem for that because they only know this country. But I'm not stupid, I know everybody in my* country *don't have problem with me but here is different. No body tell me I'm not from Eritrea but I know in this country they have a problem if I say I'm British… oh, they will ask you again many times 'where are you from really?'. If you have sense it means you are not part of here, you are part of another country. So you know where you really belong. My children say 'mummy that girl say I am not British'. I told them they are British but I know the problem. Many people don't like when you say you British in this country but where they want my children to go." (Rachel from Eritrea).*

Rachel process of belonging is illustrated in an emphatic claim to Britishness for herself and her children and the next quote from Cecilia also indicate identifying with Britain.

> *"There is belonging but also you have belong, belong. I don't think I belong here honestly. I don't think so. In my head it's like I belong here but for white people I think it's difficult for them to accept we belong here… well, first, I come from a different country and another problem for them I think it's the colour, if you are not black I think they will accept but because of the colour they don't accept us. The first time you meet with people, they always ask you which country you are from, they are telling you 'you don't belong here'. I think if you ask people here now where I belong I think they will not say this country, they will say may be Africa, may be they will say, one African country for sure." (Cecilia from Zimbabwe).*

> *"I come to realise that whether you are refugee or not as long as you have this colour the picture still stands the same……they say things like 'when are you going back?'. That question carries a lot of weight, it carries a lot of things that is going in their mind, you know. So when they ask question like that you will know what they are thinking about. They don't care whether you are a refugee, asylum seeker or where you come from. They just know you are different. 'Go back where you come from you are not welcome' (David from Cameroon).*

Participants' responses indicate experiences of discrimination erodes identification with country of residence while triggering a sense of belonging to the country of origin. There were self-identifications with Britain in participants' narrative but the questions of where they really come from are perceived as a form of exclusion from 'Britishness' and a narrative that excluded their 'looks'. Flam and Beauzamy (2008) noted that these questions are an imposition of a definition of foreign-ness which is often related to being 'black'. Participants also equated Britishness to 'whiteness' harking back to Paul Gilroy (1978) references to the notion of the perceived incompatibility of non- whites to Britishness. This is evident in Hatoss (2012) study of Sudanese refugees in Australia who perceived questions from main stream Australians about where they come from as a questioning of their identity and being positioned as 'outsiders'. As Brah (1996) highlighted, the body is inscribed with signifiers that does not allow individuals to just 'be' without being challenged to state an identity. According to Brah (1996), the body matters because discourses around it are vital in the processes of racialisation which construct individuals and groups of certain descents as 'outsiders' in Britain.

Britishness have been constructed around racialized discourse that positioned 'whiteness' as belonging and 'blackness' and minority identities as excluded (Carter, Harris and Joshi, 1987; Essed & Trienekens, 2008, Hughey, 2012). These racialized notion of Britishness involves historical discourses of 'race', immigration and citizenship which excludes and limit the ability of certain groups to experience substantive citizenship (Perry, 2015; Scharwz, 2011). For the research participants their skin-color and their refugee 'identity' makes their 'othering' a double experience of exclusion (Dandy & Pe-Pua, 2015).

> "*They will never agree we belong here. If you want to know let me do something bad here and see what will happen to me. You think they accept you now until you do something, something go wrong then bam you are back home. when you stay long in a country, you belong there, yes but they see me different from them and that's difficult.*

> *This is my country, but deep inside my heart there is something. I know if many people have the chance I can't be here…Some people are very good and nice but some people have a problem. I have a little problem with my daughter, yeah and this social service woman start to tell me 'you can't do this here, this is not like your country, you can't do like where you come from'. She says many stupid things and I know she has a problem. She doesn't know what I do in my country and she is talking" (Margaret from Burundi).*

Again there is an expression of belonging to Britain. However, reminders about the difference in the way things are done in Britain and her country of origin is perceived as manifestation of being positioned as 'different and an outsider. The phrase 'where you come from' is prevalent in participants' narratives as 'othering' resonates with Hanson-Easey and Moloney (2009) finding that 'place of origin' is a representational tool for the 'othering' of African refugees.

Essentialised cultural differences of parenting are also being utilised here as a tool of 'othering' and exclusion. Margaret perceived the questioning of her parenting approach as an indication of her 'difference'. Parenting can be pathologized in the racialized and gendered social positioning of black parents and families (Chambers, 2001, Lawrence, 1982). References to deportation also reflects the fragility of belonging. As Gibney (2013) argued that deportation demarcates the categorisation of the unconditional residence of the native citizen and the precarious, fragile and conditional residence of both the long term residence and naturalised citizen.

Cultural constructions of differences of morality can be erected as boundaries of belonging to Britishness (Garner, 2012), 'with a rhetoric of sameness which prevents any recognition of difference' (Antonsich 2010, p.650). Individuals that are positioned outside nationalistic notions of identification and belonging are left with an insecure and uncertain sense of belonging (Skey, 2013). Yuval-Davis (2011) maintained that the politics of belonging involve essentialized demarcations of national belonging such as ethnicity and shared values through which minority groups are excluded from Britishness. This finding suggest the deployment of 'whiteness' has a major impact on individuals feeling of exclusion and belonging. Participants illustrated a difference between their self -identification to Britain and their sense of not belonging emanating from their social experiences. This suggest, though related, there is yet a distinction between personal belonging and social aspects of belonging that involves contestations in 'the politics of belonging' (Antonsich, 2010; Yuval-Davis, 2006).

> *"He came back and said 'speak English this is England'… I said to him 'I'm not talking to you what is your problem. I said 'what about all this people speaking very loud and laughing, you did not tell them anything'. He said 'you are speaking like you are going to fight with him' … I said to him 'do you know what we are talking about'? He said 'African people talk too loud' I said 'you are racist' He is racist. The manager said 'you have to apologise to him'." (Abdul from Ivory coast).*

Abdul's narration illustrate how natives express their standard of normal behaviours and norms that defines difference from the outsiders' abnormality. The language spoken, the accent and tone and of speaking is interrogated as an affront to the social 'norms' and behaviours of being an 'insider'. Abdul's experiences indicate the significant social effect of possessing a non-native accent in identifying 'difference' of a social group (Deaux, 2006) and the related stigma and discrimination of migrants (Gluszcek & Davido, 2010)

> *"You know I was talking at my job about running and I said I use to run in Africa. I said 'I can beat the English guy Mo Farah'. We are joking and laughing but they said 'Mo Farah is not English! he is British'. I said 'he is from England'. My workmate said to me 'he is British, not English'. I said to him 'what do you mean?'. He said to be British you have to be born here, I think Ah! He said it is deeper and I ask him how, but Ah! I know what he means. They just laugh. They don't accept you no matter how long you are here. You know, no matter how long a tree is in water it is not crocodile, you know what I mean(laughs). A black person is a black person for them" (Imran from Sudan)*

Imran and Abdul's narration of discussions at work illustrates the shifting nature of the boundaries of belonging which can be deployed to demarcate those that belong and those that don't base on different categories of 'hierarchies of belonging' (Skey, 2013). Here 'Englishness' which is constructed as whiteness (Hall, 1992), 'race' and country of birth are deployed to perpetually question Imran's belonging.

Religious 'identity'

Participants narratives suggest Islam was one of the categories of being not accepted. The Muslim participants expressed experiences of both implicit or actual discrimination and exclusion which they attributed to their faith. The study did not set out to investigate religious discrimination. However, it was a recurring theme in the narratives of belonging for all three Muslim participants.

> *Being a Muslim and a Muslim name as well… Especially Muslim as well now, you know (Abdul from Ivory Coast)*

> *"They have a problem more if you are Muslim……I don't know but maybe people are scared of Muslims or something like that. I did nothing bad but this woman came in and said something like 'Osama' and I think maybe she did not say something like that. Another time again she said 'Osama' again when she come in and I think 'Ah!' and I said to her 'I hear what you said' but she did not even look at me. I told her 'you know, if I report you may be they sack you but you stupid woman, you don't think you have a family'. She still did not say anything but I know she said it. It happened many times to me. Some people have problem for Muslims in this country" (Imran from Sudan).*

Imran perceived his experience of islamophobic terrorist related slurs and insults as evidence of discrimination. Contrado et al (2001) study measuring ethnic related stress among undergraduates identified verbal rejection in the form of insults and slurs as a form of discrimination.

> *"Oh you can tell by the way they look at you is just different. Some people definitely treat you different when you dress in that clothes, it…yeah I wear Muslim clothes sometimes but not all the time so I know that difference. I don't know how to say it but you can tell, you know like, I don't know if they scared or don't like it. You can tell sometimes by the way some people look at you, you know there is a problem somewhere. They just avoid you like. Hmm, so I know it's not what colour clothes I have that's the problem. They don't say something but you see what they think on Facebook all the time, so I know what they thinking 'what are you doing in our country, like?'. It's difficult for every refugee but it's really double for Muslim refugee" (Musa from Sudan).*

Musa perceived his clothing as a marker of difference. Difference in clothing is perceived here as an inherent cultural marker of 'difference' (Garner & Selod, 2015), which he relates to experiences of stares and avoidance by members of the wider society. Flam and Beauzamy (2008) referred to these 'injurious' and 'malignant stares and scrutiny' in everyday encounters as 'symbolic violence'. This violence includes bodily and verbal rejection of the migrant by natives, negatively affecting their sense of belonging (p. 221-225). Contrado et al (2001) study identified avoidance in social interaction as one of the forms of discrimination.

Musa also interpreted his perceived difference through the content on social media sites, which are prevalent with islamophobic rhetoric, relating Muslim attires to extremism, depicting Muslims as the 'other' that does not belong, should be feared, deported and excluded (Awan, 2016; Faith Matters, 2014). This underscores an important implication for the understanding and examination of the shifting spaces of how 'race' and 'difference' are socially experienced. The discomfort of racialized face to face social encounters are being shifted to the digital social mediums of information technologies (Nakamura &Chow-White,

2012). Islamophobia is a form of racialisation in which 'race' is a combination of perceived inherent phenotypical and cultural characteristics including dress and religious practices (Briskman, 2015; Bansak, Hainmueller & Hangartner, 2016, Lucassen, 2018; Moosavi, 2015; Sekerka & Yacobian,2017; Weber, 2017) which negatively impact victims sense of belonging (Dunn, Klocker & Salabay, 2007).

The quotations from interview extracts suggest that a sense of belonging is not all about the claims that individuals and groups make but also impacted by the way they are perceived by the society they live and claim to belong to (Anthias, 2006; Skey, 2013). The construction of identity involves relating oneself to the other, be it an individual, group or an entire society (Bakhtin, 1981). The claiming of an identity by individuals, involves relating their claims to acceptance of the wider community (Valentine and Skelton, 2007; Visser, 2017). This finding confirms other research that found negative impacts of perceived racial categorisation and discrimination on a sense of belonging in Britain (Valentine & Sporton, 2009; Visser, 2017) and in the United states (Glick & Fouron, 2001).

Social psychological research has also attempted to shed light on the importance of understanding the everyday aspects of belonging. According to these research, exclusionary social experiences that threatens individuals sense of belonging can motivate an attention to codes and social cues which affects future social interactions (Pickett, Gardner and Knowles, 2004). Social exclusion also heightens individuals' perceptual attention to cues of social acceptance (Dewall, Maner and Rouby, 2009) and a likelihood of retaining such memories (Gardner, Pickett & Brewer, 2000), leading to expectations of a negative experience in subsequent social interactions (Maner, Dewall, Baumeister and Schaller, 2007). Experiences of negative cues of exclusion in social interactions impacted participants sense of belonging. Interview excerpts suggest participants' experiences of discrimination related to their 'Refugee-ness', 'race' and religious identity for a feeling of not belonging.

5.1.2 Contextualising spaces of belonging

The research aim was to explore the participants sense of belonging and what facilitates social cohesion. The data analysis suggests certain spaces and contexts did offer participants opportunities to have meaningful interactions with members of the wider community for an expression of a sense of belonging. Participants express a feeling of belonging in certain

spaces and places of social interactions such as employment, sport, school grounds, university campus and religious institutions

Employment

"I work in a bar at a hotel and everybody is nice and happy with you. I feel ok with everyone and everyone feel ok with me… and my neighbours I don't even speak with them. I don't know may be they hear our accent they think foreigners again. Some old people you say hi they look at you and look away. Will you say hi again?'' (Abdul from Ivory coast).

Abdul perceived the hotel bar as a possible space of belonging because of the nature of interaction with members of the wider British society, who are nicer to him as compared to the feeling of isolation and rejection from his neighbours due to his perceived foreign accent. The stigmatising potential of a non-native accent has been argued to cause prejudice and affect communication (Gluszek and Davido, 2010). The quality of social interaction at his employment help mitigate the level of isolation in his neighbourhood.

> *"I don't hate British people. Sometimes they are very nice but sometime they can change just like the whether{laughs}. Like some work mate will ask you to come out like, 'do you want to come for night out?' and they happy you come out. At work we go out when someone has birthday or something, when somebody is leaving. I don't know but everyone is like one, and we laughing and joking together no body treat you different……..no out of work we don't, is different. May be they can know I am refugee if they come. I have never been to anybody house and they don't come to my house but party time is different, you are all the same and it make you feel good. I think they ask me to come because of my dancing{laughs}. They like my dancing may be." (Margaret from Burundi).*

Even though Margaret feels rejected because of the stereotypes of being a refugee, work parties are cited as places where 'differences' don't matter and she is able to feel accepted like everyone else. Dancing for her is a practice of imposing her presence in the space of the work party venue. According to Mata-Codesal, Peperkamp and Nina-Clara (2015), recreational and leisure activities offer migrant individuals and groups such as refugees the social spaces for emotional attachments to members of the host community in their quest for maintaining continuity or adapting to changes in their lives.

Sport

Participants also indicated participation in sport activities in terms of a football fan or the actual playing of football as opportunities of developing meaningful interactions and s sense of belonging.

> *''Don't get me wrong not everybody is racist. Like when I go to the stadium it's like everybody accept you as Leeds fan. It's the jersey that matters. Everyone is the same but I don't know if those people that hug me, we all jump and hug, and hug each other for a goal but will they hug me in town I don't know'' (David from Cameroon).*

David perceived the football stadium as a space to perform belonging while questioning the possibility of receiving the same treatment outside of the football stadium by fellow football fans. His refuge-ness does not matter the only thing that matters in that context was the football shirt he had on. He illustrates the shifting spaces of inclusion and exclusion between the football stadium where he can participate in the processes of becoming a cultural 'insider' as oppose to him returning back to being an 'outsider' away from the stadium. Sport fandom is an opportunity for David to engage in identifying with other members of a football club and experience a sense of belonging in a space where the 'outsider' is the opposing team. This also suggest possibilities of meaningful interactions in a social space that were once renowned for racism and expressions of a white exclusionary British identity (Back, Crabbe & Solomos, 2001; Garland & Rowe, 2001; Ruddock, 2005). Knijnik (2015) auto-ethnographic accounts shows how an immigrants' affiliation with a football club can facilitate socialisation and a sense of belonging in a country of residence.

> *"No. I have friends from Eritrea, not English friends. I have Somali friends and many Africans also but not white people. No, I don't have. Only we play football every weekend with everybody and after we go to the town together, we go to the pub after for sometimes. I don't know if I am good footballer but I try to play {laughs}. Some people are good some people are rubbish. I am not good player but I play football in my country all the time. I don't have many things to do weekend so I like going to the field to play football in the weekend. Some English people come and some Kurdish come also but many Africans come. (Paul from Eritrea).*

Paul's social encounters were mostly limited to people of his ethnic background and other Africans. However, the football field offers a vital opportunity for social interactions with both co-ethnics and other members of the wider community. Participating in sport has been noted for facilitating a sense of belonging because it provides opportunities for social interaction and learning from people of the same or different cultural background. However,

such interactions are not found to transfer to other social spheres (Spaaij, 2013). Walseth (2008) also found participating in sport activities offers an opportunity for both social bonding among members of the same ethnic background but also social bridging with members of different ethnic background. Social bridging between immigrants and non-immigrants were limited.

However, this finding suggests sport participation can facilitate opportunities for further interactions in other social spaces. Paul's interactions in football were developed into social bridging with interethnic mixing in the Pub with members of the wider community.

It should be noted that Paul's space of interaction and interethnic mixing is a gendered space of sport practices of masculinity. Gill and Worley (2013) highlighted the gendered specific nature of activities of a community project in the North of England which reinforces appropriate notions of masculinity and femininity. Social cohesion policies should be horizontally focused rather than vertically driven from the top. It should be noted however that programmes that will advance community cohesion will be affected by government's public spending cuts (Gill & Worley, 2013). Social cohesion policies should be about utilising social spaces that facilitate meaningful interactions, and not about imposing integration based on perceived deficits of newcomers (Kundnani, 2007).

The football field also offer an escape from isolation and an opportunity for continuity of a practice he engaged in from his home country. Woodhouse and Conricode (2017) study in Sheffield found that involvement and supporting the local and national football teams offer an opportunity to shed the label of the 'other' and creates a feeling of inclusion and strength. Stone (2018) also found participation in community football facilitate a sense of belonging amongst refugees. This finding suggest sport can offer refugees the spaces to develop meaningful interactions in the process of developing a sense of belonging

School grounds and university

Participants identified school grounds as spaces for refugee parents to have meaningful interactions and develop a sense of belonging in their communities and university campus is also perceived as a space of belonging. Both the university campus and school ground to share a different identity away from their refugee 'identity'.

> *"Okay, let me say this, universities are multicultural. It is multicultural, you see a Chinese here, you see an African there, you see all kind of people there, so that feeling you don't belong is not there because it is automatic. You see, it's a multicultural environment so the question of you a refugee or asylum seeker is just not there. And good enough people know asylum seekers are not allowed to go into higher learning so the fact that you are there shows you are not. So nobody cares about your status whether you are or not'' (John from Uganda)*

John makes a distinction between the space of university and outside of the university setting. He expresses belonging in terms of seeing people like him in certain spaces. The multicultural and multi-ethnic nature of the university campus gives him a sense of comfort and belonging. His identity as a student overshadows his immigration status in the university space. The university setting is perceived as a space where his refuge-ness can be shed. In this community, the only thing he believes matters is not the question of his legal status but that of a student. Studies have found university campuses are perceived to be important inclusive, ethnically and culturally diverse spaces for developing a sense of belonging (Glass, Wongtrirat and Buus 2015; Stebleton, Soria, Huesman and Torres, 2014).

> *"Oh yeah, yeah they have parents' evenings, parties for Christmas and Halloween. They are friendly, so that makes me feel good. They make you feel you are welcome that's why I always like to go there because all parents talk to you as parent. When people see you, I see them in town but they don't try to talk to me…I don't know but at my child's school they are nice to me but in town they just don't like to speak. I think everybody like to speak because of their children to other parents. That's a good thing, I think. Also the teachers try to make parents mix together to talk together, it makes you don't feel different" (Imran from Sudan).*

Imran pointed out the school as a space where he feels welcome and not different from other parents. He makes a contrast from interactions with other parents in town, which are not so cordial. The space of the school grounds facilitates interaction with other parents.

> *"When you have children, you have to be nice, even if it's difficult some times. Children make you talk to people even if you don't like it. They will tell you 'this is my friend's mum' and now you start to talk to them. They ask me to bring food from my country to sell in the school sometimes... That is really nice. I teach them and they teach me also how to make some food. No we become friends with some. It is very good because of food but also for the children (Rachel from Eritrea).*

Participating and interactions in food preparation and exchange of cooking recipes becomes a gendered performance of femininity. This is pertinent to Parsons (2015) notion of the

practice of 'foodways' which involves the social interactions in preparing, cooking and sharing food in the performances and practices of gender (Butler, 1999; Zimmermann, 1987)

> *"Yes I do. Yes, I did take in a couple of school events for a while now and meet parents as well which is really good. You have to know your children's friends and their parents what they do, where they come from and all that because you are learning from them and makes you feel safe. They know you and you know them, you see. You get information because it's the few places you can talk and meet people who will be nice to you because of your children" (Abdul from Ivory Coast).*

Rather than just refugees, the school space provided an opportunity for Imran, Rachel and Abdul to be one of the parents like other parents in their communities which indicates school grounds can offer spaces for meaningful interactions in participants' comparisons of experiences away from the school grounds. Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst (2005) found that school grounds offer migrants parents a means of connecting to their community through interactions with other parents and teachers suggesting belonging involves conscious choices between spaces of belonging and exclusion. Participants roles as parents are shared with other parents in the context of the school grounds where their refugee identity became less significant, indicating the fluidity, contextual and social roles aspect of identity (Josselson & Harway, 2012).

Religious spaces

Participants also identified religious spaces as places of meaningful interaction and expressing a sense of belonging.

> ***"****We do bible study and also parties some times. You have a lot of African people and English people too. They love my children and help me many times……You go anywhere they say how long you are here, where are you from, bring a letter from Home Office. No body ask for your papers in church, you go and sit that's it" (Margaret from Burundi)*

Here, the church is a place where 'difference' can be shed and establish social bonds with fellow Africans but also social bridges with members of the host society who offered help and support. The church here is a place of inclusion while other places are perceived as exclusionary and restrictive.

> *"…and also the church, the church was very helpful. I have to be in a comfortable place to say I am a refugee. I'm a Christian, I go to church and every place of worship is a place of freedom. A place where, I don't know how best I could say, where you feel free, you feel you are one body……. I was like adopted by a family at*

> *the church, that I met at the church, yeah. I spent 5 years trying to prove I am genuine. This is my story, people from the family that adopted me going to Uganda interviewing my close family members in Uganda'' (Roger, Ugandan).*

Roger also perceive the church as a comfortable space to express himself without the need to conceal his refugee identity which gives him a sense of freedom and belonging. The church became a space for building social networks that offered social bridges that became a beneficial resource. Religious centres have been found to offer opportunities such as mentorship and support for refugees (Ehrkamp & Nagel, 2012), increase social networks (Wang & Handy, 2014), a space where difference can be performed rather than concealed, foster intercultural mixing and provide spaces for belonging (Foley & Hoge, 2007; Watson, 2009)

The quotations suggest participants manage to perform belonging in certain spaces. The bar, the football stadium, school, University and religious settings are perceived as spaces where belonging can be performed as oppose to other spaces where their belonging is challenged. These venues of cultural significance and the social interactions they provide do have positive contextual influences on participants' sense of belonging. Painter and philo (1995) argued that citizenship involves the occupation of public spaces without victimisation and being made to feel uncomfortable. Certain places and spaces offer a possibility of enacting a sense of belonging within the host society. This suggests short term interactions and encounters in certain spaces with members of the host community can offer individuals opportunities to practice belonging as long as such interactions are meaningful, welcoming and accommodating. This points to the social relevance of social space (Dewey, 1934; Soja 2010) in which aspects of identity can be achieved through social interactions (De Fina (2007). Thus, identities are not inherently present in people but are imbedded in actions (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004).

This underscores the importance of bridging social networks with individuals and from the wider community (Ager & Strang, 2008) for a quality and meaningful connections for building community cohesion and a shared sense of belonging (Block, 2008). Employment, recreational, schools, university and religious spaces can be a vital environment for refugees to express and develop their choices for certain culturally significant arenas that offer opportunities for their recognition and belonging. These spaces create an environment for meaningful interactions within host communities, opportunities to improve language skills

and an exposure to other cultural spheres of the host communities (Campbell, Glover and Laryea, 2016; Tirone and Pedlar, 2005).

This suggest that the boundaries of belonging are not as defined but rather something that can be enacted, practised and performed. In relation to space and identity, Massey (2004) maintained that rather than fixed, identities are constituted in contested and relational processes of engagements and interactions in public spaces. Through interaction in certain spaces the participants were able to differentiate between spaces of belonging and spaces of exclusion. This finding points to the changing and contextual nature of identities. Social identity theory acknowledges individuals and groups' multiple social identities but also the changing and contextual saliency of a particular identity at a particular time and space (Hogg, Abrams, Otten & Hinkle, 2004). Through interactions in certain spaces, participants' identities as work mates, parents and sport fan became more salient in such contexts than their refugee 'identity'. It is in such mundane spaces that individuals are able to shift their perceptions between the self and the other in a complex, multifaceted and relational way (Askins, 2015).

5.1.3. Transnational belonging

Participants understanding of belonging also involved a transnational sense of belonging to both the UK and their countries of origin. This involves making distinctions and contradictions between country of origin and country of residence. Transnational practices are also illustrated through communication links with the country of origin and the sending of remittances.

Between two camps

> *"It's difficult to say I belong here or country of origin. There is a difference between me and my family now, of course. So I cannot deny this country as well and my family back home they call me British as well because of the things I do a times. 'You British people' even in my country. It's confusing'' (Adam from Ethiopia).*

Adam expressed a more flexible identification with both the UK and his country of origin. He explains this by comparing himself to his family back in his country of origin who refer to

him as British which makes him see himself as British. Doing things that are seen as British defines him as British.

> *"I think I belong here sometimes but it's funny, I feel I am British when people back home say, like when you say something about what is happening in your country on Facebook……. they say you don't belong here anymore but some people tell you to go home here. So I will say I have two countries but no one wants me. This country has given me a lot, I'm safe here, I have my shop. {laughs} (David from Cameroon).*

This indicates the contradictory and contested nature of belonging Both Adam and David's experiences of being classified as not belonging to their countries of origin and country of residence meant they opted for a more fluid sense of belonging. Hall (1992) highlighted this fluid and contradictory aspect of identity as individuals' identities are perpetually being shifted around.

> *"I don't know, because when I went to Uganda for holiday I found it difficult. Then I was like no, I want to go back home. Even when I say home, meaning UK, is it home? I don't know where home is to be honest, I don't know. But I love this country to death, I love this country, I treasure this country. Even when there is football or anything I just, when I hear some British personnel had something wrong abroad I feel it deep down". (Roger from Uganda).*

Here a contradictory love- hate sense of home is being expressed in an effort to anchor belonging to a particular place. This contradiction suggest home is more than a single place but also a symbolic space of comfort and familiarity (Hooks, 2009). More than a legal status, belonging involves emotional attachments to a sense of 'at home' and feeling of safety (Yuval-Davis, Anthias & Kofman)

> *"It's like you always want to go back home but you want to run quickly to come back to England. That makes you think, I think we have home here and home back home. I pretend I belong here but I know I belong to my country at times. It's the food and your family in your country you can't forget…no, no, there is good food here but it is different{laughs}. Do you know you miss everything back home when you are in England and you miss everything in England when you go back home? Like the way you feel is really like you belong here and you belong in your country" (Margaret from Burundi)*

In her narration Margaret feels she is in between her country of origin and her country of residence, which make her feel she belong in both countries. Food and family experiences are cited for a feeling of belonging to country of origin while acknowledging a strong sense of affiliation to Britain

> *"For me I think it is not easy to choose between England and Eritrea. When you live somewhere for some time it's very hard to refuse. My life is in this country. You see, we always say we are going back home but I will tell you may be we never go back home. Many refugees believe we are going back but maybe it's a big lie… It is difficult to stop thinking about my country and many things there and my family, many good things also. If you live in two places you also belong to all of them…… yeah, yeah I think I am in this country long so I belong here because I am here but I belong in my country also because my heart is there, the food is not like here. I listen to the music all the time, it's different, you know. You know what I mean." (Rachel from Eritrea).*

Rachel referred to the transnational emotions of 'the myth of return' (Anwar, 1979) acknowledging the difficult and complicated experiences between the choice of return to the country of origin and the likelihood of never permanently returning. Castles (2002) argued that migrants' oral narratives have shown how they often contradictorily fluctuate between the complexities of either returning to country of origin or not. The experiences with family, food and music are also conjured here to express an emotional belonging to the country of origin while referring to the reality of a territorial belonging within Britain. Participants' concept of 'home' as 'in-between-ness' resonates with Staehili and Nagel (2006) study finding of a transnational- connections of 'here' and 'there'. Belonging is not only about territorial confinement but also about the experiences from living in other places (Brah, 1996). Excerpts from this study data are illustrative of participants transnational belonging between two places. Through nostalgic romantic constructs of aspects of country of origin such as family ties, food and music and participating in the social and political issues of country of origin they were able to maintain transnational ties.

Communication

The availability of cheap phone calling cards and mobile phones (Vertovec, 2004) and the internet has made it increasingly possible for migrants to establish transnational networks within their county of residence and countries of origin (Oiarzabal & Reips, 2012). Participants in this study expressed the importance of phones and the internet in maintaining transnational links.

> *"Now it's difficult to get lost from your country which is good. I think people that come long, long time ago its difficult and they just lost from home. Mobile phone is everywhere now, so if you get lost it mean you don't want to know about everything in your country. On Facebook and our WhatsApp group I can find out anything now about my country. But I think some people back home don't like when you say bad*

> *things about the government but it's true. I don't say it everywhere but I can say what I like, yeah, not just about the government. British people say what they like not like there, here we say what we like, its freedom. If you like you talk about food and people put pictures from my country, nice pictures of our food. If anything happens now, you know today, It's like you are there really even when you belong here, I don't know but yeah that's it…yeah, phone calls and social media and its easy now and at least once a week (Abdul from Ivory Coast).*

Abdul expressed the availability of the communication technology that facilitates a transnational existence as compared to earlier migrants who found it difficult to keep in touch with country of origin. He expresses the things that makes him feel he belongs in Britain such as his freedom to say whatever he likes. The notion of freedom of speech is utilised as a construction of Britishness, juxtaposed to an enhanced construction of food from the country of origin, suggesting a connection to both countries.

> *"Yeah, yeah I do. I contact them. Phone cards, now things have changed. There is WhatsApp, there's Skype and other things. You can even see everyone nowadays. They show you their new children and everything which is good and you don't need to travel around the world to stay in touch which is good" (David from Cameroon)*

Communication is used not to only keep in touch but it provides opportunities for family bonding.

> *"Yeah I stay in contact, WhatsApp, phone cards, Facebook. I hate Facebook but its quiet useful…well I hate it because when you talk about politics some people get a bit, a bit offended back home, you know. People in Europe are more open to different views not like those back home. Yeah, so I do, yeah" (Roger from Uganda)*

This reflects the transnational nature of refugee belonging. The excerpts from Abdul, David and Roger suggests the internet and other forms of communication are vital aspects of keeping links with country of origin. This finding resonates with other studies that found that the information technologies facilitate transnational interactions and belonging (Kissau and Hunger2010; Parham 2004; Wilding 2012), through participation in multiple social and political spaces (Nedelcu, 2012; vertovec, 2009).

Remittances

Remittances are a vital aspect of maintaining transnational practices (Vertovec, 2004). This is reflected in participants' narratives in this study who overwhelmingly narrated sending remittances to the country of origin.

"Yeah I do send help back home. Absolutely, it drains you but you trying to help as much as you can. I still get shock every time I see beggars I cry, honestly I cry." (Roger from Uganda)

"You have, oh you have to, your people have to live too. It's not easy, a times you have to sacrifice a lot and it affect my children really hard but you have to help." (Rachel from Eritrea)

"I do send financial help. It's good to help but you have responsibility here…yeah it feels like you have pressure to give back to your community back home and then with the situation here as well if you don't have a good job or you are not working it's difficult. It can affect how much you can do here" (Abdul from Ivory Coast).

"Of course, my mum just passed away. I sent money because she might need something…you have to help. We have a problem in our part of the country, I'm from the English side you see, we have a problem with the French side, so you have to help but it affects many things here also. I send so much but my brother destroyed everything you see". (David from Cameroon)

David's remittances are not only for family members but also involves helping a political cause in his country of origin. He also refers to the negative impact of remittance on his financial situation. Which has been highlighted as a transnational activity

"Yeah, I help my family. I left my family they are there now. Somebody help me to find them. My friend brother help find my family but I have to send money for help" (Mary from DRC)

The excerpts from participants illustrate the importance of remittances to their countries of origin. However, what is apparently clear from this study is the impact of remittances on the participants' financial situation. Even though they expressed the importance of remittances to their countries origin, they also express the negative impact of remittances on their ability to fulfil their responsibilities in the country of residence. Literature on migrant remittances are mostly focused on impact of remittances on migrants' country of origin (Chami, Fullenkamp & Jahjah, 2005; Jha, Sugiyarto & Vargas-Silva, 2010; Orozco, 2002; Taylor, 2002, Yang,

2011) while ignoring the potential effects this may have on the senders (de Montclos, 2003, Morell, 2008)

Participants in this study experience of belonging is straddling both the UK and the country of origin. Du Bois (cited in Bruce, 1992, p.301) referred to this conflict of where one actually belong due to experiences of exclusion and discrimination as "double consciousness". Their belonging is questioned by their experiences with people in their countries of origin who remind them they don't belong there anymore while at the same time they are reminded in the UK about where they come from. Immigrants including refugees live more transnational lives, residing in the host country while simultaneously maintaining social, cultural, political and economic links with their countries of origin (Cheran, 2006; Glick & Fouron, 2001; Tolley, 2011). Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan (2003) noted this tension between the expected discourse of a singular notion of belonging of migrants and the simultaneity of their belonging.

Valentine, Sporton and Nielsen also (2009) found a possibility of an integration process that enables participation in the host country without a need to forgo links to country of origin which provides for a more secure sense of belonging. Yuval-Davis and Kaptani (2008) study of Kosovan, Somali and Kurdish refugees also found a transnational and multi-layered sense of belonging among participants where possible. Oneill and Hubbard (2010) also found a 'double consciousness' of belonging 'here' and 'there' amongst asylum seekers, refugees and undocumented migrants in East midlands, England. This finding suggest migrant groups and individuals strategies of belonging involves a constant negotiation in relation to both their country of origin and their host society. Such strategies include elements of both countries in a transnational consciousness rather than a single form of loyalty and attachment (Castles, 2002). The aim of this research is to explore a sense of belonging of African refugees in the North of England. This finding however, point to a more transnational sense of belonging rather that a singular sense of belonging

The next theme of the research findings will be directed at the impact of political and media representations on participants' sense of belonging. The data suggests participants perceived media and political representations of refugees and asylum seekers as an obstacle to their feelings of a sense of belonging. They illustrated this through their narratives which focuses on labelling, selective reporting and generalisation.

5.2 The impact of media and political representations on belonging

Another theme that emerge from the thematic analysis of the data is the impact of media and political representations on participants' sense of belonging. The study set out to explore participants' sense of belonging. During interviews discussions about belonging, media and political representations were highlighted by participants as a hindrance to their sense of belonging due to the prevalence of negative discourse on asylum seekers and refugees. Three subthemes emerged from data analysis linked to media and political representations. These are (1) The labelling of asylum seekers and refugees in media and political representations

(2) The selective reporting and ignoring of asylum seekers and refugees' viewpoints in their portrayal

(3) The generalisation of negative stereotypes of asylum seekers and refugees

Expressing the role of discourse in the discrimination against groups, Fowler (1991, p.94) noted that:

> "Language provides names for categories and so helps to set their boundaries and relationships; and discourse allows these names to be spoken and written frequently so contributing to the apparent reality and currencies of categories"

Exploring the impact of political and media discourse on participants' sense of belonging, helps to illustrate the function of discourse in the construction processes of social identities and social relationships (Crotty, 1998; Fairclough, 1995). It is through the context of discourses that categorisations are produced (Hall, 1997) between those who belong and those who do not. Discourse is socially constructed and the discourse around asylum seekers and refugees in Britain construct them as a deviant 'other' which has social consequences for these individuals and social group (Banks, 2008).

5.2.1 Labelling

The first sub theme of impact of media and political messages on participants is the effect of labelling on their sense of belonging. 8 out of 12 participants mentioned negative labels as a source of resentment and discrimination from the wider public which impacts on their sense of belonging.

> *"The news they have two face innit. They always say bad things about asylum seekers and refugees. They say as if we are all bad, 'they take our benefit, they take our house, they take our jobs, eh they take our appointments for NHS'. Many things, makes me very sad, very bad so, not only for me but everyone. You talk about to belong; these things they say make me feel I don't belong here. How can you feel you belong like that?" (Adam from Ethiopia).*

The participant expressed the negative labels attributed to refugees and asylum seekers as undeservingly taking welfare benefits, houses, jobs and hospital appointments as bad for not only himself but for all refugees and asylum seekers. Such labels as 'takers' are perceived as a manifestation of him not belonging in the UK. The use of 'they' refers to himself and other asylum seekers and refugees while 'our' refers to the British public to emphasize the media's distinction between the refugee 'outsider' and the British public 'insider'. Carter, Harris and Joshi (1987) examination of the policies of 1951-55 conservative governments' policies suggested the features of historical discourse on immigration have not changed despite the likely changes in forms of migration.

There are historical parallels between racialized constructs of refugees reminiscent of post-war migrants and other immigrant populations. Such constructions are historically mostly based on their problematization in political and media discourse. Problematization is the analysing and concluding that an issue is problematic and then offering solutions for such an issue(Rabinow,1994). The social constructions of post war migrants were riddled with racialized labels of posing a social, political and economic threat to Britain. Black migrants were constructed in political discourse in terms of numbers, a burden on welfare and causing a housing shortage because of their likely priority over British residents. These political debates over Black migration were also drawn from media reports showing a historical link between media reports and political discourse (Carter, Harris and Joshi, 1987), such as the construction of Black migrants as potential criminals and 'muggers' (Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke and Roberts (2013). Other migrant groups such as Eastern Europeans have also been found to experience racialized representations and constructions through references to numbers, criminality and a threat to the British social order (Clark and Campbell, 2000; Fox, Morosanu & Szilassy, 2012). This suggest the racialized experiences of the participants of this study can be related to the historical hostilities towards immigration in Britain.

> *"Absolutely yes, because they are not good labels. People run away from you because you are an asylum seeker. Does type of bad labels even politically they have become a hot cake…that is why the recent Brexit the level of hate crime is going up instead of it coming down. The refugee issue has become a political cake unfortunately. So they*

tend to use it as an easier way to get state power. By the time the masses realise that's not the real matter it's too late. So refugee issues, asylum seeker issues, migrant issues have become highly politicised. They are using us as scapegoat to make excuses for their roles, duties and obligations. Their failures to provide the basics services to their own citizens. They tend to use migration as a reason to cover up. 'We are going to build houses but the asylum seekers are taking the houses, we are going to create jobs but it's the asylum seekers taking jobs.' It's all about politics and media….it is also important that politicians should stop using refugee issues as a scapegoat because by so doing they inciting the public against them which create division. The media sell stories to make money rather than facts but if you want to make a community a better place to live in, facts must prevail than using refugee issues as a political cake'' (John from Uganda)

John make a connection between media labels and political discourse and the increased levels of hate crime during the Brexit debate. He blamed the negative labels for the fear of asylum seekers by the wider society. Again, the label of asylum seekers 'taking' houses and jobs meant for the deserving British public was expressed by John.

"Every time I hear something negative. They are talking about, what is it I've found myself is all sorts of groups have been attacked. They were talking about bogus asylum seekers, they swamping. They what, nobody was caring, nobody ever needed to know the truth. They were talking about asylum seekers were getting TVs, they were getting loads of money, they are bogus, they are here just to work, lies you know. I remember we went to parliament to seek permission for asylum seekers to volunteer among other things, ok. So now when I hear they are talking about EU now, I feel the pain of EU nationals'' (Roger, Uganda).

"I'm currently feeling insecure, I am, because you don't know what's going to happen because the world is changing now you know……. well you got America, you got France with National Front, you got Norway with all the far right people coming up with these ideas. They don't want to see anyone in their country, foreigners, especially refugees. When they see all refugees and asylum seekers as terrorists and the news saying 'hey asylum seekers can be terrorist you know' So it kinda God do I belong here? Do I still gonna be here? you know, it's kinda difficult but only God knows what will happen. Now Brexit C'mon'' (Abdul from Ivory Coast)

"At times family ring from back home and say 'you know we see the news, you know the EU refugee problem, I think you are not staying in England, you are coming back because of Brexit. I worry too much, sometimes I'm scared. More people say 'go back to your country after Brexit'. Go again? Which place can I go? That mean I'm dead which place can I go" (Mary from Congo)

Discourse on immigration during the Brexit debate featured on participants' narratives. Roger makes a parallel between the discourse on asylum and EU nationals during Brexit debates. Abdul and Margaret also mentioned the negative labelling of refugees and European political climate which has been exacerbated by the Brexit debates. These debates left them feeling insecure and terrified. The Brexit debates included political and media discourses of xenophobic rhetoric and hate drawn from distinctions of the 'self' and 'other' (Piotr, 2017). Such discourses included the blaming of immigrants for poor wages, lack of jobs, pressure on public services and constructed as a competition for housing and jobs (Gough, 2017). For individuals with an insecure sense of belonging such constructs can lead to feelings of vulnerabilities in terms of their sense of belonging and also physical security (Grant, 2016; Zunes, 2017). The vulnerable and temporal nature of the asylum seeking experience (Stewart, 2005), and its experiences of exclusion (Schuster, 2004), leaves the refugee with a precarious sense of belonging as the participants' narratives shows.

> *"That asylum is taking a lot of money from the taxpayer, to looking after these people, they are having too many children, they have too many demands or they are giving them free houses and all that. People don't know so they hate us every day'' (Cecilia from Zimbabwe).*

The quotation from Cecilia suggest the negative labelling of asylum seekers and refugees as a costly burden on the British taxpayer is a source of resentment from the wider British society which increases the level of hate against asylum seekers and refugees. Cecilia also used the word 'taking' to illustrate how asylum seekers are perceived as undeserving 'takers' of what belongs to the deserving British public. A major source of resentment of asylum seekers and refugee is the myth that they are getting preferential treatment for houses and other resources. However, she contested such constructions by alluding to the lack of knowledge of the complexities and realities of refugee experiences.

> *"When you see the news you will think the government give us everything but it is not true. My money is never enough when the government gave me money. We hope on charity shop for everything. You cannot even buy clothes from good shops. Why can't they come and try and live in the house they give us. I don't think they want to live in asylum seeker house. People in this country think it is good thing to be refugee, you take all the good house and you have all the good things from government, let them come and be asylum seeker and see. You are not allowed to work, where you going to get all that plenty money they are talking about. When you tell people 'oh I run away from war', they think they come to take everything in this country, it's really sad, really sad" (Margaret from Burundi)*

Margaret also rejects the construction of asylum seekers and refugees as having a lot of money and priority for housing from government by suggesting people should try living as asylum seekers to actually experienced the realities of seeking asylum.

> *"I believe many British people don't like refugees. I don't blame them. How they going to understand our problem? What the news say that's all they know. They never go to countries where there's a problem. They only stay here so many people here are still scared of refugees……if somebody always tell you somebody is going to take all your jobs, there is not going to be enough doctor appointment because refugees are coming too many, what are you going to do? I will be scared. I don't understand that. It's difficult to understand that, we look for job, I never say sack this British person and give me the job or take somebody doctor appointment for me but they say we take house, we take job and we take everything and appointment. There's many job in this country to do, plenty of jobs if people want job they can find job but I think they just want to blame us" (Rachel from Eritrea)*

Rachel also blamed the media for the lack of knowledge about refugee experiences out there. She also rejects the representations of refugees as taking jobs and NHS appointments by arguing that refugees are not responsible for unemployment and lack of doctors' appointment.

> *"When people talk about refugee, you will know they don't know anything about asylum seekers or refugees. They just say what the news tell them. I was talking to this girl and she asked where I come from and she ask me why I came here and I told her 'I ran from war' and she just said 'are you illegal immigrant then?' I said 'what!?'. She started talking about I have to tell her if I came here in a truck and she don't want to get into trouble, blah blah. I was laughing but this girl was really scared. That was a big problem between us because her friends start asking me about it also. I have to leave that girl because she always thinks I like her for paper……because I ran from my country I'm illegal immigrant? Everything they say is from the news, trust me." (Musa from Sudan)*

Musa related the lack of understanding of refugees and asylum seekers within wider British society to representations in news reports. He is conflated with other immigrants and equated to criminality, illegality and a potential threat, which are dominant representations of asylum seekers and refugees in the news (Banks, 2012; Bleiker, Campbell, Hutchinson, & Nicholson, 2013; Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008; Goodman & Burke, 2011; Lynn & Lea, 2003; Parker, 2015). The effect of media conflation of refugees and other migrants has been linked to

people's inability to distinguish between refugees and other immigrants creating an 'outsider' perception towards refugees (Howe, 2018).

According to Wood (2007) rather than an innocent means of making sense of things, labelling can be utilised as a powerful tool for social classification and categorisation in the inclusion or exclusion of those that are deserving and those that are not. Labelling confers power and domination in terms of individuals' ability to either control the images of their representations or simple receivers of such representations that are imposed on them. Labelling also provides a conduit through which comparisons are made between 'us' and 'them' in relation to values and norms (Said, 2003).

5.2.2 Selective reporting

Participants in this study mentioned selective representation of refugees and asylum seekers in media and political discourse. The excerpts from the interviews appears to suggest ignoring positive stories of asylum seekers and refugees in both media and political discourse has a negative impact on their sense of belonging.

> *"I think it's the news. you never hear them say let's ask the asylum seekers and refugees what they think. They talk about us and that's it. I don't think they know about our problem or they don't want to tell people our problem just may be they are terrorists coming, may be they want benefit and illegal immigrants. All the time they blame asylum seekers and refugees.'' (Rachel from Eritrea)*

She blames the news coverage and the manner asylum seekers and refugees are represented in the news for the problem they faced in the wider community. The lack of opportunity for the opinion and position of asylum seekers to be heard in their portrayal is viewed as unfair and a hindrance in their effort to build relationships within the wider British society.

> *"You see newspaper and TV they are big problem. They say too much things for us for bad name. They make people think we come here to take everything but we running from problem from my country'' (Paul, Eritrean male)*

The perception that most asylum seekers are economic migrants looking for a better life rather than fleeing persecution or war in their home countries is a common one. It is one of the most repeated criticism of asylum seekers and refugees in media and political discourse. The reasons for people seeking asylum is mostly omitted from reports on asylum seekers and refugees. In Paul's quotation above he bemoans the fact that asylum seekers and refugees' reasons for fleeing to their countries of origin are mostly left out of news reports. He

perceived the newspaper and TV reports that focuses on giving the impressions that asylum seekers and refugees take what belongs to the British society which he believes is the reason for resentment from the host society.

> *"Sigh! It does affect me very much because with the media they are not always there to say the complete truth or to show the truth. They don't go to the right places to speak to the right people. There are really people out there who have been suffering. Media affect life here. If you just sit down and watch the news sometimes you feel sorry for yourself and you feel sorry for the people, they are telling too……. sighs, God. You know if this people ask rather than just assume they know. It's the way they look at us differently is the problem. I have to feel I don't belong if you always say I'm different from you, you see'' (Abdul from Ivory coast).*

News reports on asylum and refugees are perceived to be often incomplete and biased. The suffering and destitution of asylum seekers are perceived to be left out of most news report which affects the amount of public sympathy and understanding of their plight. The participant does not only express his frustration the lack of complete coverage of asylum seeker and refugee issues but also the effect that will have on wider viewing British public.

> *"All I can say is they are very bias against asylum seekers and refugees. They don't have anything good to say about or what asylum seekers and refugees contribute. They don't look at that they only look at the negative side. That asylum is taking a lot of money from the taxpayer, to look after these people, they are having too many children'' (Cecilia, Zimbabwe)*

Cecilia also mentioned the incomplete reporting of refugee experiences. She perceived the lack of their contributions to the British society and the good they do when granted status as a sign of a focus on negative stories about refugees.

> *"I don't like to watch TV because they say bad things all the time. They make people feel we can't stay here. How many people come here this time, how many people come here last year……. in this place (Asylum and Refugee organisation) asylum seekers and refugees do good work here. Refugee do many good in this country you know but nobody knows it, no body say it'' (Musa, Sudan).*

Musa also compare the negative representations of asylum seekers and refugees that focuses on numbers to the voluntary work that they do. Such contributions he felt are left out of their construction. David's interview excerpts also showed how participants construct themselves as hardworking but such stories are often left out of media reports.

> *"Some of them I think they hide things. Honestly my brother, again it still boils down to whoever is making that report. Whoever is doing that presentation or whatever they are doing. Papers or TV, they give out a way they want people to think about asylum seekers and refugees. Of course it affects my feeling of belonging. It doesn't really matter whether you have the papers or documentation as a refugee or British citizen. I do not see myself different from an asylum seeker waiting for a decision to be made……. I'm working hard but no body talk about that. I have my shop right now, there are many refugees like me working. Some have good job and good people, there is a lot of good things about refugee but what they talk about is terrorists* are *coming in, they have to stop asylum seekers coming. Even if you give your life in this country, they don't care about that, you know. Sometime ago, I remember this boy in Newcastle I think, he was studying hard to be a pilot but all of a sudden the newspaper jump on him. 'Refugee getting free course from taxpayer money'. Many stories, my brother, many stories. Did they interview him for his own story? No. They know everything about asylum seekers, everything, we don't know anything (David from Cameroon).*

This finding fits in with other studies which found the prevalence of a selective narratives in the portrayal of asylum seekers and refugees (Bryant & Donald, 2013; Campbell, Hutchison and Nicholson, 2013, Van Dijk ,1991). The participants perceive their representations as selective and ignoring their subjective perspectives and the complexities of their experiences. They challenge and contest such demonization through narratives of self- construction that includes hard work and perseverance through their sufferings.

5.2.3 Generalisation of news reports on asylum seekers and refugees.

Participants perceived news report of asylum seekers and refugees to be mostly generalised. Excerpts from interviews suggests participants feel the refugee-ness of individual asylum seekers and refugees are mostly overemphasised giving the impression that their refugee identity is the reason for their negative behaviour. Participants point to the negative generalisations towards asylum seekers and refugees in media and political representation.

> *"Because I don't think I will listen to the news without seeing someone who hadn't had my experience. Because even now when I hear like someone has committed a crime or offence and they start thinking about withdrawing their citizenship and sending them back……. and if this guy is a refugee they have to say it rather than criminal……. I can see he is a criminal but still part of me keep saying 'guy you are not safe here, one day'. I don't know, I don't know, it can't go away. They manage to get permission to send him back, that makes you think you don't belong like others belong'' (Roger, Ugandan).*

News reports on other refugees made him feel insecure, even though he is a British citizen. His belonging becomes questionable because of the possibility of his citizenship being

revoked and deported as compared to other British citizens whose citizenship is much more stable. The media fixation on the refuge-ness of any refugee that commit a crime is perceived as an attempt to highlight and link being a refugee to criminality. Esses, Medianu and Lawson (2013) found that a negative portrayal of a single group of refugees can have an effect on the perceptions of the general refugee population

> *"Now it has been intensified with the recent, with the recent events that are reported all over Europe but the report not very good. If one does something, it's like its all of us. It does not happen to them when somebody does bad things from them. It makes me feel an outsider. They alienate a lot of people'' (Cecilia from Zimbabwe).*

> *"It is really hard. You watch the news 'eh that asylum seekers rape people in Germany, asylum seeker arrested for terrorism here' and you think 'it's like if you are refugee you can be raper or something, or terrorist'. Do you have to be refugee to rape people?" (David from Cameroon).*

The refugee crisis around Europe and the negative reports on asylum seekers and refugees and a rise in racist and xenophobic discourse (Berry, Garcia-Blanco & Moore; Kapartziani & Papathanasiou, 2016; Rettberg and Gajjala, 2016), is cited as a source of their feeling of generalised dehumanisation. The generalised nature of news coverage on asylum seekers is compared here to reports on other criminal acts by non- refugees which are not reported in a generalised manner. The quotation suggests such reports cause a feeling of marginalisation and alienation. The intensity of immigration discourse also creates an atmosphere of fear and insecurity.

> *"Yeah, I think we (asylum seekers and refugees) need to try and do more for the people here to see what we can do. We don't have hundred percent freedom but if we neglect that and try hard to do more. If you go out there and do better things it's good for you, if you go out there and do bad things remember it will not only affect you it will affect others. Because for asylum seekers and refugees one bad one is like everybody is bad in the news. They are waiting, one bad news is bad news for every one'' (Abdul from Ivory Coast)*

Abdul's excerpts points to his view that asylum seekers doing well mostly remained with them while asylum seekers and refugees that are involved in anything negative tends to be extended to asylum seekers and refugees in general.

> *"They talking, 'asylum seeker woman takes too much benefit', 'asylum seeker woman beat her child'. If somebody do bad thing yeah no problem, put them in jail but not all asylum seeker is like that. 'They come from poor country and they want benefit' me I work for my money. Refugee money is nothing but people think we get all the money'' (Margaret from Burundi)*

> *"I think it's what is said about refugee. Many, many things on the news is about how refugees are doing bad things. People in this country don't know asylum seekers. What they tell them is what they know about asylum seeker. If you don't know somebody yeah, you never see me and somebody always saying something bad about me are you going to want me around you? It's the news, I know that……. If somebody is a criminal or terrorist or steal from anywhere, they say he came into this country as refugee. Everybody start to think refugees are bad or dangerous……. everybody is worried and think they have to check refugees more and more" (Adam from Ethiopia).*

> *"For them we are all the same, all of us, it don't matter if you think you are good person or not. Even if you have, even if you work at number 10, no body care, whatever you do, if you are refugee you are a problem. There are many refugees with good job in this country, I know that but no body know they are refugee. If you are not a rich refugee then you are a bad refugee, if you a rich refugee no body call you refugee. How many rich refugees do you know in this country? (laughs), I don't think you will know them because they are not refugee anymore. If I am a criminal or a bad person everybody will know I am a refugee like other bad refugees. They will say it all the time trust me, it is quiet now, when they start, when election come again, it come again" (Imran from Sudan)*

Participants used the phrase 'bad things' or 'bad refugee' in their narratives to highlight the processes of stereotyping and othering they experienced. A key aspect of stereotypes is the generalisation of perceived attributes possessed by members of a social group, ignoring the fact as to whether those attributes are either prevalent or not within the prescribed group. By simply being a member of that group then individuals are believed to fit such generalised presumptions (Cook and Cusack, 2010). Stereotypes does not only negatively impact individual's and groups' sense of belonging but also contributes to their being perceived as undeserving in regards to the powerful and access to resources in a society (Merskin, 2011).

In their narratives of their experiences participants also construct themselves as hard working and contributing in society in contesting negative stereotypes of asylum seekers and refugees. They also construct themselves as people who suffered displacement rather than just coming into the country as economic migrants as prevalent in media and political representations. According to the politics of belonging (Anthias, 2013; Antonsich, 2010; Yuval-Davis, 2006), discursive narratives of self –construction are the processes through which contestations and resistance are utilised in the erection and dismantling of boundaries in establishing those who

belong and those who do not. Belonging also involves struggles over what differences matter in the demarcation of such boundaries (Anthias, 2010). Participants in this study contested negative constructions that set them apart as different through positive narratives of moral self-identifications, and values of hard work and contributing to society. This suggests belonging is not only about individuals' identification of themselves or even how they are identified by others but also includes narratives of selective categorisations. Such categorisations utilise ethical values and morals to either justify or contest the social constructions that involves maintenance of boundaries of inclusion and exclusion (Antonsich, 2010; Yuval-Davis, 2006).

These findings suggest participants' perception of labelling and generalisation of asylum seekers and refugees in political and media representations has a negative impact on participants' sense of belonging. In linking Discourse to belonging, Delanty, Wodak and Jones (2008) argued that discursive constructions of individuals and social groups initially starts with their labelling, followed by the generalisation and normalisation of such negative labels to the entire group and then argumentations and justifications are offered in an effort to exclude so many while including others. In other words, it is through discourse that demarcations are made between those who belong and those who do not, by categorising them as possessing certain negative attributes. Such negative attributions stem from stigmatisation. Goffman (1963) referred to stigma as the possession of attributes that are classified as negative and the consequent discrediting of those that possess such attributes. Goffman offered three sources of stigma. The first are 'deformities of the body' (Katz, 1981).

For the participants in this study a source of their stigmatisation seemed to emanate from Goffman's (1963) second source of stigma that comes from the perception of the possession of morally doubtful characteristics which are viewed as socially deviant and the third source of stigma which perceived inherited racial, national and religious characteristics. Stigmas as a whole are viewed as threatening. However, those that are perceived as a challenge to values and norms of a society such as likely criminality, posing a threat to the social order are classified as more threatening. Racial minorities are also perceived as a threat because they are viewed as competitors in the job market, housing and other resources (Katz, 1981). The perception of asylum seekers and refugees as likely criminals, a security risk, possessing a cultural threat, a competition for housing, jobs and resources and a burden on the British society exposes them to a very high likelihood of stigmatisation. Black migrants such as African refugees with a visible racial difference are also more of a target for discrimination

and hostility (Delanty, Jones and Wodak, 2008). Othering processes(Merskin,2011), labelling (Goffman, 1963) and stereotypes (Cook and Cusack, 2010), has one common notion of the social construction and the ascribing of constructed attributes to a particular social group which are then generalised to include any individual that happens to be a member of that social group. Excerpts from participants' interviews suggested their labelling and stereotyping in media and political discourse are perceived as contributing to their rejection and exclusion, negatively impacting their sense of belonging.

The negative representation of asylum seekers and refugees in media and political representations have been mostly based on analysis of newspapers and visual images (Banks, 2012; Bleiker, Campbell, Hutchinson, & Nicholson, 2013; Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008; Goodman & Burke, 2011; Lynn & Lea, 2003; Parker, 2015). However, this research's finding is based on participants' subjective perceptions of negative media and political labels as a hindrance to their sense of belonging to the British society. Participants interview excerpts suggest they blame media and political representations for their rejection and exclusion by the wider British public. Dandy & Pe-Pua (2015) focus group study also found English classes and religious spaces are places of intergroup mixing and media representations caused division in an Australian community between refugees and host community.

As illustrated above the media and political representations of asylum seekers and refugees includes being constructed as a socially deviant group that is 'bogus' exploitative and a threat to the British society. Such constructions then consequently give justifications for stringent and restrictive policies. These policies include restriction on the right to work (Banks 2008; Amylin, 2016), dispersal and detention (Malloch & Stanley, 2005). The findings suggest these policies do have an impact on refugees' experiences.

5.3 Impact of policies on belonging

Only three of the study participants were granted asylum at their first application for asylum, the other nine went through the experiences of the asylum appeal system. Initial experiences are important for a sense of belonging as the subjective experiences of immigrating and settlements has a profound effect on their perceptions (Chow, 2007) and post -asylum experiences of refugees are also challenging due to the lack of an integration policy for

refugees (Baker, Cheung & Phillimore, 2016). Thus exploring participants' experiences during the asylum process help in highlighting its impact on their perception of belonging and participation.

5.3.1 process of seeking asylum and length of stay

> *"It took eleven years, discretionary leave. My husband got his in 2013. He got three years stay. My self and our two daughters were given two and half year discretionary leave at different times. I know, it's confusing…Not too good, yes it does, it does affect the way I feel because it's very expensive to renew, we have to go through a solicitor, we have to go through it all over again with all the hassle. We have to prove all over again why we have to remain in this country. It's like a message 'we don't want you here'. What can you do with two and half-years? What can you do with three years? Just sit and wait to apply again '' (Cecilia-from Zimbabwe)*

Here the limited length of stay is equated to being rejected. It does not only mean a financial burden but also regarded as being denied participating in establishing any sense of belonging.

> *"When we seek asylum, we were told that rules have changed, asylum seekers are no longer allowed to have bank accounts, to work, go to school or even drive. It was quite demoralising and disheartening as well. It's like you are here but you are not here. It will make you know you don't belong here'' (Cecilia-from Zimbabwe)*

> *"Wow, it took a long time before I got papers basically. So it was a struggle and fight. I mean I was desperate to get papers because if you don't have papers is like you don't exist in this country. It took a while, more than a while because 2003 and up to 2010 that's when I got papers. After that long you can't be happy anymore, its long time. You have to come back and think about improving your life, it's like all over again you are learning to have a job, even college is hard because its long time just waiting'' (Abdul- from Ivory coast)*

> *"They give me five years……. when they give me paper I am happy but I am worried……because I want to go to college and do everything but just five years, how can I do many things. I don't know but I like to know I am here for long time so I can do many things for my life. Now I don't know what happen after five years. After this I have to try again for Home Office. May be they say stay.'' (Paul from Eritrean*)

Paul lamented the fact that he was granted a limited stay of five years making it difficult for him to be confident he is going to be allowed to stay after that. The limited length of stay is perceived as insecure and unstable for making life decisions. The process of belonging seems to be on hold because of such uncertainties.

> *"They've accepted that I've been through hell, my story has credibility but when it came to a sense of belonging, eh I don't really think so because it was a limited time.*

> *Even the documentation, you want to look for work, yeah so that sense of belonging is not really there. Why do I say that because I found it difficult to find a job with just five years? You go to the job centre, you go to the bank to open an account. Some of the workers in the bank don't accept, they say they've never seen it before……so it really puts you down in a lot of situations……. you start to think now what's going on, they say you've been accepted but simple things like opening an account becomes difficult". (David from Cameroon)*

> *"You are running from trouble they say 'we give you just five years' after refusing your case at first……as a person yes, but also as the wider community (refugee community), it erodes especially when your claim has been turned down, rejection by the Home office is not the same as someone else. I kept smiling but when you are rejected by the state, your sense of belonging is killed, is removed from you. That's why many people who get status after being refused will never feel the same. You spend all your life fighting to stay then five years. Now you think should I work or should I study in five years because you need money for a lawyer after that'' (John from Uganda).*

For John, the rejection by the state is the highest form of rejection and not belonging that is impossible to restore even after being subsequently granted asylum. This suggest the important power that is wielded by the state in the 'granting' of belonging or exclusion (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

The length of stay given has an impact on participation. As the quotations implied, the length of stay given can affect what the participant is able to do. Participation in education and the job market is negatively affected by the length of stay. In terms of education the time they spent in the asylum process tend to leave them demotivated. Getting back into education becomes much more challenging. The length of stay given does have an impact on their level of participation in terms of looking for jobs, employers are reluctant to offer jobs to refugees with limited length of stay. There are issues with the knowledge of the wider British society in relation to refugee documentation as explained by David. He expresses the frustration this lack of knowledge can cause. The length of stay also affected the possibility of making future plans. The participants express their frustration about making decisions on whether to study or look for a job because of the insecurity and uncertainties of their legal status. Insecurity and an inability to make future plans was found to affect refugees sense of belonging (Yuval-Davis and Kaptani, 2008). Nelson and Hiemstra (2008) study of Latino Immigrants in Oregon and Colorado also found an insecure legal status, which negatively impacts their sense of belonging.

The experiences of asylum can also be gendered specific experiences. Refusal of application for asylum is a difficult experience of all refugees. However, female asylum seeker has the added responsibility of looking after children while trying to avoid deportation as the quotes suggest. The responsibilities of looking after dependent children falls with female asylum seekers. Their experiences as refugees are impacted upon by an intersection of other aspects of socially constructed divisions of the lived experiences of gender in an inter-related way (Anthias, 2012)

> *"See how I suffer here, my husband, he left me here with my children and went back to Italy because we didn't get paper here. I looked after my children. When they stop my money I have just little money for everything. You know what happen, this taxi driver bought shopping for me and bring it to my house and, he said I like you, I will help you. I said no way!... Me I said no way!'' (Rachel from Eritrea).*

Rachel expressed a gendered experience of immigration when her husband was able to move back to Italy when their application was refused leaving her to look after their children. Her vulnerability was exploited by a stranger offering help which she refused.

> *"The Home office write us a letter to go back to my country. They refuse our asylum case. I can't sleep in my house. My husband, he went to London to his friend but I can't go with all my children to hide somewhere to anybody house. We are too many to run. I can't sleep for long time in that house. My brother if your case is refused here you are in big trouble. You don't know when they will come for you. I have to hide at my friend house, hiding with four men in the house plus my daughter. I don't know but God know, I have to say that because something happen, you know, some people don't fear God, I'm not sure but one night I wake up middle night I feel very tired and I think somebody give me something and I don't know what happen that night to me……. I ring my other friend; she says ring police but how can I ring police''. (Margaret from Burundi).*

Margaret also mentioned the struggle female asylum seeker and refugee face in relation to looking after dependants. Her husband left her with the children while she looked for somewhere to hide from detention and deportation. Margaret was left to fend for herself and her children. She suspects she was drugged and assaulted by someone where she went to hide from detention and deportation. Even though she strongly suspected she has been assaulted she chose not to call the police for fear of being deported.

5.3.2 Force dispersals

Another policy that seem to impact on participants feeling of belonging is the policy of forced dispersals. This policy was not common before 2002, but became a major aspect of the

asylum seeking process afterwards. It was mainly conceived in an effort to avoid a concentration of refugee populations signifying their perceived threat (Bloch & Schuster, 2005). However, the policies impact on refugees include a sense of isolation and marginalisation (Bloch, 2002; Bloch & Schuster, 2005; Kosher, 1997).

> *"You are just taken anywhere, you don't have a choice, you are told you are going, like my circumstances with my family, we were told we are going to Leeds. We try to tell them through the social worker that we don't know anybody in Leeds, we have relatives in London and Southampton could we stay close to our relatives they said no. The only choice is where you have been told to go. If you don't go, they will withdraw that and you are stuck…Hmmm, I suppose it bring that security. Just being around somebody you are familiar with for support, emotional support'' (Cecilia-from Zimbabwe).*

> *"They choose for you where you go. You don't have a choice. Take it or leave it……. I tried to go back to London, they don't let me go back to London…. Because I have more friends that side…. yeah, It's for the support and help'' (Adam from Ethiopia*)

> *"I was sent to Leeds. I didn't know anybody in Leeds. I would have chosen somewhere else. I could have stayed close to my friends in London because they were the only people that I know. Being sent with strangers is another thing, in a flat of four'' (Roger from Uganda).*

Belonging here is being related to connectedness. Being around people does not translate as belonging for them but rather it's the quality of the connections that defines a feeling of belonging. This suggests connectedness is a vital aspect of belonging and a feeling of being connected help strengthens a feeling of belonging (Crisp, 2010). This highlight refugees' experiences of up-rootedness which heightened the need for reconnecting to familiar places and people (Hooks, 2009). The need for connectedness is a vital part of the motivating factors in social behaviour (Smith & Mackie, 2000).

Being around friends and family offers a most needed social support network for asylum seekers and refugees

> "*I wasn't allowed to work or go into proper education during the time for my application and that affect the way I feel about this country. The long time it took was not my fault, you know. It is not affecting the lives of the people responsible for that, it is me. Somebody sit in an office and say send this person to (city of residence), they don't know me, they don't care what I do there, just go. You will never feel you belong somewhere anyway if you don't want to be there''* (David from Cameroon)

The lack of freedom and choice on dispersal destinations is perceived as not belonging. This fits in with research that found the right to choose in where to live to be necessary in gaining a sense of belonging (Fenster, 2005; MCeachern, 1998). Hynes (2011) also found that forced dispersal is a form of deterrent against asylum applications resulting in social exclusion, mistrust amongst asylum seekers and refugees, hindering their smooth resettlement and a sense of belonging. According to Bloch and Schuster (2005) forced dispersal is the social and psychological exclusion of asylum seekers while detention and deportation involves a form of physical exclusion. Participants' narratives suggest these policies have a negative impact on their sense of belonging.

5.3.3 Education

Education and social policies affecting refugees are incorporated with other disadvantaged groups (Stevenson & Willet, 2005). Despite the particularity of some of the challenges faced by refugees in comparison to other migrant groups, including insecure immigration status (Refugee council, 2005) and the protracted processes that are involved before eventually settling in the host country (Ferede, 2010; Zeus, 2011).

> *"Well that was a killer because I was a clever child and tried the best I can when I was studying….so when I came here and quickly do an access course. I did an access course and GCSE, I passed and I was given a place at Leeds university. I started a new course in medicine and health, very good. In two weeks I was told 'you know what we will treat you as an international student because you don't qualify and once again I don't belong here. I was dropped before I could even start. By the time I qualified I have, you know, I have lost it now, I'm like I couldn't go back'' (Roger-from Uganda)*

Roger's story suggests a very high educational aspiration but once again shown he does not belong by denying him access to education. Even though he is academically qualified, his asylum seeker identity disqualified him from pursuing it. Stevenson and Willmott (2007) found that accessing higher education is particularly challenging for asylum seekers due to them being considered as foreign students. However, they cannot afford such fees while higher education institutions cannot get funding for them.

> *"I think they (Home Office) know what they are doing. They delay your case for long, five, six, seven years. They refuse your case many time. When you finish it's too late now. I think that's what they doing for many people. How, when you have children now, it's hard. You can't study anymore or do anything. You have to work". (David from Cameroon).*

> *''I work in hospital in my country. When I came I want to do nursing but they said I am not allowed until I have paper. When I have paper I have too many kids now. Kids go to school; I go to school too? It's too much'' (Rachel- from Eritrea*).

The restrictions of asylum seekers to access higher education evidently has long lasting implications on decisions to further their educational aspirations after been granted asylum. Other responsibilities such as starting a family during the delay in the asylum process means getting any sort of work becomes a priority.

> *"It's really hard talking about it but not being able to go to university is the worst thing to happen to us. I still cannot believe my daughter was rejected and treated like a foreigner. I thought it was only me and not my daughter who grew up here but still treated like an outsider. What's the difference between her and her friends? It's embarrassing for her to even tell her friends at Uni. We work double jobs to afford this for her. I have given up but we can't let this happen to her, no" (Cecilia from Zimbabwe).*

For Cecilia this experience seems to have the strongest impact on the way she understands her sense of belonging. She cannot accept the embarrassing rejection her daughter has to experience in comparison to her friends who don't have to pay for higher education.

Participants do not only view the prohibition of higher education as an asylum policy that is detrimental to their chances of securing better jobs but also perceived it as a deliberate attempt to frustrate and stifle their progression in the society. The years spent on the asylum system is seen as long wasted years that cannot be made up for even after gaining refugee status. Such policies stifle their level of participation and engagement in education.

5.3.4 Detention

The refugee experience involves having to deal with state institutions that are associated with the functions of controlling crime in the UK. These experiences are perceived as being treated as the 'other' that is different from members of the host community (Hynes, 2011). The participants' narratives included being treated differently which they perceived as a form of exclusion and not belonging.

> *"I was asked to sign each week. After they refuse my asylum and they say they will deport me to Ethiopia. I signed first time and second time and I stopped because I was scared they will send me back. I tried to escape to America, they arrest me at the airport and they detained me for nine months without trial, without nothing. Very, very bad experience at detention centre. Some people were one year, two years in detention centre. We went in hunger strike……my happiness left me and I have*

> *kidney problems from hunger strike. I'm happy to live here because I'm secure, I'm safe, something like this." (Adam from Ethiopia).*

Experiences of the asylum system is perceived as being criminalised without committing a crime. Hynes (2011) found that the requirement of asylum seekers to sign in regularly is perceived by asylum applicants as being linked to criminality which made them felt like the different 'other' from other members of the wider society.

> *"I was in detention in Oakington then I was sent to Leeds …then I was sent to another detention centre, I think it was Barnsley, then I was sent to another detention in Hammondsworth near Heathrow, then I was sent back on the streets. I became homeless and destitute. Everything, all this so that I can go back. That tells you where you belong'' (Roger from Uganda).*

Roger interpreted his experiences with multiple detention centres and eventual destitution as an attempt to force him to return to where he belonged. He perceived his prolonged detention as a ploy to force him to give up trying to stay in the UK. Turnbull (2014) study also found participants interpreted their uncertain period of detention as a deliberate attempt to force them to return to their countries of origin. Immigration detention regimes are processes through which states construct individuals with uncertain and insecure sense of belonging (Bosworth, 2014). Roger's experiences of being abruptly transferred around detention centres without warning has been highlighted as a strategy of imposing power on the asylum seeker, dehumanising them into people that are refused stability and worth (Gill, 2009).

> *"Hmm when I came I did not know what is the process. I thought they will just let me stay…. I was shocked to end up in prison. At first I thought going to prison was part of the process until I came out of prison then I began to understand things. It was emotional and traumatic torture, so many gates all with prison officers. You feel like what is going on, is it because I came to this country, is it because of the fake passport? How can I escape here if I don't have a fake passport? Since I had my papers there were certain places I could not work because of that criminal record. It is removed now but up to 2013 I wasted a lot of time'' (David from Cameroon).*

David thought being imprisoned was part of the asylum process until he learned later on that is not the case. This assumption of normalcy is not surprising as Bloch and Schuster (2005, p. 498) noted that the practice of detention has been instrumentalised and normalised as a form of 'physical exclusion within the territory of the state'. Another aspect of immigration detention is a power that is imposed on the asylum seeker 'other' without charges, an experience that differentiate him or her from the citizen that can hardly be detained without charge (Griffiths, 2013). There is chasm in the understanding of criminality between the refugee and the system. Even though the growing restrictions of migration to asylum seeking

destination countries meant refugees has no other alternatives but to travel illegally in many cases (Morrison & Crossland, 2001), David and Adam were still imprisoned for travelling with fake passports. David's imprisonment affected his participation in the job market for years because of what he perceived as an imposed criminal record.

5.3.5 Employment

The UK policy on the economic rights of asylum seekers has been focused on restriction due to the perception that most applicants are 'bogus' rather than genuine refugees. The overwhelming perception that illegal immigrants are abusing the system as a means of coming to the UK to access generous welfare and seek employment has been given as justifications for such restrictions. Restrictions on employment are argued to take away the pull factor which will discourage potential applicants (Mayblin, 2016). Even though the destination choices of asylum seekers have not been found to be strongly related to employment and welfare benefits (Crawley, 2010; Gilbert & Koser, 2006).

> "*When I was looking for work, I was called for an interview a couple of times and when they look at the biometric card there is a starting date and an expiry date, then they will start to question you, 'how can you be sure that you are going to be in this country. We are unable to offer you a permanent job because of your length of stay'' (Cecilia- from Zimbabwe).*

Cecilia quotation points to the impact of the length of stay given to her on her chances of getting employed. The limited time given to her was questioned by potential employers as a problem for her chance of getting a permanent job.

> *"For working, that was so much difficult because they should know you cannot say you accept somebody without allowing them to have their freedom and independent……looking for work though is a lot different because if you are given a limited stay it is very hard for you to get a job because if you have to sign a contract there's a time limit you have your paper for it will affect you'' (Abdul from Ivory coast).*

Abdul perceived the restriction to work as a form of rejection and exclusion. Being restricted from work is interpreted as disabling and a form of curtailing his freedom and independence. The limited initial refugee status granted is also mentioned as having an impact on the chances of acquiring employment. The change of refugee status to a temporal five years rather than indefinite period has an effect on participants enhancing employment

opportunities. Stewart and Mulvey (2014) study of refugees in Scotland found an inability to make future plans and an impact on employment prospect due to temporal refugee status.

> *"I think the asylum laws, I think that's where I got put down and make to feel different. I don't belong here and I'm unwanted. No right to work was the worst. You know you are there you have nothing wrong with you. You are able bodied but they want to make you disabled. What's the point? You are here they don't want you to work and look after yourself. That's the worse'' (Roger from Uganda*).

Similarly, Roger refer to the experience of work restriction as a lack of independence and disabling of their abled bodies as the most difficult of all the restrictions. Not being able to work like the rest of wider society is a manifestation of 'difference' and not belonging. Fleay and Hartley (2016) study of asylum seekers in Australia found work restrictions as the most difficult concern related by interviewees. They also expressed a feeling of being made to be different from others who can contribute to community through taxes.

The asylum policies are described as the main avenue of rejection and exclusion. It created a sense of being disabled and dependent though they are able bodied and capable of being independent. The restriction of employment, higher education during the asylum process and the length of stay granted are perceived as major constraint on their level of participation in the job market. Burchette and Mathesson (2010) found restriction to work has a negative effect on asylum seekers' ability to reinforce their identity leading to frustration, increased social isolation, limited opportunity to develop occupational identity, being devalued and a lack of a sense of belonging. This points to the economic aspect of belonging to a society through accessing the advantages from participating in the economic aspects of a society (Antonsich, 2010). Participants experiences of restrictions of the asylum policies are understood as a form of state imposed 'otherness' which affects their sense of belonging.

5.4 Citizenship

Citizenship policies in the UK are a tool for ensuring a cohesive society and facilitating a closer association to 'Britishness' (Stewart and Mulvey, 2014). Legislation was introduced to facilitate social cohesion (Home office, 2001; 2002a, 2002b, 2008). Thus the expectation is that attaining citizenship will be a form of gaining a sense of belonging (Hovil, 2016). Thus the process of citizenship which is a core aspect in the notion of belonging needed to be examined. In this study the notion of citizenship was examined in interviews to explore its

impact on participants' sense of belonging. Three themes emerge from the interviews. The first theme was that of the right to travel freely. Attaining citizenship is perceived as an enabler that ensures legitimacy to travel freely around the world. The second theme is citizenship as a means of accessing services. They perceived attaining citizenship as a means of improving their chances of getting better treatment in accessing services such as housing, employment and education. The third theme is the obstacles to citizenship attainment.

5.4.1 Freedom to travel

The first theme to emerge in participants' perceptions and understanding of citizenship is that of the opportunity to travel freely. The ability to travel becomes an important driver for refugees opting for citizenship. In this study it appears that belonging means being able to travel as excerpts from the data shows. Possession of certain passports such as the British passport ensures the freedom to travel to foreign spaces and places without restrictions faced with passports of country of origin (Neumayer, 2006).

> *"I mean the experience I got shows me, shows me that I'm different. The only time I feel British is when I am coming through the airport. I could go through where other British people go, I can have what they have. Despite that when I scan it they still call me. They want to see it. Even with the passport. ……. sometimes it's just that feeling. At the airport they have to check, which I understand, but I still think I'm being treated differently because I'm seen differently. It's just the experience I got from day one, I got shown that I'm not wanted, I don't belong here, period*". (Roger, from Uganda)

Roger's attainment of citizenship has not negated the impact of the experiences prior to citizenship. However, the chance of avoiding airport queues for non UK citizens is perceived as an act of equality with other British citizens and a form of resistance to exclusion and inequality. Despite carrying a British passport Roger's Britishness is being scrutinised which he believes has something to do with his apparent difference.

> *"Yeah with the British passport I can travel to, well any country yeah. People are careful when they see your passport, the way they treat you and all that. But British, I don't know. You see, you tell people I am British and they still ask but where are you from. There is British and there is Brrrrritish(laughs). I have the passport now but I don't know if they see me different now from before" (Abdul- from Ivory Coast*).

The freedom to travel to any country was once again mentioned by Abdul as a beneficial outcome of British citizenship, which will be much harder with the passport of country of

origin. However, when it comes to a feeling of belonging, the experiences of his Britishness been questioned is expressed in terms of a distinction between an ethnic form of belonging and a civic form of belonging, with the naturalised British being lesser. His Britishness is subjected to scrutiny and validation by other British people which is contrary to government hope for citizenship becoming a force for social cohesion and oneness. The linking of a particular form of identity to Britishness problematizes the sense of belonging of those who do not possess the requirements of such identities. Both examples in the above excerpts suggests those who perceive themselves to be more belonging have the privilege to judge and scrutinise other's belonging. Their possession of the nation's cultural capital through certain characteristics (Hage, 1998) gives them the privilege of subjecting others to the discomfort and anxiety of what Skey (2013, p.89) referred to as the ''Hierarchy of belonging''.

> *"With my old passport (Eritrean passport), it's hard to go to some country but now I went to America many times'' (Rachel from Eritrea)*

Here again the right and freedom to travel to any country that a British passport offers is being mentioned by Rachel as the reason behind opting for citizenship. The feeling of belonging is not mentioned as a reason for opting for citizenship. Belonging for them depends on their experiences of exclusion through the everyday politics of belonging and implicit acts of exclusion. The decision to aspire to citizenship involves getting the right to travel, a luxury that was denied them which points to the fluidity and complexities of the notion belonging. Belonging here is an everyday contested notion rather than a static and stable notion.

> *"And yeah I can't lie it's a good thing for me. I have my friends in many countries and it help when I go to see them. With Cameroon passport you need Visa to go anywhere. So it helps a lot to travel easily…it doesn't, no it doesn't. They can't give me back all those years I lost trying to show I am not a criminal. When you are running away, how can they expect me to get a legal passport. Its makes no sense. So the passport doesn't make me feel I belong but I can travel like other British people and I can go wherever they can go. But it doesn't change anything, trust me, you are still a refugee from a different country. Even if you have ten British passports you are still a refugee. As I said it makes somethings smooth for you" (David from Cameroon)*

The excerpts from participants seem to suggest that the right and freedom to travel like other British citizen is a form of belonging. However, their reasons for opting for citizenship is not linked to establishing a sense of belonging. Despite acknowledging the benefits that comes with citizenship belonging is perceived differently. Their perception of belonging is shaped by their experiences of rejection and exclusion.

This finding confirms other studies on refugee attainment of citizenship which also found that refugees' reasons for opting and meaning of citizenship includes expectations of better treatment during accessing services and rights, employment, security and the freedom to travel (Morell, 2009; Nunn et al, 2016; Rutter et al, 2007; Stewart and Mulvey, 2014). Attaining formal citizenship is not found to translate as equal participation or fostering a sense of belonging. Anthias (2006) rightly noted that belonging is not all about attaining formal citizenship but also a process of building a social and emotional bonds with the socially constructed sites of membership and identification.

5.4. 2 Right and access to services

The second theme is that of the right to access services without being discriminated against. Obtaining citizenship for them means minimising the discrimination they experienced during the asylum process.

> *"When I go for anything I take my passport. When they see your passport its easy, housing and job. Even the agency they check and check but it is real and they give you job.'' (Rachel from Eritrea)*

In Rachel's interview extract, a British passport is perceived as a means of guaranteeing equal treatment in accessing services such as housing. A British passport helps in getting jobs from employment agencies. However, the manner in which the passport is repeatedly checked shows there is still some suspicion on her Britishness.

> *"Yes, I feel a little bit free, relaxed because you can move freely and also get things done easily because of the documentation. I know they can still take it but of course it makes things smooth. When it comes to belonging I don't see myself different from someone without papers, no'' (David from Cameroon- British citizen)*

In this excerpts David mentioned the security offered by a British citizenship and accessing services as drivers for opting for citizenship. Yet still the possibility of the citizenship being revoked is mentioned as a reason for a less secure sense of belonging. A comparison with others with no legal status is a form of solidarity with those going through his past experiences and a suggestion of the immense impact of those experiences on an unstable sense of belonging. This highlights the importance of recognising that the process of belonging does not start after attaining legal status but rather at the initial entry into a new country. For the participants belonging is about the rights to access services.

> *"The only thing that people understand is a British passport. If you have five years or even indefinite they don't understand that at times. Some people will tell you 'I don't know this paper, I have never seen this before, I have to speak to someone first, do you have any other document?'. Even to open a bank account with some papers it's a problem. They don't know anything about refugee papers but when you show that British passport they will not ask many questions. It was really frustrating. You have to leave your papers and come back later before you get anything. They need to teach people about refugee papers and all that. Some places they have no idea if you have right to get something or you are allowed to get somethings. That's the good thing about British passport, no more question because everybody knows it." (Abdul from Ivory Coast).*

The lack of recognition of refugee documentation is a form of invisibility and the British passport ensure recognition in accessing certain services

> *"I will say yes the time they give you affect many things not only whether you feel belong or not. If you have five years stay it means you are here but you can leave when your time finish, you always thinking how many years more to go for me. If I have British passport it means I am here now. I will like to become British if I have the chance but I have to wait now. I don't know if I'm going to be in this country. May be Home Office will tell me my time finish and that's not good. I think if I am British citizen is good thing for me. I can stay and study to get better job" (Paul from Eritrea).*

For Paul a limited five years stay is not as secured as an indefinite leave to stay or becoming a British citizen which ensures the security to access education and security from being returned.

The concept of Citizenship offers individuals and groups the chance to access resources allocated by nation states (Turner, 1997). The participants' narratives on citizenship are focused on legal recognition, stability and their ability to access certain rights and resources such as the freedom to travel, employment and education. Citizenship for them is not about social cohesion or a sense of belonging confirming other studies on refugees (Morell, 2009; Nunn, McMichael, Gifford & Correa-Velez, 2016; Rutter, Cooley, Reynolds & Sheldon, 2007; Stewart & Mulvey, 2014). Though citizenship and it benefits are an attractive attainment for participants, the requirement to attain citizenship are perceived as a hindrance and obstacle.

5.4.3 Citizenship requirements

The third theme is that of the obstacles and hurdles in attaining citizenship. According to Brubaker (1992) citizenship processes and conditions for acquiring citizenship are a vital lens through which processes of inclusion and exclusion can be explored. In this study, participants perceive citizenship requirement of language, country knowledge and cost as an obstacle towards citizenship.

> *"No, indefinite leave to remain, if I apply for citizenship it involves cost. It's not only about applying and getting it. Do you have the money first of all? If you have the money did you pass the test? Every year you have to spend money, a thousand five hundred, a thousand six hundred gone. It's not only the matter of money, there is that goes in and affordability ……..so I feel saddened when someone says I've got refugee status and you think it's all over, no, that's the beginning of the war actually'' (John from Uganda)*

John questioned the benefits of citizenship in relation to the hassle of the costs, bureaucracy and test requirements. The obstacles towards attaining citizenship as the final stages of seeking asylum is being compared to a battle in refugees' efforts to finally achieve a feeling of acceptance and belonging.

> *"I bought the book, I have indefinite but it's difficult for me to pass the test. It's very difficult to remember everything. Even English people I ask at my work don't know anything. How can English people not know the answer? It's very difficult'' (Margaret from Burundi)*

The fact that they have to go through tests that other British people will probably fail creates a sense of a two tier citizenship. Byrne (2017) study found the realisation amongst those taking citizenship tests that many British born citizens will probably fail the test. They contested the usefulness of the test questions and the injustice of having to show extra abilities to become citizens.

> *"No, not yet. Maybe later but now, it's a lot of money, I have to save money……two thousand may be two thousand five hundred for everything, its expensive. I save money before but I do something first then I will get the passport later'' (Musa from Sudan)*

The cost that's involved, disproportionately exclude individuals from low income countries towards attaining citizenship (Morrice, 2016) and most refugees are from low income countries and low earning jobs (Bloch, 2004), which means attaining citizenship involve financial sacrifices.

"If you don't have time and patience you can never become citizen here. They ask you for everything. You bring somethings they say 'oh bring another paper'. I think they are trying hard to stop people to be citizen. You are spending so much money like you are crazy and it's very difficult. Who have all those papers in this country……. oh many things. Nearly all your address since you came into this world may be, five-year address, council tax, everything. Bank papers for five years. Its more than five years address too, you have to give them everything and the date. Who remember everything like that. If you make any mistake they take your money for nothing. I think they are just taking money for nothing. After all this fight you are not happy even if you are citizen now. It's like they don't like people to become citizen. It's a good thing but it's too much, they ask you for many things. If you are a bad person they will know because you are here for a very long time, why do you have to bring all these things?" (Rachel from Eritrea).

"No, I have many things to do with my money. It's too much, it is very expensive. I will spend that money on my children. If they want, they can become citizen when they have the money. You have to look after your family back home, I don't think it's a good idea for me to just throw money like that. If I spend all that amount of money, I will not feel good about it. I don't know may be later when the time come but now I can't do that. It is a long time even before you can apply and when you qualify it is the problem to save that money for your application. It's too much problem. I have too much things to worry about, not that, no. We have to pay for my daughter to study because they said she is like a foreign student. We have to help her with our money" (Cecilia from Zimbabwe).

"Of course, I want to be citizen. Every refugee wants to be British citizen I think but when I ask my friends they say it's difficult to be British citizen. You have to pass English test and plenty test. Yeah life in Britain test. If you don't speak very good English, it's not easy to pass the test. I have try to pass but it is not easy to pass. The test is the problem, when I pass maybe I can be citizen. I can pay the money but if I don't pass, if you don't get the certificate the Home Office don't accept. When you have the English one, after you try for life in Britain. I will make s passport. Yes, I have some friend who is British now but its plenty money for that." (Paul from Eritrea).

The exclusionary requirements of citizenship such as tests, the bureaucracy that is involved and the cost is being compared to the benefits of gaining citizenship. This finding fits in with other studies that found citizenship requirements are more of an obstacle rather than facilitating (Cooke, 2009; Morrice, 2016). Citizenship is purported to help facilitate integration and a senses of belonging. However, the requirements are perceived as obstacles rather than facilitators. In this regard Kostakopoulou (2010a) argued that such an approach that imposes social cohesion based on homogenous notions of values and norms delays and

stifle incorporation and feeling of belonging of migrants. Jurado (2008) maintained that citizenship policies have shifted towards a reward and earned focus while erecting hurdles for applicants. Macgregor and Bailey (2012) UK study of non EU British citizens also found that the citizenship process reinforces othering rather than foster a sense of belonging. Citizenship as a notion has the potential to offer a positive outcome by offering safety and security but at the same time has the potential to discriminate, marginalised and alienate (Khan, 2013; McNamara, Khan & Frost, 2015) as participants' narratives showed.

In regards to the study's aim to explore participants' perceptions and meaning of belonging, the study findings suggest participants exhibited an orientation towards a sense of personal belonging in the UK in their narratives. However, experiences of discrimination in terms of their 'refuge-ness', 'race' and religion are expressed as barriers towards a sense of belonging. A transnational belonging is also expressed through contradictory and simultaneous attachment to both the UK and their countries of origin, frequent communication and establishing ties with country of origin and sending remittances.

Participants identified interactions in certain spaces as spaces that facilitate a sense of belonging and engagement such as their employment, sport arenas, interactions with other parents at school grounds and university campus and religious spaces. Media and political representations are strongly expressed as obstacles in developing a sense of belonging due to labelling, selective reporting and generalisation of asylum and refugee news reports. Exclusionary asylum policies were also identified as stifling participation and a sense of belonging. The process of asylum, limited lengths of stay, restrictions on asylum seekers employment and higher education and experiences of detention are perceived as forms of exclusions of refugees which impacted their level of participation and engagement in their communities.

Citizenship was not found to facilitate a sense of belonging. Participants perceptions and meaning of citizenship are mostly about freedom to travel, rights and access to services and citizenship requirement are perceived as a hindrance in attaining citizenship. Referring to themselves as British relates to the personal dimension of belonging. However, the question of belonging is a different one. It is related to the social aspect of belonging which involves the contestations of the 'politics of belonging' (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Thus, to facilitate social cohesion the discriminatory and exclusionary experiences of groups such as refugees should be addressed. Heath and Robert (2008) made a distinction between citizenship as an official

document while belonging is determined by the form of relationship between members of a society. Levesley (2008) found a strong sense of Britishness among migrants after obtaining citizenship but describing themselves as British does not translate into a feeling of belonging. Participants' sense of belonging seems to be dictated by the nature of their relationship and interactions with immigration policies and the wider society in the UK.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

This study set out to explore a sense of belonging amongst African refugees in the North of England and what facilitates engagement and participation within their communities. Belonging is indeed a fluid, relational, multi-layered and contextualised notion of both a personal and a social aspect of a sense of attachment to a place or a group. Findings from participants' narratives suggest an orientation towards a personal sense of belonging to the UK. However, their perceptions and understanding of a sense of belonging is mostly shaped by their everyday lived experience of discrimination and exclusion in their country of residence. They illustrated through interviews that their discrimination came from people's perception about their refugee-ness, their 'race' and Muslim faith as identifiers of their 'otherness'. They related their sense of belonging to the way they are perceived through racialized constructs of their 'identities' by members of the wider community. This underlines the relational aspect of refugees' sense of belonging and the importance of a feeling of acceptance and welcome in the host country.

Findings also indicate that certain places and spaces such as places of work, sport arenas, school ground interactions with other parents and university campus, and religious spaces offer an opportunity for meaningful social interactions for expressing a sense of belonging and engagement within members of the wider communities. These culturally significant spaces of interaction and their potential to foster positive intercultural and inter-ethnic mixing should be harnessed in the process of ensuring a safer and cohesive society. Interviews also suggest an expression of a transnational sense of belonging that simultaneously involve a personal emotional attachment to what they perceived as British ideals such as freedom of speech and aspects of their countries of origin such as family, food and music. This suggest refugees lack of a sense of belonging is not a rejection of belonging but rather a preference for a more inclusive belonging that offer them safety, security and recognition. Participants transnational activities also involve frequent communication with family and the use of communication

technologies to participate in networks that involve both the UK and their countries of origin and frequent sending of remittance back to their country of origin. However, though a vital part of refugees' willingness to maintain connections with their countries of origin, the latter aspect of these transnational activities are perceived to have an impact on their economic security.

Media and political representations of asylum seekers and refugees are also indicated as a hindrance in the process of developing a sense of belonging in the UK. Negative labels that indicate criminality, dishonesty and distrust, selective reporting that ignore the complexities of their experiences and opinions and the generalisation of reporting were pointed out by the research participants as an illustration of their rejection and exclusion from belonging in the UK. They indicated that the media dissemination of negative labels and stereotypes as the main source of the British society's understanding of refugees and asylum seekers. The research participants' narratives suggest the characterisation and misrepresentations of their experiences has real life consequences for them and their ability to develop a sense of belonging and engagement within their new communities. This finding confirms other studies that found a prevalence of negative media and political representations of asylum seeker and refugee issues through analysis of media contents. This study's findings are very significant due to its narrative approach in bringing out participants' perceptions on the impact of such representations on their feeling of exclusion and their sense of belonging.

Initial experiences of exclusionary asylum policies such as forced dispersals, detentions, length of the process and limited length of stay, restrictions on employment and access to higher education are perceived as obstacles to their level of participation and engagement in the UK. Such restrictions are expressed as a delay and in some instances damaging to their initial enthusiasm to participate and engage with their communities. The findings also indicate an intersectionality in refugees' experiences of the burden of 'refugee-ness'. Female refugees are mostly responsible for looking after dependent children in the precarious and vulnerable world of seeking asylum.

The study also explored the notion of citizenship and its potential to facilitate a sense of belonging. The findings suggest refugees' perceptions and meaning of citizenship are mostly based on its potential to offer them stability and security that's lacking in the process of seeking asylum such as the freedom to travel and enhancing their ability to access services. The attainment of citizenship was not expressed as a form of socio-political belonging but rather in terms of accessing what they were restricted as asylum seekers. The requirements for achieving

citizenship such as country knowledge, language tests and cost are also perceived as unfair and exclusionary obstacles towards citizenship.

The concept of belonging has become salient due to the debates around issues such as border controls and security, the perception that certain immigrant groups are failing to integrate and the lack of social cohesion within communities in the United Kingdom. Refugees and asylum seekers are at the centre of such debates. They are often perceived as unwelcomed intruders through informal access of countries borders and states are increasingly showing determined efforts to erect both physical and other forms of borders by introducing policies to exclude those seeking sanctuary from wars and persecution. UK governments have been focusing on these exclusionary policies while simultaneously introducing policies that are perceived to facilitate community cohesion. However, the impact of these policies on migrant groups such as refugees have been mostly ignored. Immigration legislation has seen constant moves towards more stringent asylum policies while social cohesion policies are focused on a form of imposed assimilation without addressing issues that mostly affect these groups such as discrimination and feelings of exclusion.

This research is based on refugees' personal narratives on their experiences and perceptions of belonging rather than media content analysis of refugee and asylum seeker media representation, making the findings a very important contribution in the understanding of the process of refugees' sense of belonging. The research's limitation stems from the small number of participants. However, the aim of the research was not to generalise the experience of the participants to other groups of refugees but rather to offer an in depth understanding of refugees' sense of belonging. The findings suggest refugees sense of belonging is related to the perceptions and attitudes of the host community towards them. This points to the importance of future research that focus on an in depth understanding of the mainstream society's perceptions on the importance of refugees' sense of belonging. Future research can also attempt to shed more light on the impact of remittances on refugee senders rather than just on the receivers of remittances.

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Appendices

Appendix 1- Ethics application form

THE UNIVERSITY OF HUDDERSFIELD
School of Human and Health Sciences – School Research Ethics Panel

APPLICATION FORM
Please complete and return via email to:
Kirsty Thomson SREP Administrator: hhs_srep@hud.ac.uk

Name of applicant: Alpha Bangura

Title of study: Exploring a sense of belonging amongst African refugees in the North of England: what influences community engagement and participation?

Department: Behavioural science Date sent: 19.6.2016

Please provide sufficient detail below for SREP to assess the ethical conduct of your research. You should consult the guidance on filling out this form and applying to SREP at http://www.hud.ac.uk/hhs/research/srep/.

Researcher(s) details	Mr Alpha Omar Bangura MSc by research(sociology) full time
Supervisor(s) details	Main supervisor: Dr Santokh Gill Co-supervisor: Dr Berenice Golding
All documentation has been read by supervisor (where applicable)	YES
Aim / objectives	• To explore experiences of belonging amongst African refugees in the North of England • To investigate the effects of attainment of citizenship on feelings of belonging • To explore what influences community engagement and participation amongst African refugees

Brief overview of research methods	A qualitative methodology will be applied as the research is aiming to explore participants' views, meanings and perceptions on feelings of belonging. A qualitative approach ensures an interaction between the researcher and the research participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003), in investigating their sense of belonging. Data will be collected through in-depth semi structured interviews with 12 African refugees in the North of England. A semi structured method of data collection allows for specific interview questions but gives freedom for the interviewer to probe for details and clarification from interviewees about the phenomenon being studied (May,2001; Cargan,2007). Participants can also freely give in depth accounts of their experiences (Diccicio-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Interviews will last for about an hour and will be conducted at an agreed public place. Interviews will be tape recorded, transcribed and a thematic analysis will be carried out (Braun & Clarke, 2006), a suitable data analysis method for semi structured interview data (Joffe, 2012). Research findings will include excerpts of illuminating quotations from the data. The researcher has some characteristics and experiences that may be similar to those of the research participants. Therefore, reflexivity will be utilised as a medium through which the positionality of the researcher will be considered. This will include a discussion of the effects this may have on the research.
Project start date	October,2015
Project completion date	September, 2016
Permissions for study	Agreement in principle for access to recruit participants has been received from Leeds City of Sanctuary
Access to participants	The research participants will be accessed through refugee organisations in the Yorkshire region such as Huddersfield city of sanctuary, The welcome centre in Huddersfield, Leeds city of sanctuary. Permission will also be sought from course leaders to circulate information for potential participants should this be necessary
Confidentiality	All information disclosed during interviews will be confidential. Participants will be informed that only the researcher will have access to such information, except in cases where participants or anyone else is deemed to be at risk of harm, then appropriate authorities will be informed (BSA, 2002). This is included in the information sheet and consent form
Anonymity	To ensure participants anonymity, pseudonyms will be used in place of real names. Names of participants locations will be changed and participants given the choice to choose their own names in the study.

Right to withdraw	Participants will be informed that they have the right to withdraw at any time without giving any reasons or explanations for their decision
Data Storage	Collected data will be stored in a password protected computer and will be accessed only by the researcher to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. Dictaphone containing recorded interviews will be securely locked in a bag during travel from interviews and will not leave the sight of the researcher at any time. Data will be kept for 5 years in compliance with University data protection policy
Psychological support for participants	Participants will be directed towards appropriate help to organisations such as The Refugee Council Therapeutic services
Researcher safety / support (attach completed University Risk Analysis and Management form)	Please see attachments
Information sheet	Please see attachments
Consent form	Please see attachments
Letters / posters / flyers	Please see attachment
Questionnaire / Interview guide	Please see attachments
Debrief (if appropriate)	
Dissemination of results	It is envisaged that results from this research will be disseminated in the following ways: Thesis Journal articles Conference papers/ posters
Identify any potential conflicts of interest	The researcher is not currently working with any refugee organisation and has not received any funding from anyone, groups or organisations
Does the research involve accessing data or visiting websites that could constitute a legal and/or reputational risk to yourself or the University if misconstrued? Please state Yes/No If Yes, please explain how you will minimise this risk	No

The next four questions relate to Security Sensitive Information – please read the following guidance before completing these questions: http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Documents/2012/OversightOfSecuritySensitiveResearchMaterial.pdf	
Is the research commissioned by, or on behalf of the military or the intelligence services? Please state Yes/No If Yes, please outline the requirements from the funding body regarding the collection and storage of Security Sensitive Data	No
Is the research commissioned under an EU security call? Please state Yes/No If Yes, please outline the requirements from the funding body regarding the collection and storage of Security Sensitive Data	No
Does the research involve the acquisition of security clearances? Please state Yes/No If Yes, please outline how your data collection and storages complies with the requirements of these clearances	No
Does the research concern terrorist or extreme groups? Please state Yes/No If Yes, please complete a Security Sensitive Information Declaration Form	No

Does the research involve covert information gathering or active deception? Please state Yes/No	No
Does the research involve children under 18 or subjects who may be unable to give fully informed consent? Please state Yes/No	No
Does the research involve prisoners or others in custodial care (e.g. young offenders)? Please state Yes/No	No
Does the research involve significantly increased danger of physical or psychological harm for the researcher(s) and/or the subject(s), either from the research process or from the publication of findings? Please state Yes/No	No
Does the research involve risk of unplanned disclosure of information you would be obliged to act on? Please state Yes/No	No
Other issues	
Where application is to be made to NHS Research Ethics Committee / External Agencies	Not applicable
Please supply copies of all relevant supporting documentation electronically. If this is not available electronically, please provide explanation and supply hard copy	

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Appendix 2

University of HUDDERSFIELD
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CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Project: Exploring a sense of belonging amongst African Refugees in the north of England: what influences community engagement and participation

Please read, complete and sign the consent form version A (dated: 12 June, 2016). Your contribution to this research is entirely voluntary and you are not obliged in any way to participate, if you require any further details please contact your researcher.

The aims and nature of the research have been clearly explained to me as stated in the ☐

Information sheet

I consent to taking part in the research ☐

I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time ☐

without giving any reason or explanation

I give permission to be directly quoted provided a pseudonym is used. ☐

I understand that the information collected will be kept in secure conditions ☐

for a period of 5 years at the University of Huddersfield

I understand that no person other than the researcher will

access the information provided except where the researcher thinks I or someone else

is at risk of harm. In such a case the researcher is obliged to inform appropriate authorities. ☐

I understand that my identity will be protected by the use of pseudonym in the ☐

report and that no written information that could lead to my being identified will

be included in any report.

If you are satisfied that you understand the information and are happy to take part in this project, please put a tick in the box aligned to each sentence and print and sign below.

Signature of Participant:	Signature of Researcher:
Print:	Print: Alpha Bangura
Date:	Date:

Appendix 3

University of HUDDERSFIELD
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Participant Information Sheet

Title of project: Exploring a sense of belonging amongst African refugees in the north of England: what influences community engagement and participation?

Dear Sir/Madam,

You are being invited to take part in a study about feelings of belonging of African refugees in Britain. Before you decide to take part it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with me if you wish. Please do not hesitate to ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

The purpose of this study is to explore experiences and views of feelings of belonging amongst African refugees in the north of England, the effect of the attainment of citizenship on your feelings of belonging in Britain and what influences their community engagement and participation. You have been asked to participate because you are an African refugee in the North of England and this research hopes to provide an insight into your specific experiences and views on belonging in Britain. It will provide a space to have your voice heard on this topic. It is your decision whether or not you take part. If you decide to take part you will be asked to sign a consent form, and you will be free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

If you agree to take part in the research you will be asked to take part in a tape recorded hour long face to face interview which will take place at either the University of Huddersfield or at an agreed location of your choice. All information disclosed within the interview will be kept confidential, unless you indicate that you or anyone else is at risk of serious harm, in which case I would need to pass this information to the appropriate agencies. Your anonymity will be ensured by the the use of a pseudonym of your choice in place of your name and the name of your location will also be changed.

Any information collected during the interview will be safely kept on a password accessed computer. Your recorded interview will not leave the sight of the interviewer at any time during travel from interviews. All information collected from you during this research will be kept secure and any identifying material, such as names will be removed in order to ensure anonymity. Extracts from the interviews will be used in my thesis and It is anticipated that the research may, at some point, be published in a journal or report. However, should this happen, your anonymity will be ensured, although it may be necessary to use your words in the presentation of the findings and your permission for this is included in the consent form. The information will be kept at the University of Huddersfield for a period of five years

If you require any further information about the research, please contact me on:

Name: Alpha Bangura
E-mail: u1170991@hud.ac.uk
Telephone: 07765944185

Supervisor: Dr Santokh Gill
Email: S.S.Gill@hud.ac.uk
Telephone: 01484 473560

Co-supervisor: Dr Berenice Golding
Email: b.golding@hud.ac.uk
Telephone: 01484 473845

Appendix 4

Interview Guide

Thank you for agreeing to take part in the interview. Before I start I would like to remind you that you don't have to take part in this interview if you don't want to proceed. You have the right to withdraw from the research without having to give any explanations, all information disclosed during this interview will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and your anonymity will be ensured, except in a situation where such information indicates you or anyone else is at risk of harm only then will appropriate authorities be informed. I will be using a pseudonym of your choice in place of your name to ensure anonymity. The findings of this research will be used in the writing up of my thesis, possibly in conference papers and journal articles. The purpose and focus of this research is to explore feelings of belonging amongst African refugees in the north of England, your experiences and views on belonging in the UK, what are the barriers to belonging, what facilitates belonging. what impact does attainment of citizenship have on your feelings of belonging and what influences your participation and engagement in the wider community.

Do you have any questions for me before we start the interview?

1) Could you tell me a little bit about yourself?
   a) Country of origin and why did you have to come to Britain?
   b) How long have you been living Britain?

2) What were your first thoughts when you arrived in Britain?

   a) Did you seek asylum
   b) What kind of help did you receive?

3) How did you feel about living in Britain when you first arrived?
   a) Has this changed?

4) Do you feel you belong Britain?
   a) If yes, what helps you feel you belong here?
   b) If no, what stops you from feeling you belong?
   Now I want to ask you about ……thinking about how you feel about living in Britain
5) Do you currently work in Britain?
   a) If yes, can you tell me about your experiences of working in Britain?
   b) If no, can you explain?

6) Do you have children? If so, do they attend the local school?

   a) What is your level of involvement with the school?

7) Are you in some form of higher education?

   a) If yes, what are your experiences at this institution?

8) How does asylum and refugee policies such as force dispersals, length of the asylum process, support given, right to employment and education, affect your feeling of belonging in Britain?

9) What do you think about the media in relation to asylum seekers and refugees and how does that affect your feeling of belonging?

10) What was the length of stay given to you when you were granted a stay (4 years, indefinite leave to remain, discretionary leave to remain, what do you think about citizenship?)

11) What effect does your length of stay have on your feeling of belonging?

12) Are the communities that live around you mostly white, Asian, Black, refugees or non-refugees?

13) What is your interaction with these communities like?

14) How much do you normally reveal about being a refugee in your daily interactions?

15) Do you stay in contact with your country of origin?

   a) If yes, how do you normally do this?
   b) Are you in contact with your family in your country of origin?
   c) Do you send any financial support back to your country of origin?

16) Is there anything else you would like to add to what we have already talked about?

Debriefing statement: Thanks for taking part in the interview. Should you feel the need to talk to anyone about the interview, should you have any concerns about being involved in the interview at all or should you wish to contact me, please don't hesitate

to telephone or Email me or any of my supervisors. If you feel you need to talk to someone about your feelings after this interview, you can contact The Refugee Council Therapeutic Services on: 02073466700