

Young people subject to immigration control in London:
Precarious lives.

Vanessa Hughes

Goldsmiths, University of London

Thesis submitted for the degree of Ph.D. in Sociology

February 2020

Declaration of Authorship

I, Vanessa Hughes, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed:

Date: 24 February 2020

Acknowledgements

First of all, and most importantly, I would like to thank all the participants who took part in this research. Without you this thesis would not exist. To the young people in the campaign group, the teachers at the school, and the EAL students, I am deeply grateful. I want to thank you for letting me into your world, sharing your vulnerabilities and time with me. For trusting me with your stories, worries, hopes, and dreams. I hope that you find that what I have made of them in these pages, does justice to what you shared with me.

Secondly, I would like to thank my supervisors Professors Les Back and Heidi Safia Mirza, for their support and invaluable guidance throughout this long journey. Thank you for your time engaging with my project, reading my work, and seeing clarity and focus when I got overwhelmed with the scale of the project. Thank you also to my upgrade examiners, Dr Alison Rooke and Dr Anna Carlile, and former colleagues Professor Bridget Anderson and Dr Caroline Oliver for important, stimulating, and thoughtful feedback at crucial stages of the project; and to Professor Roberto G. Gonzales for hosting me as a visiting scholar at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

This project would not have been possible, without the support around me at Goldsmiths. My peers with whom this journey was shared via many conversations either in Warmington Tower, Laurie Gove Baths, or the pub, or via the PhD Migration Group we set up. They helped me keep up motivation, provided necessary comfort, and see the value of this project: Sarah Walker, Chloe Peacock, Kaoru Takahashi, Peter Rees, Laura Henneke, Louise Rondel, Sian Gouldstone, Ignacio Rivera Volosky, Ming-Te Peng, as well as many more who provided a stimulating intellectual graduate and academic community. Special thank also to Bridget Ward, whose office door was always open, and the Graduate School.

The journey towards this project, however, started long before I enrolled at Goldsmiths. My interest in this topic is no doubt related to my family's many migration stories. The encouragement to pursue this interest through research was fostered by the most supportive community of colleagues I could have wished for, while working at the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society. I would especially like to thank Professor Bridget Anderson, Dr Caroline Oliver, and Dr Sarah Spencer, whose work, support, and continued belief in me, has inspired me for many years and helped me through this project; and Professor Nando

Sigona with whom I started my journey researching undocumented migration and who taught me so much about this work.

Special thanks go to my family and friends. I could have never guessed the support I would need from them and the toll that this PhD journey would take on these relationships. Thank you for sticking with me and making many concessions for me over the years, listening to my struggles, taking me out, and feeding me. The countless messages checking in with me meant the world. Thank you mum for looking after me for the two crucial last weeks, so I could concentrate solely on writing, and your unconditional love; thank you Vicky, Milou and Piet for taking me in when I had nowhere to live and tight finances, and providing a warm and supportive home to me; thank you to Florence and Lucas for drawing me into your kids' world reminding me that there are other things in life than the PhD; thank you to Ida for keeping the most amazing social enterprise, actREAL, going; and thank you to Ish for having my back in moments of doubt. And many more – without your support this project would not have got finished. Thank you also to proof-readers for giving up your time to cast a critical eye over the final chapters: Ish Norris, Peter Rees, Vicky Kingsman, Geoff Norris, Milou Pothast, Craig Parker-Feldman, Lorraine Kingsman, and Pieter Kooyman.

Finally, this project would not have been possible without the generous funding from the ESRC.

Abstract

In this thesis I argue that the immigration and citizenship regimes cruelly shape the everyday lives of certain young migrants in London. Based on a hierarchical system with roots in empire, multiple temporary immigration statuses offer various degrees of rights and entitlements. As a result, young migrants are growing up in precarious situations prohibiting them from pursuing their futures as they transition to adulthood and are fixed in place on the 'hierarchy of belonging' within the UK (Back et al., 2012). Long waits on their immigration status applications keeps young people cruelly waiting indefinitely while their life and transitions to adulthood are on hold. As citizenship becomes seemingly unattainable for young people through increasing costs and an extended pathway, the existing social order is maintained (Anderson, 2012). By illegalizing their migration and questioning their continued presence in the UK, the state is demonstrating how their mobility is less wanted than that of the international investor in the 'hierarchy of global mobilities' (McNevin, 2013).

These lived experiences have multiple implications for young people. Long-term exclusions produce feelings of shame, stigma and isolation, which have significant mental health implications. Their being immobilised in London through their immigration status, fosters a strong sense of belonging to their locality, based on their everyday life and embeddedness in the community, especially through school. In a long and costly process of multiple immigration applications in a hostile immigration system, young people are highly scrutinised and often rejected before they are accepted. Unable to access citizenship for at least ten years, young migrants have no long-term certainty to live in the UK despite having grown up here and calling this their home. Collectively the young people formed a campaign group to contest these restrictions and exclusions.

Table of Contents

Prelude.....	10
Daisy.....	10
Young people and precarious immigration status.....	11
Chapter 1 – Introduction: Researching lives lived in illegality.....	15
Introduction.....	15
The research questions.....	17
Who are “undocumented” migrants?.....	18
A note on terminology.....	22
The legal context.....	23
Children’s rights v immigration legislation.....	24
Education and healthcare.....	25
Options to legalise status.....	26
Turning 18.....	27
Methodology.....	28
Building trust.....	31
Avoiding exploitation of participants in research.....	35
Conclusion.....	38
Thesis Outline.....	39
Chapter 2: Migration, citizenship, race and colonial echoes: Making the “illegal migrant”.....	44
Introduction.....	44
Researching young “undocumented” migrants.....	45
Immigration status as lived experience.....	48
Immigration status and intersectionality.....	50
Immigration status and time.....	52
Immigration status and legacies of empire.....	53
Migration and citizenship in Western liberal democratic states.....	56
Citizenship and migration.....	57
Citizenship, legacies of empire and racism.....	59
Citizenship and belonging.....	63
A framework to acknowledge empire and race in migration research.....	66
Collaborative ethnographic approach.....	69
Conclusion.....	71
Chapter 3 – Everyday life subject to immigration control.....	74
Introduction.....	74

Sarah	76
A life restricted by insecure immigration status.....	77
‘Even grooming yourself you need to be...[legal]’: Living without status.....	80
Applying for immigration status	86
Renewing immigration status	93
Being different	95
Conclusion.....	96
Chapter 4 - The Waiting Girl	100
Time, life-course and immigration status.....	100
Leila	100
Messy times	102
Tense times.....	104
Before status: Waiting and being stuck.....	105
Present: Growing up too early.....	112
Future: Life on probation.....	119
Conclusion.....	124
Chapter 5 - The emotional burden of living without status	126
Emotions, mental health and immigration status	126
Maria.....	127
A complex emotional landscape.....	129
Depression and anxiety.....	131
Isolation.....	134
The immigrant stigma	137
Immigration enforcement and surveillance	139
Feeling out of control.....	144
Mental health stigma.....	146
Educational attainment	147
Conclusion.....	149
I-poem: Maria	150
Chapter 6 - ‘I’m an angry British person’: Citizenship as a cruel promise?	152
From immigration status to citizenship	152
Serena	154
The myth of the citizenship pathway.....	155
The lived experience of the citizenship pathway.....	158
Not the same citizenship pathway for everyone	162
The citizenship pathway and belonging.....	164

Young Londoners: Everyday, local belonging	165
Rejected belonging	168
Legal status and citizenship matters.....	172
Conclusion: British without citizenship.....	176
Chapter 7 – The elephant in the room: Race and migration in post-empire Britain	179
Introduction	179
Leo.....	180
‘I used to think white people lived on TV’: Learning about “race”	181
‘There’s always institutional racism’	184
‘Low-key racism’	189
‘Look at all of you in this room’: Navigating the politics of “race” and racism in the UK.....	193
“Political blackness”	198
Conclusion.....	201
Chapter 8: ‘Immigration was what connected us’: From individual struggle to collective activism ..	203
Introduction	203
The campaign group	204
The migrant label	207
Overcoming demons: Sharing the struggle and healing.....	208
Support from the campaign group	209
Coming out.....	211
Becoming political.....	214
Being an immigrant activist and the collective political project.....	216
Experts by experience.....	217
Changing policy for migrants	221
Conclusion: ‘Immigration was what connected us’	228
Chapter 9 – Conclusion: Young people subject to immigration control in London: Precarious lives.	231
Introduction	231
Immigration times and pathways	233
Contradictory scales of exclusion and inclusion	235
The persistence of “race” in bordering belonging and citizenship.....	236
Taking back control through activism	237
Collaborative ethnography and its limitations	237
White allies and the politics of representation?.....	241
‘The only thing we have to overcome privilege is empathy’	244
Where do we go from here?.....	245
Bibliography	251

Prelude

Daisy

I was born in Nigeria and I lived with my grandparents until I was about 8 years' old, my mother was in a different state in Nigeria with my brother whilst my dad was here in the UK. It was when I was 8 years old that my mother told me we were coming to the UK. I remember feeling really excited but at the same time I was sad to be leaving the world that I knew behind. But I was also very curious about the new world that I was going to be coming into. I arrived in the UK on the 1st February and I remember it was cold and it was snowing, and I was in awe. I met my father for the first time since I was about 6 months old and I remember the commotion, the fuss that he made about having his family finally reunited. I felt at that time the love and the care of a father that I had never felt before. And in that moment I felt very safe and complete. Things moved pretty quickly from there. My brother and I were registered in a school the day after we arrived in the UK, I remember I couldn't speak any English at all, only Yoruba. And I knew nothing about the UK and I'd never seen white people in my life before. I was asking my dad all sorts of questions, you know 'are the different people in different places who are also different colours?' I settled into school and at home after a few months of being in the UK I started to finally enjoy being in the UK despite the language barriers. I was always willing to learn, and I was always willing to get involved, so I took part in every after school club I could think of and eventually things just started to improve. One day at 11 years old I heard my mum crying over the phone in the living room. It was extremely late, and she had already sent my brother and I to bed. When I heard her cry, I snuck downstairs to listen in on the conversation. I learned that evening that my dad had been sent to a deportation centre. I didn't understand what it meant but I was convinced it wasn't good news. Why would my mother be crying otherwise? I sat by the stairs for what felt like a really, really long time. I remember the agony of my mothers' voice as she struggled to utter words over the phone. I reacted in that moment to her pain and the feeling in my guts was hard to swallow. I remember my throat feeling dry and tears flooding my face. I was holding

my breath to keep my mother from discovering my presence. I slowly gathered up all the strength in me and walked back up to my room. I lay in my bed for several hours unable to go back to sleep. A few days passed and it became clear that my dad was no longer coming back. I pestered my mum to tell me what was really going on. She caved in and told me that we were immigrants in the UK, we didn't have the right to stay here, and my dad was caught working illegally to try and provide for this family. There was a strong moment right there between my mother and I. It wasn't until I was much older that I became aware of that very moment being the fundamental change in my life. I had always been a girl that loved smiling. I was still that girl that loved smiling, even after my father's deportation. But this time I would only smile to hide and bury the pain in my heart. I hadn't known my father for long, he made lots of mistakes, but he was never given a chance to correct them. I never spoke about my dad to any of my school friends. When I spoke to my brother about him it would be to make up jokes so we could laugh at him. I knew deep down how hurt I was about never really knowing him, and I knew how hurt I was over watching my mother carry the burdens of two children without being able to work or really have a future in the UK. It was just a devastating experience. At 21 I joined the campaign. I joined for the simple fact that I was barred from accessing student finance because of my immigration status. I wanted to help, to go to university. I never expected it would take me on the path that I am on.

There are many other young people at the campaign whose stories are incredibly similar to mine. Although not being granted student finance was how we found each other, immigration was what connected us. It was very clear that we were all broken regardless of whether we knew it or not. We just started by sharing our stories. And I remember at first sharing my story, it was difficult. I never shared my story publicly, but I wanted to heal from my wounds and face my demons.

Young people and precarious immigration status

This is how Daisy told her story in a theatre workshop I had organised as part of my fieldwork in February 2017. Daisy is a boss and a fighter. She is also a migrant, something

that has defined her life before she even realised it and more than she'd like to since she became aware of her 'status'. Instead of letting this be a constant shadow over her life, she has made it her life's work to fight the restrictions she and many like her face because of her immigration status. Rather than feeling shame and stigma at being labelled a migrant she now says it loud and proud. Getting to this point was a long journey of many unexpected and often painful discoveries and events, most crucially losing her dad through deportation as she tells in the above extract.

Daisy is not alone in her experience. In fact, there are many young people who are in similar situations in the UK, restricted from living their life because of their immigration status, while seemingly indistinguishable from their British peers. Based on a year-long ethnography in 2016 and 2017, this thesis is about these young people, their stories and lived experience of the contemporary British immigration system. It is through the lives of Daisy, Sarah, Maria, Tobi, Leila, Shuri, Serena and other participants, that we will learn about lives lived restricted as a result of immigration control. Participants' stories will lead the chapters and broader thematic discussions, focussing on a few stories per chapter. While all the stories presented here are unique, they also have many similarities, mostly in how their immigration status is a major factor of control in their lives and life-course, especially at the point of turning 18 and entering further or higher education. They are also all part of a campaign group, which works with and for young migrants who are subject to the "hostile environment" immigration policy in the UK.

In this thesis and based on the stories that the young people have shared with me, I will argue that precarious immigration status and deportability (De Genova, 2002) operate as mechanisms of control over their daily lives and transitions into adulthood. Their immigration status works to keep them in place - be it geographically or in terms of social mobility. It is a restrictive immigration system where only citizenship guarantees you safety from deportation and full access to rights and entitlements. Until citizenship there is a continuum of various legal statuses that offer varying degrees of inclusion and exclusion to non-citizens. Most of the young people in this study had "limited leave to remain" at the time and had been "undocumented" in the past, therefore having little security and limited inclusion. Instead young people became fixed in poverty, low-income work, poor housing, London, and outside of the 'community of value' (Anderson, 2013) through their legal

status. They are fixed in place on the 'hierarchy of belonging' in the UK (Back et al., 2012) by making it ever harder to attain and renew legal status, and by being stopped from changing their status. Thus, the existing social order is maintained (Anderson, 2012). By illegalizing their migration and constantly questioning their continued presence in the UK, the state is demonstrating how their mobility is less wanted than that of the international investor in the 'hierarchy of global mobilities' (McNevin, 2013). Young people then become stuck in the UK as part of the global poor, where their situation both in their countries of citizenship and their countries of current residence are connected to and shaped by legacies of empire (Anderson, 2013; Back et al., 2012; De Genova, 2010; Griffiths, 2019; Hund and Lentin, 2014; Sharma, 2015; Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002).

The process of applying for and keeping a legal immigration status is extended over a long, expensive and torturous process for ten years or more, meaning that even having short-term legal status results in long-term insecurity. However, this process rarely ends in deportation for these young migrants. Instead, they are usually granted some form of right of stay that will eventually lead to citizenship. This begs the question of what and whose purpose does it serve to restrict the lives of these young people who will eventually become British citizens? Why keep them on probation for ten years or longer which restricts their ability to access education and work at crucial points in their life-course? During this process of proving to the British state that they are worthy of British citizenship, young people are dependent on successfully renewing their immigration status every 30 months. The high and constantly increasing costs involved in this process and the restricted rights and entitlements they have on a short-term status, pose significant barriers to their daily life and transitions to adulthood. They are excluded from student finance for many years, remain dependent on their families' support for longer, often work multiple jobs and are excluded from many rites of passage that their peers experience. In addition, they are expected to maintain "good character" for their applications to be renewed with the (false) promise that they will eventually be included in the 'community of value'. This period is effectively a ten-year probation for young people, preventing them from transforming their own status and situation with long-term detrimental consequences. Many young people feel they are forced to act out of character, become physically or mentally unwell, and become open to exploitation. Feelings of shame, stigma and isolation attached to their immigration status,

ensure that they struggle on their own and don't challenge their situation or treatment for a long time. It is also likely to affect their position in the labour market and their feelings of belonging in the UK.

Over time, their burden becomes too much to bear on their own and the restrictions too suffocating that they risk confiding in someone. This often becomes the start of their politicisation; an unanticipated consequence of the injustice they experience because of their immigration status. The process usually starts with relieving themselves of their burden by sharing their story with others in similar situations. Through this they start to heal, by seeing their story as part of a collective struggle rather than an isolated incident that only affects them. Using their personal stories, agency and mutual support they build knowledge about their and others' immigration situations, make connections with related global and historical struggles, and build a campaign against the restrictions imposed on them through their immigration status. Their initial focus on educational justice has broadened to immigration justice questions over the course of their political work. Despite important collective wins, such as the Supreme Court judgement in their favour in the Tigere case in 2015, the subsequently changed rules for student finance in 2016, and individual successes such as eligibility for university scholarships, few far-reaching changes in legislation or government policy have been achieved in an environment committed to reducing the net numbers of immigrants and creating a "hostile environment" for "illegal immigrants" in the UK. Nonetheless, these young people are including themselves in the polity through their civic and political engagement.

Chapter 1 – Introduction: Researching lives lived in illegality

Introduction

This project examines the encounter between young migrants with precarious immigration status in London and the British state, how a precarious immigration situation shapes young people's unfolding lives, and how a citizenship pathway develops in their lives. Resulting from these situations are lives lived at many intersections and in a contradictory space between formal and informal processes of belonging and citizenship, or what Gonzales terms the 'belonging-illegality continuum' (2016). It will look at how these intersect with 'race' and life-course, and are shaped by their historical, national, social, political and economic contexts. By placing 'immigration status' at the centre of this research's analysis, my aim is to problematise state-categorisations and their effect in "real life", while challenging 'the state on its role in constructing vulnerability' (Anderson, 2008: 12). As Sayad argues, thinking about immigration is to interrogate the state and to 'rehistoricize' it through 'recalling the social and historical conditions of its genesis' (2004: 280). This will be examined through the lived experience of young people who are directly affected by the British state's immigration controls.

Stricter border controls, fewer legal entry routes to Europe and a hostile policy environment for immigrants, have led to increasing numbers of migrants living in a precarious legal situation in the UK. As Koser commented already in 2000: 'a vicious circle is developing between increasingly stricter entry controls and the need for potential immigrants and asylum seekers to turn to the services of "traffickers" and "smugglers"' (quoted in Black et al., 2006). Not only are there fewer entry routes, but the entry routes and rights to reside available are increasingly temporary and complex (De Noronha, 2019; Goldring et al., 2009). Restrictions on access to rights and the diversification of immigration statuses has led to a complex, stratified system of access to right of stay, citizenship and welfare rights for migrants (Morris, 2003; Oliver, 2020; Sainsbury, 2012) and multiple bordered identities (Gonzales and Sigona, 2017) that leave many non-citizens living in 'permanent temporariness' and long-term uncertainty (Bailey et al., 2002; Menjivar, 2006). Given the political climate towards immigrants in the UK and Europe with hardened external borders, exporting border duties to countries on Europe's periphery and a proliferation of internal

bordering mechanisms extending to the 'right to rent' and bank accounts, it is likely that this situation will continue in the foreseeable future. Yet, little is known about how long-term precarious immigration status affects young migrants' who have largely grown up in the UK (for some exceptions see Bloch et al., 2014; Bloch and Chimienti, 2013; Bloch and McKay, 2016; Gäsche, 2014; Ruhs and Anderson, 2010; Sigona and Hughes, 2012), and how they make claims based on their belonging as non-citizens (Bhavnani et al., 2005). This is in contrast to the US, where there is a growing literature on the everyday lives of "undocumented" migrants and young people, perhaps in part because of growing political activism (Abrego and Gonzales, 2010; Chavez, 1998; Coutin, 2000; Gonzales, 2016; Ngai, 2004). The more recent studies in particular, as Rusczyk and Barbosa point out in their review paper, 'capture a more nuanced picture of how variation in experience of illegality, both in terms of limitations and resistance, is based on diversification of legal and social context' (2016: 1). Based on their methodological depth, they argue that these recent studies 'advance new intersectional understandings of immigration status' and seeing "undocumented" migrants as a heterogeneous group "merely" defined by their immigration status (Barbosa and Rusczyk, 2016: 2).

In this project, state categories of immigration will be interrogated not only as a legal status, but also a socio-political condition and a 'mode of being in the world' (Willen, 2007). In such an approach, migrants and their relation to immigration status is not fixed. Rather migrants move through a range of statuses (Bloch et al., 2014; Jasso et al., 2008) and can simultaneously inhabit both 'legal' and 'illegal' spaces in relation to different institutional or policy arrangements (Kubal, 2013; Ruhs and Anderson, 2010). As a result, legal status becomes more or less visible during different moments of a person's life-course.

The research on how the lives of migrants are affected by "illegality" and immigration status, shows that its consequences are significant and that immigration status tends to dominate all aspects of somebody's life (Barbosa and Rusczyk, 2016; Bloch et al., 2014; De Genova, 2002; Gonzales, 2016; Gonzales and Chavez, 2012; Sigona and Hughes, 2012; Willen, 2007). In the UK, research suggests that young "undocumented" migrants and their families find themselves largely in situations of formal exclusions and a life of instability and poverty, with the exception of compulsory education where children are formally included regardless of their immigration status (Sigona and Hughes, 2012). Beyond compulsory

education, the picture becomes more complicated as a complex immigration system restricts access to further education for migrants dependent on their immigration status (Oliver and Hughes, 2018). At this point young people often find themselves suspended in an uncertain limbo. Over half of the children and young people who are “undocumented” or in an insecure immigration situation in the UK, are either born here (Mayor of London, 2020; Sigona and Hughes, 2012) or migrated here at an early age (as shown in this research). They are therefore *de-facto* non-deportable, while long-term regularisation possibilities are limited, and barriers to access them high (Arnot and Pinson, 2005; Sigona and Hughes, 2012). Young people are effectively stuck between a rock and a hard place: unlikely to leave the UK and unlikely to secure settled immigration status or citizenship. Working from an everyday lived experience framework with young people, offers the opportunity to look at how immigration status intersects with other areas of their life, such as age, “race”, and life-course. These intersections produce specific spaces of inclusion and exclusion, and feelings of belonging. An everyday lived experience framework further allows insight into how and when immigration status becomes a significant stratification mechanism. It will help to reveal how the state performs its sovereignty and “state thought” through immigration policies that have real consequences in people’s lives and show how these boundaries are contested over time in a global world. As recent studies have shown, ‘structures and institutions restrict migrants’ agency in the production of illegality’ (Barbosa and Rusczyk, 2016: 3).

The research questions

Given this context, the main research question explored in this thesis is how formal and informal mechanisms of immigration status, citizenship, and belonging are imagined and produced through institutional practices; and lived, resisted, and evaded by young migrants. What kind of inclusions and exclusions are produced for young migrants according to their immigration status? Do they vary or even contradict depending on the scale considered? What are the legal, economic, and historic processes that contribute to this? How does young people’s immigration status change over time and what consequences does this have? Does immigration status lead to citizenship and how is this pathway constituted and

experienced? And how does immigration status and citizenship affect young people's sense of belonging in London and Britain? How do young people live in this web of inclusions and exclusions? At what moments do they resist or evade their state-imposed categorisations, and how? On one hand, this thesis will examine the structural and social processes that produce difference through immigration status and the immigration regime. On the other, this thesis will look at the effects of immigration status on young people's lives by examining how immigration status is constructed, experienced, felt and lived. In other words, how does immigration status become a reality in young people's lives, and how is it made real by young people in their everyday life? How does immigration status intersect with legacies of empire, "race", gender and life-course in the production of social difference?

In this first chapter of my thesis, I will briefly discuss who "undocumented" migrants are for the purposes of this research and provide an overview of the legal context relevant to this group of people. I will also explain how the research was conducted and introduce the participants, before outlining how this thesis intends to contribute to the literature. Finally, I will provide a chapter outline of this thesis.

Who are "undocumented" migrants?

Hardly a day passes without a media item on "illegal immigration" in a polarised and increasingly xenophobic public debate on immigration in the UK. A common image invoked by large proportions of the mainstream media is either that of the bogus migrant entering the country illegally, taking away scarce resources from "the British people" - the bad, undesirable and undeserving migrant - or the victim migrant who is in need of protection thus good, wanted and deserving. In both cases the figure of the migrant is often presented as a threat to the NHS, welfare state, housing, labour market and British identity and values. Presenting such an image of the migrant is false and dangerously simplified, denying political, economic and historical reasons for the current situation (Anderson, 2015). So, what is behind the figure of the "illegal migrant"? How does a person's legal status become "illegal"? Where are these migrants from and why are they in the UK? Who are the people behind the label and what are their stories?

The emerging literature mentioned above is starting to answer these questions and this thesis will endeavour to further contribute to this understanding. Importantly what emerges from the literature, is that defining this “group” of migrants is extremely heterogeneous and complex, and context specific. The only common factor is their legal status as “illegalised”. These migrants therefore reside in the countries they live in without the legal right to stay and are subsequently deportable at any moment by the immigration regime (De Genova, 2002). Furthermore, “undocumented” migrants can simultaneously inhabit “legal” and “illegal” spaces in relation to different institutional or policy arrangements (Ruhs and Anderson, 2010) and can move through a range of statuses (Bloch et al., 2009).

They end up without legal status through a variety of routes, come from different countries of origin, have different motivations for migrating, are of a variety of ages and socio-economic backgrounds, live in different family or household structures, have hugely diverse lengths of stay, and often live very different lives in their countries of residence. Importantly, their legal status becomes relevant and visible to them or the state at different moments in time.

Black and colleagues examined the routes to illegal residence in the UK in a study published in 2006. While not a representative sample of the migrants illegally resident in the UK, the study found a diversity of routes to illegal residence and patterns associated with countries of origin. They included illegal entry by smuggler or obtaining forged documents, and overstaying after legal entry. Most of those who entered illegally soon after claimed asylum. However, ‘[T]hose who entered legally, but then overstayed on their visa comprise the largest single group of illegal residents’ (Black et al., 2006: 560). Of those who entered legally and then overstayed many ‘drifted in and out of legality’, confirming the findings of other studies. Due to the huge variation of paths into irregularity, lack of available statistics and numbers, the authors concluded that rather than trying to predict patterns, ‘there may be more value in extending understanding of the dynamics of “undocumented” or clandestine migration through in-depth case studies, than in seeking to refine further the elusive search for a “representative” sample’ (2006: 564).

How migrants’ status becomes illegal depends on a country’s legal system and geopolitical situation (Gonzales et al., 2019). People’s legal status can also change due to changes in the

law without any changes in people's situation, as can be seen in the recent examples of the Windrush scandal or Brexit. In the UK "illegal entry" is rare because it is an island and furthest removed from Europe's external borders; In the US the largest group of "undocumented" migrants are Mexicans because they share the border with the US, and children born to "undocumented" migrant parents are US citizens due to birthright citizenship in the US; and in Germany there are few migrants who are completely unknown to the state due to its bureaucratic and legal systems which emphasise coherence between state institutions and the law and where contradictions are undesirable. Unlike other legal categorisations such as asylum seeker, refugee, family migrant, labour migrant and so on, "undocumented" migrants are not defined through their legal status but rather by not having one. In some instances, this means they are completely unknown to the authorities, in others it means they are known and in the process of regularising their status, or appealing removal decisions.

Due to the UK's geographical situation, the majority of "undocumented" migrants enter legally and fall out of status later as they overstay their visa or other status. The reasons for why and how this happen are also complex. Common routes are asylum seekers whose application is refused. It can often take the Home Office many years to make a decision on an asylum application, which means by the time a decision has been made the asylum seeker has already established a life in the UK, in some instances even started a family. At that point, some may understandably decide to remain in the UK rather than returning to their country of origin. Another route that has been documented by the *Becoming Adult* project, is young people who arrive under the age of 18 and are granted discretionary leave until they are 17 ½ and whose application for asylum as an adult is refused. Again, young people by then have lived in the UK for several years, are often in education and established a life when they are told to leave the UK. Many decide to abscond instead. Another route is to overstay short-term visas, commonly referred to as "overstayers". These can include those who entered on student visas and decided to stay after its expiry, often because of a change in their life circumstances such as falling in love or starting a family and where changing from one category to another while in the UK is becoming increasingly difficult. Changes in life circumstances are especially problematic if their immigration status is tied to them as is the case in a variety of dependency visas. This is when someone's legal right to

reside in the UK is tied for example to an employer (a sponsor) or another person (a parent or spouse). If this situation changes, because of losing a job or relationship breakdown, migrants are no longer legally resident. Again, this might be after many years of having lived in the UK. Increasingly migrants are also “illegalised” through greater convergence of the immigration and criminal justice system. For example, the Home Office enforcement operation Nexus automatically scans anyone who is taken into police custody. This has led to detentions and deportations of long-term residents in the UK for minor crimes. Finally, children born in the UK adopt their parents’ immigration status since the abolition of birth right citizenship in 1984, meaning they are born into an illegal status.

These are just some examples of how a person can end up in an illegalised situation due to their immigration status in the UK. It shows that there are a variety of routes, reasons and pathways into “illegality” that relate to the global economic context, geopolitical histories, current immigration regimes and border mechanisms as well as personal life circumstances. It is important to emphasise that migrants rarely, if ever, come to the UK with a strategy to either overstay a short-term visa or remain after a refused asylum application. Rather it is a combination of a lack of options to remain in the UK legally, the difficulty in accessing those legal statuses (as will be discussed in this thesis) and life circumstances that change. In-country regularisation of immigration status is becoming increasingly difficult with more restrictive legal and policy changes for both adults and children.

Finally, a brief note on numbers. While the hidden nature of “undocumented” migrants, and the various diversities within this “group” prevents any rigorous figures on how many migrants are present on a territory at any given time, there have been some attempts at creating estimates. For the UK, it was estimated that there were 618,000 “undocumented” migrants at the end of 2007 (Gordon et al., 2009) and 120,000 undocumented migrant children in 2011, over half of whom were UK-born (Sigona and Hughes, 2012). A report published in January 2020 by the Mayor of London updated these estimates. This suggests that the “undocumented” population in the UK is 674,000, and that there are 215,00 and 107,000 “undocumented” children in the UK and London respectively (Mayor of London, 2020: 3–4).

A note on terminology

The complexity described above is also reflected in the plethora of terms used to describe migrants 'who are subject to enforcement' (Anderson, 2013b: 117). The terminology used remains highly contested (see for example PICUM, n.d.), and different terms often reflect different meanings and intentions, or depends on context. A term can narrowly delineate a legal category or represent a political or normative position. Terms include "illegal", "irregular", "undocumented", "unauthorized", "sans-papier" and "clandestine".

A key criticism of these terms is that it links the migrant to criminality when in most instances they have committed an administrative offence rather than a criminal one.¹ These terms also represent a too simplistic dichotomy between "legal" and "illegal", to some extent replicating the image of the "good" vs "bad" migrant referred to earlier, and which is not confirmed by lived experiences of migrants in such a situation. Furthermore, migrants are not fixed in one legal status throughout time and can even simultaneously inhabit multiple legal statuses. People can be considered as "illegally resident" through many different pathways, that include being born into it, overstaying different types of visas, having (asylum) applications refused, or through illegal entry (rare). Migrant workers' status is often tied to their employer, especially in the case of domestic workers, and if that situation changes or the relationship breaks down the migrant is considered "illegal" by the state. Likewise, if a relationship of a "dependent migrant" broke own, his/her legal status changes. Furthermore, in-country regularisation of immigration status is difficult with more restrictive policies meaning that migrants may choose to stay in an "illegal" status rather than try and regularise, risking forced removal.

The use of such terms has therefore been argued to be reductive, fixing migrants' identities in their immigration categorisation and falsely used to describe the person rather than their legal status (Andersson, 2014a). Goldring et al. instead argue for the use of "precarious status", as it is non-binary and reflects the 'variable forms of irregular status and illegality' (2009: 239). Recently there has been a trend in the literature to use longer descriptions such as "migrants with an irregular immigration status" or "migrants without the right to reside".

¹ For an overview of which European countries criminalise illegal entry or stay see Spencer and Hughes, 2015, pp.54–56.

Some media outlets in Europe, the US as well as in the UK have also pledged to no longer use the word “illegal” to describe a person, or migrant, in their reporting.

While such lengthy descriptions are probably more accurate in terms of describing a person’s legal situation, they are also wordy. Following Anderson, I will use the term “illegal”, or “illegalized”, in more literature and policy-based discussions of this thesis to demonstrate the state’s role in making somebody illegal. However, in the empirically based chapters I will be using terms as used by the young people themselves. While most of them prefer to use the word “undocumented” some also use “illegal immigrant” to describe themselves. It should be noted that this is often a reflection of young people internalising dominant discourses and can have unhelpful consequences for the young people themselves as discussed in chapter five. Such a negative self-identification can often last beyond the point of getting status.

The legal context

The legal and policy context pertaining to young “undocumented” migrants is hugely complex. My aim here is to give a broad overview of some of the relevant legislation to the young people in this study and to give a sense of the complexity and contradictions inherent to their situation at the intersection between two different policy and legal areas. These two areas are those dealing with the protection and welfare towards children on the one hand and immigration policy on the other. They often stand in tension producing contradictory and inconsistent outcomes for the young people subject to these policies. This has resulted from immigration policy objectives by successive governments that moved from ‘managing migration’ in 2006, to a commitment to reduce net numbers of migration in 2007, to creating a hostile environment for “illegal” migrants in 2012 within the context of curbing public expenditure that also drove policies to restrict access to public funds for migrants. Together these converge to produce a vulnerable environment for young migrants in a precarious immigration situation with respect to the protection of their rights that should be assured regardless of their immigration status. This is often due to problematic implementation or interpretation by front-line staff in practice and lack of training due to the complex and frequently changing nature resulting from this legal and policy landscape.

So while on the one hand, the British state vows to protect the welfare and rights of children and act in the best interest of the child, this is undermined by the restrictions placed on young migrants and their families through the immigration regime. Furthermore, it is not uncommon for vulnerabilities and safeguarding issues to arise as a result of young people's encounter with the immigration regime, that then fall to other state departments to resolve due to their duty of care for children.

Children's rights v immigration legislation

Young people under the age of 18 who are in the UK without the legal right to reside find themselves in a complex situation with regards to the policy context and the laws that govern their lives: 'as migrants, children and irregular, this group stands at the intersection of different policy agendas in which state intervention differs considerably, where different legal and policy frameworks operate, where international obligations and national priorities do not always coincide, and where agendas and discourses constructed for different audiences...meet and sometimes clash, producing a diverse and often contradictory range of policies and practices' (Sigona and Hughes, 2012: 9). The international human rights regime is based on the understanding that every human being has inalienable rights regardless of their legal or administrative status. This is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989, UNCRC), to which the UK is a ratified signatory and which sets out further legally-binding rights for children that should apply to young people under the age of 18 in precarious immigration situations in the UK. In Europe, the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) provides further protections. These instruments cover a broad range of civil, political, social and economic rights and the UNCRC further stipulates how the rights should be applied and, in Article 3, that 'all actions concerning children...the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration'. The effectiveness of these laws however depends on their incorporation into national law, which in the case of the UNCRC and the UK has not taken place. The ECHR on the other hand has been incorporated into UK domestic law through the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998 and as such is justiciable in terms of the rights contained in it. Relevant to the young people in this research, and often applicable to their immigration applications, is article 8 of the ECHR which is the right to private and family life.

In UK domestic law, children's rights are enshrined in the 1989 and 2004 Children Acts as well as the 'Every Child Matters' framework. Generally, this means that local authorities and public bodies have a duty to safeguard and protect the welfare of children. Support is given to the child based on a needs assessment and should follow the principle that children should if possible, stay with their families. Immigration status should not necessarily be relevant to the support given if a child is in need.

However, the above legislation pertaining to the welfare, protection and rights of children does not explicitly mention immigration status. In practice, entitlements are therefore often complicated by restrictions imposed through immigration legislation (Morris, 2003; Oliver, 2020). The main tension here lies in the 'no recourse to public funds' restriction attached to many immigration statuses. A recent study examining exactly this tension in the different policy and legislative areas, concluded that the result is a shift in responsibility from central to local government, but where only central government, namely the Home Office, can resolve the protracted situation resulting from unresolved immigration status issues (Price and Spencer, 2015).

Education and healthcare

With regards to education, children in precarious immigration status are implicitly entitled to compulsory education through the Education Act 1996 and the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Spencer and Hughes, 2015: 45). However, access to further and higher education (i.e. post-compulsory education) for migrants is dependent on their immigration status (Oliver and Hughes, 2018). Particularly relevant to this research is how migrants are assessed in terms of their fees and what finance they are eligible for for further and higher education, including English classes. Many migrants are ineligible for home fees meaning they are assessed as 'overseas' fees expected to pay up to three times as much for higher education as home and EU students. In 2011, the law was changed so that only migrants with settled status were considered for home fees, although this is at the discretion of individual higher education institutions, and eligible to access student finance. This excluded many young people or family dependents who had lived in the UK for many years but either without legal residence or on short-term statuses not considered 'settled'. In 2015 a legal challenge was brought to the Supreme Court to contest these restrictions to student finance. In the case *Tigere V Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills [2015]*

UKSC 57 the Supreme Court rules that ‘the settlement rule...violated [the appellant’s] Convention right to be afforded access to education on equal terms with her peers’ (Oliver and Hughes, 2018: 137). Eventually, new eligibility criteria were introduced in April 2016 that introduced a ‘long residence’ qualification. Young people were now eligible for student finance if they have had at least three years of legal residence in the UK (not necessarily settled status) and if born abroad have lived in the UK half their life.

Access to the NHS and healthcare has been a topic that has received much media and political attention over recent years due to unevidenced concerns over ‘health tourism’. While access has been somewhat restricted, access to emergency and primary healthcare should still be freely accessible to anyone in the UK regardless of their immigration status. Access to free secondary healthcare is dependent on whether a person is ‘ordinarily resident’ in the UK and since 2014 has indefinite leave to remain. Otherwise secondary healthcare, is accessible but chargeable (Spencer and Hughes, 2015). Furthermore, treatment that is medically deemed ‘immediately necessary’ or ‘urgent’ cannot be withheld by medical staff even if patients cannot pay for the treatment there and then.

Options to legalise status

Despite the expansion of deportations (Paoletti, 2010), the gap between those eligible for removal and actual removals in the UK remains considerable (Sigona and Hughes, 2012: 11). Furthermore, an increasingly complex immigration system with a plethora of immigration statuses and bureaucratic problems within the Home Office, as well as delays making timely decision on applications, means that many migrants remain in the UK in a legal limbo. Children, young people and migrants who arrived in the UK as children and lived here for a substantial amount of time, are unlikely to be deported (Sigona and Hughes, 2012).

At the same time, options to regularise immigration status in-country are limited, complex, and often difficult to access, as will be explored in more detail through the lived experience of participants in this study. While the UK has not carried out any official regularisation programmes or amnesties like other European countries, certain programmes have unofficially regularised certain migrant groups, for example the Case Resolution process set up in 2006 that accompanied a backlog of legacy cases and lasted five years. As Griffith explains, ‘the “legacy backlog” refers to people who claimed asylum before March 2007 and

either never received a decision to their claim or were refused refugee status but not removed' (2014: 2006). For migrants who for other reasons do not have the legal right to reside in the UK and wish to apply for legal stay in the UK there are very few options. The most common route pursued is to apply for "limited leave to remain" (LLR) outside of the immigration rules, which based on long residence in the UK and the right to private and family life (Article 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998). LLR is usually granted based on the applicant having strong connections to the UK and to those who have lived in Britain for several years. Exact rules however are vague. Applications for LLR are exempt from legal aid, subject to an application fee of currently £1033 and the national health immigration surcharge currently £1000. If granted, LLR entitles a person to legally reside in the UK for 30 months, or 2.5 years, and to work. LLR is usually granted with 'no recourse to public funds'. Once the period of LLR expires, applicants have one month to submit a new application before "falling out of status".

Furthermore, children born in the UK will have under a range of circumstances the right to register as British Citizens. Under section 1(4) of the British Nationality Act, children who were born in the UK, lived in the UK continuously from birth until their 10th birthday with absences of no more than 90 days in any year and is of good character, can apply to be registered as a British Citizen at any time after their 10th birthday (PRCBC, 2015).

Turning 18

It is also important to note that many rights and entitlements change for young people upon turning 18, except the right to register British Citizenship for those born in the UK. While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to consider these points in detail, and which has been done elsewhere, three points are noteworthy. The first is that a young person will be legally considered as an adult on their 18th birthday and as a result the legislation described earlier to protect the rights and welfare of children no longer applies. Secondly, upon turning 18, young people can no longer apply as dependents of their parents in immigration applications, but instead have to apply alone in a separate application. And finally, local authority support is often abruptly ended as young people turn 18. This is most relevant to

unaccompanied asylum seekers who have been in looked after care and face little or no transitional support into independent adult life (Meloni and Chase, 2017).

Methodology

Researching the lives of young “undocumented” migrants who are illegalised by the state and subjected to state surveillance poses a plethora of challenges and requires careful ethical consideration. This project employs an ethnographic approach that uses multiple qualitative methods incorporating elements of collaborative ethnography (Back, 2007; Jones et al., 2017; Lassiter, 2005b; Sinha and Back, 2013), decolonising methods (G Adams, 2014a; Bhabra, 2014b; Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1992; Ladner, 1973; Rodriguez and Boatcă, 2016; Smith, 2012) and feminist and critical race methodologies (Alcoff, 1991; Crenshaw, 1991; Gunaratnam, 2003; Haraway, 1988; Oakley, 1981, 2005; Skeggs, 2002). The intention of this is to gain an in-depth understanding of the complex issues outlined above from the perspective of those living them, carry out research ethically and produce knowledge that is not exploitative of participants. Choosing these methods intends to make the connections between the past and the present visible; connecting the lived experience to specific intersectional and structural positions; to invite genuine dialogue and listening between myself and participants in a collaborative approach to knowledge production; and to make reflexivity an integral part of the research process. Finally, methods were also chosen to avoid a replication of interrogation techniques used by the state which participants in this research are likely to have been subjected to.

In this section I first give a description of the methods used in this project. I will then discuss how I engage in building trusting and safe relationships with the research participants without exacerbating surveillance and scrutiny they already face due to their immigration status. Thirdly, I explain the strategies I engaged with to try and produce knowledge that is not (or less) exploitative, given the power differences between the researcher and the researched. How can we make research more collaborative and value participants’ knowledge and expertise? What are the limitations we encounter during this process? How as researchers do we create an ethical space that encourages meaningful modes of dialogue

for young “undocumented” migrants, to give their accounts in a way that is more than a simple extraction of story?

The ethnographic part of this research was carried out in two main sites for a little over 12 months between September 2016 and March 2018. The first site was a London-based youth-led campaign group for young migrants aged between 18 and 25. The campaign group was founded by young people in 2014 as part of a youth justice and children’s right charity, following the introduction of the Education (Student Support) Regulations 2011 which meant many young migrants were no longer eligible for student finance, could be charged international fees, and therefore effectively barred from university. Their initial campaign focus was on equal access to education but has since broadened to wider issues affecting young migrants, including affordable immigration fees and a fairer immigration system. Since its establishment, the group has worked with around 1,200 young migrants to provide information, practical and emotional support. In September 2019, the young people became an independent organisation.

I attended their regular campaign meetings made up of the core group which had between eight and 15 members, and monthly gatherings which were open to anyone who felt affected by the issues the group campaigned on. These were usually attended by between twenty and forty young people. I also accompanied members of the group on campaign activities, such as giving assemblies in schools, attending college fairs or political actions.

In addition, I carried out in-depth one-to-one unstructured interviews, or conversations, with nine young people who were either “undocumented” at the time of interview or who had previously been “undocumented”. These mostly took place in young people’s home, two were conducted as walking interviews through their local neighbourhood and two in cafés at the request of the young people. I also organised two theatre-based workshops with four young people. These were organised as an exchange where participants got professional drama coaching in preparation for an event, and I was able to observe the workshop and record the stories for my research purposes. The one-to-one conversations and theatre workshops were audio-recorded and transcribed. I also collated their published materials for my analysis. In October 2017, they participated in a conference at Goldsmiths that I co-organised with other PhD students and in April 2018, I carried out a feedback

session with them to present and discuss my initial analysis. In March 2019 we jointly participated in a symposium at Liverpool university and co-organised a parliamentary event.

In total, 14 individual stories of young people were collected, in addition to the ethnographic fieldwork and stories shared as part of the gatherings. Of these 14 young people, ten were female and four were male and either were or had been in the UK without legal status. Most young people in the campaign group were also female. They had diverse immigration situations and pathways into “illegality”, with hardly any of them passing through the asylum system. Most had entered the UK on short-term visas or non-settled stay and were now in the process of applying for or had been granted immigration status. This was usually “limited leave to remain” which they have to renew every 30 months as discussed in the previous section. The majority of the young people were born in Nigeria (9), two in Jamaica, one in Ghana, one in the Gambia and one in Pakistan. All of them came to the UK under the age of 18 and most under the age of ten. They therefore completed the majority of their education here. They usually came with their families or to join a family already in the UK. At the time of the interview they were all in their early twenties.

I simultaneously carried out an ethnography in the EAL (English as an additional language) room at a secondary school in a highly diverse borough of London for two days a week during the academic year 2016/17, as this project was initially designed to look at the immigration status within the institutional setting of schools as well. In the EAL room newly arrived students are prepared for mainstream school. I was also a volunteer mentor with a charity based at the school mentoring one female student who was a Syrian refugee. The ethnography was supplemented with more structured participant activities with students, including a theatre workshop, poetry, a photo diary and craft activities led by the school counsellor to explore identity, immigration status, home, belonging, trauma and to understand the consequences of policies in everyday schooling. However, it quickly transpired during the analysis process that immigration status was not something discussed either by students, teachers or school management (except briefly in relation to the school census). I therefore had to make the decision to not include this material in this thesis as it does not connect to the discussions outlined previously or the other ethnographic material.

Consent was obtained from all participants, in written form where possible and from parents for participants under the age of 18. I was DBS checked and before commencing my fieldwork, acquired institutional ethical approval from Goldsmiths University, the campaign group and the school. It was made clear to the young people that participation in the research was voluntary, that they could withdraw from it at any time and that anything they told me during the research could be withdrawn in the future. All information was treated confidentially, and names and locations were anonymised to protect individuals' identity.

Building trust

The participants in this research are living vulnerabilities produced by the state according to where they are placed on the racialised hierarchy of deserving and undeserving migrants. Every day they are navigating the hostile environment towards immigrants that increasingly uses surveillance and draconian laws penetrating their private and emotional lives (Back and Sinha, 2013). And every day they are living the consequences of the legacies of empire in the immigration regime. They are in immigration proceedings where their life stories' authenticity is being questioned (Griffiths, 2015). Consequences of the hostile environment for people's lives are huge. They face the fear of being detected that could lead to regular reporting and forced removal. These fears easily extend to anyone who is embedded in an institution and could be linked to the government. A fear that is not farfetched, as the government's objective to create a 'hostile environment' for 'illegal immigrants' (Jones et al., 2017), means border enforcement is being outsourced to a number of public services and private citizens such as NHS and higher education staff, landlords, employers and teachers (Anderson, 2013b). Furthermore, the criminal justice and immigration systems are becoming more closely enmeshed since the 2006 Foreign Prisoner scandal² and initiatives such as Operation Nexus³ (De Noronha, 2015; Griffiths, 2015; Stumpf, 2006). Recently, concerning reports have surfaced where victims of crime ended up in detention centres following reporting crimes to the police. Deportability is a real possibility for these young migrants.

² Which means that migrants are now automatically deported after a sentence of at least 12 months imprisonment

³ Operation Nexus was introduced in 2012 and ensures that arrestees' details are checked against UKBA/Home Office databases

Given this environment inhabited by migrants, we have a responsibility as researchers to create an environment for participants where they feel comfortable to tell their accounts and to trust the researcher with their story. How can we achieve this? Linda Tuhiwai Smith's suggests that integrity is key (2012: 10), as is openly discussing difficult questions of power dynamics and privilege in dialogue with participants. Furthermore, she argues participants should have some autonomy over the research process, which I discuss further in the next section. For relationships and trust to build and to have these dialogues we need time.

During my fieldwork with the young campaigners I therefore eased myself into their space to engage in the process on their terms. First, I met three of them with their youth worker to introduce my project. We agreed that I could accompany the young people on school visits. After a few visits the young people suggested that I attend their monthly meetings, which I did. As I nervously entered the room with over ten young people the power felt more in their hands than in mine. I presented my research project and asked their permission to observe the group over the next year. An awkward silence followed, and I offered to leave the room so that they could discuss their response in private. Nerve-racking moments passed as I could see but not hear their discussion through the glass windows. When they asked me back into the room, they all smiled a unanimous "yes" at me. I was so relieved! In this moment, I was asking them a favour and the power over the future of my PhD lay firmly in their hands. Adams similarly discusses how in her collaborative anthropology on timbre players, participants demanded loyalty, time, respect and secrecy before sharing information with her, and that it was them who controlled access to their lives and stories, and what the researcher can know (2014). After attending monthly meetings for a few months, it was again the young people who suggested I also attend their gatherings, and after yet again a few more months some young people impatiently asked when I would finally interview them. As we moved through the steps of the research process, it was always the participants that initiated a step-change and invited me deeper into an understanding of immigration status in their everyday lives.

Trust and consent become inextricably linked in an ongoing process. Consent, rather than an act committed once when signing a form, became a process whereby participants gradually

consented to the research as we got to know each other more. They decided whether or not to take part and at what points, if at all, to reveal more about themselves. Consent forms felt almost superfluous and most participants found it redundant, telling me 'of course I consent to this, otherwise I would not have agreed to meet with you'. While the meaningful work of gaining participants' consent took place over months of being with them prior to 'the interview', the 'consent form' remains what is institutionally required. However, trust and intimacy are built gradually and we cannot demand of participants to reveal themselves and their often-sensitive stories upon our first encounter. We need to give them time.

Building trust over time involved me showing my vulnerabilities and creating a dialogic research space. Rather than being just an objective researcher, I also showed my humanity and became a student of their lives. While travelling back from a college fair with two young women at the start of my fieldwork, they bombarded me with questions. How old was I? Where was I born? Where did I grow up? Did I have a boyfriend? Why did I come to the UK? Where did I study? Etc. By answering their questions they could gain a sense of me. The conversation then naturally moved onto them telling me about themselves and so the flow of information became two-ways, building trust. From here on they invited me to their monthly meetings and gatherings.

Frankenberg in her research on whiteness and race has argued for a democratization of 'the research process, [which means] reducing the extent to which I was positioned as an invisible presence' (1993: 31). Likewise, I found that the more I allowed for the fieldwork interaction to be a dialogue, the more comfortable and open the interaction became. Interviewer neutrality has also been criticised by feminists such as Ann Oakley who argued that this reinforces power differentials. Being open about my own politics and life experiences is especially important in research that raises difficult feelings such as shame. Researcher's revelations and sharing can give permission to discuss certain topics. As Frankenberg writes in relation to race '...given the shame associated with racist feelings in a society that has repressed rather than abolished them', she used personal interjections as a way to give permission to talk about sensitive or taboo topics (1993: 36). To find a way

through the discomfort and a common language, it is our responsibility as researchers in positions of power to transform the research process into a dialogue as much as possible.

“Showing face” is another way of building trust over time and something that Smith discusses. She describes how in Maori culture, *‘Kanohi kitea* or the ‘seen face’...conveys the sense that being seen by people – showing our face, turning up at important cultural events – cements your membership within a community in an ongoing way and is part of how one’s credibility is continually developed and maintained’ (2012: 15). Without wanting to claim that I was engaging in an established Maori cultural tradition, this appeared to ring true for me. I gained my credibility and the trust of participants by attending events that were important to them, showing them who I was and how I would behave. This was perhaps exemplified during one meeting towards the end of the fieldwork where I re-introduced myself during a gathering as new members had shown up, when one young person who had been at the group for perhaps six months said she thought that I was one of them, not a researcher. This process was ongoing and every encounter could change how they felt towards me. Time spent with participants without demanding accounts allowed trust to build.

Trust is also established through the methods we choose. Les Back and Shamsir Sinha (2012; 2013) and Emma Jackson (Jackson, 2015), have urged for caution in the type of methods used when working with people who have been subjected to mechanisms of interrogation and surveillance. My intention was to avoid replicating tools often used in these situations such as the ‘interview’ and work from an ethnographic approach instead. As a co-researcher and unaccompanied minor explained at a conference on this topic: ‘interview styles can be extremely rigid’, produce similar narratives and ‘reproduce the same violence the refugee system produces’ (Haile et al., 2017). At the same time, I did not want to discard the interview all together. While ethnography was my primary data collection, I offered interviews as supplementary and optional to participants. Many participants opted for an interview, or rather conversations as I will refer to them, several months into the ethnography. This ensured that rather than a momentary encounter, both me and participants built a relationship over time that led some of them to want to tell me

their life stories as affected by immigration status, while others avoided the interviews. These were usually young people who were still in more precarious situations. In this process, I had to balance answering my research questions with collaborating with participants on how they wanted to tell their social worlds.

In order to build trusting relationships with participants, I therefore found that time was of the essence to allow young people as much control over the process as possible, as well as offering them different research methods that they felt comfortable with. As time passed and trust grew, participants became more comfortable with research methods that delved deeper into their lives.

Avoiding exploitation of participants in research

I chose an ethnographic approach that could incorporate multiple qualitative methods to best respond to problems around exploitation of participants raised earlier, and to 'enlarge our field of vision' (Das, 2010). A key concern was to avoid techniques reminiscent of state-interrogation which participants are likely to have been subjected to either by the Home Office in the UK or by the regimes they fled (Back, 2012; Sinha and Back, 2013). Smith offers some useful questions as a guide to thinking about participants' involvement: 'Who has designed the questions and framed its scope? Who will carry it out?' (2012: 10). The institutional parameters of a PhD project limit the extent to which these questions can be answered collaboratively. The majority of the project design and framing was carried out by me the researcher, as was the data-collection. However, I started meeting with participants while I was designing my project to discuss my research questions and approach with them. I also built flexibility into the research design so that questions could shift during the process, a portfolio of methods that participants could choose from was offered, rather than rigid methods which would also be adapted when they failed (Jackson, 2010). Again, time was limited for the implementation of such an approach.

Scholars who are engaging with questions around collaborative research have done much work to give more autonomy to participants in the research process to avoid an exploitative mining of stories. In this section, I will discuss the things I did to democratise the process

and share power with participants on the themes of the research and how they give their accounts. Here I will discuss how I tried to shift some of these problems in my research.

Flexible questions and methods

Although I designed the questions and scope before entering the field through a review of the research and literature with which I approached participants, integral to my methodology was flexibility in terms of the research questions and methods. This approach acknowledged participants as ‘experts-by-experience’ and that ‘racial forms of domination do not develop in a linear fashion’ (Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1992: 10), meaning that the tools we use to study domination cannot be linear either. As one young campaigner said, ‘our stories are ours, they are true, and nobody can question or take them away from us.’ Holmes and Marcus discuss how research participants are often ‘para-ethnographers’ themselves, in that ethnographic practices are not restricted to anthropology (or in this case sociology). Such a perspective shifts participants more towards being collaborators than subjects (Holmes and Marcus, 2010). Throughout the fieldwork, the research therefore shifted somewhat in scope and focus to respond to participants’ input. For example, in order to deal with power imbalances, I decided to make their political resistance and activism a bigger part of the research and one chapter of this thesis. In this way, my intention was to convey their agency as much as their structural marginalisation.

Mental health issues and struggles with personal relationship because of immigration status were raised frequently in group meetings, gatherings and one-to-ones by participants. This was not something I had considered or encountered much in the literature thus far. It was through the young people raising this that I decided to include a chapter around this in my thesis. By not rigidly sticking to my questions I was able to hear participants’ concerns and incorporate them into my thesis.

Sharing some power with participants also meant building flexibility into the methods. I did this by offering a ‘portfolio of methods’ to allow participants a degree of choice over *how* to tell their accounts. Some methods worked in one context but not in another, some methods worked for one person but not for others or differently to how I had intended them. The

'portfolio of methods' could be called upon to suit either a situation or participant. Participants and I were in a constant dialogue over how to discuss their lives. Giving participants *choice* over the how avoids a 'one-size-fits-all' approach and enables research *with* people, while at the same time maintaining coherence and rigor for the research project.

In the school, I worked with different child-friendly methods to offer young people the opportunity to express themselves in a way that they felt most comfortable. I decided to try out poems (Punch, 2002), photo diaries (Milligan and Bartlett, 2015), walking interviews (Evans and Jones, 2011) and a theatre workshop (Boal et al., 1979; Freire, 1985; Kaptani and Yuval-Davis, 2008) in addition to classroom observation. I also helped the school carry out a survey of 631 students in years 7 to 10. This enabled me to include a question on belonging for my project⁴ in the survey. Hardly any of them produced much useful data. Instead it was from moments of 'being in the right place at the right time' and trusting relationships, that I gained most insights.

A lot of the young campaigners were used to telling their stories publicly, which made them more confident in taking control over their narrative, but it also meant they often stuck to their rehearsed scripts. Observing discussions the young people were having among themselves were often directly relevant to my research and thus proved productive. From them I was able to learn about their activism, politics and views. The one-to-one interviews were essential to gain a more in-depth insight into how immigration status had affected and shaped young people's lives individually. Two chose to include walking in our one-to-one meet ups, four chose to speak in public spaces such as cafes near their homes, and five invited me into their homes where we shared food and a tour of the house and family photos. These meetings resembled traditional interviews, which I had intended to avoid, but they were what participants chose.

⁴ The main focus of the survey was on languages spoken by the student and at home.

Conclusion

Living a life subject to immigration control and immigration enforcement in London needs to be understood as more than being “undocumented”. Following on from other scholars that have problematised a too simplistic and dichotomised understanding of “illegality” (e.g. Anderson, 2013b; Bloch et al., 2014; De Genova, 2002; Goldring et al., 2009; Ruhs and Anderson, 2010; Willen, 2007), I argue that immigration status needs to be considered as part of a larger continuum of ‘precarious immigration statuses’. In a context of fewer legal entry routes to the UK, a multiplication of short-term immigration statuses, fewer options for in-country regularisations (and appeals), and even less safety for naturalised citizens, precariousness continues throughout the continuum of immigration statuses in the UK. While different statuses bring varying degrees of long-term safety, only the (white) British-born citizen with no other citizenship (or access to) is entirely safe from deportation. Such a hierarchy of immigration status and belonging is based on legacies of empire, race, and an intention to protect British interests and privileges globally (Back and Sinha, 2018a; McNevin, 2013).

As such, we can understand not only the implications for young people’s lives while they are illegalised by the immigration system, but also the complexities of why young people are in those situations and the barriers they face attaining and importantly keeping their legal status. Immigration not only affects every aspect of young people’s lives, as previous research has shown, but also affects young people after legalising their immigration status. They therefore live in the “condition of illegality” for substantial periods of time throughout their life-course and beyond being illegalised through their immigration status, as they continue to be deportable, face long-term uncertainty, and are unable to become citizens of the countries they have spent the majority of their lives in and call home.

In this section, I also argued that approaching such research across different positions of privilege of disadvantage needs to be done sensitively and with due consideration to ethics enacted through the research. I tried to implement such an approach through a collaborative ethnographic framework, that allowed time for both the participants and I to build trusting relationships and to slowly move deeper into the research questions. I also used a “portfolio of methods” which enabled more autonomy for participants, as they could

choose their methods and guide the questions and themes explored as part of this study. I will now outline how the questions and themes raised in this introduction are addressed in the rest of this thesis.

Thesis Outline

The purpose of the second chapter of this thesis is to ground it in the relevant literature and to put forward three key points in relation to it. Firstly, I argue that a large proportion of the literature on “undocumented” migration is policy-related and written in a historical vacuum. I therefore propose that the lived experience approach is crucial to understanding the complexity of how immigration status shapes young people’s lives, identities and futures. Secondly, this chapter looks at the migration and citizenship literature, which leads to my proposition that more explicit connections need to be made between postcolonial work and migration literature, for legacies of empire and racism to be more visible in the literature. (Bhabra 2014b). Through this tracing of migration and citizenship in Western liberal states, I argue that citizenship and immigration status today must be understood as a continuation of the citizenship and immigration regime established along racial lines during British colonial rule. Instead, working from a ‘connected sociologies’ (Bhabra, 2014a) and lived experience approach, offers a more in-depth understanding of how these young people’s lives unfold at the intersection of formal exclusion and informal inclusion. It further challenges the state’s role in producing vulnerable and racialized immigration categorisations that have real consequences on the lives of young people in Britain today.

Chapter three examines how the everyday lives of young migrants are impacted and restricted by their immigration situation and status, through an exploration of Sarah’s life story. This can be either while they were without status, during the process of trying to apply for status or the renewal process. I argue that throughout these different phases in terms of young people’s immigration status, they are experiencing a “precarious immigration situation”. This chapter exposes the ways in which the immigration regime extends its control over these young people and their families’ lives, via formal exclusions imposed through their immigration status, immigration enforcement, increased surveillance and time-sensitive bureaucratic processes. This takes place against the contradictory

background of young people leading a life of relative normalcy, especially at school and in their local neighbourhoods, indistinguishable from other young Londoners.

Chapter four looks at the intersection between immigration status, life-course and the experience of time, through Leila's story whose mother calls her 'the waiting girl', because she is always waiting for her immigration status. It will look at how young people's experience of time and life-course transitions are shaped by their immigration status and encounters with the immigration regime. The encounters at this intersection produce a complex landscape for young people to navigate during their transitions to adulthood. Unpicking the multiple tensions of this messy and complex temporal matrix, interacting with the immigration regime in an unfolding life is at the heart of this chapter, thus contributing to a growing literature that considers time, temporalities and migration. The emerging themes of this literature, as Griffiths, Anderson and Rogers found in their review paper cluster around, 'the strong relationship between power, the state and management of time' on the one hand, and migrant subjectivity on the other (2013). This chapter will contribute to both themes and how they in turn stand in tension with each other, through an understanding of how young people, in particular Leila, experience and navigate these complex temporalities.

Chapter five is about the implications of living in a precarious immigration situation, its effects on young people's emotions, feelings and mental health, explored through Maria's story who likens her life to a jigsaw puzzle – just without the picture on the front of the box. As Sigona argues, it is important for scholars to pay attention to these specific vulnerabilities that are produced by the immigration regime (2012). This chapter asks how the young people make sense of the consequences of their immigration status in their everyday life, and how this makes them feel? What emotional landscape are they having to navigate as a consequence of the resulting insecurity? Most young people spoke of having experienced stress, depression and anxiety at some point and feeling isolated and alone in their situation. What are the long-term consequences of this for young people? By asking these questions, this chapter examines the state's role in producing vulnerability through the immigration regime, the tools of governance and state power. This chapter argues that the state's practices of immigration enforcement have serious negative and long-term impacts for young people's emotional well-being and mental health. These include fear of detention

and deportation, feelings of isolation, stigma and shame, long-term precarity, uncertainty over the future, lack of accountability, and a sense of losing or wasting time. Combined, these factors create a feeling of being out of control of their lives and at the mercy of an invisible immigration regime. These effects are felt more acutely during significant life-course transitions, where young people are more psychologically vulnerable.

Chapter six of the thesis moves on from exploring the lived experience of immigration status to the lived experience of citizenship and asks whether it is a cruel promise for the young people in this research. Using the concept of a citizenship pathway and illustrated by Serena's story, I will explore how it unfolds for young people and whether the end goal of citizenship is a tangible outcome. The reality of young migrants' experiences of the citizenship pathway often contradicts the imagined, mythical linear and forward moving one. Based on an analysis of participants' experiences along the citizenship pathway, this chapter argues that their lived experience directly contradicts this imagined and constructed pathway. Young people find their belonging continuously undermined through multiple rejections by the state and its immigration regime. Rather than a hopeful and joyous end to their migration journey, citizenship becomes a 'cruel promise' that seems less and less achievable with every obstacle that is placed in participants' way. Drawing on Berlant's idea of 'cruel optimism' (2011), I will explore how young people's need and desire for achieving citizenship becomes an obstacle to young people's sense of belonging. Despite these experiences of rejection, citizenship remains important for young migrants in order to secure their long-term safety in the country they call their home.

Chapter seven explores the 'elephant in the room', which is the intersection of migration with race, racism and legacies of empire. It explores how young migrants position themselves in relation to both their migration and racial background, and the respective debates around them. This chapter asks, how young people's daily life is shaped at the intersection of migration and race? And how does their migration experience produce experiences of racism? These experiences are perhaps most vividly illustrated through the 'Go Home' phrase that has resurfaced both in government immigration enforcement campaigns, right wing politicians and in one-to-one street level interactions. Trying to make sense of these experiences, young people engage both with debates around bordering mechanisms and anti-racist and decolonial struggles. While drawing on both literatures and debates and making

historical connections, young people feel they position themselves with neither. While immigration status categorises many aspects of their life, young people find it does not explain all their experiences crucially leaving out race. Anti-racist and decolonial debates on the other hand often echo of past times. Young people then forge a new way forward integrating both discussions into their understanding while embracing neither fully, and that asserts themselves as British.

The eighth and final empirical chapter of this thesis explores young people's activism for justice. In this work young people are trying to reconcile the tension between the individualisation and isolation imposed by the immigration system, and their resistance to this atomisation through collective activism. I argue that the very thing that made young people's lives hard growing up in London and that isolated them from friends and community, is what made them find the campaign group, "come out" to others, and become activists, the "migrant label". It is through their collective process that participants reclaim their story, their struggle and being a migrant, saying it proudly and using it to fuel their campaign work. This chapter is about how young people responded to the injustices and inequalities imposed on them, as a result of their immigration status and their political journey.

Chapter nine draws out the key themes of the thesis and puts forward its conclusions. Based on this research, I argue that viewing young migrants' lives through the lens of immigration status shows that precariousness and deportability extend beyond "illegality" and produces long-term uncertainty. While immigration status affects all areas of young people's lives, there are certain moments when immigration status becomes more visible or dominant, for example when applying for university. This research found that various temporalities shape young people's experiences and encounters with the British state. During their immigration application and renewal processes, many feel stuck in the present. As a result of their encounter with the UK immigration system, young migrants are kept waiting and suspended in a state of limbo during important life-course transitions. Despite strongly feeling British and mostly having lived in the UK over half their lives, young migrants can face a long and costly pathway to citizenship depending on their position in the hierarchy of immigration statuses, which is shaped by race and legacies of empire. Being in such a precarious immigration situation over long periods of time has severe and enduring negative effects on

young people's mental health and well-being. Becoming part of a political struggle helped young migrants to no longer feel ashamed of their situation, understand their situation in context, and feel able to fight their exclusions.

Chapter 2: Migration, citizenship, race and colonial echoes: Making the “illegal migrant”

Introduction

The politics around “undocumented” migration in Western liberal states remains a highly contested and emotive topic. Its contemporary and historical context continues to be poorly understood and there is little knowledge on how the lives of “undocumented” migrants unfold, especially in the UK. Defined through their immigration status, this group of people is otherwise highly diverse in terms of their countries of origins or nationality, age, gender, socio-economic statuses, journeys and reasons for migration. Despite this heterogeneity, research has shown the significant consequences and dominance of immigration status and deportability for all aspects of a person’s life: ‘illegality significantly influences the daily experiences of those living in that condition’ (see also Bloch et al., 2014; De Genova, 2002; Gonzales, 2016; Gonzales and Chavez, 2012: 261; Sigona and Hughes, 2012; Willen, 2007). Furthermore, research suggests that migrants from some backgrounds feel the impact of not having status more than others.⁵ This recent body of work therefore argues for further study on “illegal” migration to better understand the impacts of status on people’s lives, to question immigration status and related stratifications, and how immigration status intersects with other factors such as race, gender and life-course. This research project will contribute to this body of work. This chapter reviews this and other relevant literature for this research project.

The only study on “undocumented” migrant children in the UK so far estimated that about half of young “undocumented” migrants were born in the UK, thus inheriting their parents’ status and being ‘born into illegality’ (Sigona and Hughes, 2012). Unlike in the US, under current legislation there is no automatic birthright citizenship for children born in the UK. However, children of parents who were not legally resident at the time of birth are able to apply for British citizenship after 10 years of consecutive residence until the age of 18, given they have no criminal record and pass the ‘good character test’ (Section 1(4) British Nationality Act 1981). UK-born “undocumented” children are therefore able to access a

⁵ Visible through deportation that show India, Pakistan, Romania, China and Nigeria as the top 5 countries of removal from the UK in 2016. Statistics (Blinder, 2017)

pathway to citizenship, albeit a difficult, expensive and long one, making these young people into ‘citizens in *becoming*’ (Sigona and Hughes, 2012: viii). Furthermore, young people under the age of 18, who have family in the UK and have lived here for a significant length of time, are rarely deported.⁶ Given this likelihood that young “undocumented” migrants will remain in the UK as adults, it is important that we understand how their lives as children are shaped by immigration control and legal status, what effects this has on their futures and the historical trajectories of the current immigration regime.

The purpose of this chapter is to ground the thesis in the relevant literature and to make three key points in relation to it. After a brief discussion of the terminology, I first examine how young “undocumented” migrants’ lives and “illegality” have been studied. I argue that it has been dominated by policy-focused research leading to a narrow and uncritical framing of “illegal” migration as a problem to be solved. I propose that instead a lived experience and intersectional approach is needed to understand the complexity and power of how state categorisations of immigration status shape young people’s lives, identities, and futures. I look at the literature around citizenship, migration and belonging relevant to this thesis and its research questions. This leads me to my second point which is that through a Western-centric framing a large proportion of this literature does not discuss or acknowledge the relevance of colonialism and racism in contemporary citizenship and immigration regimes. Instead it is caught in an ahistorical study of the current moment. More explicit connections between postcolonial and critical race work on the one hand, and migration literature on the other are needed for legacies of empire and racism to be visible. Thirdly, I propose a framework for approaching the study of “illegal” migration that acknowledges empire and race in migration research.

Researching young “undocumented” migrants

A large proportion of the work on “illegal” migrants remains policy-related and considers solutions for this so-called “problem” as it is considered by Western nation-states (e.g.

⁶ The exception here is in cases of deportation after mostly minor criminal offences once young people have turned 18, which seems to affect young black men disproportionately (Aliverti, 2012; De Noronha, 2015; Griffiths, 2015; Stumpf, 2006).

Bhabha, 2008; Carrera and Merlino, 2009; Jordan and Düvell, 2002; Triandafyllidou, 2009). Often research is so closely connected to policy that it is commissioned as an evidence base by policy-makers (Koser, 2005) and therefore setting the questions and parameters of the research. More recently another body of work is emerging ranging a number of disciplines, especially in the US, which looks at the everyday lives of “undocumented” migrants through in-depth qualitative studies. In this section I will first argue that the dominance of the policy-approach has contributed to a problematic framing of “undocumented” migrants and second for the importance of understanding the far-reaching impacts that immigration status has on the identities, lives and futures of young people who are in all ways but by law British.

While valuable in other respects, policy-focused research on “undocumented” migrants has led to a problematic framing of the issue for two reasons. The first problem is that it usually takes the state’s legal categorisations of migrants as an unchallenged starting point. Rather than questioning immigration status itself, the aims here are often to understand the structural determinants of “irregular migration”, why it persists, how it is connected to the labour market and what the presence of “undocumented” migrants means for the liberal state. The perspective taken is largely one of the state. Furthermore, a significant amount of research in this area has been produced by non-governmental organisations or think tanks where research has a different purpose, such as to evidence needs for policy-intervention. These literatures have led to reductive explanations and, as Anderson argued, has had the tendency to portray the “illegal immigrant” ‘as either an exploited victim (“trafficked”) or abuser of the system’ (2008: 2). In both cases the person is given little agency and is seen either as in need of help or punishment. This dichotomy is closely related to the “good” and the “bad” migrant paradigm that sorts migrants into a hierarchy of more and less deserving of residence or citizenship according to how “good” or “bad” they are considered to be. Such explanations are hardly representative of complex lived realities. Importantly, as Anderson continues, such an approach is ‘anti-political’ and ‘obscures the state’s crucial role in [the] construction of categories of people’ and their vulnerabilities (2008: 2). ‘Illegality’ she argues ‘is not an aberration, nor is it a lack, but it is an inevitable consequence of nation state-organized citizenship and immigration controls’ (Anderson, 2013b: 118). As Coutin points out ‘Individuals are not naturally “illegal”; rather, they are constituted as such, by

structural conditions, violence, and immigration laws, policies, and histories' (Gonzales and Chavez, 2012: 270). This research project will therefore centre the people's experiences in order to understand how they and their lives are determined and shaped by such conditions.

Similarly De Genova urges scholars to carefully examine the origin of the status "illegal", which he argues is legally produced (2002). Although it is important to understand the effects of such state-given categorisations, such research easily slips into a perspective that is more closely aligned with that of the "receiving" Western liberal state. This is opposed to the perspectives of the migrants themselves, who as Ruben Andersson found in his ethnography, do not call themselves "illegal" until they are so categorised by *'Illegality Inc.'* (2014b). This led him to argue that people could only be called "illegal" from the Western gaze or the perspective of the receiving state. Mongia makes a similar point with regards to the use of the word "aliens" in the North-American context. She asks '[W]hat is it that makes possible the circulation of the bizarre term "alien", with all its evocations of extraterrestriality—territoriality, as a "natural" part of immigration discourse?' (1999: 528). It is unlikely that people would choose to call themselves "aliens". Discussing Sayad's work, Bourdieu and Wacquant argue that *'before he or she becomes an immigrant, the migrant is always first an emigrant, and that the sociology of migration must therefore imperatively start, not from the concerns and cleavages of the receiving society, but from the sending communities, their history, structure and contradictions'* (2000: 174). In this thesis I will use the lens of the lived experience in order to broaden and add complexity to this framing of "undocumented" migrants.

Secondly, a narrow and simplistic framing of "illegal migrants" as a current problem often denies both the historical and current global political and economic reasons that have led to the contemporary stratification (Anderson, 2015; Back and Sinha, 2018a) and resulting racialised hierarchy in the immigration system. Based on his review of ethnographically informed scholarship on "undocumented" migration, Nicholas De Genova argued that 'it is necessary also to produce historically informed accounts of the socio-political processes of "illegalization"' (2002: 419). Although sometimes implicit, explicit connections between the legacies of empire and contemporary stratifications through immigration remain rare in the literature. Furthermore, Sirriyeh makes the case that immigration policies and immigrants'

subsequent positions need to be considered at ‘a multi-scalar level, including, for example, discourses, *emotions*, social actors, bureaucracies, histories, sectors, social and political events and relations of power’ (Sirriyeh, 2018b: 8). The majority of young people participating in my research who end up in precarious immigration situations came from former British colonies and have some of the most restricted access to residence, rights and citizenship in the UK. The aim of this thesis, through participants’ accounts, is to unpick why this is the case and so contribute to a more historically contextualised picture of contemporary migration hierarchies in the UK while being attentive to different scales.

Immigration status as lived experience

Recently a different body of literature has been emerging. This is concerned with the lived experience of what it means to live without legal status and questioning the state’s role in the production of the “illegal” immigrant (for a discussion of four of them see Barbosa and Ruszczyk, 2016). Andersson’s recent ethnography has shown how European states and the EU itself are multifariously implicated in the ‘illegality industry’ at the southern frontiers to Europe and thus the ‘making of illegal immigrants’ (2014b: 6). He questions why it is the black African migrant rather than the white mobile banker or trader who is the target of this extensive regime justifying unprecedented and disproportionate expenses in the fortification of Europe’s external borders. He asks ‘what racial and colonial legacies underpin these efforts?’ (2014b: 6). Such efforts are particularly questionable when most migrants become “illegal” through overstaying visas rather than because of illegal entry.

Other studies of the everyday life of “undocumented” migrants have shown the multiple ways in which precarious immigration status impacts on people’s lives. Based on their research with young “undocumented” migrants in the UK, Bloch, Sigona and Zetter argue that what is ‘clearly evident is the contrast between the constructed identities of official, static immigration categories and “undocumentedness” as a *process* which resonates more closely with the perceptions of the migrants themselves’ (2014: 151). Applying an everyday life approach, they also found that age is an important factor in how the effects of immigration status are felt and that migrants adopt complex coping strategies in response to remain invisible and avoid deportation. Such insights show that an in-depth and

qualitative approach offers a way into a more nuanced understanding of the lived experience of immigration status.

It also leads to a more complex understanding of immigration status itself. Sarah Willen's work on "undocumented" migrant workers in Tel Aviv is instructive here and emphasises the importance of lived experience. Based on her research she developed a 'critical phenomenological' approach to the study of migrant "illegality" (2007: 10). Immigration status, she argues, should be interrogated in its many layers: 'first, as a form of juridical status; second, as a sociopolitical condition; and third, as a mode of being-in-the-world' (Willen, 2007: 8). Bloch et al. also emphasise the complexity of immigration status. They found that people moved in and out of different statuses at different points in their lives rather than being permanently fixed in "illegality" (2009). Further unpicking the instability of "illegal" status, Ruhs and Anderson propose the concept of 'semi-compliance' to move away from the too simplistic and inaccurate dualism of legal and illegal (2010). For instance, non-citizens may be legally resident but in breach of one or more of the conditions attached to their immigration status because they work 25 hours a week instead of 20 hours. 'Semi-compliance' is the result of a complex web of immigration statuses and attached 'civic stratification' (Morris, 2003) that restricts migrants' rights according to their status. Similarly Gonzales and Chavez point out in their study of young "undocumented" migrants in the US that being illegally present is 'to be allowed to participate in some aspects of society (e.g. schooling) but not others (e.g. work) (Gonzales and Chavez, 2012: 258). Goldring and colleagues propose to move away from such a dichotomised understanding and instead move towards gradation of precariousness (2009). The distinction between legal and illegal is therefore rarely as clear cut as it might at first seem, nor are non-citizens permanently fixed in one type of status. Rather "illegality" is multifarious and affects a life lived in different ways at different times.

Understanding the daily lived experience of immigration status, as Anderson argues, also 'exposes non-territorial borders' (2013b: 125) that extend beyond a state's external borders into the daily lives of societies and works to delineate the boundaries of the 'community of value' (discussed later in this chapter). Internal border mechanisms increasingly implicate citizens in their enforcement, or affect citizens through their intimate relationships with non-citizens (Griffiths, 2015, 2019) and encroach further into people's private lives to

establish distinctions between the deserving and non-deserving migrant (Back and Sinha, 2013). Thinking theoretically through the accounts of the lived experience of immigration status can then help us think through how the borders of a state and membership are made, enacted and defined, and at which point they become visible. As Sayad has argued ‘thinking about immigration means thinking about the state’ (2004: 279). Beyond immigration itself, critically analysing these debates can help us understand the (nation-)state and how it thinks about itself and “its” citizens more generally.

Through a lived experience approach to the study of immigration status this thesis will contribute to knowledge on the multiple impacts of immigration status on a young people’s lives, status as a state-produced and multifarious concept, and its connection to bordering mechanisms.

Immigration status and intersectionality

Studying the lived experience of immigration status can also help to understand how it intersects with other variables and so expose powers that are marginalising certain groups. In her 1991 article, Kimberle Crenshaw coined this approach by arguing for an ‘intersectional framing [of] the various interactions of race and gender in the context of violence against women of colour’ (Crenshaw, 1991: 1296). Crenshaw developed this argument out of a critique of feminist literature which generalised the experience of white women and was not attentive enough to how women of colour faced different discriminations based on their race as well as gender. This approach has since been widely used and is also helpful to this project. As Kubal points out ‘migrants are seldom just undocumented’ (2013: 11) and therefore must be researched within their wider context. A framework should therefore acknowledge how migrants face discriminations based not only on their legal status, but also based on their race, gender or age.

In the US an early in-depth ethnography of the lives of “undocumented” migrants first published in 1997 by Leo Chavez (1998) exposed how they are not only invisibilised as migrants but in combination with racist, gendered and legal discourses. This shows that “undocumented” migrants are experiencing multiple marginalisations based on their immigration status, their race and their gender. It is through an intersectional analysis that these processes of domination, oppression, and privilege within the immigration system can

be exposed. As is discussed in the next section, immigration processes are deeply racialized. Some groups of migrants are therefore more visible and deportable to the state than others. Working through a lived experience and intersectional framework shows how individuals are multiply positioned and excluded vis-à-vis the state.

As research remains limited in this area, we know little about which intersections are significant in creating specific discriminations in the lives of young “undocumented” migrants. In his recent and ground-breaking twelve-year study of 150 young “undocumented” migrants in Los Angeles, Gonzales found that age and life-course play a crucial role. He examined in-depth what it is like growing up with, or rather *into* “illegality” (2016). His sensitive study shows the extreme rupture that young people experience upon turning 18 or applying for college. As young people they grow up largely protected from the implications of their legal status, form belongings where they live and *feel* “American”. Their sense of being American is violently disrupted at 18 where their legal status places barriers in their path to adulthood. Through their exclusions they are separated from their peers and instead experience a ‘transitioning into *illegality*’. A study in the UK similarly focused on how “illegality” affects young people (Sigona and Hughes, 2012). While less in-depth it also found the significance of age and life-course for how young people experience immigration status. In exploring the implications for accessing healthcare and education, it found that most young people were fairly protected until the age of 18. At 18 however, they became excluded from services. A more recent study of young unaccompanied asylum seekers in the UK also specifically examined transitions to adulthood and found that turning 18 had huge implications in terms of institutional support for young people and for their immigration status and legality (Meloni and Chase, 2017). It was not uncommon for a young person to find themselves illegalised on their 18th birthday. A key lens of analysis in this thesis will therefore be life-course: how do we understand at what moments of a young person’s life, immigration status exerts more or less power over their lives, and how does this unfold? This is discussed in chapter four of the thesis.

Although officially “race-less” citizenship and immigration policies have racial implications (Anderson 2013; De Noronha 2015; Sharma 2015). Immigration controls target certain groups more than others. As Sirriyeh has argued, ‘Since their inception, the emotional regimes of immigration policy [in the UK, US and Australia] have centred on anxieties and

fears about immigration, and have been constructed around attempts to identify and exclude the undesirable migrant' (2018b: 49). This results in different experiences of immigration status according to whether an immigrant is considered desirable or undesirable by the immigration regime. Policies often operate indirectly through the use of code using the language of immigration to disguise underlying racisms (Bhavnani et al., 2005; Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1992). Terms such as "economic migrant" or "highly-skilled migrant" are more than a reference to a legal status, they conjure up specific images. When picturing a "highly-skilled" migrant we imagine a white banker flying into the UK first class, whereas an "economic migrant" is imagined as a poor, black man from an African country scrambling to get to Europe on life-endangering boat journeys across the Mediterranean. Similarly, the term "asylum-seeker" has become 'the new swear-word in the playground' (Mirza 2009b, 147) followed by the criminalised "illegal migrant" or 'freshie' describing someone fresh off the boat (Back and Sinha, 2018a). These processes of "othering" and coded language work to mask and perpetuate underlying racisms in the immigration regime that established a specific hierarchy.

Immigration status and time

In migration studies, time has mostly been considered as either discrete areas of the migration journey or a migrants' life. Over recent years an emerging scholarship has started to look at the temporalities of migration in more complex ways. A review paper by Griffiths, Anderson and Rogers found that work in relation to migration and temporality clusters around two areas: 'the strong relationship between power, the state and management of time' and migrant subjectivity (2013). Different types temporal zones act upon migrants' lives simultaneously, with varying rhythms and cycles that are often out of sync. Time exists as measured by a clock and by a calendar, time can be culturally or legally defined. Social times have different patterns to bureaucratic times, which are different again to times in the labour market. Time is also crucial in terms of defining who is a migrant, and when a migrant becomes eligible for citizenship. Time is then inextricable from the study of migration and the unfolding of their lives and life-course (Griffiths et al., 2013). However, the connection between migration and temporality has received relatively little attention, with a few notable exceptions in recent years. In addition to the review paper, Griffiths has explored how instability and precarity is created through an uncertainty over

time in relation to asylum or immigration applications in the experiences of refused asylum seekers and immigration detainees in the UK (Griffiths, 2014). She found that this uncertainty and resulting inability to plan for the future, or knowing how long the present is, had serious mental health implications and suffering due to the experience of time passing slowly. Griffiths concludes that the 'dual temporal uncertainty is a technique of power, one that keeps deportable migrants in a passive and desperate state of continual transience and uncertainty' (2014: 2005). Time then needs urgent exploration as part of an understanding of the lived experience of immigration status.

Back and Sinha have similarly explored time and waiting in relation to young people's asylum or immigration status applications in their recent book *Migrant City*. While waiting for the immigration system to process their applications and to make a decision, migrants live in what they call 'dead time'. 'Dead time' because migrants are out of control over their lives and futures during this period, unable to influence either the decision, their current or future lives. All they can do is wait. As they point out this is not just a condition of life but can have near-fatal human consequences. Back and Sinha argue that 'the conditions of life for non-elite migrants is limited by what we have called a 'temporal straightjacket' or 'time trap'. "The migrant" is defined within a particular ordering of time' (2018a: 96). Time, life-course and the temporal dimension of young people's lives in relation to their immigration status is explored in chapter four of this thesis.

Immigration status and legacies of empire

As an emerging field of study there remain many gaps. Significantly a yet little explored line of analysis is how the contemporary category of the "illegal immigrant" is constructed racially and through legacies of empire in the UK, and legacies of slavery in the US. Although some scholars have started to make these connections both in the UK and the US, a large proportion of migration studies remains silent on these issues (for exceptions see Anderson, 2013b; Back et al., 2012; Back and Sinha, 2018a; De Genova, 2010; Griffiths, 2019; Hund and Lentin, 2014; Lentin, 2008; Sharma, 2015; Sirriyeh, 2018b; Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002). In the US context in particular, understanding the marginalisation of migrants and African-Americans as part of the same historical and contemporary processes remains rare even among activists and those affected (Fernandes, 2017; Sirriyeh, 2018a). In the UK, Back and Sinha argue that the result is a discussion on immigration that is limited on the one hand by

'*presentism* i.e. a focus only on the current situation, which pre-empts any discussion of the connection between immigration and the legacy of the British Empire' and on the other by a '*parochial focus* on domestic concerns about resources that obscures the relationship between migration and British involvement elsewhere in the world' (2018a: 39). Excavating such connections reveals how contemporary immigration statuses and citizenship regimes are differently accessible for people from different countries of origin depending on what rule was imposed on them during empire. This creates a hierarchy of people residing in the same British state, ranging from citizens, to legally resident non-citizens to the illegally resident non-citizen. If viewed from a connected framework, as Bhabra suggests (2014a), who ends up in these categorisations seems far less coincidental. In the UK this can to a large part be traced to the organisation of and rule during empire. In a lecture on Brexit's genealogy Engin Isin argued that a hierarchy of people within the British Empire was invented in response to three different types of rule (2017). At the heart of this hierarchy, he argues, was a differentiation between Europeans and non-Europeans, non-white and white. For the Australian context, Moreton-Robinson traces similar lines in her book *The White Possessive* (2015). She argues that not all citizens are attributed equal sovereignty over their status but instead sit in a hierarchy according to their whiteness and according to settler history. Read in this way, types of legal status were a mechanism first employed during British colonial rule to shift the power balance towards the white settlers and against any "other" people.

This link is not only missing in the context of the contemporary immigration regime. For the discipline of sociology Bhabra has argued that it also often misses, or perhaps actively avoids, the connections between colonialism and the origins of modernity and sociology itself (2014a; see also Hesse, 2007). She suggests that a framework of connected sociologies is necessary to move the discipline forward through a 'postcolonial revolution'. For migration studies, making these connections help to expose the racist foundations of the immigration system and how they translate into 'multi-status Britain' today (De Noronha, 2016).

The lack of a postcolonial and critical race theory perspective in migration studies is also reflected in the limited representation of ethnic minority scholars (Lentin, 2014) and scholars from the Global South (Adams, 2014b), with a concentration of white scholars from

Anglo-American academia. This enables the continuation of the problematic policy-centred framing discussed earlier and a historical amnesia of the legacies of empire and slavery present in contemporary migration (De Genova, 2010). Furthermore, it contributes to the continuation of a migration paradigm where some forms of mobility are privileged and others viewed as a threat, which consequentially sorts migrants into “good” and “bad”. Scholars who are or have been “undocumented” are particularly rare. While young scholars in the US are emerging and writing from their own experiences, they remain few and mostly on the periphery of academic recognition (see for example contributors to the ‘Illegality, Youth, and Belonging conference’, Gonzales and Sigona, 2013). Through academic legitimating practices such as ‘citationality’, as Sara Ahmed has argued, dominance of certain scholars is ensured over others (feministkilljoys, 2014). Linda T. Smith makes a similar point in the context of indigenous research and researchers, where Western scholarship uncomfortably dominates. She says ‘Language and the citing of texts are often the clearest markers of the theoretical traditions of a writer’ (Smith, 2012: 14). Diversifying and legitimating the voices in academic writing on this issue is therefore crucial to shift the debate.

Therefore, in this thesis I use a broad conceptualisation of immigration status to view the intersection of race and immigration, and trace the legacies of empire as they manifest in the lives of young “undocumented” migrants. Through a lived experience framework my intention is to foreground the experience of young people and how both current and historical policies and legislation on immigration and citizenship are lived and become real in their lives, and how they intersect with other experiences of marginalisation. Through paying careful attention to the lives of young “undocumented” migrants in the UK and how it is shaped by their immigration status and their racialisation, this thesis aims to make more explicit connections between the current and historic context and the literatures on migration, postcolonialism, and critical race theory. Such a perspective is essential in order to not silence discussions on race and empire in relation to contemporary migration.

Migration and citizenship in Western liberal democratic states

In this section I examine how citizenship and membership have been discussed in the “migration literature” and show how its origins are linked to British Empire and colonialism leading to the contemporary hierarchy of multiple immigration statuses in Britain, including the “illegal immigrant”. Research on migration can be found across disciplines and academic traditions yet they rarely engage with relevant arguments made by postcolonial, critical race and cultural studies scholars. Especially early migration research was dominated by political science, economic, geographic and legal approaches that focused on large-scale modelling of migration and policy. The legacy of these approaches in contemporary migration literature, as Lentin argues, is that it largely fails to acknowledge the link between the colonial past and the multicultural present (2014). Similarly Paul Gilroy argued that the current situation in the UK needs to be understood in the context of its imperial and colonial history (Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1992; 2004a). Over recent years, however, there has been a shift in the literature towards a more critical approach and increasingly joined up thinking on race and migration has emerged, particularly in the UK and European context. Similarly to the literature on “undocumented” migrants this shift occurred through greater attention to migrants’ experiences to problematise established theoretical and conceptual work in what might be termed ‘critical migration research’ (Jones et al., 2017).

I start this section by briefly outlining how citizenship and migration has been discussed in the migration literature. It has largely been understood as a concept integral to the Western liberal state that faces a philosophical conundrum through migration when non-citizens and citizens reside side-by-side within the state’s territory. Secondly, I examine the historical connections between citizenship and the British empire and its connection to the contemporary immigration regime. Thirdly I argue that working with a multifarious conceptualisation of citizenship can open spaces to contest its power. As with immigration status, I will argue that citizenship’s meanings can be shifted through claims of belonging and acts of citizenship by those formally excluded from the citizenry.

Citizenship and migration

Today, citizenship is understood as a concept with multiple layers. Although its primary function remains to describe a person's membership in a state and the legal relationship between the state and its citizens. As such it is a contractual arrangement that gives rights and entitlements to citizens and obligations to the state. Citizenship is acquired based on two principles. The first is *jus sanguinis* – literally by blood, based on ethnicity – and the second is *jus soli* – which means by territory. Traditionally states' citizenship laws have been either one or the other, but recently most states have incorporated aspects of both into their legislation. Citizenship can also be acquired through naturalisation, which operates on the *jus soli* principle. While states have different naturalisation processes they typically involve long-residence requirements and some form of test including language. As a legal status, citizenship is a global system that fixes people within a bounded territory, the state, defining both who is included and who is excluded thus marking 'a distinction between members and outsiders based on their different relations to particular states' (Bauböck, 2006: 15). By not living within the state of his or her citizenship, the migrant upsets this order. Instead non-citizens have fewer rights and entitlements than citizens and no say in the polity. This is problematic for liberal theory because non-citizens are subject to the law but not sovereign over it as should be the case in liberal contract theory (Brace, 2015; Cole, 2000). The presence of noncitizens within the territory of a liberal democracy also 'problematizes the ideal of universal citizenship' (Bosniak, 2000: 974). Hammar describes such non-citizens legally present on a state's territory and with substantial rights and entitlements yet without full citizenship as 'denizens' (1990).

Joppke argues that there are two further aspects to citizenship, rights and identity: 'rights [are] about formal capacities and immunities connected with such status; and... identity...refers to the behavioural aspects of individuals acting and conceiving of themselves as members of a collectivity, classically the nation' (2007: 38). As part of the contract between the state and its citizens, citizens agree to obey the state's laws in exchange for being granted protection, safety, civil, political and social rights by the state. These include the right to vote, to access welfare, to justice, and so forth. This also includes the right to abode and the right not to be expelled or deported. Depending on where one is born in the 'birthright lottery' (Shachar, 2009), a person's citizenship plays a crucial role in

the opportunities and wealth someone can access. While the allocation of citizenship is arbitrary, the levels of wealth accessible through citizenship are not. Rather they are historically contingent (Pogge, 2007). Contemporary global inequalities, often a reason for migration, were produced through Europe's empires and are directly related to colonial history. As Bhabra argues '[T]he colonial matrix...has to be central to any discussion of contemporary global inequalities and the historical basis of their emergence' (2014b: 119). Citizenship as a global system fixes people into these inequalities and the 'function of British immigration policy is designed to protect national interests' to maintain the relative wealth of its citizens (Back and Sinha, 2018a: 43).

The idea of citizenship as an identity formalises individuals' belonging as part of a nation, or the 'community of value' (Anderson, 2013b), denoting membership in a normative community. This community is thought of as 'composed of people who share common ideals and (exemplary) patterns of behaviour expressed through ethnicity, religion, culture, or language – that is, its members have shared values' (Anderson, 2013b: 2). Similarly nationhood 'tell[s] us that each of us has a unique place in the world', as Nandita Sharma argues (2015: 142), which is largely determined through racism. The nation is thus racialised and reinforced through regimes of citizenship and represented by the state today. Who is included in this community, Anderson argues, is furthermore defined through "others" who are excluded and "Failed Citizens" who are formally included as citizens but not in the normative community (2013b). The racialized nation and "its people" however, as Bosniak argues, is a myth that is contingent and historical, rather than intrinsic (2006: 5). It is through these processes that exclusions in the immigration regime are justified and access to membership is restricted for certain persons.

Following from the above conceptualisation of citizenship, and T.H. Marshall's work on citizenship in 1949, a typical narrative of its development over the past century is one of expansion. As Bosniak points out, 'The conventional view in citizenship theory, however, is that the kinds of formal exclusions from citizenship [African-Americans, women and ethnic and religious minorities]... are mostly a thing of the past' (2000: 970) – a view which she argues is false (see also Bhabra, 2015). Based on a conceptualisation of citizenship as universal, such a narrative emphasises how civil rights expanded in the 18th century to include freedom of conscience (religion), freedom of speech and the right to due process

and rule of law. In the 19th century new political rights granted to citizens included freedom of association and expanded suffrage to include some women, some black people, the property-less and people with physical disabilities. With respect to social rights these increased in the 20th century to include social security, welfare and healthcare (Isin, 2016). More recently increased queer rights have been established and naturalisation processes have opened up citizenship to non-citizens (Anderson and Hughes, 2015; Isin, 2016). While this narrative is true, as Isin points out, it is also the hegemonic view of the West, and its history is largely rooted in recent events that have taken place for some people in Europe and North America (2016). This narrative ignores those who were never included in citizenship (Bhambra, 2015; Lister, 1997), and those who have been and continue to be left out of the expansion of citizenship, which is discussed later in this chapter. As Bosniak points out, ‘citizenship continues to be an important exclusionary status category within the democratic national political community’ (2000: 976). She argues that such assumptions were able to persist because of a separation between theorists who looked at citizenship within its boundary and those who looked at its contestation at the boundary through noncitizens. Scholars, such as Bhambra, have since argued that citizenship was never universal because those who were excluded – or dominated – were considered as lacking in properties that would define them as subjects and part of the citizenry. Even if there is an acknowledgement that citizenship is in reality not universal, there is a presumption ‘as a backdrop the notion that citizenship contains within it an expansive logic, and that the rights of citizenship have, in fact, been extended to an ever-increasing class of subjects in liberal-democratic societies over time’ (Bosniak, 2000: 969). In this thesis I will illustrate how citizenship continues to be exclusionary for certain people in the UK today.

Questions in the citizenship literature have focused on *contemporary* meanings of citizenship, how it changed over recent years through migration and globalisation and whether it continues to be meaningful today. While these are important debates themselves little has been written on how citizenship’s roots are linked to colonialism. The aim of the next section of this thesis is to make these connections more explicit.

Citizenship, legacies of empire and racism

Citizenship is closely related to modernity, the nation-state, liberal democracies, sovereignty and contract which in turn are all deeply connected to British colonialism and a ‘racialised

structuring of the social world' (Bhambra, 2015: 102). As Bhambra and Santos have pointed out in the context of sociology, '[t]here is little disagreement between us regarding the necessity of considering the historical processes of dispossession, enslavement, appropriation and extraction as central to the emergence of the modern world' (2017: 4).

In this section I look more closely at the historical connections between citizenship, the British Empire and racism. I argue that citizenship, the passport and the immigration regime emerged as part of British colonial rule where people were ordered based on their European heritage. This ordering transposed into immigration statuses in contemporary 'multi-status Britain' (De Noronha, 2016) and migrant "illegality" (De Genova, 2010). As Back and Sinha argue, 'UK immigration policy filters global flows of people to maintain relationships of dominance and subjugation between underdeveloped countries, zones of 'war on terror' and citizens of the over-developed, post-imperial world' (2018a: 53). Through the accounts of young migrants living these contemporary immigration statuses, this thesis will contribute to literature that deconstructs the hegemonic narrative of citizenship.

From its inception, British citizenship was part of colonial processes of empire that subjugated and excluded people as "other" based on their race, creating distinctions between citizens and non-citizens and among citizens. As Griffiths writes: 'The institution of British citizenship is founded upon 'state racism', with its roots in the colonial system and construction of a nationality system *designed* to exclude and marginalise certain people' (2019: 4). Within the North American context, contemporary racial ordering goes back to slavery. For example, John Locke developed his social contract theory while he was part of the colonial administration in the Americas (Volpp, 2015: 316). It was this experience that informed his idea of the state of nature which he saw in the lives of the indigenous people. Locke's social contract theory was key to the subsequent development of the concept of citizenship. Tocqueville excluded "the Indians and the Negroes" from his foundational accounts of democracy and citizenship in America, viewing them as deficient, because citizenship was founded on their domination (Bhambra, 2015: 107). In Canada citizenship was not extended to its indigenous people, but instead used to develop and maintain a 'white settler colony' through the Indian Act (Abu-Laban, 2014). In Australia, Moreton-Robinson argues that citizens are placed in a hierarchy according to their whiteness and according to settler history. These examples illustrate how citizenship was a mechanism first

employed as part of British colonial rule to include white settlers and exclude other groups, or as Bhabra says to dominate these “others”. Exclusions, which as Bhabra argues, were ‘defined against two other understandings of the subject: the subject *incapable* of property...and the subject *indifferent* to property’ (2015: 105), where the modern subject had to have self-ownership. Such powers were formalised through the invention of the passport as Moniga shows in her analysis of the history of the passport in North America. She argues that ‘the passport not only is a technology *reflecting* certain understandings of race, nation/nationality, and state but was central to *organizing* and *securing* the modern definitions of these categories’ (1999: 528). The lines of inclusion to membership were then drawn around racial lines from its inception and the beginnings of citizenship as an institution were ‘fundamentally based on *exclusion*’ (Bhabra, 2015: 106). Bosniak concurs that ‘citizenship in its boundary-defining mode is a fundamentally exclusionary project’ (2000: 971–972). The legacies of this exclusionary project along racial lines remain traceable in postcolonial Britain until this day, albeit with altered hierarchies and boundaries.

The US and other self-governing colonies began regulating immigration in the 1880s and Britain passed its first Alien Act in 1905 (Sirriyeh, 2018b). Legislation on Commonwealth citizenship was adopted in 1948 which ‘transformed all colonial British subjects into citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies’ (Hansen, 2003: 26) in one of the biggest expansions of citizenship. This was short-lived, however. As Western states realised the consequences of allowing greater access to their citizenship, they quickly restricted access to citizenship again. The Act also created a ‘two-tier nationality structure’ (Fransman, 2011: 171) distinguishing between two groups of people: ‘either citizens of the UK and Colonies (CUKCs) in the UK or where their countries of residence remained colonies, or, where their countries gained independence, they would be citizens of those countries and British subjects as well’ (Clayton and Sawyer, 2012: 68). While the British Nationality Act 1948 expanded British citizenship to many British subjects it also continued colonial processes entrenching racialized divisions between white settler colonies and other colonies that still have relevance today. As Isin argued, these racialized hierarchies have been built since the beginnings of colonialism and depended on differentiations between colonies and dominions (2017). During the period of indirect rule from 1783 onwards (White-European) British subjects were given some autonomy over their own affairs as calls for independence

became stronger. The type of rule and citizenship imposed was then based on differentiation between Europeans and non-Europeans, coloured and white settlers. Citizens of white settler colonies such as New Zealand, Australia and Canada, were given more powers compared to people living in the dominions (Isin, 2017).

In 1962 the Commonwealth Immigrants Act eroded the principles of Commonwealth citizenship, introduced a differentiation between subjects born in Britain and other Commonwealth countries and started a period of legislations that increasingly restricted access to citizenship. The right of abode for Commonwealth citizens was restricted through the principle of *partiality* introduced in the 1971 Immigration Act, which 'effectively changed the status of Commonwealth citizens to aliens ... [and] ... only allowed those who were born in the UK or who had close ancestral links to the UK, the right to entry and abode' (Bloch and Schuster, 2005: 195). In 1981 the British Nationality Act narrowed the definitions of British citizenship further and created 'subcategories of citizenship' for those who did not have the right to live in the UK (Spencer, 2011: 28). As Anderson argues the Act 'marked the downgrading of relations with former colonies (former 'British subjects') and the abandonment of *ius soli*' (2013b: 102). These legislative changes also demonstrated a shift towards more overt racialization of immigration control (Solomos, 2003) against black and Asian commonwealth citizens. Bloch explains: 'Under the legislation millions of white Commonwealth citizens could, in theory, enter Britain under the partiality clause while almost all non-white commonwealth citizens were excluded' (2000: 32). This trend has continued with a plethora of immigration legislation passed in recent years that indirectly discriminate against certain groups and increasingly through wealth. Back and Sinha observed that, 'constraints and limitations do not apply to all migrants', pointing out the example of the Premium Sponsor scheme as well as other fast track or priority services that can be bought for hefty fees ranging from a few thousand pounds to £25,000 for large companies (2018a: 80). Migrants who have at least £5m in the bank are also eligible for a fast-track route to visas and settlement (Travis, 2011). Another case in point is the introduction of income thresholds (Anderson, 2013b; Bhavnani et al., 2005; Spencer, 2011) and visas. For example, visa requirements to come to the UK were only introduced in the late 1990s for many African countries and in 2002 for Jamaica (Black et al., 2006: 559). Changes to the family migration rules in 2012 meant that only those earning £18,600 or

more were eligible to bring a spouse to the UK, which disproportionately affected sponsors from Black and Ethnic Minority backgrounds. As such, 'the legacy of Empire remains evident in the multitude of legal forms of British belonging, created to maintain an indivisible British subjecthood but resulting in a (racialised) system selectively managing the mobility of different groups' (Griffiths, 2019: 4).

This racialised hierarchy is disguised through a language of citizenship and immigration, as discussed earlier in this chapter, and works to absolve the state from its role in the production of the racialised "migrant". It is precisely the sanitization of its history of colonialism and the pervasive 'imperialist nostalgia' (Gilroy, 2004b: 3) in White European discourse that allows for the ignorance of race in migration. The state here plays a crucial role in continuing the racial system (Goldberg, 2001) that was established under colonialism. Migration literature talking about the nation, integration, minorities, etc. without also talking about race, de-racialises and denies race (Lentin, 2014). Far from being "race-less" immigration controls and its categorisations are often racist, albeit indirectly so, and intricately related to Britain's colonial history. Ignoring empire and race in today's immigration regime is a continued form of violence and harm against migrants living this reality. Through a historical framing of the contemporary British immigration regime in this thesis, I aim to show how contemporary state categorisations of immigration are continuations of racial processes established during British colonial rule.

Citizenship and belonging

In addition to a historically contextualised and intersectional framing of citizenship, a lived experience approach also encourages us to see its multiple meanings, the different scales at which citizenship is lived and experienced, and how it is claimed by citizens and non-citizens alike. Beyond a legal status, citizenship is also membership in a political and normative community with social and cultural aspects, identity, belonging, and a form of participation. These multiple meanings of citizenship are often contested at its margins through the partially included or entirely excluded non-citizen. Immigration and naturalisation are crucial sites of these as the only place where they are overtly articulated (Brace, 2015; Honig, 2001). Examining how people *live* citizenship at these points of contestation complexifies the narrow legal framing. In this section I briefly discuss four points: first the relationship between citizenship and belonging; second how a more complex

conceptualisation of citizenship that is attentive to differentiation by scales can contest its power; and third how formally excluded migrants partake in acts of citizenship.

Bridget Anderson argues that citizenship also denotes membership in the 'community of value' (2013b). In this community its members share ideals, behaviour, ethnicity, culture, language and so on, and become "Good Citizens" through being law-abiding, hard-working, respectable, and by demonstrating good behaviour (2013b: 2). Beyond a legal relationship, citizenship then also is about behaviours which means non-citizens can partake in them. In fact, more expectations are placed on the non-citizen to be accepted into the 'community of value'. The boundaries of the 'community of value' and the "Good Citizen" are policed externally through non-citizens who are expected to prove themselves through exemplary behaviour, and internally through the failed citizen who demonstrates unacceptable behaviours. Similar to the concept of semi-compliance in relation to immigration status discussed earlier, understanding citizenship as a multi-layered concept means that people can simultaneously be excluded in some aspects and included in others. As Gonzales found in the US, young "undocumented" migrants are constantly negotiating this intersection of informal inclusions, and formal, *legal* exclusions (2016) and therefore provide a useful case to study meanings of citizenship through a lived experience approach.

Citizenship and belonging is closely associated with the processes of integration, which are differently constituted, lived and experienced at different scales such as the global, national, regional, local or neighbourhood levels (Gidley, 2014). These processes also take place in relation to different domains, such as the economic, institutional, social, or cultural ones (Spencer, 2011). If as scholars we are attentive to these different scales, we can contribute to an understanding whereby citizenship and belonging are experienced differently at different levels. A person might simultaneously feel belonging to their local neighbourhood, while feeling rejected through macro-political processes of restricted rights and exclusions. It is also why everyday multicultural life can co-exist with an increasingly hostile environment for migrants based in public debates and restrictive policies (Back and Sinha, 2018a). As Gidley argues, different processes take place in different domains and scales, and we have to think carefully how they intersect as well as how and these processes are different at these different levels (2014). Arguing against a presentism and parochialism within many contemporary migration debates, Back and Sinha urge scholars to examine

contemporary processes of immigration, citizenship and belonging in the context of scales of the past and current broader global processes (2018a). For the current British context this means developing an understanding of contemporary migration patterns in relation to its colonial past on the one hand, and current geopolitics, global economics, environmental crises and military interventions.

Nira Yuval-Davis also argues that citizenship is a multi-layered construct through which we become members of various collectivities: the 'local, ethnics, national, state, cross- or trans-state and supra-state' (Yuval-Davis, 1999: 122). Through a feminist rethinking of citizenship she claims that citizenship is not 'limited to only state citizenship but also [to] be understood as the participatory dimension of membership in all political communities' (2011: 6). This includes the private and familial sphere, or intimate citizenship as she calls it. Such an approach to citizenship shifts the focus onto people and their agency in making citizenship everyday and shifting power from the state to people. This again highlights how a person can be excluded from state membership yet actively participate in other aspects of citizenship.

Further shifting our gaze to the active engagement of citizens, Isin and Nielsen (2008) and Heidi Mirza (2009) suggest using the concept of 'acts of citizenship'. Using this concept, Isin and Nielsen argue, allows for an examination of citizenship that values it both as status and practice, while not reducing it to either and recognising the distinction between the two. A daily enacting of citizenship is what Mirza calls 'real citizenship' in her study on black supplementary schools. Mirza found that black women enacted their citizenship through radical education programmes who, although legally British Citizens, were being excluded from the citizenry through racism (2009). 'Acts of citizenship' can also show how formally excluded non-citizens will nonetheless take actions attributed to citizenship. In her book *Impossible Subjects*, Ngai shows how "illegal immigrants" in the US disrupt legal categorisations through claims of belonging and engaging with society (2004). Likewise, in his analysis of the "December Riots" in Greece in 2008, Andreas Kalyvas shows how the "illegal immigrant" became the "rebellious immigrant" through entering the space of the *polis* through civic participation defying their legal exclusion from it. He argued that through their actions '[T]hey became informal citizens, citizens *de facto* but not *de jure*, that is, citizens against the law' (2010: 358). By enacting citizenship through daily processes or

certain acts, the excluded, failed citizen, and non-citizen contest the state's exclusionary powers of citizenship by claiming aspects of it for themselves. Young "undocumented" migrants thus offer a pertinent case to understand how citizenship is more than a legal status.

Approaching citizenship as a lived experience in this thesis will allow me to engage with its multiple layers. It can expose its incongruent edges where concepts and lived realities do not neatly map onto each other. It will also help to reveal where the power of legal citizenship is immovable and where it can be shifted through the non-citizen's enactment and contestation of it.

A framework to acknowledge empire and race in migration research

In the last section of this chapter I discuss my framework for this thesis based on insights from the reviewed literature. I understand immigration status and citizenship as broad and multi-layered concepts best analysed through a lived experience approach. This helps to reveal not only the various intersections that uniquely shape individual's lives, but also makes explicit colonial legacies and racism in the contemporary immigration regime. As someone who cannot write about this topic as an "expert by experience" it is also important to find a mode of writing that is reflexive, collaborative and contextualised (see next section in this chapter and the conclusion, chapter nine).

Migration studies has been criticised for an amnesia of legacies of empire (De Genova, 2010; De Noronha, 2016, 2017) and sociology for its lack of a 'postcolonial revolution' (Bhambra, 2007; see also Hund and Lentin, 2014). Both areas have suffered from a lack of inclusion of scholars of colour at its core (Back and Tate, 2015) and these limitations are particularly problematic for migration scholars. As Boatcă et al. argue, such analyses 'ignore Europe's cultural transformation triggered by a colonialist, slavery and imperialist past, conditioning today's migratory movements' (2016: 2). How the topic of migration is approached is significant to the kind of knowledge that is being produced.

While historical amnesia of legacies of empire is common in large proportions of the migration literature, there is a large body of work in postcolonial and critical race theory,

and some sociology, that unpacks the connections between modernity and colonialism, colonialism and contemporary migration, and how this amnesia works at denying the significance of race in today's immigration regimes. Bhabra has written on the missing 'postcolonial revolution' in sociology and how 'sociology's emergence coincided with the high point of Western imperialism'. She criticises how modernity in this narrative was singularly seen as a great transformation based on a narrow Eurocentric view without considering colonialism's role in it. Yet, modernity's formation was built and dependent on the exploitations of the colonial world and as such 'modernity is racial' (Hesse, 2007: 643). He continues: 'the "onto-colonial" describes the modernity of social realities historically brought into racialized being by colonial regimes of demarcations, designations and deployments, that is to say as the effects of onto-colonial taxonomies' (Hesse, 2007: 658). Sociology as a discipline, Bhabra argues, has so far only addressed race as a pluralism of identity claims, but has yet to fully address the postcolonial in a thought-revolution. Drawing on work by Sanjay Subrahmanyam, she argues that through 'the approach of 'connected sociologies' theoretical categories are reconstructed to create new understandings that incorporate and transform previous one[s]' (2017: 6). This, she says, should be done through a pluralism of voices that connect in dialogue with each other, 'for a reconstructed understanding of modernity inclusive of its colonial histories and their consequences' (Bhabra, 2014a: 13). Similarly, the contemporary British immigration regime needs to be analytically re-connected to its colonial past.

Bhabra further suggests that the structures of knowledge and knowledge production need to be questioned (Bhabra, 2007), unsettled and reconstituted (Bhabra, 2014b) through genuine postcolonial and decolonial dialogue, decentring Europe as sociological knowledge production (Rodriguez and Boatcă, 2016) and theory-building, and recognising how Europe is a product of colonial and imperial legacies. As migration literature is largely situated within such a framework the same processes need to be applied here. This involves a centring of scholars of colour and ending the segregation in sociology between white academics and academics of colour (Back and Tate, 2015). Back and Tate argue that the white sociological mainstream has historically ignored the contribution of black sociologists such as Du Bois and Stuart Hall at the discipline's core. As a result, it has become segregated and is in need of reconstruction that should include 'dealing with the legacy of slavery,

empire and racism'; being attentive to 'global dimensions of how the question of difference operates', 'to conduct sociology with other crafts', and 'the promotion of creative forms of knowledge production' (Back and Tate, 2015 paragraph 4.7). Shifting the framing away from the Western gaze is enabled through placing those who are experiencing these legacies at the centre of the dialogue, whether in academic debates or the knowledge production process.

Ethnographic studies of migration in sociology and anthropology have often engaged more directly with race and empire. This shows how through a lived experience approach the postcolonial legacies inscribed in participants' lives are impossible to ignore. Work that has foregrounded the concept of belonging over legal membership, and analysed how they are in conflict with each other has particularly contributed to a problematisation of race in migration (Back et al., 2012; Yuval-Davis, 2006). In their article *New Hierarchies of Belonging*, Back, Sinha and Bryan argue that immigrants are differentially included based on a racial ordering, where '[w]ho counts...as an 'immigrant' is an affect of racism rather than the quality and history of patterns of people flow' (2012: 141; see also De Noronha, 2016). In this racial ordering the black or Muslim male migrant is more visible and highly policed through immigration enforcement than their white counterparts. As we saw earlier the top countries for removal destinations from the UK in 2016 were non-white. This illustrates that the intersection between race and immigration status has different consequences for people's lives. As Luke de Noronha has argued 'immigration control is used to monitor, manage and expel Britain's ethnic minorities. It makes some people's lives miserable, contradicts their lived sense of belonging, and draws divisions in schools, neighbourhoods and relationships' (2016 paragraph 11). The length of time someone has spent in Britain and the attachment and belonging they have formed have less value than their position in the racial order. The non-citizen becomes the ever-outsider in an immigration system where citizenship is increasingly unattainable. A study of migrants in Britain then necessarily must involve a discussion of race and racism and its connections to colonialism. A qualitative approach of these lived experiences is more likely to ensure these realities and connections are foregrounded. In this study, I have therefore chosen to employ a collaborative ethnographic approach to try and address these points as much as possible throughout the research process.

Collaborative ethnographic approach

Given my own positionality of privilege vis-à-vis the participants in this research, the knowledge production process will be crucial to the meaningfulness of this thesis. My position as a white, middle-class woman with dual British and German citizenship meant that I had long-term security in the UK and was usually assumed to belong to the UK although I only moved here age sixteen. Participants on the other hand had non-EU passports, an insecure immigration status, were from ethnic minority backgrounds and often not seen as belonging despite having moved to the UK between the ages of two and sixteen. Their class backgrounds varied, but migratory pathways had mostly placed them in poorer living conditions in the UK than me, while in their countries of birth they were usually well off. Access to higher education was another major differential between me and participants. A key commitment in this endeavour is, therefore, to write from participants' accounts and their experience of immigration status today. A collaborative ethnographic framework foregrounds the lived experience of participants, and race and colonial history in contemporary migration as lived emerges. An everyday life framework allows for an examination of the complexities of immigration status and how they unfold in young people's lives while also making explicit connections with the historical, social and political (Back, 2015; Certeau, 1984; Jones et al., 2014; Neal and Murji, 2015). Using an intersectional approach (Crenshaw, 1991) will enable me to place immigration status, race and life-course at the centre of my study to understand how young people are uniquely placed along multiple lines of identification. If the immigration regime is racialized it is not sufficient to look at immigration status without also examining race. Life-course and temporalities is also crucial when studying young "undocumented" migrants as their immigration status becomes variously visible at different stages of their lives.

Researching the lives of young people who are globally mobile, illegalized by the state and subjected to state surveillance poses some key challenges. In an environment that is made purposefully hostile for "illegal immigrants", how can we carry out research that is ethical in how it produces knowledge and not exploitative of participants? Is it possible to work more collaboratively despite being embedded in institutions and disciplines that are implicated in the state and colonial histories which produced the current context? What methods and methodologies do we engage with to handle research across differences of power and

privilege responsibly and with integrity, if this is possible at all? What tools can we use to decolonise the research process? In this section, I aim to outline how I aimed to assume responsibility and accountability in my practices as a social researcher in the context of a hostile immigration landscape in the UK using a collaborative approach and having ‘the ethical courage and intellectual humility...to *fail better*’, as Gidley argues (2019: 123). In the conclusion of this thesis (chapter nine), I will also examine the value and limitations of such an approach.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith discusses similar questions in the context of indigenous research in her important book *Decolonizing Methodologies* asking: ‘Whose research is it? Who owns it? Whose interests does it serve? Who will benefit from it? Who has designed the questions and framed its scope? Who will carry it out? Who will write it up? How will its results be disseminated?’ (2012: 10). These questions are not new for social science researchers. At the heart of it is the relationship between the researcher and the participant and how we deal with representation, power and privilege. Some anthropologists have tried to address these issues through a framework of collaborative ethnography, which is: ‘...ultimately about power and, I would add control – about who has the right to represent whom and for what purposes and whose discourses will be privileged in the ethnographic text’ (Lassiter, 2005a: 102). This thesis engages with these concerns by drawing a on learning from a collaborative framework is key to this project.

In sociology, paradigm shifts in these debates emerged out of feminist writing that questioned the possibility and value of objectivity in qualitative research and encouraged greater reflexivity that acknowledged the researcher’s position in and towards the research. Postcolonial and critical race scholars have worked to expose how the discipline itself was caught up in and replicating ‘the colonial relationship between white institutional power and the communities of people of colour’ (Blauner and Wellman, 1973: 311). In *The Death of White Sociology* contributors argued that ‘white social scientists worked to perpetuate destructive ideologies about African American people’ (Thompson, 1973) and that research was exploitative (Ladner, 1973). In the same book Thompson criticised objectivity because it has been misused as power and argues that we must therefore write from our own subjectivity and biases that we all have (1973). Similar criticisms are made of the migration

literature today, as was discussed in the previous chapter. It is therefore important to draw on and learn from these literatures when doing migration research.

Drawing on the above literatures, I use a methodological framework that to address such questions around exploitation, representation, the researcher-participant relationship, power and privilege as far as possible. How can the research process be more collaborative and dialogic in the context of researching the lived experience of migrants in a precarious immigration situation in London? I propose that some of these problems can be shifted through doing research differently and some limitations remain, especially given institutional constraints (discussed further in chapter nine). Whether we can or cannot shift problems, I contend that research has value and can be done ethically. To do so, we need courage to make mistakes trying new methodological approaches, genuinely engage with difficult questions, time to build relationships with participants who are the ‘experts by experience’, and enact our ethics throughout.

Conclusion

Colonial and immigration histories have become detached in contemporary debates on migration in the UK as ‘colonialism’ is something that happened ‘over there’ (Sirriyeh, 2018b: 37). In this chapter I discussed how the lives of “undocumented” migrants and “illegality” have been studied, the advantages of a lived experience and intersectional approach, and the importance of making connections between the contemporary immigration regimes and its legacies of empire explicit. A historically contextualised examination of today's immigration regime shows how it evolved out of a two-tier citizenship system created during the British empire that differentiated between those of white European ancestry and people of colour. This has evolved into a racial hierarchy of statuses, with the black and ethnic minority “illegal” non-citizen on one end and the white British Citizen at the other.

Stratifications through statuses and citizenship in this system are not accidental or unexpected. They have become increasingly complex with a plethora of different statuses that determine a person's rights and entitlements (Morris, 2003) and pathways to

citizenship. In this state-produced hierarchy every status except that of the citizen by birth is precarious and insecure. Through making citizenship hard to access for some migrants the state produces their continued vulnerability. Immigration status therefore has significant consequences for a person's life and future as it intersects with race and life-course. If we trace the historical origins of the current immigration regime it becomes clear how the lines of demarcation of membership have been formed.

In this chapter I argue that citizenship and immigration status today must be understood as a continuation of the citizenship and immigration regime that was established along racial lines during British colonial rule. As direct rule transitioned to indirect rule, citizenship was one mechanism employed by the British Government to continue this order indirectly and its power while outwardly appearing to be increasing people's citizenship rights and autonomy. Stratifications between people of white European ancestry in settler colonies and indigenous people and former slaves were entrenched through this legislation. Despite overt racism becoming less acceptable with the end of empire and anti-racist activism, the British Government was reluctant to give access to citizenship to all people in its former colonies. However, the presence of people with unequal rights on the same territory presented a problem to liberalism and its idea of universal citizenship. The state therefore had to find a way of indirectly continuing its intended differential access to rights while not directly contradicting its own ideologies. Citizenship and immigration laws offered exactly this. The racial logic established during colonialism that subjugated, oppressed and "othered" people of colour, found expression in a newly established British immigration regime that continued to "sort" people. Since the end of the British empire, citizenship laws have become more complex with multiple legal meanings of a citizen. In addition, policy changes over the past decades have led to a proliferation of immigration statuses to create 'multi-status Britain' (De Noronha, 2019). This proliferation of immigration statuses produces precariousness, temporariness and insecurity for most migrants in the UK. A simplistic and uncritical policy-focused framing of "illegal immigration" in a large section of the literature enabled through an a-historical Western-centric gaze, enables these racist citizenship and immigration categorisations to continue. As the authors of *Go Home?* argue: 'an understanding of immigration now must engage with questions of race and racism' (Jones et al., 2017: 153). As well as engaging with questions of race and racism, we must

also engage with questions of colonialism to unpack their connections to how the “illegal immigrant” is framed today.

To shift this framing, I argue in this thesis that we need to work through the lived experience and accounts of people who live these categories of exclusion today so that we can excavate the historical legacies of empire within them and bring the racism in today’s immigration regime to the foreground. The framing of the migrant as either good or bad, deserving or undeserving, can be challenged through reconnecting racism and immigration control, and colonial histories with the current geopolitics of migration control (Jones et al., 2017: 138). A lived-experience approach is also important to understand the far-reaching consequences of legal status on the lives and futures of young migrants who are likely to remain in the UK. Through their accounts we can learn about the multiple meanings of immigration status as a lived reality and how individuals can be simultaneously excluded and included vis-à-vis different aspects of citizenship. More than a legal category, immigration status significantly shapes young migrant’s identities and sense of belonging. As young people’s lives unfold at the intersection of formal exclusion and informal inclusion they have to navigate their place on the ‘belonging-illegality continuum’ (Gonzales, 2016). This more complex approach to the study of “undocumented” migrants will contribute to challenging the state’s role in producing vulnerable and racialized immigration categorisations that have real consequences on the lives of young people in Britain today.

The next chapter will start doing this, by examining the multiple ways that young people’s everyday lives are affected by their immigration status. Through a close look at how Sarah’s life has unfolded in relation to her immigration status, the next chapter explores how the current structure of the immigration system produces differences and similarities in experiences of exclusion and inclusion according to a person’s position within, and journey through this system. It also argues that this position produces significant uncertainty in young people’s lives and that immigration status is more complex than a simple dichotomisation of “legal” or “illegal”.

Chapter 3 – Everyday life subject to immigration control

Introduction

This chapter highlights how the everyday lives of young migrants are impacted and restricted through their immigration situation and status. Through an in-depth analysis of Sarah's life, this chapter explores how immigration status affects young people at different stages of their immigration journey. This can be either while they were without status, during the process of trying to apply for status or the renewal process. I argue that throughout these different phases of young people's immigration status they are experiencing a long-term 'precarious immigration situation', extending beyond their "illegality". As Bloch et al. point out 'increasingly the concept of precariousness is used to understand the position of those lacking the rights normally associated with residency and/or citizenship' (2014: 76). This chapter exposes the ways in which the immigration regime extends its control over these young people and their families' lives via formal exclusions enforced through their immigration status, immigration enforcement, increased surveillance and time-sensitive bureaucratic processes of 'regularisation'. This takes place against the contradictory background of young people leading a life of relative normalcy, especially at school and in their local neighbourhoods, indistinguishable from other young Londoners who are formally included in compulsory education where they are told to believe in the 'work hard, achieve anything' meritocratic illusion. The young people are also informally included in their local communities, and socially and culturally integrated, as well as facing some informal exclusions, most notably based on race as is explored further in chapter seven.

The proliferation of immigration statuses and their increasingly temporary nature has contributed to larger numbers of migrants in the UK living in precarious situations (De Noronha, 2019; Sigona, 2013; for Canada see Goldring et al., 2009). This makes it harder for migrants to make long term life plans unless they have naturalised as British Citizens or they are, for now at least, an EU citizen. Consecutive governments have become increasingly concerned with 'managing migration', responding to public worries over 'too many immigrants' in the UK by wanting to prove that they are being 'tough on immigrants', so the immigration system has made migrants' situations increasingly precarious through a proliferation of short-term immigration statuses. There are a huge variety of short term

immigration statuses to enter the UK, depending on whether a person is an EU, EEA or Commonwealth citizen, coming for a short visit such as a holiday or business, study visas for short or longer term courses, to work, to join a family member in the UK, or to seek protection or asylum. The list is long and complex and specific to everyone's situation. No status, however, is immediately eligible for settlement or citizenship. The shorter the length of stay, the fewer rights people usually have. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the various immigration statuses contribute to the production of a hierarchy of immigrants within the UK according to type of status and respective rights and entitlements (Morris, 2003).

However, there are many people whose life situation does not fit into these pre-existing legal categories of the immigration system. Such individuals have the option to apply 'outside the immigration rules'. A lot of these cases draw on Human Rights legislation such as Article 8 'the right to family and private life'. This was the most common route taken by the participants in this study. Hardly anyone had a case for asylum in the UK and most had already spent a substantial amount of their life in the UK. Their only option then was to apply for "limited leave to remain", which is a short-term status that is granted for 30 months. "Limited leave to remain" usually entitles young people to access education and to work but is 'no recourse to public funds' restricted. There is no option for young people to apply for an immigration status that is any more long-term than this. Instead migrants are forced to re-apply for this short-term status four times before they are eligible to apply for the longer-term indefinite leave to remain. Not counting legal fees (LLR does not qualify for legal aid), current costs for one LLR application are £2033, inclusive of £1000 Immigration Health Surcharge, a sum that has risen 238% in five years from £601 in 2014 (Let us Learn, 2019). An indefinite leave to remain application costs £2,389. After 12 months of indefinite leave to remain young people are then eligible to apply for British Citizenship incurring a further cost of £1,330. This means that most young people in this study will be in their mid-thirties before they become eligible to apply for British citizenship despite them having lived the majority of their lives here. As the initial application process, the renewal process is gruelling and costly. The rules around renewing your status are strict: subsequent applications must be made within a one-month window or they risk falling out of status. In

2014, the Immigration Act introduced these fees which are set at the minister's discretion and have increased annually since, except in 2019.

Sarah

Sarah has wanted to be an astronaut ever since she can remember. She has done everything in her power to achieve this aim: worked hard at school to achieve three As at A-level in maths, physics and chemistry, went on a school trip to CERN – the European Organization for Nuclear Research - attended university summer schools and received offers from four of the UK's top universities to study physics. At that point she got stuck: her West African citizenship and insecure immigration status in the UK meant she was not eligible for student finance or to join the European Space Agency. Sarah and her mum came to the UK when she was only four years old to join her father who had already been here for two years with his cousin. For many years she lived in the UK without legal status, and for many years she and her family were trying to get their immigration status. Now she has "limited leave to remain" which gives her legal residence and the right to work in the UK for 30 months before she must renew it, but she still cannot get a student loan. She has two younger brothers who were born in the UK. They are both eligible to register as British citizens via the 'ten-year-route', her older brother Daniel already has his British passport and her younger brother Aaron is in the process of applying for it now. Her immigration status has shaped many aspects of her life, determined paths she could pursue and formed some of her most profound memories. Not wanting to accept the restrictions that immigration status imposed on her also made her a campaigner and activist. She has since spoken on many media outlets such as Channel 4 Dispatches and the BBC, as well as at the Women of the World festival.

This chapter examines how young people encounter state practices through the immigration regime and how immigration status operates formally and informally and has far reaching effects on young people's everyday social lives, relationships, and bigger life transitions, which separated them out from their peers. I argue that as a result, immigration status is an important vector of stratification to analyse beyond "illegality" which produces profound long-term precariousness and insecurity in young people's lives employing similar mechanisms of immigration enforcement and 'deportability' (De Genova, 2002). These mechanisms penetrate deep into the young people's private and intimate lives (Back and

Sinha, 2013) constantly questioning their belonging in Britain – the country they consider their home and where they have lived most of their lives. This chapter is divided into four sections. The first considers the impact of not having immigration status in the UK on young people, the second looks at the application process, and the third section examines the continued precariousness produced by the renewal process for the short-term “limited leave to remain” status. The final section looks at how this creates deep feelings of being different among young people and separation from their peers.

A life restricted by insecure immigration status

Like Sarah, there are many young migrants in London who came to the UK at a young age, who have made Britain their home but who are excluded from full membership because of their immigration status. They usually arrived in the UK either together with their parents or to join a parent already in the UK, often living with grandparents or aunts and uncles before coming here. For many coming to England became a meaningful reunion with parents after a long separation. Most of them got on a plane and went through passport controls at the airport; even if they cannot remember which type of visa they arrived on they entered the UK legally. Sometimes they only planned to stay a few weeks, other times it was to make a life. Many already had lives that were anchored both in Britain and their countries of birth. Parents had businesses in both countries, extended family members already lived in London, some young people were born in the UK. They were usually enrolled in school within weeks of arriving and as children quickly settled into their new lives, learnt English which they now speak with a thick London accent. They made new friends, took up new hobbies, found new interests and settled into their new way of life. In ‘policy-speak’ they were fully integrated. Even though everyone’s reasons, circumstances and age when coming to the UK were slightly different, their lives are here now and they claim London as their home, the place they belong. As Sarah said: ‘all my memories are from here, like I’ve pretty much grown up here, done my education, like everything is here so as far as that goes yeah this is my home.’

Despite describing London and Britain as their home, having a precarious immigration status affects young people’s lives in a plethora of ways, ranging from formal exclusions such as

student loans to intimate, mundane exclusions in their everyday life such as buying razors or matches. Overarching these exclusions and keeping young people in place through their status was the constant threat of their 'deportability' (De Genova, 2002). As De Genova explains: 'Migrant "illegality" is lived through a palpable sense of deportability, which is to say, the possibility of being removed from the space of the nation-state' (2002: 439). For the young people in this research this possibility of being removed and resulting precariousness, did not only apply when they were in a situation of "illegality" but also once they had regularised and held a short-term migration status as well as during the renewal process of this status, as I will show in this chapter and throughout the thesis.

Sarah started her story with her father's second time in detention, indicative of its significance. She was very young when he was first detained and so hardly remembers it. The second time he was detained however had many implications for the family and is a time firmly etched onto Sarah's memory that still makes her sad today. Despite this, her demeanour as she was telling me about this did not portray her true feelings about her father's detention, which she only revealed much later during the interview. Rather she recounted this experience very matter-of-factly, almost detached, despite it clearly being a significant memory to her, since she chose to direct the interview there within a minute of starting and without any prompts from me.

She explained how her father was in detention for two to three months, which meant the sole breadwinner had been taken from the family. Sarah, her brothers and mother had to live at her aunt's house during this time, where they had no money and felt scared. She said she felt like they were fugitives. Her father's detention also led to her first trip outside of England. They had to travel all the way to Wales to attend his detention hearing. The thing that made Sarah the most upset though was that he missed her thirteenth birthday – the first time he had missed her birthday. Instead of a joyful celebration as a family she got one cupcake, and cards written on paper from her mother and brothers. There were also the constant questions from friends or teachers to be answered, 'Why aren't you coming? Where is your dad? When is he coming back?'. She would come up with any excuse apart from the real reason. Sarah was therefore aware of her insecure immigration situation from a young age. It affected what she could do and what she could tell people. Her nightmare ended as suddenly as it was started. One Sunday afternoon she was watching TV with her

family when her brother got up and ran to the window shouting ‘dad!’ Nobody believed him and told him to stop making such inappropriate jokes until they all saw him with their own eyes. Sarah’s father had been released from detention without any prior notification to either him or his family.

The threat of detention and subsequent deportation, or deportability as De Genoa calls it (2002), was at the forefront of every young person’s mind. In one-to-one conversations many young people revealed how they had experienced detention or deportation either themselves, or through a close family member, friends or members of their extended community. Everyone knew someone who had experienced it and thus young people were aware of this possibility as a consequence of their precarious immigration situation. Young people discussed how easily anyone on a variety of immigration statuses could be detained during one of their campaign meetings. As Griffiths points out, since the 2007 UK Borders Act ‘any non-British national sentenced to prison would be considered for deportation and that those with prison sentences of 12 months or more (or with separate convictions accrued over five years totalling the same), would be ‘automatically’ deported after serving their sentence, even if they had indefinite leave to remain in the UK’ (2015: 111). The type of crime, it seemed to young people, also had little to no bearing on this significant consequence. And they noted that more often than not the crimes were committed out of poverty which was often produced by the immigration system in the first place. Many questioned this link between the criminal justice system and the immigration regime and its enforcement apparatus. After all, if someone committed a crime, they can go to prison like everybody else without also being placed in immigration detention. They saw this as a double punishment, as it has also been described in the literature (Griffiths, 2015). However, as Anderson traced in her book *Us and Them*, such a connection between foreigners and criminals has a long history (2013). A convergence that has been referred to as ‘crimmigration’ by some scholars (Aliverti, 2012; Stumpf, 2006). Another example of such ‘interagency arrangements between the police and Home Office’ is Operation Nexus whereby immigration checks are carried out on everyone arrested in the participating areas (Griffiths and Morgan, 2018).

As well as affecting how young people are treated by the state’s immigration regime, ‘deportability’ also affects how young people and their families act and react to situations in

their daily lives. Or in other words their emotional landscape (discussed further in chapter four) and their behaviours. Bloch et al. refer to this process as 'learning to be illegal' resulting out of a need to remain invisible to the authorities, whereby young "undocumented" migrants learnt not only which pubs to frequent and when, and how to navigate public transport to avoid detection, but also how 'to manage an ambiguous and often suppressed identity' (2014: 72). For example, Sarah explained how she knows that her precarious immigration status makes her less likely to speak out against injustices or to report crimes for fear of being arrested and deported herself. This was particularly strong at the intersection with race, which she thought made her or her father more likely to be arrested in the first place. Talking about an instance where her dad was the victim of a racist attack and how to respond she said 'you just need to learn to keep yourself in check because...like I said to him, he said that if, if someone came up to him and like insulted him like was racist and you know, stuff like that, he would retaliate and I was just like 'but at the end of the day dad, you're the one who's gonna get arrested. He might get arrested too, she might get arrested whatever, but, their erm, their stay in this country isn't affected by that because if you get arrested that's gonna go against you for renewal. You might be put in detention, you might have your status revoked, you might be deported! So, think about that before like...' and he's just like 'why is that fair?' it's not fair, but at the end of the day that's another thing that you have to think about.' Although young people mostly settled into life in the UK quickly after arriving, there were also constant reminders of their status as a migrant and exclusion from membership that pervaded their everyday lives.

'Even grooming yourself you need to be...[legal]': Living without status

Arriving in London, often meant trading a comfortable life of relative wealth for cramped housing conditions, multiple moves, financial struggle and encountering racism for the first time in their lives (discussed in chapter seven). Most young people were aware that they were an "immigrant" or even an "illegal immigrant" – a seemingly dirty word in England. Something to keep quiet about and hide by blending in as much as possible. Many young people internalised this negative external identifier over time, so much so that Mary, another participant, said she still referred to herself as an "illegal immigrant" after receiving

her status. Young people were usually at least subconsciously aware of such a negative image of “the immigrant” and the legal exclusions attached to their immigration situation that restricted them from certain rights and entitlements. Only over time, and with specific experiences that separated them out from their friends, did young people become more overtly aware of what it meant to live a life restricted by immigration. Young people then often felt and experienced the restrictions of their legal status well before they could name immigration status as the cause of it.

One aspect of living in the UK without immigration status was that young people and their families were often dependent on other people to support them, such as friends, family or partners. This was especially pertinent when finding accommodation, any payments that required bank accounts or cards or involved dealing with authorities. This is not uncommon and documented in the everyday life literature on “undocumented” migrants. Bloch for instance argues that “undocumented” migrants in the UK who were unable to work or worked less ‘were instead dependent on family members, friends, churches and other charitable donations for subsistence support’ where those who do not speak English are most vulnerable to exploitation (2013: 277; see also Bloch et al., 2014). Subletting in co-ethnic networks, where the person with legal status signs the contract and then informally sublets to “undocumented” migrants, is particularly well documented as a precarious arrangement (e.g. Bloch et al., 2014; Sigona and Hughes, 2012).

In addition to her dad’s detention and not being able to go on school trips, this was very familiar to Sarah. Their initial accommodation was a room in a friend’s flat and their first home was next door to their aunt’s house who also arranged it for them. She has never been able to travel back to her country of birth since arriving in the UK and meet new family members, or to America to meet her half-brother. Sarah and her family also never went on holidays abroad, much to her friends’ disbelief, instead they visited family in the Midlands. Even to do this, they needed to ask her aunt to buy the tickets online and pay her back in cash. Ordering things online the way her friends did was not an option for Sarah: she could not get a bank account and debit card as she did not have the right papers. This constant dependency on family members and friends creates precarity in young people’s lives as the support can be withdrawn at any moment leading to the possibility of street homeless – as happened to Leila for instance whom we will meet in chapter four. It also creates

problematic power dynamics between those giving the support and those being supported which can lead to exploitation. In a situation of complete dependency on another person, whether a family member, partner or friend, rights and advocacy feel diminished.

Although Sarah knew that being an immigrant somehow meant not being able to do certain things, it was hard to understand that this was related to her legal status. Her parents did not talk to her much about it even though immigration was a constant topic at family gatherings. This signalled to Sarah that immigration status was not something she could talk about, something that had to remain hidden and secretive, and ashamed of (explored further in chapter five). She explains: 'a lot of the hard stuff was happening when I was younger, so we didn't really talk about it. I sort of, like I knew what was going on but she [her mother] never sort of sat me down and was like 'you know, this, this and this' so I just sort of just went with it. Like I always knew you don't talk about it with anyone else apart from the family...'

As Sarah got older, she became aware that she could not get any form of ID or National Insurance number as her friends did. This was a problem for example when they wanted to go out together, such as going to the cinema. It was also a problem when she wanted to buy some razors in a high street drugstore. They asked her for ID which she did not have. She had to buy them from her local corner store instead where they did not ask any questions. They were probably also more expensive. Still she couldn't quite believe it: 'I was just like really? Really? So yeah even grooming yourself you need to be...[legal]'. Maria, who we will meet in chapter five, also came up against the barrier of not having ID when she wanted to buy some matches: "cause I look like a child. I went to go and buy matches once (laughs) and they were like 'oh sweetie, oh no you need ID' and I was like 'err I'm 19, or 20' I can't remember what I was, but I was old enough basically. It was so frustrating because all I needed; I need a card to be able to get a card to show people my real age. And it's just, oh, it's just so annoying'. Without a bank account, ID or National Insurance number Sarah, Maria and others like them, were also unable to start a part-time job around the age of 16. Not having a job meant not having their own money, further separating them from their peers and increasing their dependence on their parents or others who supported them.

ID is something that is constantly required from us in adult life today and something I – who has this privilege - take entirely for granted. You need ID to get a mobile phone contract, to sign up for shop points cards, for student cards, to get into bars, clubs or concerts, public transport travel cards and especially bank accounts. The inability to partake in such mundane everyday activities as buying razors or matches, shows the far-reaching effects of immigration enforcement technologies into young people's private lives as internal immigration controls proliferate. Back and Sinha have documented how border control is now being 'in-sourced' not just to landlords, doctors, health visitors, teachers and university lecturers, but also expanded to the use of the mobile phone and social media (2013; see also Meloni, 2017). In 2013 the Home Office paid the private company Capita to carry out a campaign using texts to tell people to leave the country. In the process many people were wrongly targeted. As they argue, 'The mobile phone is now an instrument of border control, but it is also a connecting device' (Back and Sinha, 2013: 3). Similarly intrusive are mechanisms that scrutinise intimate relationships in family migration applications that require couples to prove their love and 'genuine and continuing relationship' through sharing intimate and private message exchanges as the Home Office becomes arbiter over what constitutes a genuine marriage (APPG Migration, 2013; Charsley and Benson, 2012; Hughes, 2015).

The Home Office has continuously expanded its immigration enforcement practices in a bid to appear tough on immigration over the past decade or more (Jones et al., 2017). They include communication campaigns such as the 'Go Home' vans in the summer of 2013; a Twitter feed that live tweeted immigration raids in people's private homes and in workplaces; and a poster campaign in hospitals and other healthcare providers against the un-evidenced worry of healthcare tourism. Theresa May kept her word when as Home Secretary in 2012 she declared she would create a 'really hostile environment' for irregular migrants in the UK (Kirkup, 2012). This is an environment consisting of suspicion, fear and threat that can affect anyone, as documented in the book *Go Home?: The politics of immigration controversies* (Jones et al., 2017). In a related blog Jones, one of the researchers on this project points out, that this threat can affect 'anyone at any time – even someone with settled status whose documents are unavailable [as was the case in the Windrush scandal], even someone born in the UK with parents with legal status, even

someone who has no immigration history in their family but works for a bank or rents out a home' (2018). As part of these changes, citizens are also increasingly implicated in policing the UK's internal borders. The introduction of the 'Right to Rent' in Immigration Act 2014 whereby private landlords have been made liable for checking tenants' immigration status to determine whether they have a right to rent in the UK is a point in case. The Home Office's guidance to landlords states: 'From 1 December, landlords or agents in England could be charged with a criminal offence if they know, or have reasonable cause to believe, that they are letting to an illegal migrant.' (Home Office, 2016: 2).

This change in the law could have had very serious consequences for Sarah and her family had it been introduced before they got their status. They relied on the private rental sector for a home and to avoid homelessness. Without even the room or later small flat, this would have hugely increased their vulnerability and precariousness. Young people in this research were very aware of these immigration enforcement activities generally as well as having first-hand experiences of them as their lives have become increasingly restricted and illegalised. This environment has added to young people's fear around their 'deportability' described earlier. As Sarah told me, hardly a family meeting passes without talk about the latest immigration news. Whether it is someone who has been detained, where the vans were seen or where the latest raid was carried out, they all contribute to a climate of fear among migrants who are in a precarious immigration situation in the UK. In fact, to such an extent that the Home Office is rarely mentioned by its name at such gatherings, instead it is called 'the Big House'.

But those early years were not all negative. During this time Sarah was included and able to enrol at school and attend without problems. Given the insecurities in her life, school provided an important security for her. As Sarah says herself: 'I guess school was my escape because it was finally somewhere I could go that I didn't have to think about all these big life decisions and stuff. That I could just submerge myself in my books and I always loved learning as well so it was just something that I could do that I was in control of, that was mine.' At school she found her passion for the sciences and space, and fostered her dream of becoming an astronaut. She also made close friends and strengthened the relationships with her relatives in London. Her and her family started going to church and built new networks there as well as with other people within the community of their country of origin.

Through all of this Sarah and her family built a life here. London is Sarah's home: 'all my memories are from here like I've pretty much grown up here, done my education, like everything is here so as far as that goes yeah this is my home.'

Living in the UK without legal status produces a plethora of vulnerabilities, poverty and lack of control over their lives for young people. This dominance of exclusion is however contradicted by their formal education in the state system where they are encouraged to work hard, strive for good grades, develop their ambitions, dream big and continue in UK higher education. In addition to their formal inclusion in the education system, young people are also informally included in the community through their relationships at school, church and wider networks. They are then simultaneously included and excluded at different scales. Chauvin and Garcés-Mascreñas call this paradoxical integration "camouflage" (2014). This, they argue, more adequately describes the situation of "undocumented" migrants who take part in everyday life in the places where they live, as Sarah does, and are thus visible. At the same time, they must remain invisible to the authorities in the "undocumented closet" to avoid punishment, detention or deportation. The young migrants experience their immigration status differently according to whether it is related to the neighbourhood, municipal/regional, or national scale. As Gidley points out in relation to integration, '[D]ifferent domains of integration take place on different scales, and most often on a scale smaller than the nation-state' (2014). In relation to the scales at which immigration status are more or less strongly experienced, young people's exclusions are mostly strongly related to the boundaries of the nation-state (that nonetheless penetrated their everyday life), while the municipal or regional level is murkier with young people being able to access schools but not locally managed benefits. At the local or neighbourhood scale, young people and their families often feel the impact of their immigration status the least as they form relationships with friends and become active members in their community. Young people simultaneously experience exclusion and inclusion related to their immigration status, dependent on the scale considered.

Applying for immigration status

This section considers the implications of immigration status for young people throughout the process of “regularisation”, or applying for “limited leave to remain”, with the Home Office and being legally resident in the UK on this temporary status. At 17 Sarah finally got her leave to remain after a four-year process that involved her writing supporting letters to the Home Office, submitting photos of her school and prom ‘with white people in’ to prove she was integrated, several lawyers and her parents attending two tribunals hearings – both of which the Home Office representative did not turn up for. Their first application was rejected immediately. They appealed, submitted more evidence and spoke to their MP. They were given no timeframe for the process and could be told at any moment to leave the country. Sarah talked about how she never felt secure during this time because she never knew what might happen. After a period of silence their lawyer eventually called them with the good news that their application had been successful. The whole family went to their local post office to have their photos and fingerprints taken until eventually Sarah held the plastic card that gave her legal status in the UK in her hands. Although this finally gave her security it was also a conflicting moment as she described: ‘And then when we got our leave to remain, I was happy but then I was just like ‘is this it?’ Like I literally said to my mum ‘is this what we’ve gone through all of this for?’ And she was like ‘yeah, but you know we can do more stuff now’ and I was like ‘yeah but it’s this piece of plastic’ (laughs) I was just like, I’m just like, I was uuuh like I was obviously happy and grateful but then at the end of the day I was angry because I was just like ‘this thing has been, has...like stopped me from living life for so long, has put my dad through all of this, has done this, this and this, it’s just...’

The first hurdle in the process was often finding a solicitor who would genuinely support their application. Almost all participants experienced rogue lawyers who either took their money, disappeared and never submitted their application, or seemingly purposefully did a poor job completing the form, possibly in the hope they would get more fees through a second application or an appeal process. As Sarah observed: ‘all they want is their money. And obviously immigration, like there’s a lot of money in that ‘cause there’s a lot of people trying to regularise and there’s a lot of applications that need to be done and stuff.’

Given their own precarious immigration situation, young people and their families were usually too afraid to formally complain to the correct professional body about such lawyers. In the UK the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) set up in 1999 by the Immigration and Asylum Act regulates immigration advisers. They have powers to 'investigate complaints about immigration advisers and can prosecute those who operate illegally' (OISC website). Solicitors, barristers and chartered legal executives are automatically registered, as well as some others, Anyone else wanting to give immigration advice needs to apply for OISC authorisation (Yeo, 2019). The OISC does not regulate qualified lawyers but others who give immigration advice and the OISC can only investigate improper practice if it has been brought to its attention. So, the scope of its regulation is limited, and mostly would not have helped participants who have encountered rogue lawyers. On some rare occasions immigration lawyers have though been prosecuted (Middleton et al., 2015). Eventually the young people and their families usually found a lawyer able to secure them status. They were commonly either found through personal networks or through migrant support organisations.

In all cases of participants, the money the families had paid lawyers for failed or non-submitted applications was irredeemably gone. Already struggling to make ends meet just to live, saving up to get the fees together for a second, third or fourth time was a huge barrier and often took many months or even years. Ineligible for legal aid, and with few successful fee waiver applications (Let us Learn, 2019), participants had to raise the fees again, which as outlined in the introduction could be thousands of pounds per person. It was not uncommon for families who were unable to raise the money for every single member of the family at the same time, to use a strategy of staggered applications. They were forced to prioritise who was most in need of status. During this period of saving for their second application, the young people and their families would not be legally resident in the UK. The difficulties families had in saving the fees contributed to delays in young people getting status. It was not uncommon for parents to sell jewellery or other items of value to borrow money from friends or family further increasing their dependency on others to meet the costs of the application.

The next hurdle was dealing with the Home Office. There were two aspects to this that made the process especially difficult. The first was that different rules seemed to apply for

the Home Office than did to the applicants, such as having to keep to certain deadlines. The Home Office imposes strict rules and timeframes within which applications or appeals need to be submitted and how application forms must be completed. A simple typo or error on the form can lead to the entire application being rejected, without the case for leave having been considered and resulting in the loss of all fees paid. However, on the other hand it was common for the Home Office to not turn up to tribunal hearings or make mistakes with the application, such as misspelling of names. In Sarah's case the Home Office representatives did not turn up to two tribunal hearings. She reflects: '...it makes you think like if we didn't show up how would that have turned out but if they don't show up it was fine you know...so but the thing is like if we messed up anytime throughout this process we would have, we would have gone. But like they could afford to delay, they could afford to not show up, they could afford to...obviously like yeah, they're the government, whatever, fair enough, but like it's just, I don't know, it's not fair.'

The second aspect, that Sarah already referred to in the extract above, was the extensive delays and waits in receiving an answer on applications that could be anywhere between a few months and several years. Griffiths similarly found that in her study of British citizen women with noncitizen partners in precarious immigration situations, the women reported 'decision-making that appeared unfair, irrational and incoherent. Several described the immigration system as Kafkaesque' and contradictory' (2019: 9; see also Gentleman, 2019). During this time applicants were suspended in limbo unable to work or pursue their futures due to a lack of papers. They were waiting without a definite end point and the end point either way would prove life changing. This keeping someone waiting has profound effects on whose waiting, as explored in greater depth in the next chapter. Sarah described it as follows: '...it was really long and like you knew something was happening but you just didn't know what was happening, you didn't know when you were gonna get a...just didn't know...and again that was another uncertainty, so, because at any date they could just be like "no, bye" and that would have been horrific too so...I don't know when I really felt secure. I guess when I got the, when I actually had it in my hand, because even as the application was there like you just, you would never know so you couldn't even feel secure then... So, you really felt like you could potentially be sent away. Yeah! At any point, absolutely... And then you always hear these horror stories of you know, you're just sitting

in your classroom and they come and pick you up and I don't know like you just hear so many scary things.'

These different rules and senses of accountability for the Home Office and applicants are illustrative of the power dynamics at play, which enable the mechanisms of control. As Sarah mentioned in relation to lawyers, immigrants who are trying to regularise their status are desperate, they will pay anything, do anything and put up with anything in the process. They have no means through which they can complain or demand a better process as a result of their deportability. Bloch et al. similarly found in their study that young people felt powerless to change their immigration status in the face of the immigration regime (2014). The power remains firmly in the hands of the Home Office.

In some cases, applicants were waiting so long for a decision from the Home Office that young people turned 18. This meant they had to submit a new application on their own and this had implications on the services they could access. Once 18, young people's rights and entitlements changed and more than once families applied for emergency social housing support after becoming homeless whilst waiting on the outcome of their application. However, the children who had turned 18 were excluded from this support once it was granted. As 18-year olds they were expected to fend for themselves and parents were expected to kick their own children out of their accommodation provided by the local authority. Such outcomes that seem mistaken or arbitrary are an example of what Oliver sees as 'system-wide indifference to irrational outcomes' and 'a form of governmentality-effected neglect' which result in 'exclusions of legal migrants that are harsher in practice than in law' especially in relation to access to services and benefits (Oliver, 2020). Another example of seeming irrationality present within the immigration bureaucracy was when Home Office decisions on applications would create mixed-status families who as a result were in danger of being separated. In one case a family of four – mother and three children all under the age of 18 – applied together with identical circumstances but received different decisions whereby one daughter was granted leave to remain while the rest of the family was rejected. This illustrates an inconsistent system where decisions are arbitrary (Griffiths, 2014, 2019; Oliver, 2020).

Sarah's family's experience was no different. They applied when she was 13 and went through a few lawyers before they managed to find the one who got their application through. Rather than in London this lawyer was in Leicester. He was recommended to them through a relative and eventually got them their papers. Even this 'good' lawyer would try and overcharge them. To register Sarah's little brother Aaron's citizenship, he quoted them £900 in fees. Her parents ended up paying him £500 to essentially be their 'postman', as Sarah put it. The application process itself felt strange and involved to Sarah. She and her mum first went to her school to explain their situation, a situation that Sarah herself did not fully understand, to ask them to write supporting letters to evidence her presence in the UK. Sarah and her brothers wrote their own letters to the Home Office explaining why they should be allowed to stay in the UK. She wrote about how the situation was impacting her emotional well-being and her revision for her GCSEs: 'because all the uncertainties is [sic] impacting...my ability to concentrate, which to be fair it actually did.' She remembers that they just kept submitting more and more evidence to the lawyer in the hope it would strengthen their application.

Her involvement in the application process also meant that she became more aware of her legal status and started to speak openly with her family about it. However, this has not always been the case:

Sarah: erm no, but recently that I've gotten older, erm, especially when everything was resolved, I think that's when it became like 'ah I finally can talk about it'... Because it wasn't so taboo, I guess. So, I only recently started talking about it to other people... So yeah as I've grown older and as I've had to really deal with the situation more that's when we've had to talk about it. Still haven't like sat me down and been like 'you know, this happened' but like again I've picked stuff up and if I have any questions, I can talk to them about it. It's not a taboo anymore. Like we can genuinely just openly talk about it... So yeah that's good.

Vanessa: ...how does that feel?

Sarah: Amazing!

Despite her ambivalent feelings towards receiving the 'piece of plastic' that was her "limited leave to remain" as a result of this long and gruelling process, it did mean a lot of changes to Sarah's everyday life, including her school trip to CERN. Sarah was finally able to work and started pretty much immediately. For the first time she was earning her own money, had ID and a bank account. She could apply for work experience and no longer needed to rely on other people like her aunt for these things. I asked her about the main differences when she got status. She explained: '...firstly just being able to be in the country without fear, like that is just...ugh...just the biggest weight off your shoulders. Erm and then like, little things like having a bank...wooah...little things...but erm having a bank account might be little to someone who's never had to worry about these kind of things but for us it's like, because firstly umph, firstly my dad's always had to pay for everything, like we never had a credit card, never had benefits, nothing like that. Erm like even, I remember getting in school, we used erm - I always had a 100%... so for a few years I got a cheque erm for £50 or £100 for my attendance... and then every time they'd ask me 'oh how do you want it to be addressed?' And I'd have to go through like my aunt and be like 'oh hey can you receive this cheque for me?' So then I'd have to go through who'd then have to erm put it into her account and then give me the money. So even just little things, like today I received a cheque as well and I just walked to my bank (with a smile, sounds happy) and went 'hey' so like it was just small, small things like that but that's huge and even to be able to order stuff online and yeah, I don't know, it's crazy.'

Once Sarah had her status, she applied to study physics at university with her friends. She attended a summer school at Cambridge University and eventually got offers from four of her five chosen universities. Two assessed her as a home student for the purpose of fees, one as international and one asked for more information before making a decision. After she logged her first and second choice on UCAS, the next thing to complete was her student finance form. She only got as far as the second question when she realised she couldn't answer it. She tried again but eventually she got the dreaded message: 'you're probably not eligible for student finance, go away and assess your situation'. Sarah did not understand the problem and sought clarification from her head of sixth form teacher who signposted her to the campaign group. She was anxious and scared to talk to them. Eventually she spoke with the youth worker who confirmed that she probably was not eligible for student

finance. In response to my question what it was like to receive this information she just sighed deeply, deflated. She was dealing with this at the same time as revising for her A-levels. Finding out that she couldn't get student finance threw her into a dark place: 'I remember I got to the point where I just sort of sat there and I was like, what's the point? And I just, I remember I went like, maybe a week or two, without revising... I just sort of gave up...and then I don't know one day I just sort of looked at myself in the mirror and I was like 'what are you doing? Like what are you playing at? At the end of the day if you mess up now, that's it but if you get these grades that you need, even if you don't go to uni this September it will place you in good stead to go in the future'... it was devastating and I did go into a dark place but you know it just needed, I just need to put things into perspective before I...yeah got up and did what I needed to do.'

Again, her exams were impacted by her immigration. She managed to get two A*s and an A which the university of her choice accepted. And after much negotiation between Sarah and the admissions office she was finally accepted as a home student. Every step of her way to university was a battle for her. And she still faced a four-year course at just over £9,000 fees per year plus accommodation and living expenses without a student loan. She was working all the possible hours on her gap year but at minimum wage it seemed impossible to save the necessary funds. Ever resourceful and unwilling to accept no as an answer she started a GoFundMe page that has raised over £15,000 to date, which meant she has been able to start her course.

As has been documented elsewhere in the literature (e.g. Back and Sinha, 2018a; Griffiths, 2014, 2019), the process to regularise your status outside of the immigration rules via a "limited leave to remain" application was gruelling for the young people and their families. Difficult experiences with lawyers and high costs, could mean years before they were able to submit their first application. Long waits on the Home Office and lack of responsiveness and accountability meant that they were suspended in an unknown limbo for even longer, despite intending to regularise their status. Interactions they did have with the Home Office, or outcomes, could feel cruel, and disrupt families. While in the process of application for legal status, migrants occupy a strange in-between space. They are known to the Home Office and so do not need to fear being apprehended, but the outcome of their application could mean immediate removal. The sense of deportability then remains pervasive during

this process. Finally receiving status often felt simultaneously great and disappointing. Great as it enabled many important changes for young people, such as feeling safe in the UK or being able to open a bank account. Disappointing as the small plastic card that represented years of struggle felt underwhelming in their hands as it dawned on them that they would have to go through the application process again in only 30 months' time and start saving for the fees immediately.

Renewing immigration status

I saw Sarah again at a parliamentary event organised by the campaign group on the increasing immigration fees eight months after our interview and for the first time she seemed down to me, resigned and lacking in energy. She had achieved her dream, was in her first year at university studying physics. She had raised enough money through the GoFundMe page and by working two jobs to cover her tuition fees, living expenses and fees for her "limited leave to remain" renewal that was coming up during her second year at university. As at 2019 they are £2033 including the NHS surcharge which doubled in November 2018, but as the fees increase every April they are an 'ever-moving target'. She must submit her application within a one-month window or risk 'falling out of status' which has serious implications for her settlement route and citizenship pathway (discussed in chapter six). There is also no guarantee that her renewal will be successful. Getting the money together for her renewal, completing and submitting it on time is then her priority. This made her first year at university a lot less enjoyable. Rather than living her dream of studying physics she was riddled with worry over the renewal of her status and working two jobs alongside her studies to save for her fees. Again, the immigration system and her status are interfering in her life despite her now being "legal", limiting her choices and control. Her precarious immigration situation extends far beyond her immigration "illegality" through the renewal system of multiple temporary statuses that offer no long-term guarantees, and which are out of sync with her life events such as attending university. She has been in the UK since the age of four, never left the country except once on a school trip and completed all her education here, but this bears little weight on her immigration situation.

Such restrictive immigration policies affecting Sarah's life are usually justified by the government to avoid additional burdens on British Citizens or 'the British taxpayer' by immigrants, despite no evidence to support such claims. In fact, most legislation is already laid out that most immigrants to the UK have limited access to benefits (e.g. Oliver, 2020). Furthermore, research has continuously shown that immigrants do not pose a burden on a country's welfare system. If anything, their economic contribution is a positive one (Dustmann and Frattini, 2013; Oxford Economics, 2018; The Economist, 2018; Vargas-Silva and Sumption, 2019). Another justification for short-term immigration status has been that migrants need to first demonstrate a commitment to Britain and be "integrated". However, several studies have shown that this attitude of restricting access to certain services in the first years after arrival has the opposite effect. Oliver and Hughes (2018) for instance found that women who came to the UK as dependent spouses, who were not on any activating benefits were restricted from accessing English/ESOL classes for three years after arrival.

For the young people in this study, such justifications do not hold. Their "limited leave to remain" status restricts them from accessing any benefits except in rare circumstances. On the contrary, most of them work, pay tax and in addition pay the immigration health surcharge with every application – something they consider a double taxation. Given they have grown up in the UK, completed their education here and mostly have English as their first language, their "integration" is not questionable. The outcomes of restrictive policies then often contradict the stated intentions and rationale, and produce ambivalent feelings among young people. As Sarah explains, while she feels at home in her neighbourhood, '...on the macroscopic scale for example the government making it so hard for you to be here, how can you feel like home when you're always being pushed out of it? Or people are actively telling you that you don't belong here and that you should go home.'

Through the immigration status renewal process that lasts at least ten years, young people feel constantly scrutinised, controlled and limited in their lives. Having not had legal status in the past, they know their lives would come to a complete standstill if their status was not renewed. Not getting status therefore is not an option, and young people have said they would forego paying rent and risk becoming homeless over not paying their application fee. The precarious situation produced by their short-term immigration status then contributes to their vulnerability throughout the renewal progress. The threat of deportability also

continues as every 30 months their application can be rejected, resulting in forcible removal to countries they have not lived in for many years. In chapter six this long-term precariousness and significance of citizenship is explored in more detail.

Being different

Immigration status does not only have implications for what young people can or cannot do, it also impacts their friendships and how they feel in relation to their peers. Every time Sarah could not go on a school trip or did not go on holiday abroad, she had to face questions from her friends and come up with an explanation or excuse or lie. If possible, she would avoid these questions but over time her friends noticed. She told them it was about money, after all they are a family of five. To Sarah 'those were the key moments when it was just like "yep, I'm different, you know, I can't do all these things that my friends can do"'. Her father's time away from the family and their London-home because he was detained also required explanation to their friends from church and family. This was particularly tricky as the time frame kept changing. He worked in construction and so the story was that he had a big job in Scotland, then that there were delays and that the job got bigger. She described it like this: 'it was just excuse after excuse and like it got to a point when I was just like "when's he coming home?" but obviously if they're not gonna tell you that, you don't know.' Sarah had to constantly hide a part of herself from her friends.

When Sarah was finally able to go on her first school trip to CERN, she was so excited. She loved the trip and bought as many souvenirs as she could. The trip that should have been a happy experience, singled her out from her classmates because of her status at every stage of the trip - even before they left. Firstly, her passport was the only green one amongst all the burgundy during the school's preparations for the trip: 'I literally sat in the corner on my own, hiding my passport, writing down the number'. Secondly, Sarah and her Canadian teacher were asked to step aside during check-in while letting all the British passport holders through. Then arriving in Switzerland again she was the only student to pass through the 'other' queue. For her the worst part was on the way back. Boarding the plane, the attendant was unsure about the visa waiver the school had organised. It took three further staff members and 45 minutes before she and her teacher who had stayed with her

could board the plane. She said, 'I literally sat there for about 45 minutes for them to debate whether or not I could actually go on the plane...it was the most horrendous feeling'. She continued: 'And then when I finally got on the plane everyone, all my classmates were cheering for me and I was just like "you know this is the worst thing you can possibly do right now". They probably think it was like a good thing, like I get it, but for me I just, it made me feel even worse because I was just, I felt more self-conscious.'

As she recounts this story to me, she is visibly uncomfortable, as if she is experiencing it all over again, frequently shaking herself and retreating more and more into the sofa. During these instances the immigration regime is visibly separating Sarah out from her peers through markers such as the colour of her passport and different queues at airport passport controls. This conjures up a strong emotional response of embarrassment, shame, and being different (further discussed in chapter five), that remains deeply embedded in her as she shifts in her seat recounting the story. Immigration status as a lived experience for young people is more than formal and informal exclusions, but something they carry with them in their body and their emotions. As Back and Sinha put it, 'The socially produced damage that results from state violence, patriarchy or imprisonment is imprinted on the emotional and physical scars young migrants carry' (2018a: 156).

Young people talked about how strongly they feel that Britain, and London, was their home and that it is where they belong. After all, the majority of their life was spent here and most hardly remember life in their country of birth. Their education has been here, their friends and family are largely here and because of their immigration status they have hardly been able to leave the UK. On the other hand, they are constantly defined as different, as not belonging due to their immigration status. Over time this experience creates conflicting feelings which is explored in chapter six. This constant simultaneous inclusion and exclusion is hard to live with for many young people and has significant consequences for both their mental health and their relationships with friends, which will be discussed in chapter five.

Conclusion

This chapter examined young people's everyday lived experience in the UK as shaped by their immigration situation through an in-depth look at Sarah's story. In many ways it is a

typical experience of the young people who participated in this study. Although individual experiences vary, the wide-ranging, far-reaching and long-term impact that immigration status has on young people's lives is consistent across participants. All participants experienced some form of vulnerability or precariousness as a result of their immigration status. At certain moments in their lives, immigration status became dominant and overbearing, restricting their lives in multiple ways. While the lives lived by these young people are more complex than what can be contained within the state's legal categorisation, an analysis of this vector of stratification is informative. There are three distinct phases in the lives of young people who participated in this research according to their immigration status: the first is not being legally resident in the UK; the second is being in the process of applying for legal status; and the final is having legal status and being in the renewal process. Although there are important differences between these phases, as explored in this chapter, the precariousness experienced by young people is true for all, albeit to a greater and lesser extent. Furthermore, young people felt that their immigration status dominated all aspects of their lives whether they were "undocumented", or officially legal while in the application or renewal process. Their most significant exclusion then perhaps is being excluded from accessing a secure, long-term, settled immigration status such as indefinite leave to remain or citizenship for a minimum of ten years, usually longer.

Deportability – the fear of removal – as De Genova argued in relation to "illegality" (2002), was a state young people lived in beyond "illegality" and after they had obtained their legal immigration status. On the one hand, this was due to an internalised fear they had experienced for so many years. On the other, it was because of the short-term immigration status they held, which meant they could face deportation every two and a half years if their renewal were to be rejected. A heavily stratified rights system according to immigration status (Morris, 2003; Oliver and Hughes, 2018), also means that young people's rights remain restricted once they had been granted "limited leave to remain". Most notably their status was usually granted with "no recourse to public funds" and they remained excluded from a student loan. Despite the recent changes in guidelines, young people need to have at least three years legal residence before being eligible for a student loan. That cannot be achieved with only one "limited leave to remain" status which entitles young people to 30 months legal residence, six fewer than needed. High costs for immigration status

applications, poor legal representation, and long waits on application decisions by the Home Office further increase the time that young people and their families are in a precarious situation in relation to their immigration status. This constant insecurity about their presence in the UK had implications on their relationships with friends and teachers. Their legal exclusions meant they could not equally participate in school and social life, such as going on school trips or having an unexplained absent parent. Too afraid or ashamed to tell the truth about their immigration situation, young people often resorted to giving excuses or telling lies to provide an explanation.

Despite these formal exclusions that are produced as a result of young people's legal categorisation by the state, their inclusion and exclusion pattern is more complex when considered in relation to different scales, such as the neighbourhood level, the regional level, and the national level. While formal exclusions were mainly associated with the national level, at the regional level they were also formally included through attending school. At the neighbourhood level, they were often indistinguishable from their peers at school or their church community, thus defying their label as an outsider. As a result of simultaneous inclusions and exclusions at different levels, young people experienced both a strong sense of belonging and home within their neighbourhood and London, and of exclusion in relation to their precarious immigration status.

Young people's situations are produced as a result of a complex hierarchy of immigration statuses in Britain that sorts and excludes people in the context of global mobility. Hierarchies which 'remain haunted by the legacies of empire and contemporary geopolitical interests that continue to protect and preserve Europe's wealth and privilege' and are 'sustained through fear and suspicion' (Back and Sinha, 2018a: 154–155; 74). As Bowling argues, the British immigration system encourages rich white people, but discriminates against poor, black and brown people (2013: 301). As discussed in chapter two, these statuses offer varying types of security, rights and entitlements, and importantly are differently accessible to people depending on their migratory background such as country of origin, reason for migration or wealth.

Following Goldring et al. and others, I therefore argue that "illegality" cannot be considered in isolation from the hierarchised continuum of immigration statuses that produce

conditions of precariousness and ‘state-sponsored harm’ (Griffiths, 2019: 15) for people in a range of different immigration situations who are subject to restrictive immigration controls and enforcement. Building on the argument by Bloch et al. (as well as others) that “undocumentedness” is better understood as a *process*, than static categories, whereby people move in and out of legality and can be ‘semi-compliant’ (Ruhs and Anderson, 2010), I argue that the immigration status renewal is a similarly non-static process. Not just “undocumentedness” is changeable, but this observation extends to temporary, precarious immigration statuses such as “limited leave to remain” that shape young people’s life experiences. Furthermore, in the current socio-political context in the UK, as I will discuss further in chapter six, all immigration statuses carry a level of precariousness through deportability and restrictions on rights and entitlements. While indefinite leave to remain represents legal status, as we have seen this does not protect them against deportation in the case of criminal offences. Similarly, naturalised citizens can have their citizenship removed for public good and national security reasons – a power increasingly used over recent years. Being granted “limited leave to remain”, or another immigration status, then only removes insecurity temporarily rather than long-term. The relief is often short-lived as preparations for the next application begin under compromised conditions. For the young people in this study who have grown up in Britain, the consequence is long term uncertainty and anxiety over their future in the country they call their home. Issues of time and temporality will be explored in greater depth in the next chapter to develop an understanding of immigration status and its implications on everyday life and the life course over time rather than just in a moment of time. The next chapter will look at the theme of waiting in relation to obtaining status and dealing with the immigration bureaucracy, the impacts of precarious immigration status on young people’s transitions to adulthood and growing up, and how the long-term uncertainty produced by the immigration regime can mean that young people feel their life is constantly on probation.

Chapter 4 - The Waiting Girl

Time, life-course and immigration status

This chapter will explore the intersection between immigration status, life-course and the experience of time. It will look at how time and life-course transitions are experienced by young people who are in constant encounter with the immigration regime. How do these encounters shape their subjective experience of time? And do they align with bureaucratic and cultural expectations? To what extent do their immigration status and migrancy shape their life-course transitions from childhood through adolescence to adulthood? And what conditions are produced for an unfolding life in this space of migrancy and the immigration regime? The encounters at this intersection produce a complex landscape for young people to navigate during their transitions to adulthood. Unpicking the multiple tensions of this messy and complex temporal matrix interacting with the immigration regime in an unfolding life is at the heart of this chapter, thus contributing to a growing literature that considers time, temporalities and migration. The emerging themes of this literature, as Griffiths, Anderson and Rogers found in their review paper cluster around ‘the strong relationship between power, the state and management of time’ on the one hand, and migrant subjectivity on the other (2013). This chapter will contribute to both themes and how they stand in tension with each other, through an understanding of how young people, in particular Leila, experience and navigate these complex temporalities.

This chapter is structured in three time-sensitive sections: the first section explores waiting and feeling stuck before getting status; the second section examines the present in which young people are experiencing paradoxical adulthood transitions; and the final section looks to the future and the long-term uncertainty that is produced as a result of the immigration regime for the young migrants in this research.

Leila

Leila’s mum calls her “the waiting girl”. She calls her “the waiting girl” because she had to wait over ten years to get her “leave outside the immigration rules (LOTR)” status, or “limited leave to remain” as it is more commonly referred to, a time when her presence in the UK was out of sync with her legal residence. Under the current system she will have to wait another ten years until she is 34 before she can become a British Citizen, despite calling

the UK her home and having lived nowhere else since she arrived aged 11 years in 2005. The long wait to get status has affected Leila in many ways. While waiting to get her status, it felt like time was moving too slowly for Leila. She also felt stuck as she could not participate in life together with her peers. On the one hand this was because she did not have her immigration status, which placed many restrictions on her, and on the other it was because she had to look after her younger siblings. She was stuck and without control over her life. Then when she got the first decision she had run out of time, time as a child. Her application was rejected by the Home Office because she had turned 18 while the application was being processed, even though she had submitted the application when she was 16 ½. Waiting on the Home Office had brought her back to square one. Another lawyer, another application, housing complications, more waiting.

Waiting on her immigration application decision affected how Leila felt about becoming an adult. A consequence of both her and her family's immigration situation was that Leila felt she had to grow up at too young an age, earlier than her peers and earlier than she had expected. Life in the UK was a constant struggle for her and her family, and in the process, she said she lost her childhood. They experienced financial hardship, insecure housing, volatile relationships and the constant fear of being deported. To help her mother, Leila took on many adult responsibilities. She became the main carer for her younger siblings at a time when her friends went out and explored their independence. For Leila and many others like her, transitioning to adulthood was full of contradictions because of her immigration situation, rather than the celebration she had expected when she was a child. Not only did the family's struggles with status create specific risks and responsibilities for Leila growing up, but their immigration status also amplified any problems in other areas of their life such as housing and dependencies in relationships.

In 2017 Leila finally got her "limited leave to remain". This gave her 30 months legal residence in the UK and the right to work. She was even granted access to public funds which was rare according to her lawyer. Getting her status was both a relief and the start of another journey (explored in more depth in chapter six). While she was able to move on with many aspects of her life such as work and some education, she was also confronted with her long-term uncertain future in Britain. Without British Citizenship Leila remained deportable and even as a naturalised British Citizen her status was less secure. On her

journey to British Citizenship, she would have to apply another three times for “limited leave to remain”. Each application means completing the 60-plus page application, paying the annually increasing immigration fees⁷, currently £1,033 plus £1000 for the Immigration Health Surcharge and legal fees unless a fee waiver were to be granted. This meant it would be ten years before she was eligible to apply for “indefinite leave to remain (ILR)”. This would necessitate another application and currently £2,389 in application fees. If she was granted ILR she would be eligible to apply for British Citizenship after 12 months: another application, tests and more application fees at £1330. Her long pathway to getting status and eventually citizenship, the countless applications totalling £11,851 in fees, lawyers, Home Office delays and renewals, reminiscent of a rigged snakes and ladders game. Leila stayed “the waiting girl” for a long time while having to endure uncertainty over her future.

Messy times

Time, temporality and life-course transitions became complex, non-linear and contradictory concepts in Leila’s life through her encounter with the British immigration regime. Her life was unfolding at the intersections of simultaneous and competing temporalities, or temporal-zones. While scholars on the anthropology of time (e.g. Gell, 2001) and life-course sociologists (Hockey and James, 2017; Thomson et al., 2004) have developed complex understandings on the relationship between the experience of time, culture, structures and individuals, migration literature often considers time as more discrete areas or states (Anderson, 2018a; Cwerner, 2001). These include the decision to migrate, the journey, the arrival, and social, cultural and economic integration imagined as unfolding in a coherent, linear and forward-moving manner. However, time matters in many ways in the process of migration and has many rhythms and cycles not always synchronised with the rhythms of time around them. As Griffiths, Anderson and Rogers (2013) have argued, during migration different types and scales of time can stand in tension with each other, such as natural and cultural times, time in relation to life-course and employment, or social time versus bureaucratic or industrial times. Migration furthermore reveals these tensions to us if we pay attention to them. Various temporal aspects of migration intersect to create a messy experience and unfolding of time and life. Time is crucial in who is considered a migrant and who is not. For instance, the UN Statistics Division considers a person a long term migrant if

⁷ Though they were not increased in 2019

they have lived outside of their country of usual residence for at least twelve months (United Nations, 2017). Over time migrants accumulate rights which have implications for their legal status. It matters at what age you migrate in terms of your work, career or starting a family. Time is also inextricably implicated in the bureaucracy and administration of how the state manages and controls migration by deciding when and which immigration status to give to people. It matters to a person and their unfolding life whether they have to wait three months or three years to receive a decision on their application. And it also matters whether somebody receives a short-term temporary immigration status or one that gives them indefinite security in their country of residence.

In Leila's case, there is biological time which tells her that she is growing older every day and becoming a woman. Every year she has a birthday and a new age becomes attached to her name. Universal time as measured by a clock or a calendar tells Leila exactly how long she has been waiting for her status even if this is not how she experiences the passing of time. Some days waiting for her status feel like they will never end; other days feel too short. After years of waiting she eventually runs out of time over night when her application is rejected because she reaches 18 years, as her biological time intersected with the power of bureaucratic time to determine her life-course transition. Time also passes differently in relation to different issues. Waiting for status, time passes slowly for Leila, but while watching her little sister grow up, time seems to pass too fast. Multiple cultural expectations of her life-course transitions by her parents, her peers and herself tell her that she needs to move on, go to university, live on her own, earn her own money and have children. Yet she can do none of those things because of her status. Immigration status, for Leila, determines to a large extent how she experiences the passing of time and her life-course transitions. The power of time as connected to her immigration status creates a complex web of intersections between different temporalities and bureaucracies bearing down on Leila's life. The way this unfolds and the subjectivities produced for Leila and other young people like her, is the focus of this chapter.

In addition to this complex web of temporalities, this chapter will examine the varying degrees of control or power young migrants in a precarious immigration situation have over these different temporal zones, and why. To what extent are they determined by the immigration regime? What influence does Leila's migrancy bear on her life-course

transitions? And how are her every day troubles intensified through the immigration regime? For example, Leila can influence her school results, but she cannot speed up a decision on her immigration application. Waiting on a decision can be debilitating and suspends people in a limbo, as Leila calls it. Griffiths has called this a 'precarious, quasi-legal space' to live in, in relation to the asylum system (2014: 1993). Back et al. describe being in this condition as a 'temporal straightjacket' where people are trapped in the present (2018a: 96). They are unable to move forward to the future while the clock is ticking and people around them move on. Despite celebrating her 18th birthday Leila was unable to become independent and go to university with her peers. Furthermore, this chapter examines how the different temporal zones that unfold messily and simultaneously are differently dominant at different moments in young migrants' lives.

Tense times

There are three key tensions that I discuss in this chapter. The first tension relates to the misalignment between bureaucratic time and individually experienced time as shaped through the encounter with the immigration regime. Here control over the passing of time and waiting can be a form of power, and the passing of time can feel slow or fast in relation to bureaucratic processes (Back and Sinha, 2018a; Griffiths, 2014).

The second tension that this chapter investigates is how young people's transitions from childhood to adulthood are complicated and shaped by their migrancy and the British immigration regime. Transitions to adulthood are conventionally marked by greater personal responsibilities and a changing role in the family, economic independence, educational and occupational attainment, marriage, renting or buying a house and starting a family. Although scholars have deconstructed such a standardised view of life-course transitions since the 1990s, linear timelines still hold power, for instance through bureaucratic practices or cultural expectations, especially between generations. A slowing down of transition into adulthood and an extension of what is understood as adolescence is not uncommon in the UK today (Thomson et al., 2004). This is due to increasing educational and housing costs increasing in contrast to wages which are not increasing (Sawyer et al., 2018). However, little is known about the impact of immigration status on the life-course (for an exception see Sirriyeh, 2013). Participants in my research were often expected to take on significant adult responsibilities within the family before their 18th birthday because

of their immigration situation. As a result of this many experienced growing up too early. Paradoxically, upon turning 18 and on legally becoming an adult, their adulthood became curtailed through the immigration regime as they could not take part in practices that are conventionally associated with adulthood such as educational or occupational attainment and economic independence. In the context of the asylum system, Sirriyeh and Ní Raghallaigh similarly found that unaccompanied refugee minors in care experienced accelerated transitions to adulthood while simultaneously being in a state of ‘waithood’ due to the uncertainty surrounding their asylum claims (2018). Unlike the young “undocumented” migrants in Gonzales’ study in the United States, who transitioned into “illegality” as they turned 18 and thus became more invisible to state institutions and consequently more independent (2016), young people in this research became more visible to bureaucracies at 18 because they were applying for higher education and trying to get status or had a temporary status. These processes increased their dependence on their families. What the young people in both studies had in common, however, was that upon turning 18 their immigration status – whether temporary, pending or rejected - came to dominate all areas of their lives.

The third and final tension in relation to time and life-course examined in this chapter relates to long-term uncertainty that is produced through the immigration regime by multiple short-term and costly immigration statuses on the path to citizenship. This affects young people’s ability to imagine their own future and denies them agency in the process of creating their own future.

Before status: Waiting and being stuck

This section examines how *waiting* on immigration status effects and is experienced by young people. What is it like to have your life externally determined, when you are in the passenger seat lacking control over the direction or speed of travel rather than being in the driver’s seat? How does it feel to be fixed in an eternal present by an immigration system that cannot justify the waiting imposed on the young people? How do young people navigate this contradiction of feeling stuck in the present moment and feeling like time is passing them by too fast? The clock keeps ticking, days get struck off the calendar and

birthdays keep coming, yet young people do not feel like they are able to move forward. How does time pass when waiting on a decision that is extremely high-stake and life changing, when the outcome can mean you either stay living in the country you call home and continue on the trajectory you imagined for yourself or you are deported to the country of your birth, an otherwise unknown place? After living in the same place for ten years and growing up here to then be told that this is not your home can be traumatising. Leila's life has been and is in Britain. She even has a half-sister who has a British passport.

The process of getting immigration status has had profound implications for how Leila experienced the passing of time. While there were some aspects over which she and her family could have influence, for the large part she was consigned to the more passive role of waiting. She reflects: 'And... now that I've sort of reached that point in life where things are finally settling down for me, I feel like, those nights that were really hard for me like, I had sleeping problems, I could not sleep because there was too much going on up here. And sometimes 4am, 5am I'm awake for no reason. And I'd have to distract myself with other things because I felt as though time was just passing by and there was nothing I could do to slow it down.' Leila experienced acute powerlessness and vulnerability produced through her condition of waiting on her papers. As Khosravi points out these are common feelings generated by waiting where 'waiting is a common experience for the less powerful groups in society'; beyond migrants it often also affects the poor and the unemployed, for instance waiting on benefits applications (2014).

Getting status first meant waiting to get enough money together for the legal fees and for the application. Given that it was already a struggle for Leila's mother to keep herself and her two children housed and fed on her low salary, this was no easy feat. As Leila explains: 'I'm the kind of person that likes to be in control of [the] things that I'm doing. And I had literally no control over what was happening. And I mean, the whole time we'd been here, even after our visa expired, after we're struggling to keep up with the rent, find a place to live, my mum was still trying to get our status sorted.'

Trying to get status also meant waiting on lawyers. Along Leila's journey one of the many lawyers she and her family had used was arrested for tax fraud after they had paid her £1500. Leila explained: 'We went through loads of scammy lawyers. Like there was one

lawyer we had, she was in Kent, and after we gave her about £1500...for the application, she got arrested for tax fraud (V gasps) and er (L laughs) that was actually a funny one...like it wasn't funny 'cause we lost a lot of money, she got arrested. And yeah, that was it, our money was just gone. No application done. No lawyer, [we] had to find another lawyer.' Leila and her family were back to square one. Eventually she found a lawyer through a migrant support organisation that she did not have to pay for and who even managed to get her a fee waiver. This was also the lawyer who got her her status twelve years after she arrived in the UK.

Shuri had similar experiences with lawyers and had to go through many different ones before she found the lawyer that finally got her case through. A particularly bad experience was a lawyer whom the family contacted to submit their application when Shuri was seventeen. This was not long after she was reunited with her mother after having been detained and separated from her. After they met with the lawyer and completed the paperwork the lawyer assumed that Shuri's mother did not have enough money to pay for the application fee. Instead of asking them about it he put the file under his desk and did not process it. By the time this came to light Shuri had celebrated her eighteenth birthday and could now no longer apply together with her family. Instead she would have to submit a fresh application on her own which led to different outcomes for her and her mother and brother. She explained: 'So...yeah, it was like, after like 6 months or so, they got their papers, so they got their leave to remain and I was status-less.'

Finally, trying to get status also meant waiting on the Home Office, possibly the most debilitating aspect in the condition of waiting. Here young people are confronted with what Anderson calls the 'bureaucratic temporalities of immigration applications' (2018a), which is something migrants have no control over at all. At least in the case of financial difficulties people can try to raise more funds and if they have been let down by a lawyer, they can find a new one. However, in the case of the Home Office, applicants can do nothing once the application has been submitted. Known to the Home Office but without legal status, migrants can do no more than endure this 'quasi-legal space' (Griffiths, 2014). We already know that Leila's first application was rejected precisely because the Home Office took so long to make a decision and she had turned 18 in the meantime. This is a clear example of the applicant's powerlessness and the Home Office's power over the situation where

waiting is used as a technique to regulate the applicants' life. As long as Leila does not have status she cannot fully participate in life, her social interactions are curtailed and, as Khosravi argues, her time is manipulated (2014).

To the Home Office Leila turning 18 meant she was legally an adult and therefore no longer dependent on her mother. She therefore had to complete her own "leave to remain" application. Although waiting for a decision was agony, the refusal was even more painful. Through no fault of her own and her inability to hold the Home Office accountable for the time they took to make a decision, she was placed back into "illegality" and liminality. She had to start the process all over again at a moment when her mother had no financial means to support her, and Leila was effectively homeless and without the right to work. To Leila this was the darkest time she experienced and she describes it as being in limbo: 'because I was, I was in a really...I was in limbo. And it wasn't like a normal limbo, it was like a really...almost like limbo has different stages. I was in the deepest stage of limbo you could possibly be [in] and I had just given up, I didn't wanna think that 'oh at some point the status will get sorted, at some point I'll go to uni, at some point I'll have status, at some point I'll travel'. I mean I have a list, I had a list of places I wanted to go to, but I feel with the list, I should have thrown it away. Now I have to make another one (laughs).' Although she felt lower in mood about her second application than her first, the process was unexpectedly easier. Her second wait on a decision by the Home Office was only six months and this time the decision was positive. In total it still meant she had waited over ten years until she could claim her legal residence in the UK after her initial six months visa had expired.

The long waits on Home Office decisions and not knowing where your future will go was often a topic at the campaign groups and came up in every single interview during this research. Tobi, who arrived in the UK from Nigeria aged nine with his brother to join their mother who was already here, had to wait two years for a decision on his application as it got caught up in the Home Office backlog in 2011/2012. The Home Office initially told them they had lost their application. Eventually they got an answer and their application was refused two years after it was submitted. Two years in which Tobi had lived a life in London, gone to school, made friends and started imagining his future here. He applied again and was granted status only three or four months after submitting the second one in 2014. As

we already know from chapter three, Sarah was seventeen when she finally got her status and she arrived when she was four. Daisy arrived in the UK when she was eight years old and got her status when she was twenty-one. Also aged eight, Victoria came from Jamaica to join her mother in the UK and received her status ten years later aged eighteen. It is the same story over and over again for young people who have been in a precarious immigration situation. It was a common experience for participants that getting status involved long delays and waits when dealing with the Home Office and corrupt lawyers.

Her status was not the only thing that Leila was waiting for. She was also waiting to continue her education. However, because she did not have her status when it was time to apply for university she did not apply as she would have been classified as an overseas student, meaning higher fees they could not afford. Even after getting her status she would have to wait another three years before she became eligible for a student loan. This waiting on continuing her life felt like she was wasting her time, like she was doing nothing: 'Waiting symbolizes waste, emptiness and uselessness' (Khosravi, 2014). She could not work, she could not go to university, she did not feel like she had a purpose. Leila explains her thought process like this: 'I'm still gonna classify as an international student, d'you know what I mean? I have to wait for the three-year legal residence thing. And it's just, it's what, it's literally what you said, about one thing after another, even when you get the status, there's still another hurdle you have to jump over. And it's just, it's a hassle, it really is but it's a really bad thing to say that most migrants my age now can say 'we're used to it'. It's a really bad thing to say, it should not be that way!' Sirriyeh and Ní Raghallaigh similarly found that unaccompanied refugee minors in their study were suspended in a 'state of "waithood" (Honwana, 2012)' while they were waiting on the outcomes of their asylum claims as 'they cannot work legally and have limited post-18 education entitlements' during this time (2018: 89). Not only does the waiting have profound consequences for young people but over time it is as if they become desensitized to the waiting and the bad news. Like Leila said, 'we're used to it'. Most young people who participated in this research said they expected bad news, not good news. Negative decisions, not positive ones. That way there is no disappointment.

Similarly Sarah, whom we met in chapter three, describes this period as a "forced gap year". That's where she was when I first met her. Like Leila and thousands of other young people

in the UK, Sarah was unable to go to university when she finished her A-levels because of her immigration status. Despite being legally resident and having lived in the UK since the age of four, she had to wait two years before she could go to university. Two years of her life that would have felt entirely wasted to her had it not been for her involvement in the campaign group that filled some of this void. Still, it was not her choice to wait.

The bureaucracy of immigration and the immigration regime significantly impacted on the real and subjective experience of time for the young people who participated in this research. While young people try to obtain status and navigate the landscape of costs, lawyers and the Home Office, they are suspended in a condition of waiting. During this waiting young people are largely consigned to a passive role with little control or influence over their situation and are dependent either on lawyers or the Home Office. Largely unable to move on with their own lives young people feel stuck in an eternal present as they watch their peers make plans for the future and follow their dreams. Time for them has to some extent stopped and feels like it is passing agonisingly slowly. Except the clock keeps ticking, the years keep passing and they get older. These periods become interspersed with moments of activity when the young people and their families have meetings with their lawyers, when they complete the application or when the letter from the Home Office finally arrives. Time then suddenly speeds up, sometimes too much as time runs out and young people turn eighteen. No longer eligible to apply with their families and rejected by the immigration regime they are pushed deeper into “illegality”.

In her article *Out of Time*, Griffiths talks about this as ‘temporal angst [that] relates to the perceived disjuncture between the temporalities of themselves[migrants] and those around them, and between their expectations of progress and efficiency, and the machinations of the immigration and judicial systems in practice’. In this she distinguishes between “sticky” time, ‘a long, slowing time of waiting’, suspended time, ‘one that can decelerate into complete stagnation’, and frenzied time, ‘a fast time rushing out of control’. Separating the various subjective experiences of time in relation to dealing with the immigration regime is helpful. The young people in this research experienced all these temporal tensions in relation to their immigration status, at times slow and “sticky”, at other times fast and frenzied – all while their daily lives continued.

Furthermore, young people often experience temporal ruptures with respect to different aspects of their lives, or within themselves. Having arrived in the UK as children they have built lives here. Friends, school and hobbies continue at a pace that is more in sync with their imagined time frames and time frames around them. Simultaneously they are experiencing “sticky” time in relation to their immigration status as they are waiting for a decision on their immigration status and ‘normal time’ as they are sitting their A-level exams, as was the case for Sarah. Some might be able to avoid the suspended time that Griffiths refers to, but Leila was not so lucky. When her first immigration application was refused after she had turned eighteen she reached ultimate stagnation in her life, or as she called it “rock bottom”, where she was unable to find accommodation, unable to work and unable to submit a new immigration application. Following the period of stagnation eventually came a period of frenzied time as she submitted a new application. Once the application was submitted, she was once again in “sticky” time waiting for a decision, then again before she received the decision in another bout of frenzied time as she collected her card from her lawyer who told her to immediately start saving for the next application.

In other circumstances time becomes immeasurable and young people feel they lose any sense of time at all. This was the case for Shuri when she was detained. All electronic devices had been taken off her and she did not have a calendar with her nor were there any around the centre. Until this day she does not know how long she was detained for and she does not believe the timeframe the Home Office told her: ‘officially the Home Office say we were only there for 9 days but it's a lie. Erm I think we were there for longer. Erm it just felt, maybe it was 'cause I was so young, but it did feel like a lot longer and I've always said it was longer. Like it literally felt something like 6 weeks but they say it was just under two erm but yeah I don't [think] it was. Er because I remember having to relax my hair (laughs), erm and being a black girl you only relax your hair when it gets, you know when it's time to relax your hair and that for me that was only every two or so months and I hadn't relaxed my hair in about a month and a bit so I was there for a long time.’ During this time the family was twice taken to the airport to be deported and time suddenly became frenzied again and for reasons unknown to Shuri ‘something happened and then it just didn't work’.

Throughout the process young people are powerless to influence the decision of the Home Office. As they gather as much evidence as possible to prove that they ‘deserve’ the right to

remain in the UK, exposing themselves, their relationships and entanglements with the country they call home, the Home Office remains faceless and unaccountable. They cannot even be called to find out progress about the application. In this process the immigration regime becomes an immaterial arm of the state that cannot be seen, heard, touched or smelt which uses waiting as a form of control over the young people as they are suspended in uncertainty, instability and vulnerability. Young people are stuck in multiple gap years somewhere between adolescence and adulthood. While waiting they are unable to move their life forwards towards their future and when it can start remains unknown. During the condition of waiting, time seems to move unbearably slow for young people like Leila, until it suddenly runs out – either with a positive decision or a refusal of their Leave to Remain application. Or, as in Leila's case, go through both: first the refusal then some years later getting status.

Present: Growing up too early

The long and indefinite process of immigration applications and status insecurity affected the life-course transitions of the young people in this research. As Griffiths, Anderson and Rogers noted 'life-course is...directly experienced by migrants, as time. The life-course is the passage of time, marked personally and collectively' (2013). Diverging from conventional life-course trajectories from childhood to adolescence to adulthood, many young people found their personal life-course experiences diverged from the collective one. An overwhelming experience for young migrants was that of moving from childhood straight to adulthood in their teens due to their immigration situation provoking feelings of growing up too early. Their role in the family changed as they took on adult responsibilities and became more aware of their immigration situation. When celebrating their eighteenth birthday many young people already *felt* like adults and so turning eighteen did not seem like a major milestone. However, as we saw in Leila's case, legally turning eighteen had significant consequences bureaucratically, and paradoxically curtailed their progression into adulthood as it impeded their transitions to economic independence and higher educational attainment. Furthermore, their experiences were often incongruent with the normalised, cultural expectations of an imagined linear life development in the UK and at odds with the

experiences of their peers. As Khosravi states '[P]rolonged waiting, for papers or deportation, means 'not being in-time with others'' (2014). While sociological writing on the life-course has challenged the idea that transitions are linear and aligned with institutional pathways (Hockey and James, 2017), especially in the case of young people (Andy and Fred, 2006), the impact of the immigration regime on transitioning into adulthood has been less scrutinized and largely focused on unaccompanied asylum seeking children (for some exceptions see Gonzales, 2016; Knight et al., 2008; Meloni and Chase, 2017; Sirriyeh and Ní Raghallaigh, 2018). The life-course transition that has received more attention from some anthropologists and sociologists is that into old age and death (Gardner, 2002; Gunaratnam, 2013).

The young people in this study were between twenty and twenty-five years old at the time of the research. The age-range of when they applied for and received their status varied hugely. It is especially hard to say when young people started their process as mostly it was their parents who applied. However, they usually became more aware of their immigration situation or took an active role in the application from about sixteen years of age and most got their status in their late teens or early twenties. Almost all participants had obtained their status before we met. The life stage that was then most affected by their encounter with the immigration regime was adolescence and their transition to adulthood. It was also a transition which they had either most recently experienced or were approaching the end of. Before that, their migration to the UK at a young age influenced and sped up their transition from childhood to adolescence. Migration to the UK often meant moving from a life of relative comfort and wealth in their countries of origin to a life defined by cramped housing, financial hardships and being marked as different by accents or looks. This greater awareness of surrounding circumstances and parents' struggles quickly moved young people on from the more carefree and innocent life they had known thus far. Moving into adolescence, many took on adult responsibilities to support their parents.

Becoming a teenager also often coincided with greater awareness of their immigration status and its consequences, such as fear of detection. The combination of experiences produced by people's migrancy during childhood or early adolescence and their encounter with the British immigration regime during transitions to adolescence and adulthood then sped up young people's life-course transitions making them feel out of time with others

around them. Paradoxically upon turning eighteen many young people who are subject to immigration control, whether they have status or are still in the process of obtaining it, face greater restrictions on their lives because of their legal status which impedes their full transition to adulthood. This includes for instance not being able to progress their education because their status excludes them from student loans. For young people whose application for immigration status is still being processed or who are in the renewal process, economic independence becomes restricted either because they are unable to work or because of the significant financial burden of immigration applications. So, while migrancy and the encounter with the immigration regime makes young people *feel* they grow up too early during their adolescence, once they *legally* turn eighteen their transition to adulthood becomes curtailed by the immigration regime.

In Nigeria Leila lived a comfortable life, despite needing to make some concessions once her brother was born. She had gone to private school and was driven there by her grandparents' driver. She lived in a beautiful house, had food, clothes and no worries. Her life changed dramatically when she was eleven and she, her brother and mother came to the UK. Although the move itself was disorientating, the biggest changes came in the years to follow. Leila says that she lost her childhood and that she had to grow up earlier than she expected because of her immigration experience and status issues in the UK.

By the time Leila turned eighteen, she had long felt like an adult and been more than simply a dependent on her mum (in bureaucratic immigration speak). Since the family's move from Nigeria to London she had increasingly been taking on adult roles and responsibilities in the family. Growing up in London she quickly learned about being different, racism and struggle. She was her brother's and sister's main carer while her mother was working, and their dad stayed in Nigeria. Her mother always worked in at least one job, often two in order to cover the rent and living costs for the family. Her mother's long working hours meant that Leila would often have to drop things she had planned for herself to go and pick up her younger brother and sister from school:

'My school life was not really, I feel like I didn't get the most out of it because I would have to leave school early to go pick my brother up...Because his school finished the same time mine did. So my mum would hire...there was this lady that was a friend of the lady we were

staying with...she had two daughters in my brother's school so whenever she picked up her daughters she'd pick up my brother and I would leave school about half an hour early, before school finished, to go to her house and pick up my brother. The journey is about an hour, so by the time I'm getting to her house my brother has already been picked up from school, he's had a snack and he's ready to go. And then I'd take him home, 'cause my mum had to work.'

Leila missed out on after-school activities, time for homework and hanging out with her friends because of caring responsibilities towards her siblings. She also supported her mother through the Home Office applications, dealing with lawyers, finances, several moves, social services, a volatile relationship, giving birth and co-parenting her sister. Throughout her adolescence she constantly felt out of sync with the perceived norms for her age and her peers' transitions through life. While her friends were carefreely exploring their journey to adulthood, Leila felt she was already living an adult life. Circumstances meant she had to grow up and mature earlier.

Shuri was also suddenly expected to take on caring responsibilities for her younger brother when she was only fifteen years old. It was the day they were detained. Their mother had already gone to work the day the immigration officers came to their house and although they were with their dad who was visiting at the time, they did not have a close relationship with him. Shuri therefore felt responsible for her brother and that she had to protect him. It was Shuri who packed the bag for herself and her brother and who tried to calm him in the van: 'I had to be strong for myself, I had to be strong for my brother, so it was just like so much.' Once in the detention centre her brother chose to stay with Shuri rather than her father and Shuri focused on staying strong for her brother. She played with him in the recreational areas to distract him and make sure that he was ok: 'it was just so difficult for me (her voice wobbly) and trying to be strong for my brother as well as myself. I felt like the mum for the whole thing...And it was just so difficult 'cause my brother was only about 10 then, or 11.'

Unlike their peers, when Leila, Shuri and others like them turned eighteen and were legally considered an adult, they were not able to move out, go to university or work and live an independent life like them because they still did not have their status. The only thing that

changed was how they were viewed by the Home Office: as an independent adult. Instead of independent, they felt more dependent than ever. Without status they were unable to work. Without work they were unable to raise the money for their immigration application and lawyer's fees. They were dependent on the help of others, especially their mothers who were themselves struggling. For Leila especially, it also affected her involvement in the campaign group because she just could not commit to anything regular. Instead of building her own relationships with friends, Leila was mostly at home caring for her younger siblings and supporting her mother. The constant struggles had taught Leila to put on a brave face, bury her feelings and put her needs after her brother's, sister's and mother's.

This is how Leila told her story at one of our theatre workshops: '... When I turned 11, my brother 4 at the time, we came to the UK with my mum [...] Before I knew it, I had taken up responsibilities subconsciously. I practically raised my brother whilst my mother struggled to find a job and make ends meet. I never had a chance to put my needs first. I always wanted to make sure everyone else was ok. I didn't know how to ask for the things I wanted, not until my mum noticed it. The guilt would take over me every time as I would desire for certain things. She would occasionally thank me and tell me she appreciated me for stepping up but somewhere I rejected the gratitude because stepping up for me meant giving up my childhood. I couldn't attend after-school activities like my friends did or go to the cinema at weekends or the beach in summer. I was constantly putting everyone else before myself. I was a teenager now and I wanted to go out in the world, but instead I felt caged. It was almost as if I was living my life for my mum and my brother. Everything seemed to revolve around them. I knew this was a selfish mentality because my mum wasn't laying around doing nothing. She was struggling to make my brother and I happy. I felt guilty about my own feelings, so I began to bottle up.'

To Victoria not being able to go to university was a huge shock and major barrier on her road to becoming an independent adult. To her going to university meant becoming independent and moving out of home. Although she was very excited to join her mum in the UK age eight after living with her grandparents in Jamaica, their relationship did not flourish. Victoria and her mum struggled to bond and instead she threw herself into schoolwork. She worked extremely hard so that she could go to university and through that forge an independent life for herself. She explained: 'And so when I was in Sixth Form I found out

that I got a place at LSE to study law, I was ecstatic. I thought this was me coming up in the world. It was another step closer to getting away from my mum, to getting away from the household and everything. So, when I heard that I couldn't go I was angry, I was frustrated, I was thinking "ok another rejection".'

As she applied for her student loan, Victoria found out that she was "undocumented". She realised she had to sort out her immigration situation before she could do anything else and put her dream of going to university and moving into the future on hold. When she got her status, she encountered the next hurdle: she was still ineligible for student finance. 'I remember when I first realised I couldn't go to uni and I had to take my gap year it was a hard reality to adjust to because I was like 'oh great I have to be at home again''. Seeing all her friends go off to university was tough. She set up a campaign group around the issue and through her hard work she was eventually offered a scholarship by LSE to study law. Finally, she was back on her pathway towards her future. However, she remained out of time with others around her. By the time she started university most of her friends from school were finishing their courses and starting their working lives.

In the United States, Gonzales also found profound impacts of immigration status on young people's transitions to adulthood (2016). In his research with young "undocumented" migrants, young people became separated from their peers upon turning 18 where instead of transitioning into adulthood they transitioned into "illegality". Until the age of 18 young "undocumented" migrants are relatively protected from formal exclusions, such as education. However, upon turning 18 their legal status becomes a "master status" in their life, enforcing multiple exclusions especially in education. In the UK, the 'Becoming Adult' project looked at transitions to adulthood among young unaccompanied asylum seekers (Meloni and Chase, 2017). They found that young people in local authority care faced more difficulties than non-migrant young people when turning 18 because institutional support was often abruptly ended. Young people whose status was unresolved and had been protected from deportation until the age of 18 often disengaged or withdrew from statutory services out of fear of being forcibly removed and returned to their country of origin. As a consequence many experienced homelessness, destitution and poor health (Meloni and Chase, 2017). Being known to the bureaucracy is then not always a good thing and sometimes a lack of visibility can be protective.

Leila also found this when her immigration application was rejected because she had turned 18, which was also when she was effectively made homeless - also because she was 18.

When her mother, brother and sister were put up in emergency housing by the council after her sister's father had thrown them out, Leila was not allowed to stay with them:

'she [social worker] looked at me and she was like 'how old are you?' I was like 'I'm twenty' and then she goes 'you're not supposed to be here'. And I was like 'what are you talking about?' And then she goes 'social services for women, I mean families with kids who are sixteen and under. That my mum had breached the agreement.' And I was just like 'what the hell are you talking about?' I remember, I just cast my mind back to every single letter that these people have ever written and my name is on every single one of them. This woman pretended like I did not exist to her. She called her manager. Her manager was just like my mum has breached the agreement, she has to leave. There's nothing they can do. And I was just like 'so if she has to leave, what about me?' She was like 'you have to find somewhere to stay'. And I was just like 'god what is happening?' I didn't wanna cry but it happened anyway.'

The consequence of her visibility to the social worker in that moment meant that she was being separated from her family that she had given her childhood and adolescence up for. After putting her life on hold to care for her siblings and to support her mother, she was suddenly on her own. How could she suddenly be considered an adult in isolation when what had made her an adult before her time was her caring responsibility for her family? During this time, the fact that her immigration status had just been rejected meant that she was unable to work or rent anywhere on her own, which made her more dependent on her mother. Because she could not work and her mother's job had to provide living costs for four people and savings towards a deposit for new housing, she would not be able to raise the fees for Leila's immigration application or for legal support with it. Leila was stuck in a paradoxical situation where in her adulthood transition the bureaucracy had made her simultaneously *practically* dependent and *legally* independent. On their eighteenth birthday every young person in the UK is legally considered an adult. This means that they acquire both rights and responsibilities. They can vote, legally rent or own their own home, have a credit card, or get married without their parents' consent. It also means that different rules apply to them in terms of immigration and the welfare state from their eighteenth birthday.

Legally Leila was therefore considered independent from her mother and was expected to submit her own immigration application. She was also expected to provide for herself and could not be considered as part of her mother's social services support package. However, the fact that she still did not have her legal status meant that she had no means by which to provide for herself and so in practical terms it was precisely at the point of turning eighteen that she became more dependent on her mother for her housing and everyday living expenses. If Leila's mum supported her because she did not want her daughter to live on the streets and she got caught, she would risk losing the accommodation that had been provided for herself and her other two children.

Turning 18 here had immediate and significant consequences for Leila's, Shuri's and Victoria's lives because in the eyes of the bureaucracy they were legal adults. At the same time that they were expected to look after themselves without support, that very bureaucracy curtailed their ability to pursue an adult life and adult responsibilities to provide for themselves. Their immigration status stopped them from going to university the same way their peers did. While young people's circumstances did not change overnight, their eighteenth birthday provided the grounds for the immigration regime to reject their application or enforce restrictions in relation to their immigration status and so curtail their transition to adulthood. In addition to understanding borders and immigration controls as orders of time as Back and Sinha, and Anderson and colleagues argue (2018b; 2013), the age of young migrants becomes another border through which the immigration regime is enforced.

Future: Life on probation

'It feels like...I don't wanna say like I'm in jail but...on probation'. This is how Maria described the immigration renewal process that she and others like her have to endure for at least ten years once they received their first 30-month "limited leave to remain" immigration status. Back and Sinha found a similar sentiment amongst their participants in their book *Migrant City* where they find that 'for migrants and asylum seekers the whole city becomes an open prison and they live in a shadow of time' (2018a). Through waiting, uncertainty and temporariness young migrants are unable to move forward into their future

(Knight et al., 2008). During this time activities they engage in occupy their time but often do not feel meaningful in a way that supports their future journey. For example, when Serena was waiting for time to pass so that she was eligible for her student loan and able to go to university, she worked as a carer to earn money. The work was tough and gruelling and brought in necessary money for her and the family, however this was in no way related to her future trajectory. The initial relief of getting status is often short lived as young people realise that they need to wait longer before they become eligible for student loans and to go to university, and that they have go through the same process again after thirty months. Leila's solicitor told her as much when she went to collect her paperwork: 'he said if you're gonna apply for [the] fee-waiver... he can't guarantee that they will accept it [the] second time, because at this point they, know that once I get it I am able to work. I should save money for the renewal.... And I'm just like, it's just one thing after another.'

The immigration regime then suspends young people in what Anderson calls both a 'renewable temporariness' and a 'permanent temporariness' (2018a).⁸ They are in 'renewable temporariness' as their stay which is timebound to 30 months must be renewed regularly, and in 'permanent temporariness' as there is no long-term security for them in sight until they become eligible for citizenship. The experience of temporariness then feels permanent for at least the near future enforcing a sense of contingency on young people, where life is not about living but merely about surviving. The high and constantly increasing fees are an especially tough hurdle for young people like Leila and their family. Not only are the amounts substantial for them to raise, but the unknown, annually increasing⁹ costs provoke significant anxieties. As Leila says: 'You spend your entire life saving towards a goal that is constantly moving forward.' The constant immigration renewal process causes total uncertainty over young people's short, medium and long-term futures. And as Bauman noted in his book *Strangers at our Doors* quoting Wittgenstein, 'uncertainty is the mother of all fears' (Bauman, 2016: 113). So how do young people cope with the impact of such levels

⁸ Although far more restrictive, migrants' permanent temporariness was recognised in the case *RA (Iraq) [2019] EWCA Civ 850* where Judge Haddon-Cave LJ drew a distinction between 'prospective limbo' and 'actual limbo'. As Carver argues, for migrants' themselves this distinction often does not feel as clear cut and many statuses can feel as if life is on hold, (2019).

⁹ Since 2003 with the exception of 2019.

of uncertainty in their lives? In chapter five Maria explains it is a bit like not having a picture on the puzzle box, nor all the necessary pieces, but still having to make the puzzle.

As was common among participants in this study, Leila is expected to continue to go through the agonizing immigration and waiting process outlined above many more times because of the type of status she is on. She will have to re-apply for her “limited leave to remain” status three more times every 30 months. She can then apply for “indefinite leave to remain”, entailing a similar process and experience, before she is finally eligible to ensure her long-term security in Britain by applying for citizenship. Every time she applies for status, she will have to wait for however long it takes the Home Office to process her application, and cope with the uncertainty of whether she will get it.

Instead of a long-term, secure status such as “indefinite leave to remain” or citizenship, the only option for many young people is a 30-month temporarily secure future and a long and costly pathway towards citizenship. This reflects developments in the immigration regime over recent decades which created a plethora of short-term and insecure statuses (De Noronha, 2019) and making even citizenship status more insecure with a drastic increase of citizenship deprivations since 2012 (Yeo, 2018). Getting and maintaining status then almost becomes like a carrot and stick game, where the Home Office offers the reward of status if young people comply with certain stipulations, but then the Home Office does not follow through – at least not immediately. This system continues unchanged because the power is firmly rooted with the Home Office and young people need status to get on with their lives; the Home Office has what the young people want so they have no choice but to go along with Home Office demands as best they can.

This power imbalance also means a lack of accountability of the Home Office in the process whereby they can neglect showing up to tribunal hearings, as was the case for Sarah and her family (chapter three), or not adhere to guidance response times as we saw in Leila’s situation, without consequences for the Home Office. Instead the consequences are borne by the young migrants as they face a life on hold during long periods of waiting and delays or as their claims get rejected. At the same time applicants are penalised for the smallest of mistakes such as typos on a 69-page long application form.

The power imbalance is further maintained by applicants' fear over potential deportation, nearly absent complaints mechanisms¹⁰, limited appeal rights and cuts to legal aid that restrict access to justice for most migrant groups except for asylum seekers and refugees. Fear of deportation is actively and intentionally promoted by the Home Office through its communication campaigns and part and parcel of the 'hostile environment' policy laid out by then Home Secretary Theresa May in 2012. It includes an active Twitter feed that broadcasts violent immigration raids, dawn removals and the public display of increasing use of charter flights for deportations (De Noronha, 2018; Penny, 2017). One of the Home Office's most controversial communications campaign were the Go Home vans that drove around six of London's most diverse boroughs with the slogan 'here illegally? Go home or face arrest' in the summer of 2013 (Jones et al., 2017). And although the 'Go Home Vans' campaign was quickly shut down after the work of campaign groups and a public outcry, there were no known consequence to the Home Office or their staff. On they went to their next task. The stakes of those at the receiving end of such campaigns is then significantly higher – i.e. deportation – than those of the Home Office.

Tobi had just submitted his first immigration status renewal application when we spoke and was waiting for a decision. He had been told that he and his family would hear about their application in three to six months. Three months had just passed, and they had not heard anything from the Home Office yet. Tobi said they were expecting the renewal process to take about a year 'because mostly other people we know, it's taken them a year to get their renewal'. The time it takes the Home Office to process the renewal application is not counted towards the ten years needed for people to become eligible for ILR. The only thing that is counted are the four 30-month periods of when the status is granted until it expires. This means that if the Home Office take one year to process every renewal then it will actually take a young person four times 30 months plus three years, i.e. thirteen years, from the date they were first granted status until they become eligible for ILR. Even in an ideal scenario, another year of application processing time would be added to the so-called ten-year route. The long decision times for renewal applications is difficult to comprehend, as Tobi explains: 'if it's a renewal you've already looked at our case before, so what's taking

¹⁰ Exceptions are judicial procedures and the Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration. However, they have few powers to enforce any judgements or recommendations on the Home Office to change practice.

you up to a year to look for in a, in a case for you to apply, I mean for you to say yes or no. But that's what we're waiting for at the moment um just to get that and hopefully I can progress with my life... like going to uni again...going to college...’.

The long wait is making him feel like a first-time applicant again. He cannot understand why it is taking so long when nothing in his situation has changed since he first applied. Except that he has now lived in the UK a further 2.5 years, worked during those years, paid taxes, volunteered and completed another qualification. While the Home Office is processing his application, his life is in many respects on hold again. The Home Office have his passport which means he cannot leave the country. He holds a US visa which is likely to run out while his renewal is being processed and before he will be able to use it. Luckily, he has a provisional driving license, so he has a form of ID. His brother temporarily got fired from his job during his renewal process because he could not show his passport and Tobi may not be able to enrol in his college course because of it. Tobi, his brother and mother also want to travel to Nigeria to see their father, sibling and family whom they have not seen in 11 years. Something else they cannot plan until they get the passports back and their renewal application approved.

This stop-and-start process also has more long-term implications for Tobi and others like him. It is not just that his life is on hold while his renewal is being processed because he does not have the necessary paperwork to do a lot of things. He is also unable to plan his future, neither for the next years as his renewal might not be approved and he is in ‘renewal temporariness’, nor in the long-term either because even if his renewal gets approved and he gets another 30 months legal stay he might be rejected next time as he is in ‘permanent temporariness’. Tobi explained it like this to me: ‘Yeah that's the thing, you can't really plan your future...And that's also another thing is, you could do, let's say you do erm three two-and-a-half years they can still like decline it in your fourth one, and you've done like close to eight years. That's yeah, that's also the uncertainty of like even though you have got status you don't have status it can just get taken away from you just like that.’

Conclusion

Hage describes the feeling of being stuck in the present as “stuckedness”. For the young people in this research their “stuckedness” is produced by the immigration regime, and as a result they experience invisibility, immobility, ambiguity and arbitrariness (2009). This sense of being stuck becomes further coupled with a deep uncertainty over people’s future. Given the life-course stage of young people transitioning into adulthood, their main focus is on their future changes in their family roles, educational attainment and economic attainment. All of which become prohibited because of their immigration situation. Uncertainty is produced by the immigration system through forcing a sense of temporariness onto many of those who want to live in the UK.

Most immigrants now are given some type of temporary status to stay in the UK. Whether a refugee from Syria, a student from Australia, a high-skilled worker from India or joining a family member, your right of stay in the UK will be limited over time and restricted in terms of access to entitlements, while being subject to continuous scrutiny to prove your value and contribution to the British state and society. A system that sorts people into deserving and undeserving, desirable subjects and undesirable subjects, poor and wealthy, the good migrant and the bad migrant. As part of this system of sorting, or ordering, we need to also account for time and life-course as bordering mechanisms enforcing immigration controls, as Griffiths, Anderson and Rogers (2013) and Back and Sinha argue, where hierarchies of belonging are ‘also accompanied by an ordering of migrants’ relationship to time’ (2018a). The British citizen becomes considered in terms of their future potential contribution to Britain but has to first prove this deservingness to permanent residence through exemplary behaviour assessed through multiple short-term immigration applications. Throughout the process migrants have to pay high, profit making sums, pass the “good character” test and endure years of uncertainty. A scrutiny that most British citizens escape through the privilege of being born with “the right” passport, or “the little red book” as one of the young people in my research called it.

Examining the intersections between the immigration regime, time and life-course then shows how specific experiences are produced for the young migrants in this research. A condition of waiting, feeling stuck and unable to move into their future amplifies difficult

adulthood transitions produced by migrancy and immigration status struggles. In this process young people often grow up too early as they take on greater roles within the family and adult responsibilities such as caring for younger siblings. Status insecurities amplify feelings of increased responsibility as young people fear being detained or deported. Instead of spending time with their friends in their adolescence they often spend time at home instead. While their subjective experience of adolescence is defined more by adult responsibilities and being sensible than youthfulness, once they turn eighteen and become legally considered an adult their immigration status curtails their transition to full independence. Whether their status restricts them from further educational attainment or that they have no status meaning they are unable to become economically independent, the immigration regime curtails their progression into adulthood and continues uncertainty over their futures. Even though Leila now has her status she remains unable to go to university and is still waiting to eventually feel fully secure in the country she calls home.

Furthermore, this uncertainty over young people's futures produces feelings of shame, depression and anxiety (Khosravi, 2014), which will be explored in greater depth in the next chapter. Living in a precarious immigration situation, either without status or with short-term status, during crucial transitions of young people's lives, has profound implications for their emotional well-being and mental health. The next chapter explores how immigration status insecurities affect young people growing up in the UK. It looks at how they deal with the depression and anxiety it provokes, feelings of isolation and the stigma associated with immigration.

Chapter 5 - The emotional burden of living without status

Emotions, mental health and immigration status

This chapter is about the implications of living in a precarious immigration situation on young people's emotions, feelings and mental health. As Sigona argues, it is important for scholars to pay attention to these specific vulnerabilities that are produced by the immigration regime (2012). It is about how the young people who participated in this research make sense of the consequences of their immigration status and their encounters with the immigration regime, and how this makes them feel. What emotional landscape are they having to navigate as a consequence? Why do many young people in this situation struggle with depression and anxiety? And why do they feel isolated and alone in their situation? By asking these questions, this chapter examines the role of the state in producing vulnerability in these young people through the immigration regime and the tools of governance and state power employed to this end.

How does the state influence young people's emotional landscape? What practices does the state engage in which have a consequence on the feelings of those subject to them? And how do we understand, name and evidence this relationship when it is immaterial and cannot be grasped with our senses? This chapter explores how the practices of the immigration regime provoke emotional responses and impacts mental health of the young people subject to it. In its toolbox of practices, the immigration regime can affect young people through fear of detention and deportation (Anderson et al., 2011; De Genova, 2002), creating isolation, stigma and shame, long-term precarity, uncertainty over the future, lack of accountability, and a sense of losing or wasting time as discussed in the previous chapter. Together this creates a feeling of being out of control and being at the mercy of the invisible immigration regime during crucial transitions of young people's lives when they are already more psychologically vulnerable (Gonzales et al., 2013) causing considerable anxiety and stress that manifest in various ways.

In their study of "undocumented" migrant children and families in the UK, Sigona and Hughes found that the stresses linked to immigration status caused mental health issues for the majority of participants which were further compounded by restricted access to

healthcare and related financial hardships (see also Khosravi, 2014; 2012). In her research on mixed-status families, Griffiths also found that ‘exclusionary border controls cause financial, emotional and social harm to both precarious migrants and the citizens close to them’, describing it as a form of legitimised ‘state sponsored harm’ (2019: 14–15). Similarly, the young people in this research are in a constant struggle with the Home Office and other state bureaucrats who demand exemplary lives from them and thus building up enormous pressure. No matter how much young people comply with the ‘good citizen’ expectations, this is no guarantee for settled status in the UK (see chapter six), and they hold little power or leverage over the application process or decision (see chapters three and four). Instead, this lies firmly with the face-less Home Office bureaucrats and their impersonal email correspondence. This power imbalance inherent in the relationship between young migrants as applicants and state bureaucrats as decision-makers has a significant effect on young people’s well-being and mental health.

Maria

Maria came to the UK from Nigeria at the age of eight together with her parents, brother and sister. She thought she was only coming for the Christmas holidays – they had lots of relatives and friends already living in London whom they were visiting. After a week her parents asked her and her siblings whether they wanted to stay, excitedly they said yes. And so, her life in London began. They moved houses, made friends, went to school and did well. Or so she thought. Over the years the family’s problems with their immigration status began to dominate their lives more and more: Maria’s father was detained and deported; Maria’s “limited leave to remain” application was rejected; and she found out she would be charged overseas tuition fees at university while also being ineligible for a student loan. All of this became too much for Maria and when she had to take a year out from university she fell into a depression. Looking back at her life she reflects: ‘Life is like a jigsaw puzzle, but you don’t have the picture on the front of the box to know what it’s supposed to look like. Sometimes you’re not even sure if you’ve got all the pieces. That’s what my life has felt like. And it’s not even feeling like I haven’t got all the pieces but feeling like pieces are being taken and locked away. Now I am not the most eloquent speaker but one thing I’d like to say is ‘why?’ Why did my dad get taken away from me? Why do we have to be scared of our door being knocked down? Why did my A-levels get covered by the blackness that was

UCAS applications? Why did it get to me? The depression, the loneliness, the feeling that it would never end. Why couldn't I talk about it? Do anything about it? Why couldn't I trust? I had all these emotional and life barriers I felt I couldn't overcome.'¹¹

I met Maria in a Starbucks near Stratford station. We tried to find a quiet corner in the busy hustle and bustle of this East London hub. The music made it difficult for us to hear each other at times and the people around us were a self-consciousness reminder of the present moment as we were navigating Maria's life story and her emotional journey. In that moment we were both ordinary customers in the café chain and sharing an extraordinary conversation. Maria was shy to start with, smiling nervously, avoiding eye contact and breaking out in the odd sing song or humming of a melody. Although she was certain she wanted to speak with me she was also visibly uncomfortable shifting in her seat and playing with her cardigan. She said this was a first for her. Although I had met her many times before we had shared few conversations. Over time she warmed to our conversation and opened up revealing a depth of thinking and understanding of her own situation as well as maturity and reflection that left me in awe. We concluded the conversation with the usual dance of mutual thank yous after an exhausting three-hour whirlwind of Maria's life. She concluded that it had almost felt like a therapy session to her, which she found helpful, relieving, before we were abruptly brought back to the present as a young man at the next table interrupted us to join the conversation. By this point Maria had lost her shyness. As he asked what we were talking about, she confidently told him 'about immigration, because I am an immigrant'. He offered his own anecdotes, having some Nigerian heritage himself, and asked Maria questions with an interested, kind and open demeanour which she answered in a seemingly comfortable manner. The conversation ended with Maria firmly stating 'this is my home now'.

This chapter examines the complex emotional landscape that young people have to navigate as a result of their immigration situation. It will examine the consequences of this on their mental health, especially depression and isolation. Many young people felt stigmatised and ashamed of being a migrant which was reinforced by immigration enforcement and surveillance. As a result, many felt out of control over their own lives. Not

¹¹ Extract from a story Maria prepared for the drama workshop held as part of this research project in February 2017.

knowing where to turn with their emotional burden and worried about mental health stigma many young people poured their efforts into their education as the only area of their life they felt they had control over.

A complex emotional landscape

As a result of their immigration situation, young people have to navigate a complex emotional landscape while transitioning to adulthood. Living life subject to immigration control, trying to attain legal immigration status in the UK and long-term uncertainty mean multiple stressors in young people's lives that have negative effects on their mental and emotional health (Gonzales et al., 2013; Griffiths, 2019; Khosravi, 2014; Sigona, 2012; Sigona and Hughes, 2012). Many questioned their belonging, kept feelings hidden, became emotionally numb and disconnected or became hyper vigilant as a result and in order to cope. How these stressors manifested varied. For many the effects were long-term, extending beyond a successful application for immigration status. Over time the pressure and stress in the young people's lives became overwhelming and led to long-term mental health problems such as anxiety and depression. To me, academic language can sometimes feel inadequate at expressing and conveying the inner emotions and feelings of people. This section therefore starts with a poem I wrote based on what young people have said about their feelings and mental health to try and convey common and complex emotions expressed by participants as well as their emotional struggle. The intention of using poetry in this case is to evoke a more emotional connection between the young people in this research and the reader.

A complex emotional landscape

*I was afraid, alone, anxious,
dependent, depressed, and hidden,
insecure, isolated, vulnerable,
and always worried.*

I couldn't trust.

Is it just me?

I am excluded AND I belong.

I experienced harm but,

I kept smiling. Inside I felt ashamed, guilty, scared, sad, stigmatised, unwanted, useless, and undeserving.

The darkness,

I didn't want to feel anymore.

I have no control.

Am I underserving? Why?

Why?

Most young people in this research experienced either anxiety, depression or both at some point during their lives. All participants attributed this to the stress they experience as a result of their immigration situation. The first time Maria really felt the emotional impact of the Home Office's power over her life was when she lost her dad. She did not lose him because he died, but because he did not have immigration status in the UK and was deported. The grief is similar though and had a significant effect on Maria. In fact, she says it is one of the main consequences of her immigration status: 'the biggest thing is...to be honest the only real thing is probably my relationship with my dad, because as soon as he got deported - like I was a daddy's girl, like we were besties and then he got deported and obviously once that happened, once he was in another country communication is completely, you have to work at it. And as a kid it's not that, like I just wanted him to be there so I can go hug him after work or I can just be like sitting next to him ... talking to him ended up being the same conversation over and over again 'Everyone is fine, I'm ok, everyone's ok' and he's like 'yeah don't worry, everything will be sorted out' and you're like hearing that five times, ten times, it just gets annoying because six months down the line 'everything will be fine', ten months down the line 'everything will be fine'. It's just like 'ok, whatever, cool, I get it, everything will be fine' and it's just after a while you don't wanna, I don't like I didn't really wanna talk to him...and hear it all over again. 'Cause it, I just, it just

felt pointless basically. Like yeah, it just really sucks. 'Cause I know we could have been best friends if he was still here.' The potentially traumatic impact and psychological distress of forced parent-child separation and parental loss was documented in a study by Rojas-Flores et al. (2017) for Latino children in the United States following their parents' detention and deportation.

The day Maria's dad was deported was the day he was due to visit the family for a few days in between work trips. Maria was so excited she ran all the way home from school just to find her family upset in the living room – without her dad. She couldn't understand what was going on for a long time. She thought she would see him in a couple of days, that they were just holding him at the airport. But instead she hasn't seen her dad since that day. That was over ten years ago. When he was deported, she was a little girl, a daddy's girl. Now she is a young woman and she and her dad are strangers.

Depression and anxiety

Maria

Like all her friends, Maria applied for university when she was in sixth form. That was when she discovered she was classified as an overseas student and ineligible for student finance – which came as shock to her. She said she refreshed the website at least three times before she believed it. She subsequently lost interest in her education as it no longer seemed relevant to her or part of her future. She did not want to tell her mother because it would mean insurmountable costs for the family and she did not want her mum to feel she had to pay. Eventually she did, however. She picked a course and a university based on their location – close to home – and the lowest fees she could find. Her family struggled on for one year paying her high fees, which made Maria feel riddled with guilt. She lived at home and commuted for around two hours one way to get to university. She often got there early in order to miss peak prices on public transport. She rarely socialised at university and did not make many friends there. At this point her younger sister had got her leave to remain. This meant that her sister was able to work and contributed to Maria's tuition fees: 'So, Serena got her papers the year before...she had to take a year off as well 'cause of the whole uni situation. So she was working...and even then she had to help pay for my uni fees, and that made me feel even like less than a person because why can't I do anything to help my family? Why is my little sister helping me pay for my uni fees? It doesn't make any sense. It

should be the other way round; do you know what I'm saying? I just, I felt so useless and I felt like any, if I tried to do anything I would just be in everybody's way basically.'

After a year of constant reminder emails from her university to pay her fees and scraping together money from family and friends, she had come to the end of her resources to pay for her studies. Maria had to take a gap year without knowing whether she would return. That year was one of the darkest of her life and threw her into a deep depression. She wasn't able to work and was unable to contribute to the family household. She did not talk to anybody, didn't leave the house and hardly left her room. Her immigration application was still pending with the Home Office and Maria was stuck until she got a decision. Without status she could not study, she could not work nor volunteer. She also could not access any mental health support. The only thing she had to hold on to was hope that the decision on her application would be positive this time after her first one was rejected. Even if it was, she would have to wait another three years before she could get student finance but at least in the meantime she would be able to work again. This is how she described that year: 'I would literally be lying in my bed all day, on my phone, not doing anything in particular, maybe playing a game or online or something and I would be in the same position that my family left me in, 'cause everybody like my siblings went to school, my mum went to work and she would come in and be like 'why are you still lying down?' and I'm just like 'well I've got nowhere else to go, what do you want me to do?'...I mean obviously in hindsight I might have been slightly depressed...I feel like it should have been obvious to her like why I wasn't doing anything. Like I couldn't even, like, I would try and apply for like volunteer roles for something to do, help build up my psychology, whatever, but then it required a DBS and obviously I can't get that, so it was like 'oh great, another thing I can't do'. Yeah, I just felt like in this tiny, tiny bubble basically and I can't, like there's no air, I can't breathe and it's getting smaller and smaller and smaller. And it's just like 'ok no one can help me out, I can't even help myself' basically. Yeah so another shitty year.'

Sarah

Sarah also experienced depression after she found out that she could not access a student loan because she did not fulfil the eligibility criteria. By this point she had just received her "limited leave to remain" and had lived in the UK for at least half her life but had not had legal residence for three years as required. Without a student loan she would not be able to

go to university. It was everything Sarah had worked towards and so her world crumbled, leaving her feeling completely devastated. Like Maria, she was in disbelief initially and tried to find further information on her situation. Eventually she spoke to an advisor from the campaign group who confirmed that she would not be able to get student finance. She broke down, crawled under a table in the school library and cried for the first time since she was a little child. Everything she had worked hard for at school, all her dreams of her future went up in a puff of smoke in front of her because she had not had her “limited leave to remain” for long enough. She was in the middle of revising for her A-level exams and collapsed into a brief but deep depression. She lost all interest in her school work and hardly made it out of bed. Eventually she realised the only thing that she could control over right now was her exams. And the results were important for her future whether she could go to university this year, next year or in ten years’ time. So, she managed to pull herself up and started revising again. It was worth it: she achieved As in maths, chemistry and physics. But she still couldn’t go to university.

Instead she had to take an enforced gap year, as she calls it, to wait until she had achieved three years of legal residence before being eligible for student finance. This would mean another application for the 30-months “limited leave to remain” before going to university, meaning more costs and more anxiety. During her gap year, she joined the campaign group and became active giving speeches, doing outreach work and in the process learnt that she was not the only person in this situation. She also worked to save money for her studies. However, the £15,000 needed for one year of tuition fees and living expenses at uni was hard to achieve on a minimum wage. Eventually she set up a crowd-funding campaign with the help of her aunt which was significantly boosted after her TV appearance. Rather than the three gap years she had prepared herself for, she was able to start university after just one. Slowly she felt she was taking back control over her life. In her second year at university she faced her next hurdle: her status renewal. In addition to the stress of whether or not it would be granted, it would cost her over £2,000 plus lawyer’s fees, in the middle of her undergraduate degree. In order to cover her immigration fees, tuition fees and living expenses she worked two jobs while studying full time. This leaves little time for friends and life. The uncertainty produced by her immigration status at various stages of her life and due to the process of multiple, costly renewals means constant worry for Sarah. In a study

looking at mental health in refugees with temporary protection and permanent protection in Australia, Steel et al. found that those on temporary protection had consistently higher levels of anxiety, depression and overall distress which was not improving over time, as opposed to those with a permanent status (2011). They conclude: 'the data suggests a pattern of growing mental distress, ongoing resettlement difficulties, social isolation, and difficulty in the acculturation process amongst refugees subject to restrictive immigration policies' (see also Momartin et al., 2006; 2011: 1149). It also means additional pressures to her university life, as she has to raise large funds. Working two jobs as well as studying not only is taking a toll on her grades but also her social life. Unable to participate in university life on and off campus with her peers, she continues to be isolated because of her immigration status even though she is now legally resident.

From my research it emerged, that mental health issues were often compounded for young people because they found it difficult to talk to their parents about their status, although they often were the only other people who knew about their legal status. Parents often wanted to protect their children from the details and stresses about immigration – albeit unsuccessfully – and children often did not want to burden their parents further. Young people would see their parents struggle on to 'sort out papers' and through financial hardships. They saw their mothers sell or pawn their last pieces of jewellery, continue enduring an abusive relationship as otherwise the family would be homeless, or work day and night to make ends meet. As young people see their parents' sacrifices for the family, their own feelings of depression or loneliness feel unimportant or insignificant. Certainly not important enough to further burden their parents with. Instead feelings get bottled up, buried deep inside themselves, while on the outside young people maintained a happy, untroubled persona. Over the years they played this role so well they convinced themselves that they were fine and happy until one day their own feelings became unbearable and overwhelming or sometimes emerge in other ways. As Leila said: 'everything was happening all at once, but the thing with me at that point was I would smile to everyone and then cry myself to sleep.'

Isolation

Most young people who participated in this research felt unable to confide in others about their immigration situation growing up, because of feelings of shame, stigma and fear. Fear

of being reported to the Home Office was a particularly strong factor as the consequences of potential detention or deportation were severe. It keeps young people and their families from telling others about their immigration status. This reinforces isolation and leads young people to believing that they are the only ones in this situation. Gonzales et al. similarly found that 'legal exclusions and the inability to participate in important adolescent rites of passage that peers were moving through led to social isolation' (2013: 1184). Due to the shame and stigma associated with being a migrant, many also feel too embarrassed to tell friends or teachers. Combined these factors often mean that rather than sharing the burden of their situation, many young people keep it and related feelings to themselves. Maria explains: 'It's so disgusting. You go to someone for...this is the problem because, this is why there's such a fear, because you think you're going to someone for help and then next thing you know, you're in the complete opposite situation than you expected to be in... that's why nobody knows about...I'm sure most people don't know about most of the things that are going on in terms of deportation and immigration or whatever, because nobody talks about it.' This fear of being reported or apprehended has also been documented in other studies of "undocumented" migrants, especially in the US (Chavez, 1998; De Genova, 2002; Gonzales, 2016; Gonzales et al., 2013; Gonzales and Chavez, 2012; see Sigona and Hughes, 2012 for the UK). In his study of "undocumented" migrants in the San Diego area in the states, Chavez found that 'undocumented immigrants are constantly aware that at any moment they could be apprehended and deported from the country' (1998: 159). This fear restricts the migrants to a small space within which they move, geographically and in terms of their social networks.

Shuri, who we will hear more from shortly, thinks this is why she, her younger brother and father ended up in detention. Her mother told a friend whom she trusted about their situation. This friend, they think, reported them to immigration. Shuri explains: 'my mum confided in a friend of hers and I think that friend was the one who reported us which is why we got locked up in the first place... you don't know who to trust! You just gonna not trust anyone.' This is not an uncommon story and one that circulates within the community and on the grapevine. Fear about being reported therefore means young people and their families hide their status, which in turn maintains their isolation, as young people and their families feel unable to trust anyone with the information about their status as long as they

remain deportable. Chauvin and Garcés-Mascreñas have referred to this secrecy around immigration status as the 'undocumented closet' in their study of "undocumented" youth in the United States and argue that while in the closet young migrants remain in a state of 'static powerlessness' (2014). The 'undocumented closet' reinforces invisibility produced by their immigration status.

This invisibility as migrants that young people experience becomes especially hard to break for those who came to the UK as children and are fully integrated here in all aspects except their immigration status. As such, the young people are largely indistinguishable from their British peers and therefore well 'camouflaged' (Chauvin and Garcés-Mascreñas, 2014). The notion of camouflage, Chauvin and Garcés-Mascreñas argue, 'points to a situation of invisibility within visibility' (2014: 425). As discussed in chapter three (and more in chapter six), participants came to London as young children and completed the majority of their education here. Their friends, life, cultural references are British, particularly of London. Their camouflage is that they are culturally British and blend in where they live. In that sense they are visible to their friends as peers and members of local communities. However, within their visibility their immigration status and its consequences remain invisible.

As a result, young people felt isolated and alone with the burden of their immigration status, too afraid to speak to anyone about it in case they would be detained or deported. Not speaking to others reinforced their belief that they were the only people in this situation and therefore their isolation. When isolated in their situation, young migrants were usually unable to see that what they were experiencing were the consequences of a hostile immigration regime that is intentionally and systematically making their life difficult (as discussed in depth in chapters three and four). Through increasing enforcement policies, practices, and visible campaigns such as the 'Go Home' vans the immigration regime is overt about viewing certain migrants as undeserving and their subsequent deportation seems like a real possibility – as discussed more in the next section of this chapter. As a study of the effects of immigration enforcement policies and practices on the children of "undocumented" parents in the United States has shown, such draconian policies can cause children and young people considerable mental health problems that are likely to affect them into adulthood (Delva et al., 2013). Together with increasingly hostile immigration policies that overtly aim to make life as difficult as possible for "illegal" migrants, such as

removing their right to rent, placing reporting duties on various citizen groups, discourses of the undeserving migrant, and fear of removal, the immigration regime ensures that migrants in precarious situations refrain from talking to each other. This isolation is maintained through fear and distrust instilled by a hostile immigration regime that individualises migrants and their situation. This enables and perpetuates a thinking whereby the young people see themselves as the problem, rather than the immigration system, state practices or governance structures which are creating their exclusions. This is reflected in the following extract from my interview with Maria:

Vanessa: I mean it's part of a...bigger thing, part of an immigration system that is really not very friendly

Maria: Yeah I think the fact that, that, that, that I remember it's not just me makes me feel much...that's the problem, I think one of the issues. That's why I couldn't say it 'cause it felt like it was just me in all of like secondary school that was going through that. 'Cause obviously somebody is going to be out there saying 'I cannot go to uni and bla bla bla' no one is going to be jumping on the roof shouting that. So yeah, that kind a, that kind a tight bubble. But yeah remembering that there are other people going through it and that me saying this is what happened might eventually get to another person and help them realise 'oh it's not just me also' yeah that's why I can kind of easily say it basically.

Vanessa: And you never told any teachers or church people, that's quite amazing

Maria: Nobody knew.

The immigrant stigma

Many young people also spoke of the stigma they felt for being an immigrant. On the one hand they felt stigmatised in their daily life, for example at school where it was common to refer to recently arrived migrants, often still with a strong accent, as a 'freshie'. This reflects a hierarchy not just of immigration statuses but also of belonging, as Back, Sinha and Bryan have argued. Here, newcomers or recently arrived migrants are positioned lower in the hierarchy: 'New foreigners who bear a striking similarity to old foreigners are consequently

ranked lower on a hierarchy of belonging' (Back et al., 2012: 148). On the other hand, the young people were very aware of the negative image of migrants propagated by much of the mainstream media, by some political parties and as has been common in public debates in the UK. Both affected the way young people thought of and felt about themselves. The two are also likely to be related, as could be observed in the rise of xenophobic and racist hate-crimes after the Brexit referendum (Burnett, 2017; Devine, 2018; Weaver, 2018). In these discourses a migrant becomes equated with being an "illegal immigrant" which is equated with being bad, undeserving and something to be ashamed of. These discourses become internalised by the young migrants themselves and manifest in their everyday life. During my interview with Sheila there were many moments where she spoke about herself negatively because she was an immigrant. She told me about a situation when she went to the Citizens Advice Bureau to get her National Insurance Number. The woman behind the desk said to her "you are an immigrant" which Sheila said made her feel awful. To her, "immigrant" was a dirty word, why would this woman call her that? Over the years and throughout her struggles to obtain her papers, however, Sheila internalised the negative feelings and connotations of the word "immigrant" and says it has almost become her identity. Even though she has legal immigration status now she still mostly thinks of herself as an "illegal immigrant". Only recently she caught herself thinking this during a gathering of the campaign group. As she is becoming aware of this, she is actively trying to stop herself. Still, as she explained to me, after her life has been dominated by getting status and papers for ten years, it is hard not to think of herself as an "illegal immigrant" who is unwanted and bad.

The common imagination – peddled by many mainstream media outlets and some politicians - of how migrants arrive in this country is usually in poverty, by boat and with bogus asylum claims. The so-called Mediterranean crisis in 2015 was a large contributing factor in conjuring up the image that the UK was being "flooded by dangerous immigrants". As a result, the public debate over migration has become increasingly toxic, polarised and xenophobic. The language used is aimed at convincing readers that "we" are being "invaded" by "swarms" of "marauding" migrants, in a "tidal wave" that will destroy the NHS, welfare state, housing, labour market and British identity and values. As well as being false, this dangerously simplifies the situation and misses the political, economic, historical and

global reasons for the current situation (Anderson, 2015). It furthermore dehumanizes migrants and their stories, with a language of crisis, flooding and problems. With such language and discourse commonplace in public domains, they can become reflected in the stigmatising and bullying of young migrants at school, both within and outside of migrant and minority communities. Leila explains how this happened at her school: 'And another thing I would say is that, the stigma around it. Especially in the African community, it needs to be addressed. Like people need to not be so scared to come out being a migrant...I said, being, we need to let people understand that being a migrant it's actually, it's a good thing. It's ok to be a migrant, it's not a bad thing...Because if we keep thinking it's a bad thing...then it's just, it's never gonna be... the problem will always be there. Like when you're at school, if you're, if you go mention something like "I'm an immigrant", the next thing you hear kids sayin' "oh you're an "illegal immigrant"... And then the bullying will start: "he's an illegal immigrant. Oh my gosh, she's in the country. Did she swim here?" I'm like... literally... when I was at school, there were jokes like that around. Luckily, they were not at me, they were jokes but they were probably true about the person being an illegal immigrant. There was this one kid in my year, he came a bit late...when I was in about year nine. And he had just come from Nigeria, and his accent was still very strong. And they were like "oh he's an immigrant, he's fresh off the boat" as they say. Fresh off the boat meaning, you came here by boat, and you literally just stepped of the boat and now you're here. And it was, it was, he was bullied for it.' From this example we can see how larger narratives in the media and public discourses have consequences in the lives of young migrants, in that they legitimate certain behaviours towards them.

Immigration enforcement and surveillance

Isolation, fear, worry and anxiety are further produced and maintained through the constant surveillance and enforcement tactics of the UK immigration regime. Most young people were aware not only of the anti-immigrant rhetoric discussed earlier but also direct government communications around immigration. They were aware of the "Go Home" vans initiative and in some cases had even seen them. They were aware of NHS posters and the hostile environment policy. They were aware of immigration enforcement vans driving

around the areas they lived, and stories of raids or friends of friends being picked up by immigration were constantly rotating on the “community grapevine”. Maria describes some of her encounters with and thoughts about immigration enforcement: ‘so, my mum will come home sometimes and be like “I saw the van at the tube station, they took everybody from the shop” and I'd be like “oh wow so I can't go to the tube station then” ... I don't know... It's been a worry but not a worry. I feel like I'm never in a place where they would be going to go and get those people anyway. Like I'm at school, I don't know if they go to schools, but I've never been worried about them turning up at school. I think sometimes like literally my siblings and I say this to each other, sometimes we'll be walking home and just be scared like that the wrong person is watching, like sitting outside our house or whatever, like waiting for us to come back home just so they can take us away. So, this one time that I was coming home, from uni I think, and then there was someone, some guy walking at like... er, he was in front of my house, but I think he was like trying to get into the neighbour's house, but I couldn't tell because of the massive hedges. So, I literally just walked past my house, walked past him and went to the park because I was worried because I didn't know who he was. So, I just stayed in the park for like half an hour or so and I went back... 'cause I didn't want to walk into my house and he be like “finally you're here”, yeah, yeah... it's definitely something that's always at the back of your mind, even now, like, I know they can't, actually no, let me not say they can't because they'll find a reason to but yeah, like, they have no legal reason to, but like... I still get worried you know about like, if I'm applying somewhere, like I have to make sure everything is done correctly. Like I would, I don't want them to have any reason to call the wrong person or whatever, I'd, yeah, you end up being really self-aware and also very aware of the environment and the people that are like around you and stuff, yeah. It's like, I still, I have this habit of when I go home, I make sure I look around, to make sure no one is like watching me. Or if there's a van nearby I hope it's just the same van that's meant to be there or whatever, so yeah. That's the way that is.’

Exacerbating her fears are the stories she would hear from other people in her community. At her church choir two guys one day just stopped coming to practice. Nobody really knew what had happened except that it was something to do with their immigration and documents. Maria thinks that they had probably been taken to a detention centre. One of

them eventually came back to choir practice. The other one has not, his wife still comes to church though. Nobody knows what's going on and nobody wants to ask.

Even the NHS is not exempt from being seen as a space that induces worry and fear. A week before Maria and I met, she said she was experiencing some very severe pains on her side near her ribs. At this point she had her status, was working and going to uni. In other words, she had been able to move on and lead a "normal" life. However, she was still wary of going to the hospital to have her pains checked out. She explains: 'sometimes you hear these stories of somebody who went to hospital and then for one reason or the other they weren't allowed to leave. And the next thing you know "goodbye, have a safe flight" and it's just like yeah, you can, you get really worried because... like they have to say like "oh you're an immigrant"... and the thing is it wouldn't matter for me right now but like I'm still tense about it 'cause it could go the wrong way. Like somebody might misunderstand the situation and the next thing you know, they're just like we have to call the Home Office and check who you really are or whatever... I just feel like I can't trust the NHS... Better for me to not get sick than to actually go to the NHS or go to the hospital or whatever...'.

For Maria fear of detention and deportation was real and close to home as she experienced her dad's deportation to Nigeria, as outlined in the introduction. Like Maria, many participants experienced immigration enforcement policies first-hand. Whether they spent time in detention as was the case for Shuri, or whether their parents were detained and/or deported as Sarah, Maria and Daisy experienced, these encounters with the government's practices of immigration enforcement left deep scars in the lives of young people. As a result, some further retreated into themselves and maintained the secrecy of their situation even more strongly. For others, their response was a new drive to try and resolve their situation as was the case after the second time Sarah's father was detained. They pushed ahead with their immigration application – accepting the risk that in becoming visible to the immigration regime they might be rejected and could be removed from their home in the UK.

Shuri experienced detention herself. She arrived in the UK when she was just two years old, has lived here since and has one of the most generous and open smiles I have ever known. Her house in a residential area of East London is clean, quiet and simple as I arrive on a rainy

London day. We are alone in the house: her brother is at university and her mother is either out working or seeing friends. London is her home; it is where she grew up together with her friends and family leading a largely “normal” life. Although she and her family experienced some hardships – mostly financial - she did not really realise this was because of their immigration situation until she was detained. Her mother did not talk to her about it, because she did not want to worry Shuri. One morning when Shuri was a teenager, she and her brother were getting ready for school. Her mother had already gone to work. There was a knock on the front door by four uniformed officers from G4S. They explained little and Shuri was very confused. At first, she thought they were from the gas company, even though it was odd there were four of them. The atmosphere quickly changed as the officers told Shuri and her family that they were going to take them away. Her father was being physically restrained after fighting them. An officer took Shuri and her younger brother who was ten at the time to their bedroom: ‘they sat me down and he was like “yeah you’re “illegal” in this country, you’re not meant to be here” and then I was like “what do you mean?” And he looked at me and he was like “why do you have such a British accent?” I was like, in my head I was like “bitch, what? What do you mean? But I was like “Because I’m British.” I was so offended. Erm and he was like “but you're not”.’

She was told to pack some things for her and her brother in a suitcase and they were taken into the van which she said looked like a police van. The van drove along the same route she would normally take to school, stopping at a petrol station where she and her friends regularly bought sweets on the way to school. She could see some of her friends out of the van window and desperately hoped they would not see her, she felt so embarrassed. They drove for a long time and until this day she does not know which detention centre they took her to, but she thinks it was Yarl’s Wood¹². At arrival all electronic items were taken off them, including a laptop and their mobile phones. They were then told that they were in a detention centre and that they would be there for some time. Shuri felt like she had done something really bad. At that point her only reference point to detention was punishment at school. But she couldn’t work out what she had done, and nobody explained it to her. She said it was horrible in there, the food was terrible, the so-called school was awful and the play area nearly empty. She was missing the auditions for the school play she wanted to be

¹² Also likely as it is the only one that detains children.

in and had never before been separated from her mum for more than a few days. Shuri had no way of contacting her mum or anybody else and she doesn't know how long she spent in detention, as discussed in the previous chapter. The only thing that kept her going inside was staying strong for her younger brother. She was terrified she would be sent back to Nigeria where she would have to live with her father and his family. She had spent hardly any time of her life in Nigeria and barely knew her dad or his family. He was visiting at the time because it was her birthday and had only planned to stay a few days. Normally he did not live with Shuri and only visited very occasionally. She never saw a lawyer, a social worker or anybody else to support her or advocate on her behalf. One time her mother's friend visited to tell her that her mother was trying everything to get them out. Eventually she and her brother were released into the custody of her dad's friends as foster carers and whom they had never met before. Shuri and her brother lived with them for one year. During this time, they did not know where their mother was, and it took another six months before they saw her again. Her father had been "taken away".

Immigration enforcement policies are then often very real experiences in young people's lives and change their lives forever. Shuri is likely to have long-lasting trauma from her detention and the subsequent forced separation from her mother, she might never see her father again, she missed important months of her schooling, and it has substantially altered her relationship with her mother. Ever since she has been dealing with depression and anxiety. Maria is in a constant state of hyper vigilance due to fear of being detected. The effects of immigration detention are well documented in the literature and show adverse effects (e.g. Lorek et al., 2009; Mares et al., 2002; Mares and Jureidini, 2004; von Werthern et al., 2018). Following their systematic literature review, von Werthern et al. found that studies showed that adults, adolescents and children who were or had been in detention experienced high levels of mental health problems, especially anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (2018). Steel et al. further found that the impact of only temporarily granted immigration status also has long-term detrimental effects on mental health (2006). What this research shows, and as backed up by the literature, is that the emotional burden and consequences on young people's mental health as a result of the immigration enforcement regime are severe.

Feeling out of control

Another contributing factor to young people's emotional struggle is feeling unable to control their own situation, especially their immigration status upon which all else hinges. Feeling out of control relates to their experience of dealing with a hostile Home Office and the endless waiting as discussed in the previous chapter, experiences with lawyers who are often unreliable, and at times with parents who want to protect their children by not involving them in the application process.

We already learned in chapter three how the way that the Home Office dealt with Sarah's application left her feeling out of control and in limbo. Throughout the process the Home Office gave Sarah and her family little information about when they could expect an answer or what their chances were. There was little sense that they had any influence over the process, but still they kept trying. They did their best to avoid any mistakes, they kept on submitting more information to their lawyer to support the application – letters, photos, school certificates: proof that they were integrated and an asset to Britain. Until this day Sarah does not know whether this made any difference to the outcome of their application. Young people are then simultaneously facing a wait that has no definite end and an inability to influence this waiting period even if they do everything 'right', causing many to suffer from anxiety. As Maria explained: 'you don't realise you spend all this time waiting, you spend all this time being anxious or whatever. And yeah, it's so annoying. You can't control anything. Even though you feel like you can. Like if my application is right and I write the right things you know, maybe it will work out this time, but realistically it's out of my hands. Yeah...it's so annoying.'

In addition, the Home Office is unaccountable. There is little guidance on what applicants can expect and no avenues to hold them to account if the guidelines are not followed. For example, decisions on "limited leave to remain" applications should take around six months. However, most participants in this research waited longer and it was not uncommon for participants or their family members to wait for up to two years. The Home Office's behaviour during the application process can therefore feel arbitrary and careless to young people. This was something that Maria and her family felt was especially hard when they got the decision on their first application. Maria's mother applied together with her three

children in one application and with the same lawyer. They had all arrived in the UK together, lived here exactly the same amount of time and had exactly the same story. Yet, Maria's, her mother's and her brother's application were denied, and Maria's sister was accepted. Leila had a similar situation whereby her mother and brother's application were accepted, but hers was rejected. The reason the Home Office gave Leila was that she had turned 18 since the application was submitted and therefore needed to submit a fresh application on her own rather than with her family. However, when she submitted the application she was 16 ½ and it was while her application was with the Home Office for a decision that she turned 18. In Leila's case it was she who had to bear the consequence of the Home Office's delay in processing her application – the mistake of not processing the application within their own stated time period meant Leila's application was denied. Neither Leila nor Maria had any influence or control over the outcome of their application. There was nothing they could have done differently to their application to change the outcome and ensure that they would have got their status together with their family. They also were unable to question the Home Office over their conduct or to lodge an appeal. Their only option was to submit a new application now with even higher anxiety levels over whether it would be successful this time.

Lawyers could also make young people feel out of control and most participants had several lawyers before the one who was able to secure their status for them. Stories vary but they are almost always negative. Some lawyers took money while never submitting applications to the Home Office, others assumed that clients would not be able to pay and so simply put their files at the bottom of their piles. Chavez documented similar problems with scheming lawyers in his book *Shadowed Lives* in the United States in the 1990s (1998). Immigration law is hardly regulated and plays on people's fears and desperation. People will pay regardless as they need status so much. And as long as they have not got their status yet, they are unlikely to complain about corrupt lawyers out of fear it may lead to their deportation. Shuri and her family have been to ten different lawyers that she knows of trying to get their status. She thinks her mum has seen even more lawyers that she does not know about. Apart from poor service the most frustrating thing about their lawyers was often the lack of communication with them. With one lawyer this meant the difference between Shuri submitting her application as a dependent and together with her family or on

her own as an adult. The lawyer had simply put their file at the bottom of the pile of files in this office assuming they were unable to pay the application fees. Shuri and her family had understood that he was processing and submitting their applications. After eight months they realised the lawyer had not even looked at their file again and by now Shuri had turned 18. She had to start again.

The hostile environment towards immigrants then exists not only in increasingly extensive enforcement policies and practices that intrude into people's personal, private and intimate lives and can cause long-lasting trauma and stress in those who are subject to it. The hostile environment is also evident in the culture of the Home Office and how its advisors treat applicants (Jones et al., 2017). Limited responsiveness, not adhering to their own guidelines and a lack of responsiveness to applicants' questions were common experiences for participants. In addition, lawyers were unreliable, interactions could feel hostile and young people and their families had no recourse to justice or recovering lost funds due to the unregulated nature of immigration lawyers and their own non-citizen status.

Mental health stigma

Mental health issues are often compounded when young people find that they are further stigmatised for admitting that they feel depressed or riddled with anxiety. Many young people spoke about mental health issues as not being seen a legitimate issue by parents or others in their community. They found little understanding when they told a parent they felt depressed or unable to get out of bed or out of the house. In Maria's hardest year her mother could not understand why she never went out. Her suggestions to go window shopping instead of lying in bed all day felt so far removed from how Maria felt at the time that it contributed to them feeling even further apart. Shuri felt very fortunate for her mother's understanding when she told her that she felt depressed, something she did not expect. Rather than telling Shuri that things will be fine, her mother was able to give Shuri the strength and support she needed at her lowest moment.

The taboo around mental health within their own communities meant that many young people rarely sought out any professional help. This is something that Leila regrets: 'the one

thing I wish I could go back and do properly would be to get help sooner. Not just like for the situation but mentally. It affects you more than you think it does. Like my mum raised me to...she told me that 'if someone can't help you with your problem, keep it to yourself'. That's not how it should be...because if I had opened up sooner to maybe a teacher at school, I could have gotten help sooner. But because of that being stuck in my head, I kept it from everyone, and it affected me more than I tell her. I don't tell her, how mentally it affected me. Because even in the African concept mental health is not something that is...that's not really something they look into. If it's mental health they just sort of brush it aside.... Because you're expected to be stronger than that. You're expected to just get on with it. And things like depression or anxiety is not, in the African community it's not something that is...it's not even spoken about. Like you, if you tell your...if you got an African parent tell them 'oh I got depression' they'll be like 'go take paracetamol', or drink some water, or go to sleep.' Due to the stigma around mental health in young people's networks and communities, and not seeking professional help, the isolation of the immigration regime becomes further entrenched.

Educational attainment

In this environment of emotional turmoil and secrecy where young people are constantly hiding a part of themselves, school and educational attainment became an important focus for many young people as an area of their life they could control and where they could forget about their immigration problems.

At school many young people felt differently. At school young people are encouraged to imagine their future. At school young people are taught that if you work hard you will achieve and be rewarded (even if this turns out not to be entirely true). To achieve at school and get good grades, immigration status does not matter. In fact, it is the uncertainty around immigration status that spurs many on to study hard at school precisely because it is often the only area in their life that they can exert any influence or control over. Specifically, educational attainment. Unlike in an immigration application, young people are not dependent on others for the outcome of the decision nor kept at arm's length during the

process. Whether young people do or don't achieve good grades is up to them and depends on their own efforts at school and preparing for exams.

Although school can also be challenging, as outlined above and in the previous chapters, and young people often found out about their immigration situation through school related events, feeling to have control over this area of their life was important to young people's well-being. For many it was also a place where they could feel mostly normal, they were just another young person in London, having normal young person's worries such as about homework or exams. Especially for young people who were very aware of their immigration situation school provided a form of escape. Sarah explains it like this: 'I guess school was my escape because it was finally somewhere I could go that I didn't have to think about all these big life decisions and stuff. That I could just submerge myself in my books and I always loved learning as well so it was just something that I could do that I was in control of, that was mine.'

Michelle similarly described school as an escape from her immigration situation, the poverty and uncertain future she was facing. She even attributed her good grades to this. Working hard at school to achieve good grades was more than just the only place where she could have control over her life. It was also a means by which she thought she could eventually take back control over all the other aspects of her life again. The hope being that eventually this will lead her to a better future, being a doctor, and would place her firmly back in the driving seat. To finally no longer be controlled and dominated by her immigration status: 'Escaping into the facts of a textbook has always been my escape mechanism and this was why I was good at school. I enjoyed every moment of secondary school. I was determined to take back control of my life and that meant beating my situation. I did brilliantly in my GCSEs and scored five A* and four As.'

Maintaining this attitude and outlook could however be challenging as her schoolwork became interrupted by encounters with the immigration regime. For Sarah it was every time she had big exams on. During her GCSEs the family was going through their Home Office application and during her A-levels she found out about her ineligibility to student finance. Serena, who we will hear more from in chapter six, also found it hard to stay motivated to revise for her A-levels after realising she was not eligible for student finance. She had always

been an A grade student and attended several summer schools in order to decide which universities to apply to. She was offered a place at her university of choice, one of the best in the UK. At AS-level her grades dropped, and she was in danger of not making her offered grades. One of her teachers noticed her lack of motivation and decreasing grades and confronted her about this. During that conversation Serena told the teacher about her situation, that she could not go to university and that she did not have status. This is how her teacher responded to her, as Serena explains to me in our interview: 'And then he [the teacher] said something to me, he said to me 'listen Serena, like, there are certain things in life that you can control, for you right now that's your education. You right now can control your education but your immigration status you can't control that. You can't control what's gonna happen. But you know you wanna go to university, you know, that's the goal for you.'

This gave Serena the motivation she needed to refocus on her exams. Even if she would not be able to go to university straight after school, she still wanted to go to university. It may take a year, two years or three years but she wanted to go. And when that day would come, she needed to have good grades. This was the one thing she could focus on now. Once she got the grades, she could focus on finding a solution to her student finance situation.

Conclusion

Immigration status is something that affected all areas of young people's lives, whether directly or indirectly. Consequently, many struggled with mental health issues such as anxiety or depression but were unable to seek professional help because of the mental health stigma they felt in their community, because they were not eligible for public services due to their immigration status and were unable to pay privately. Being subject to immigration control in a hostile environment meant finding ways to cope with a complex emotional landscape that brought up issues of trust, keeping their status a secret in the "undocumented closet", uncertainty, lack of reliability and accountability when dealing with the Home Office, fear of deportation, and experiences of trauma such as losing a parent to deportation or being detained themselves. Negative discourses about migrants impacted their everyday life experiences at school and many internalised the "immigrant stigma" which made them feel undeserving. The more immigration enforcement and surveillance

encroached into the everyday and private lives of the young people, the more they felt out of control over their own lives. The only thing they felt that could solve their situation was to get status, and this was the only thing that they had no control over. Whether that was because their parents were dealing with the application process without them, whether lawyers were not communicating with them, or whether it was the Home Office that was taking more than the guided time period to make a decision on their application. Even the one and often only thing young people felt they had control over – their educational attainment – was at times affected by their immigration issues. The stresses of submitting an application or waiting on a decision could be distracting and negative decisions demotivating, affecting their exam revision and results.

I will conclude this chapter with an ‘I-poem’ (Woodcock, 2016) from Maria’s self-written and presented story from the theatre workshop I organised as part of this research. Using an ‘I-poem’ allows us another look at Maria and her subjectivity.

I-poem: Maria

My life

I haven’t got

I am

I’d like to say

My dad

My A-levels

Taken from me

We have to be scared

I couldn’t talk

I couldn’t do

I couldn’t trust

I had

I felt

I couldn’t overcome

I could become

Helped me

Allowed me

I still struggle

The darkness

I feel

I was

I am stronger

I’ve got more power

I am able to say

Who I am

The poem tells not only of her mental health struggle and emotional burden she carries as a result of her exclusions because of her immigration status, but it also clearly highlights her transformation. Moving from the depths of her depression when she lost her dad and during her A-levels when she found out she could not go to university, to becoming the stronger person she is now: no longer ashamed of being a migrant. While the first section of the poem focuses on external restrictions on her life, the second part focuses on her personal and internal journey to move forward, becoming stronger and more powerful. When reading her story in prose it feels overwhelmingly a story of struggle and negativity. The I-poem form reveals another subjectivity, that of Maria's journey towards being able to say who she is and the power she feels by doing so. Maria as someone who reclaims her own subjectivity through defying external definition of her identity. The topics of personal and collective transformation are further explored in greater depth in chapter eight.

Living subject to immigration control then has huge and complex implications for young people's emotional well-being and mental health at a time in their life when they are transitioning to adulthood, a period of psychological vulnerability. The immigration bureaucracy isolates and marginalises young people through fear of deportation and prevents them from talking to others about their situation. As a result, they see themselves as the problem and reason for not getting status. Unable to see their situation as a result of institutionalised forms of power of the immigration regime, young people's mental health deteriorates without having any access to support.

Above all what these young migrants need to support their well-being and mental health is a secure future in the country they call their home – the UK. The need to know that they are no longer liable for deportation every two and a half years and that it is safe to invest both emotionally and materially into a future for themselves. The next chapter explores the options available to young people on their journey towards long-term security in the UK and the pathway to citizenship. As the young people in this research consider London their home and have few experiences or memories of living elsewhere, I will ask whether the long and difficult pathway to citizenship for them is a realistic goal or a cruel promise.

Chapter 6 - 'I'm an angry British person': Citizenship as a cruel promise?

From immigration status to citizenship

While the previous chapters of this thesis explored the lived experience of immigration status, this chapter look at the lived experience of citizenship and the citizenship pathway. How is the citizenship pathway constructed by the state and imagined by migrants? And how does this pathway unfold over time in young people's lives? Using the concept of a pathway, I will explore whether this path is smooth, linear and always moving forwards towards the end goal of citizenship as commonly imagined; or whether instead participants face ruts and obstacles along the way. What are these stones or boulders placed in their way and how can the young people overcome them? Are there long-term consequences of these obstacles for their citizenship pathway? Does it affect their sense of belonging? And is the end goal of citizenship actually achievable for participants? This chapter will also look at the relationship between citizenship and belonging, citizenship's multiple meanings in the lives of participants, and the differences between citizenship and immigration status. What does it mean to legally become a British Citizen rather than be a migrant? Most young people strongly feel that they are British and belong here through their everyday life in their London neighbourhoods while remaining legally excluded from the British nation-state through their status. They also have attachments to their countries of birth. How do participants make sense of these incongruencies and live with them?

In the migration journey citizenship is usually imagined as the final step and end goal. If not returning to their country of birth, citizenship should follow temporary immigration statuses. After arriving on a visa and holding, for example, "limited leave to remain" with restricted rights for some time, as was the case for most participants in this research, the citizenship pathway assumes that migrants will transition to a settled status and eventually citizenship. Over time migrants acquire more rights and entitlements and, importantly, the right to citizenship. Once eligible, migrants can apply for citizenship - a process which in many countries, including the UK, is now tested with language and citizenship tests. In this imagination, citizenship becomes

equated to belonging, long-term safety and non-deportability. Once naturalised, a migrant is no longer a migrant but has transitioned to a citizen with equal rights and entitlements to other citizens within the same nation state. The new citizen becomes a member of the 'community of value', effectively ending their probationary status. Whether in the legal or policy framework, popular discourse or research, and migrants' own imagination, such a conceptualisation of the successful citizenship pathway is rarely questioned. As Anderson points out, there is 'an underlying assumption in both research and policy that those people who successfully migrate either move from being temporary to permanent (or 'settled') or return to their country of origin' (2018b).

The citizenship pathway is also imagined as unfolding in parallel with migrants' integration: once migrants are 'integrated', non-citizen residents will be eligible for full membership and to become citizens. While integration is a contested term and concept, it is most commonly understood to refer to 'processes of interaction between migrants and the individuals and institutions of the receiving society that facilitate economic, social, cultural and civic participation and an inclusive sense of belonging at the national and local level (Spencer, 2011: 203). The assumption then is that integration, migrants' feelings of belonging and the citizenship pathway, run in parallel and on a linear forward trajectory until all converge when migrants become fully integrated through acquiring citizenship.

The reality of migrants' experiences of the citizenship pathway however often contradicts this imagined one. Examining the differences between the imagined citizenship pathway and the reality of it for participants in this research, is the focus of this chapter. Based on an analysis of participants' experiences along the citizenship pathway, this chapter argues that their lived experience directly contradicts this imagined and constructed pathway. Young people find their belonging continuously undermined through multiple rejections by the state and its immigration regime. Rather than a hopeful and joyous end to their migration journey however, citizenship becomes a 'cruel promise' that seems less and less achievable with every obstacle that is placed in participants' way. Drawing on Berlant's idea of 'cruel optimism' (2011), I will explore how young people's need and desire for achieving citizenship becomes an

obstacle to young people's sense of belonging. Despite these experiences, citizenship remains important for young migrants in order to secure their long-term safety in the country they call their home. Serena's experience was no different. Her pathway to British citizenship started when she was eight years old, but the further along the pathway she was the less sure she was of ever achieving citizenship.

Serena

Serena was eight years old when she arrived with her family in the UK on Christmas Eve 2004. She desperately wanted to be British and quickly integrated once she went to school, adopting a London accent and everything she thought was British culture. Soon Serena called London home. For many years she felt ashamed of her Nigerian roots, even lying about where she was born. However, living in the UK without immigration status meant that her immigration situation came to define her life and experiences. There was her father's deportation, the school trips she could not go on and the fact that she was unable to access a student loan to go to university. There were the many applications to the Home Office that got rejected, which she and her family appealed and then putting in fresh applications. When hers was finally accepted it was a bitter-sweet victory: her siblings and mother were rejected. She felt she belonged in Britain, so why was she facing all these obstacles? Next, she realised that despite having status she would not be able to go to university for another three years. Another frustrating and painful rejection. As a result, Serena became involved in a campaign group on the issue. Being part of the campaign group increased her awareness of how many young migrants are excluded from full membership in Britain. This was also when she learnt about the long and costly pathway she was facing in order to get citizenship. Unable to go to university, Serena started working as a carer and became angry with the restrictions she was facing in her life because of her immigration situation. All she wanted was to go to university. Serena's exclusion from rights such as education because of her immigration status taught her that papers mattered more than anything else, and that citizenship mattered the most. The other lesson she was coming to terms with was the extent to which she would have to prove her deservingness in order to obtain citizenship over the next ten years or more. No matter how well she spoke English, how often she went to church, or how good her exam results would be, she would remain legally excluded from belonging in Britain for

many more years. The more she felt the exclusions and rejections, the more she questioned her belonging in Britain. Why couldn't her legal status be the same as the way she felt? And why was she trying so hard to be part of this country that kept rejecting her? She started to explore Nigerian culture and history again. Over time Serena developed a more complex framework of belonging that included both Britain and Nigeria. Still, there is no doubt in her mind that London is her home. She has lived here most of her life and knows nothing else, no other culture and no other way of life.

Through the examination of the lived experience of citizenship, the citizenship pathway and belonging by participants in this study, this chapter will contribute to a body of literature that critically examines the multiple meanings of citizenship and belonging and how it is lived at its points of contestation. This chapter is divided into four key sections. The first looks at the myth of the citizenship pathway, deconstructing how it is commonly imagined and conceptualised. The second section examines the citizenship pathway as lived by participants in this research and how this differs from that conceptualisation. The third section interrogates the relationship between the citizenship pathway and belonging and the impact of rejection on participants' sense of belonging, producing the 'angry British person'. The final section looks at the importance of papers and citizenship.

The myth of the citizenship pathway

In chapter two I challenge the narrative of citizenship in Western liberal states as one of expansion in terms of rights and entitlements of citizens and to whom citizenship is accessible. This narrative leaves out groups that were excluded historically and that continue to be excluded today, such as women and minority groups (Bhambra, 2015; Lister, 1997). It also does not consider citizens who are excluded from the 'community of value' (Anderson, 2013) or those excluded symbolically from the nation (Kapoor and Narkowicz, 2019). In addition to a critique of this dominant narrative, some scholars have argued for a contraction of citizenship since the late 1990s based on the increased barriers along the citizenship path for non-citizens, the growing significance of citizenship rights' compared to rights of legal non-citizens, and a renewed emphasis on national identity and assimilation in many Western liberal states who are re-

asserting their sovereignty through citizenship policies and border controls (Fargues, 2017; Joppke, 2010; Mouritsen, 2012). As Bosniak observed ‘we have witnessed a dramatic return of the *national* citizen’ (2000: 963). Fargues for instance argues that the increased use of citizenship deprivation since the 1990s shows the ‘renationalisation’ of citizenship (2017). Importantly, citizenship means that settled migrants are safe from deportation and as Anderson and colleagues point out ‘[F]reedom from deportation power – the right to *genuinely* permanent residence – can be seen as one of the few remaining privileges which separates citizens from settled non-citizens in contemporary liberal states’ (Anderson et al., 2011: 548).

Instead of greater accessibility to citizenship for migrants or less need for citizenship because of near equal rights between citizens and non-citizens, states are now systemically producing, constructing and institutionalising precarious immigration statuses through its policies, as Goldring et al. have shown in the case of Canada (2009) and Bosniak in the US. She argued that ‘Lawmakers have recently enacted a variety of measures designed to make national citizenship status either harder to obtain, more socially significant, or both’ (2000: 963). As a result, migrants today are more likely to find themselves along a pathway in and out of legality with various precarious and legal situations, than on a citizenship pathway as outlined in the introduction of this chapter. This increased precariousness in immigration regimes has extended to citizenship itself which is becoming increasingly fragile with ever starker lines of differentiation between citizens by birth and naturalised citizens (Kapoor and Narkowicz, 2019). As Cole points out, naturalised citizens are not as safe as citizens by birth as they might face questioning over their belonging to a national identity and because their citizenship can be withdrawn by states (2014). He concludes ‘The danger is that migrant citizenship remains a distinct space of fragility and uncertainty, rather than an equally valued and secure way of being a citizen’ (Cole, 2014).

Three recent examples help to illustrate this trend. Firstly, the Windrush scandal in spring 2018 showed that people who arrived in the UK as citizens in the 1950s, with the right to reside in the UK indefinitely and who have lived in the UK most of their lives up to 50 years or more are at risk of deportation, and in some cases were deported (Gentleman, 2019). Secondly, the Brexit referendum demonstrated the

insecurity of the rights of non-citizen residents. European citizens - until now the most privileged migrants in the UK through their European citizenship - practically lost their rights as European citizens overnight due to policy changes (Gonzales and Sigona, 2017). Thirdly, the case of British-born Shamima Begum's deprivation of citizenship in February 2019, who did not hold another nationality (although she is eligible for Bangladeshi citizenship) when she travelled to Syria as 15-year old teenager where she married an IS fighter, shows the fragility of citizenship. As Gibney argued, the dangers of 'piercing holes into citizenship' had already led to a 'creep in denationalisation powers' and uses by the British state before Begum's case (2018). Numbers of citizenship deprivation have sharply increased since a change in the Home Secretary's powers in 2002,¹³ peaking at 104 in 2017 (up from less than 5 in 2006 and only a handful of cases hitherto) (Yeo, 2017). This shows how citizenship is no longer an irrevocable right but becoming a privilege that can be revoked as punishment for certain types of behaviour (Gibney, 2013; Griffiths, 2019).

In the UK, the citizenship pathway has also changed over recent years with settled status – a precondition for citizenship eligibility - harder to access and short-term precarious immigration statuses being the common type of stay for a diverse range of migrants. As a report by the think tank IPPR pointed out in 2016 'Acquiring British nationality is tougher than it has ever been' (Murray, 2016), and since 2013 citizenship grants have declined sharply (Blinder, 2018). The young people themselves were very aware of these changes and how they were being kept at arm's length from citizenship. During a campaign group meeting discussing future campaigning priorities, one of the issues they were concerned about was that the citizenship pathway had been increased from six years to ten years for most of them. In addition, legal options to enter and reside in the country have also diminished with increasingly restrictive immigration politics. Changes to the citizenship pathway relevant to participants in this research can be grouped around two areas (for a more in-depth discussion see chapter two): (1) citizenship pathways have been extended in time with most non-citizens needing a minimum of five-years legal residence before being eligible for citizenship; and (2) citizenship has become more expensive in terms of application, legal, course,

¹³ Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002

test and ceremony fees (Huddleston, 2013) (which increase annually and are comparatively higher than in most other EU countries). Pathways have also become more complex with different eligibility criteria for naturalisation depending on prior immigration status, as outlined in the British Nationality Act 1981 (as amended). These changes have often been implemented through piecemeal changes in legislation rather than a wholesale overhaul of naturalisation law. For example the pathway to citizenship for family migrants was extended from three to five years as part of the changes to family migration rules in 2012 without amending nationality legislation (Wray, 2013).

Criteria have also become more restrictive and are rigorously tested (Byrne, 2017; Monforte et al., 2019). Migrants are expected to evidence that their behaviour and values align with British national identity through stipulations such as the ‘good character’ requirement and enforced through the ‘British Values’ and ‘Prevent’ agendas, even after they are citizens. As Badenhop argues in her thesis, the naturalisation procedures in the UK now require migrants to prove themselves as ‘Super Citizens’ in order to be granted citizenship (2018). During this period, young migrants arguably carry all the *obligations* entailed in citizenship, but none of the *rights*. In its most recent ‘good character’ guidance in January 2019, for instance, the government declared that any overstaying in the ten years prior to a citizenship application would most likely lead to applicants failing the ‘good character’ requirement and so not receive citizenship (Hickman, 2019). How strictly this will be enforced remains to be seen in forthcoming case law.

The lived experience of the citizenship pathway

This section will look at how the citizenship pathway is lived by young migrants in Britain today and contributes to a deconstruction of the hegemonic narrative of it. Young people in this study were mostly on a pathway that required a minimum of eleven years legal residence before they were eligible to apply for citizenship, as discussed in previous chapters.¹⁴ Not included are the years people lived in the UK

¹⁴ Four times 30 months “limited leave to remain” statuses and one year indefinite leave to remain.

without immigration status before receiving their first status, or the time spent waiting to find a lawyer, save money, for appeals, Home Office decisions or in-between renewals. Many young people will therefore have been in the UK for around twenty years before they are eligible to apply for citizenship. As Leila points out: 'I'll be 34 when I officially become a citizen of the UK.' She arrived when she was eleven, so she will have been on the citizenship pathway for 23 years. Young people's pathway to citizenship cannot only take them a very long time, it also is not a smooth journey nor is there certainty of becoming a citizen at the end of it. Unlike how the pathway is envisaged in policy as a linear forward movement, the experiences of young people tell of a different journey. They encounter multiple barriers, hurdles and rejections along their paths extending its duration. Whether this is being excluded from school trips, finding out they cannot access student loans or having their leave to remain applications rejected, their path towards citizenship is bumpy and moves both forwards and backwards. Feeling tested over their deservingness of British citizenship, young people start questioning whether the citizenship they were promised will ever become a reality.

Tobi, who came from Nigeria aged nine and who we met in chapter four, explains it like this: 'I see this as this country trialling you as a citizen, seeing if you are worth becoming a citizen. But you've done so much and done so much for your community and all of that, that I feel like I just have to show them that this is what I'm doing but I don't wanna feel like oh I'm doing this just to become a citizen. I'm doing this because I want to do it, do you understand? But I'm choosing to do this, I'm not choosing to do the community hours to look good so I can get like renewal and stuff. I'm choosing it 'cause I actually want to do it... And I have an interest in it. But it just helps with my application.' Tobi is aware that he is only 'tolerated' in the UK for now and that he is expected to prove his deservingness to become a full member. He becomes the hard-working immigrant who upholds the virtues of Good Citizenship (Anderson and Hughes, 2015: 4) but remains legally excluded from it. At the same time his insecure and temporary status and his need for citizenship leaves him little choice in this process. If he is not the hard-working, law-abiding non-citizen who engages in community work his chances of eventually being fully included through citizenship diminish drastically. As Chauvin and Garcés-Mascareñas point out: 'access to legal

status depends on the successful performance of deservingness' (2014: 422). In this process Tobi is expected to successfully perform his deservingness of citizenship, but, in return, receives little assurance as to whether he will become a citizen.

Tobi was very aware of the long-term insecurity of his situation. He knows that to be legally safe in the UK – which he considers this his home — he needs at least settled status, ideally citizenship. He also knows that no matter how far along the path he got, it could end at any point during the process, whether at his next renewal application, at his application for settled status or his citizenship application: 'to get indefinite...you have to do ten years of "limited leave to remain". And then indefinite is not guaranteed because they can still say "oh you're not like, we don't think you're worthy to get an indefinite. You still have to do limited leave until we think you are worthy to get indefinite"'. The onus in this process is entirely on applicants like Tobi to prove and perform their deservingness to the Home Office all along the citizenship pathway and beyond. They cannot build up a bank of 'good behaviours', one false step along the pathway could cruelly stop their entire process as was made explicit in the recent 'good character' guidelines outlined above. If all along his journey Tobi behaved impeccably, as indeed he has, if he submitted his renewal application even just a day late, he would legally be considered as overstaying and so could later be denied citizenship.

In my conversation with Shuri she pointed out the high standards that she and people like her were being held accountable to in order to achieve citizenship, especially given their length of residence in the UK and their social and cultural inclusion. She explains: 'Even when you apply for your like citizenship you have to take a life in the UK test... I am pretty sure British people would not even be able to pass this test so why do I have to take it. Yes, I feel British and what-not but would you be able to pass the test? ...It's just ridiculous. Yeah like proper actual study. Like school kinda study. It's not, I'm just like 'why?' er it just kinda, it frustrates me. And then as well as the life in the UK test you also have to take a British language test or whatever it's called, I'm just like...It's so frustratin'. Oh Jesus. I just, I can't...it's a lot. ...It's just too much.' While she was expected to uphold the virtues of good citizenship, exemplifying these throughout her life in the UK, she was also being tested on these. Tests that she had to study and pay

for. To her this felt incredibly frustrating, and somewhat laughable – especially given her only language was English - were it not also so painful.

Finally, the long, messy and bumpy citizenship pathway that young people are on produces feelings of incongruence for them. As Daisy explains: 'Like many of my fellow campaigners who have also grown up here, I am on this 10-year journey to being eligible for British citizenship. Only then will my official immigration status reflect the way I have thought about myself for as long as I can remember.' The citizenship and passport that they hold to is usually of a country they have no other connection to than being born there. Most have little memory of their country of citizenship and have not set foot in it since they left as young children. Something they were unable to do because they were immobilised in the UK through their immigration situation. The very thing that defined them in the eyes of the British state – their migration from a non-European country – meant that they were in fact unable to be mobile. As a result, they no longer have any connections with their country of birth and citizenship. Yet they are ineligible for citizenship in the country they live in and felt at home in for at least a decade.

The citizenship pathway is imagined as ending with migrants becoming British Citizens as they integrate into British society and settle here long-term. Young people follow this pathway, expecting this outcome, but, instead have to experience a cruel reality: constant bumps and multiple rejections along the way. With every bump and rejection, the promise of citizenship at the end of the pathway becomes less and less realistic. However, once on the pathway young people cannot leave the pathway. And complying with expected behaviours becomes a cruel necessity. When young people were once keen and proud to become legally British, the idea of being British becomes almost sadistic given they are seeking legal recognition from the very state that is rejecting them and restricting their lives. Maria explains it like this: It's just so frustrating...like it's really, it's you jump through hoops and you do all these like amazing things whatever just to live in the country. Like realistically, it's not that great, as a country but it makes everybody else thinks it's great. And that is the best thing about England, it has the best PR (both laugh). England and America, they have the best PR. But at the end of the day I'd rather be here than in Nigeria anyway, just I like

economically anyway I'd rather be here. And this is, like this is where my life is now, this is where my friends are. This is where I became my adult self. Yeah...yeah, this is where ... yeah this is home. Yeah...that's that. Onto the next card I guess...oooh' As young people realise this reality of the citizenship pathway, they also realise their only option is to stay on the pathway and play by the rules if they want to be safe in the country they call their home.

Not the same citizenship pathway for everyone

Chapter two of this thesis explored the historical connections between citizenship, empire and racism, citizenship's trajectory to the contemporary regime in the UK and contests its premise as a universal concept. Instead it argued that for certain groups, citizenship has always been exclusionary (Bhambra, 2015; Griffiths, 2019; Lister, 1997) and a tool of governmentality (Kapoor and Narkowicz, 2019), especially in terms of who can access which citizenship. It is closely linked with the emergence of the nation-state system and the British empire and orders people globally by fixing them to a state based on their place of birth (Shachar, 2009). These legacies of colonial governing continue in today's immigration and citizenship regimes in the UK not just through multiple immigration statuses as discussed in chapter three of this thesis, but also through naturalisation policies that create a hierarchy of accessibility to citizenship and differential pathways to citizenship. A hierarchy that translates into different levels of realise-ability of the promise of citizenship.

Serena was very aware - and made aware - of these global hierarchies of belonging and citizenship from a young age. She was so aware that, when she first arrived in the UK, she lied about where she was born. She did not want her friends to know that she was from Nigeria: 'I used to lie as well about where I was born, one time I said I was born in America, in New York, at New York general hospital. 'Cause I don't know, at school...at lunch times we'd be like 'oh yeah what hospital were you born at? Newham general hospital? King George's?' like people would [name] their hospitals...and I remember thinking 'what the hell am I gonna say? Lagos general hospital?' Like, so the... that was the first time I was gonna self-profess that I was a migrant, I was born in Nigeria. Not that I lived in Nigeria... born on that ground. That my passport is green, d'you get what I mean? So, I said, if I'm gonna claim that I'm an immigrant I'm gonna be the best

possible immigrant... So, I said 'oh I was born in America, in New York general hospital'. Doesn't even exist!

This story tells of an implicit knowledge that Serena had as a child that different passports and citizenships hold different value, despite being determined by little else than where you are born in the 'birthright lottery' (Shachar, 2009). To Serena her green passport was not something to be proud of compared to the blue U.S. passport. Not only does someone's citizenship at birth significantly determine their life chances and access to global resources (see chapter two) but for a young Serena it also came with a sense of shame. The same way that Sarah felt embarrassment and shame about her green passport from West Africa which she hid it at school before going on a trip (chapter three), and Kareem put his own green Asian passport in an envelope on a school trip so that no one would see it, Serena was too embarrassed and ashamed to admit where she was born to her peers at school. Peers who she thought were mostly British.

As Bhambra argued, the hierarchy defining British citizenship is predicated on a racial hierarchy and dates back to the days of empire and its evolution through the Commonwealth (Bhambra, 2017; see also Hampshire, 2005; Karatani, 2003). This established a system of multiple citizenships with national British citizenship on the one hand, and 'alternative types of citizenship, that is, British subjecthood and Commonwealth citizenship' for former countries of the empire on the other after the second world war (Karatani, 2003: 192). The meaning and value of Commonwealth citizenship was further diminished in the 1960s and 70s which effectively introduced 'full and second-class citizenship' (Bhambra, 2017) until the 1981 Commonwealth Immigration Acts by which 'citizens were turned into migrants...with the loss of rights and privileges that had previously been afforded to them' (Bhambra, 2016). This hierarchy is furthermore maintained by privileged accessibility to immigration status or citizenship through money and wealth (Anderson, 2013; Bowling, 2013; Griffiths, 2019). As a young person during a campaign meeting observed: 'immigration is only for the rich...if you cannot pay you have to stay in your precarious situation.'

Had Serena migrated to the UK from Nigeria between 1948 and the 1962 she would have arrived as a citizen – although even that would not have guaranteed her long-

term safety as the recent Windrush scandal showed. This illustrates that people's situations change because of changes in policy, even if they themselves have not changed anything about their situation. Chapter two discussed this in relation to migrants' legal status which can change due to policy changes, among other reasons. In the same way, people's status as a citizen has changed in the UK and the context of empire as a result of changes in policy and legislation, as does their ability to access citizenship through naturalisation, changing people's citizenship pathway. So even though Serena and Sarah arrived in the UK as migrants and not citizens, their experience of exclusion from citizenship and their bumpy, long and costly pathway to citizenship must be seen within the context of British citizenship's racial hierarchy and its legacies of empire, whereby citizenship has become more narrowly defined in ethnic, national and racial terms. As Hampshire has convincingly argued in his book *Citizenship and Belonging*, much of post-war immigration and citizenship policies in Britain were designed to obstruct colonial immigration (2005). The legacy of this today, is that naturalisation for young people like Serena is harder than for other immigrants who are not from former colonies racialised as other, foreign, poor and black or brown. Citizenship pathways then change throughout time but also depending on where you are from, your resources, and for some - as for those affected by the Windrush scandal - the pathway can be reversed whereby citizens become migrants.

The young people in this research face a citizenship pathway that is neither cheap nor straight-forward despite their strong feelings of belonging, as discussed in the next section. The pathway they face usually takes a minimum of ten years, costs a minimum of £10,000, involves multiple bumps along the way and involves the uncertainty of whether that pathway will lead them to its end or cruelly remains an unrealisable promise.

The citizenship pathway and belonging

This section of the chapter examines the relationship between participants' sense of belonging and their experiences along the citizenship pathway. Having mostly grown up in the UK, young people strongly feel that this is their home and that they belong

here – as reflected in the title of their most recent campaign video on fairer fees and their long and costly pathway to citizenship. Gidley and colleagues point out that compared to citizenship '*Belonging* includes an affective, emotional dimension...includes a performative, ritual aspect...and has an association with place' (2018: 3). This section explores these aspects of belonging and how they are mostly located in young people's localised, everyday lives in London. Their sense of belonging stands in tension with their exclusion from legal citizenship and their experiences of rejection along the messy citizenship pathway. The papers they hold do not reflect where young people feel they belong, and their feelings have little to no bearing on their papers. This jarring between young people's exclusion from legal citizenship and their belonging in Britain provokes feelings of pain and anger and leads to a sense of 'rejected belonging'. How do young people make sense of their continuous exclusion based on their non-British and non-European passports despite their best effort to conform to what they think are British ideals and behaviours? This section first discusses participants' sense of belonging based on their everyday life in local London neighbourhoods, and describes tensions between local and national belonging and what it means to be British. Secondly, it discusses how the tension of this belonging with their citizenship pathway produces 'rejected belonging'.

Young Londoners: Everyday, local belonging

Most of the young people in this research came to the UK at an early age and spent over half of their lives here. They call Britain their home and having created an emotional connection here, claim their belonging in Britain. Looking at young people's performative, ritual aspects of belonging and the places they inhabit, it becomes apparent that their affect and emotional belonging to Britain is based on their everyday life in local London neighbourhoods. Through the campaign group and going to university – for those who could – this space expanded to include more areas of London but still rarely involved leaving London. All except one participant had only lived in London since migrating to the UK. And all except one participant intended to continue living in London. This section therefore looks at how young people's everyday practices of going to school, seeing their friends or going to church that embed them in their local communities lead to feelings of belonging to Britain.

They usually also already spoke English before arriving in the UK and most soon lost their accents adopting a London one. Arriving as children, they integrated quickly, especially once they attended school. In policy-speak one could therefore argue that they fulfilled many of the markers of belonging required to obtain British citizenship. Markers that, as outlined above, are now tested before non-citizens can naturalise with an English Language test and a citizenship test designed to ask future citizens about British culture, customs and history. In addition, considering policy integration debates, young people can be considered fully integrated. Integration is considered to be the process when migrants and individuals and institutions of host societies interact so that migrants increasingly participate economically, socially, culturally and civically, as well as develop a sense of belonging nationally and locally (Spencer, 2011). Despite young people's feelings, practices and rituals of belonging, and their process of integration progressing in a linear, forward-moving trajectory, and as expected by the state, this does not always translate into the citizenship pathway unfolding in parallel and ending with the successful convergence of belonging, integration and full legal membership.

Tobi was always aware that he was not born in the UK. He also knew he did not have the right to stay there. However, his everyday life in multicultural London hardly differed from that of his peers at school. He went to school with his friends and they shared the same experiences growing up. He also went to his local church and, at the age of 16, got a part-time job. He belonged, in everyday terms, in his local community and neighbourhood in East London. He explains: 'growing up here, meeting friends, you tend to forget 'cause you've been, you become really close to them and attached and having neighbours like you go to their house and stuff then you forget that you are not a citizen. So then through those like, especially when I was at secondary school, I became more comfortable, my accent changed a bit... I started forgetting that I was Nigerian... I feel more British. Like with my friends we... um we were all like treating each other as British.' Tobi's experience and sense of being British here is one that is particular to London and needs to be understood in this context (see e.g. Back and Sinha, 2018a). As he himself acknowledges: 'I was happy that where we moved to was very culturally diverse. So, a lot of people knew about Nigerian people'. Since moving to the UK Tobi has only lived in a very multicultural part of London. He has hardly left

London even for short trips. When talking of Britishness and being British, this must be understood in the context of Tobi's lived experience only encompassing multicultural London. This understanding of Britishness cannot be likened to a more nationalist understanding that equates being British more closely to a mono-ethnic national identity. Such an understanding is reflected for example in recent changes to citizenship legislation and rhetoric among advocates of the 'Leave Campaign' during the Brexit referendum. In other parts of Britain, Britishness will be understood yet again differently.

Since Serena arrived in the UK as an eight-year old girl from Nigeria, she worked hard to assimilate herself into London and become as British as possible. The one thing she did not want to be recognised as was a migrant. Especially a migrant from Nigeria. She lost her Nigerian accent for a London accent, went to school, was active in her local church and tea became her favourite drink. She says: 'from like year three to year six you know, I found myself assimilating to like British culture more, assimilating to the British norms more, and stuff like learning to use a knife and fork... I mean in Nigeria we use spoons!' Only her cooking stayed Nigerian. Today she is indistinguishable from her fellow Londoners in this multicultural city. To Serena London is her home. She has lived here most of her life and thinks she would find living in Nigeria very difficult. She felt she belonged in Britain and a large part of her identity was British. Serena was part of several communities including her school and her church. She played netball for her school, club and the county teams. She made it into the gifted and talented group in Sixth Form for the top 40 GCSE results. Through the King's College K Plus and Social Mobility Forum she participated in fortnightly talks, was assigned a university mentor and attended three summer schools in Durham, York and at King's.

Participants' experiences of everyday belonging in London were so strong that not having British citizenship practically became irrelevant or forgotten in an everyday context. And local belonging in London's neighbourhood came to mean the same to them as being British. Their legal exclusion was almost mundane in everyday life, especially while participants were young and at school. Once Serena had settled into her new life, she remembers growing up in London similarly to Tobi: 'Yeah I knew I was an immigrant like from the get-go... but it wasn't a thing, I didn't talk about it 'cause

everyone was British or had some sort of status... or that I knew of anyway... so what did I do? So, I just got on with it. You know, if conversations came up “yeah yeah yeah, I've got a British passport”.’ Even though she did not have a British passport and knew this, growing up in London and going to school it almost did not matter. After the initial transition, Serena quickly did not feel like a migrant anymore when she was with her friends.

Participants developed a strong sense of belonging through their everyday life and neighbourhood despite formal exclusions. While this is not uncommon (see for example Back, 1996; Back and Sinha, 2018a; Gonzales, 2016; Sirriyeh, 2008), what sets participants in this research apart, is their migration as young children and their subsequent immobilisation in the UK. This led to lives lived within a localised area that became and is their only home, as memories and connections to their countries of birth faded.

Rejected belonging

This section explores how young migrants’ sense of belonging changes with their length of stay in the UK and in response to their experiences along the citizenship pathway. Research has generally found that ‘belonging to Britain and Britishness increases with length of stay in the UK’ (Platt, 2014: 1). The three modes of belonging outlined by Gidley and colleagues – emotions, rituals, and place – effect each other and are differently affected by young people’s citizenship pathway. It was particularly young migrants’ feeling of belonging and ‘British-ness’ that was being tested by the state through obstacles along their citizenship pathway, which made them feel increasingly rejected. Every rejection is a painful experience that makes young people question the meaning and value of being British. Their understanding of belonging becomes more complex, incorporating their countries of birth, and a sense belonging in the campaign group. Still, London remains the only home they can imagine living in and adamantly claim being British. As a result, they are caught in an impossible place: their belonging rejected by the British state and unable to achieve the promise of citizenship. This inability to become a British citizen becomes increasingly cruel as young people are unable to make their feelings of belonging align with their legal status.

Participants sense of everyday belonging described in the previous section would be brutally disrupted by moments of visibility through exclusions, restrictions and rejections based on their immigration status. How and when these moments occurred varied among participants, as discussed in chapter three. For some it was school trips that would separate young migrants from their peers in everyday rituals of belonging. For others it was a parents' deportation that provoked a dislocation from place. As Sarah explained in chapter three, when her father was detained her mother moved the family out of their family home and hid with an aunt, afraid they would be detained too. Sarah was therefore removed from her familiar surroundings that had given her a sense of belonging. For others like Shuri, it was their own detention that reminded them of their exclusionary and tolerated status in the UK. Shuri's detention also removed her from the place where she belonged long-term. First as she had to stay in the detention centre, after detention as she had to stay with a foster family and even when she was reunited with her mother they lived in a new area and with her mother's friend. Even returning to familiar places like her school no longer felt the same. Her localised belonging through everyday rituals of going to school and seeing her friends nearby was disrupted through the detention and its consequences and acted as a cruel reminder of the fragility of her belonging that was not supported by her legal status.

Growing up feeling no different to their peers, these moments often came as a surprise to young people. Singled out as not British, their belonging and how they had understood it, was questioned. These moments of rejection or difference showed on the one hand that their sense of belonging was a specific localised belonging, rooted in their neighbourhood and everyday lived experiences. On the other hand, it demonstrated the differences between social and cultural belonging lived locally, and juridical belonging as articulated in national citizenship. Belonging and being British are no longer necessarily aligned. For many participants it was in one of these moments that they 'became' a migrant. Before then, they had thought of themselves as British.

Over time Serena's life became more and more defined by her immigration status. She was unable to go on school trips; her father was deported; she was unable to get a student loan; planning a future became a privilege for others - her and her family's first

immigration application was rejected. They submitted a fresh application in 2012, which was rejected again. They appealed and eventually submitted another fresh application in 2014/15. This time only her application for 'leave to remain' was accepted. Her brother's, sister's and mother's were rejected. Despite her sense of belonging, she remained legally and politically excluded. To her, ultimately, this was the barrier that meant the most to her. It was what prevented her from feeling safe in the UK. It was what prevented her from feeling that her family was safe in the UK. And it prevented her from being able to plan for and move towards her future in the UK.

Serena remembers the first time she really felt fear as an immigrant: her father's deportation. She explains: 'there was like fear as a result of it... my mum like literally packed us up and said: 'ok we have to go, 'cause they might come to the house and get us next' sort of thing... So that was like my first encounter with the fear of being an immigrant sort of thing.' Suddenly she was not only excluded legally, but her legal exclusion also excluded her from her local community as she had to move house. Their mixed-statuses in the family produced a similar situation where Serena's status separated her from her closest community: her family.

After multiple rejections from Britain, Serena started to ask herself why she so desperately wanted to be British and part of this state? A state that pursued policies which produced the problems she faced in her life. She started to explore her Nigerian roots again and shed the shame she had felt as a young girl. She read books about its history and novels by Nigerian writers. She wore traditional clothes more proudly and started to wear her hair naturally. At the beginning of our interview, Serena and I looked through photos of her as a child in Nigeria that she saw for the first time just the day before. Her sense of belonging started to diversify, incorporating multiple aspects of herself. These included her life, friends and family in London, and her Nigerian culture and family which gave Serena a sense of self other than her situation in Britain.

For Michael the moment that led him to question his belonging and what it meant to be British was when he realised he was ineligible for a student loan because of this immigration status. He came to the UK from Ghana aged nine to join his mother and sister here. Like most other participants in this study Michael felt entirely British by the

time he reached his A-levels and considered this his home. He achieved excellent grades at A-levels and got several offers to study chemistry from UK's top universities. But he was not eligible for student finance. He had done everything he thought he was supposed to do and yet he was barred from continuing his education. He felt that everything he had been told was wrong and his future was slipping through his fingers. Until this point he thought he was British, behaved British and acted British. Yet he was excluded from a British student loan and from British universities (until he was awarded a scholarship). He explains this contradiction in his own words in a talk he gave during a group gathering: 'So we weren't British enough for a loan, but we were British enough to work, we were British enough to pay taxes, and we were British enough to join the British army.'

Moments of young people's everyday lived belonging in London became rejected by the British state through experiences along the citizenship pathway, which affected their overall sense of belonging and of being British. Every time they encountered an obstacle on their pathway to citizenship, it illustrated to them their exclusions from being British, and highlighted the different rights and entitlements they had based on their non-British citizenship, compared to their peers who held a British passport. The need and desire for citizenship had negative consequences for young people's sense of belonging, while citizenship remained unattainable. Over time participants incorporated multiple belongings into their identity, sometimes in response to experiences of rejection along their citizenship pathway, other times despite of them. They did not always fit neatly together. Often edges jarred, and different belongings sat uncomfortably next to each other. But all areas mattered. Despite citizenship seeming harder to achieve and this goal seemingly moving further away from them, or perhaps because of their experience of 'rejected belonging', they also became more aware of the importance and necessity of citizenship. The next section of this chapter will explore this importance of immigration status and citizenship and to what extent the everyday belonging of participants matters in the face of legal exclusions.

Legal status and citizenship matters

This last section of the chapter discusses how citizenship as a legal status matters in participants' lives and the relationship between legal citizenship and a sense of belonging. I argue that despite young people's strong sense of belonging and home in London, the UK, and as British, that in spite of young people's everyday rituals and activities and embeddedness in their local communities, they reach a moment where they are unable to progress with their lives because of their legal status. As Bloch et al. demonstrate in their study of young "undocumented" migrants in Britain, rights depend on citizenship and exercising rights is therefore withheld from migrants in precarious immigration situations (2014: 86). Usually around the time young people turn 18 (as outlined in chapter four), their immigration status and inability to access citizenship becomes cruelly prohibitive. As something that was never questioned by the young people themselves, everyday belonging here takes more of a back seat, while the obstacle of legal status and citizenship takes centre stage in their lives. Furthermore, their feelings of belonging and being British, is not usually something that gets considered as part of their immigration applications.

This section also looks at how citizenship compares to immigration status and why citizenship is more important to participants than continuous temporary immigration statuses. In chapter two, I looked at literature that argues citizenship is more than just a legal status. This literature argues that citizenship is also membership in a political and normative community, that citizenship involves social and cultural aspects, identity, belonging and a form of participation. Importantly this opens our field of vision and analysis to how non-citizens participate in citizenship *practices*, how this contests its power and affects people's sense of belonging. The previous section discussed young people's strong sense of local belonging through their everyday lived experience. Here, I discuss the contradictions between this and young migrants' exclusion from juridical citizenship or immigration status. The constant obstacles along the citizenship pathway and the growing importance of getting citizenship as young people get older, make citizenship seem more like a cruel promise than an achievable goal.

The importance of papers and legal inclusion were often brought into sharp focus when inclusion and exclusion were directly opposed. Education was something Serena had been included in – formally and informally. She had gone to school since she arrived in the UK, where she was both cheeky and academically able. However, her performance in exams often did not reflect her abilities. This was because, when she was preparing for her exams, she was also going through her immigration application process, and found out that she was not eligible for a student loan. Compared to getting status, her A-Levels did not seem that important. The most important thing she needed to go to university was her status although her teacher reminded her, she also needed her A-levels, whether she went to university now or in ten years. Once she knew she could not get a student loan, Serena found it hard to motivate herself to work for something that seemingly had no future. As Serena explains: ‘So I knew... I'm not gonna be able to go to university without erm status and, if so, it's gonna be very hard. So, I was really struggling with like working towards something that I didn't even know I could attain at Sixth Form. And academically everything started to go downhill... it was just like, “Serena, what's the point?”, you know. Literally that was my discourse 24/7. What's the point of me being here? All o' that. I started to look a mess oh my god... I didn't care anymore you know. Sixth Form now became a chore for me. I loved being at school, but it just became a chore because I was thinking “What am I working towards? What's the purpose here?”’ This illustrates how Serena's sense of belonging only mattered up to a certain point. Completing her education and having a future in Britain depended on Serena receiving status and eventually citizenship. Serena cannot pursue her educational future until she has status. And she cannot access a student loan until she has either settled status, or legal status for three years and can prove she has lived in the UK for half her life. She needs legal citizenship, or status, in order to claim her rights to education.

The value of being legally included through papers and how it relates to belonging is highlighted by the relief young people feel when they get their status. Their feelings of belonging to Britain are confirmed legally and on paper. Although getting status does not lift all exclusions for young people, it was still an important step along the citizenship pathway. Importantly it removed the fear of being deported for the duration of their status. Shuri explained it like this: ‘It used to scare me so much... And

it [having papers] brings like an actual sense of belonging. Like you actually have the papers to prove that - you are kind of part of that thing now. It's not like something that they can take away...well they can take it away from you, but they can't like force you into a van and say "we're gonna deport you". So, it was quite nice in that respect just like getting it.'

Having status meant that Serena and Shuri were now legal residents in the UK and they were non-deportable for the duration of their 30-month stay. The immigration regime however meant that citizenship was not a guaranteed end to their current situation living as not-yet-citizens on an eleven-year citizenship pathway. For now, their status afforded them safety and access to some rights while their presence in the UK was temporarily tolerated by the British state. The stratification produced by a complex UK immigration system (Morris, 2003) meant that with their "limited leave to remain" status, they still faced multiple exclusions and restrictions.

The most significant legal exclusion that remained for Serena despite getting her status, was her ineligibility for a student loan and therefore her inability to go to university. As a consequence, she deferred her place to study history, and became involved in the youth-led activist group that campaigned for equal access to higher education for all. She went to every outreach meeting, every core group meeting, every campaign meeting. Soon she started doing call-backs, and was planning and leading the monthly meetings, becoming a core member of the group. As Serena explained in her personal statement for a scholarship that she read out to me during our conversation: 'August 13th, 2015 came. Results day. The day my dreams [were] to be realised. The day I would be harrowed by the news that I was ineligible for student finance. Betrayed by a system that painted success as being the preserve of those with a university degree, I was lost. But I was unable to stand this injustice. So, in February 2016 I became a voice for the campaign, which aimed to create equal access to higher education for all. I've told my story at conferences, schools and written blogs in order to raise awareness of this issue, which unfortunately impacts so many others.'

In other words, Serena was constantly partaking in "acts of citizenship" (Isin and Nielsen, 2008). She was including herself in the polis, becoming a "rebellious immigrant" and a "citizen *de facto*", as Kalyvas argued (2010). However, the reason

Serena became involved in activism was because she was an excluded long-term resident who felt she belonged in the UK; unable to become a citizen and prevented from going to university. She might not have become an activist non-citizen had she been legally included in the citizenry. Paradoxically, it is precisely young migrants' exclusion from legal citizenship that pushes them to engage in "acts of citizenship" and citizenship practices beyond their everyday belonging.

Papers matter to Serena and others like her regardless and because of their strong sense of belonging in Britain and London. Papers matter in a time where 'immigrants are assumed illegal unless they are explicitly declared legal' (Chauvin and Garcés-Mascareñas, 2014: 423). Temporary immigration status is therefore necessary for Serena to be safe from deportation in the UK, to take part in education, to work and to have her feelings of home and belonging somewhat confirmed by her legal status.

Citizenship matters for non-citizens like Serena because rights and entitlements are restricted and long-term safe legal residence and a future in the place she calls home, is not guaranteed otherwise. The lived experience of immigration status and the citizenship pathway presented in this thesis, then support Bosniak's suggestion from 2000, that taking "alien status" into account 'tempers[s] the widespread conviction in the literature that status- and rights-based approaches to citizenship are fundamentally outmoded or otherwise exhausted' (2000: 974). While not the only aspects of citizenship that matter, status and rights matter to the young people who participated in this study, and have consequences for their lives. Without citizenship, migrants are in a condition of precariousness and long-term uncertainty where they are not-yet-citizens, tolerated as legal residents for short periods of time. However, access to settled status and citizenship has become increasingly difficult. Although young migrants become less "illegal" over time through accessing short-term statuses and the moral economy of "illegality" (Chauvin and Garcés-Mascareñas, 2014: 426), this does not necessarily bring them closer to legal citizenship as this chapter has shown. In an immigration system that has institutionalised precariousness, obtaining citizenship to secure long-term safety has become more important than ever and increasingly harder to achieve. The promise of citizenship after multiple temporary statuses at the end of the migration journey then appears more like a cruel promise

than a natural and realistic conclusion. Contrary to arguments of the diminishing relevance of national citizenship (Joppke, 2010) because of universal human rights in a postnational citizenship system (e.g. Soysal, 1994) or the similar rights held by non-citizen legal residents to citizens and their 'denizen' status (Hammar, 1990), this section contributes to the literature that argues for the renewed importance of citizenship (e.g. Anderson, 2013; Fargues, 2017).

Conclusion: British without citizenship

This chapter discussed participants' experiences along the citizenship pathway and how their sense of belonging derived from their everyday life in their local London neighbourhoods is both undermined and rejected by the state. Their citizenship pathways become a struggle with multiple obstacles and U-turns in its path, rather than the linear, forward-moving progression imagined. In this process, achieving the end goal – citizenship – seems ever more uncertain as citizenship turns into a cruel promise for young people rather than the logical end to their migration journey.

The lived experience of participants in this research shows that the citizenship pathway is not linear and forward-progressing as is often imagined and outlined in policy. And being more integrated or feeling belonging does not align with more rights in terms of citizenship. It is perhaps paradoxical, that even though young people exemplify the "good" citizen in terms of integration discourses in policy, this does not lead them to citizenship. The implications of not complying with expectations of "good" citizenship is likely to have severe consequences for young people, either if applications or renewals are rejected, or if citizenship applications are negatively impacted. As Chauvin and Garces-Mascreñas have pointed out 'restrictive governments face a dilemma when their constructions of "good citizenship" threaten to extend to "deserving" "undocumented" migrants' (2014: 422) through years of informal inclusion that has made them integrated or camouflaged. But governments have to maintain that "undocumented", or former "undocumented", migrants are undeserving therefore they argue that 'deservingness is both a civic obligation and a civic privilege' (Chauvin and Garces-Mascreñas, (2014: 422). The function of the

tolerated non-citizen is then perhaps being the exemplary citizen and uphold the ideals of the good citizenship in order to police the failed citizen, as Anderson has argued (2013).

While young people's citizenship pathway is bumpy and full of obstacles, their everyday life in their multicultural London neighbourhoods tells a different story. Living there most of their lives and growing up there, going to school and church has established them as members of their local communities with a strong sense of belonging. There is no doubt in their mind where they belong. Shuri points out: 'Yeah [I] just definitely just identify as British... And I think being here for so long, I mean since I was two... yeah, I love Britain. I wish it was more understanding, but I love Britain, I would never wanna live anywhere else. Maybe like a different part of London but never anywhere else.'

Despite participants strong sense of belonging through their everyday life, legal exclusion remains deterministic over their lives. The longer young people are on the citizenship journey and the more they experience the exclusions as a result of not being a citizen, the more they realise the importance of both papers and citizenship. Papers and citizenship matter in terms of rights and entitlements, they matter in terms of a future, and they matter in terms of feelings of belonging and home. While multi-layered citizenship is a useful concept in terms of expanding our field of vision to practices and experiences beyond legal status, the legal exclusions are often the unmovable barrier that young people come up against when pursuing their future.

Young people are then walking a tightrope between everyday belonging, home and their embeddedness in their community and neighbourhood on the one hand, and being excluded from legal citizenship not just once but continuously through multiple rejections on the other. It is cruel in its process, and cruel in a promise being made to young people which has no certainty over becoming a reality. During this process, they are being prohibited from living their life because of their need and desire to gain citizenship. As Berlant argues in relation to her related concept of cruel optimism 'A relation of cruel optimism exists when something you desire is actually an obstacle to your flourishing' (2011: 1). The cruelty in the situation of the participants in this research is, firstly, in the uncertainty of the promise of citizenship, secondly, in the

optimism instilled in young people that citizenship is desirable and attainable, but is then rejected multiple times. And, thirdly, in how the desire to gain citizenship becomes an obstacle to young people's belonging.

As a result of this tension between young people's strong sense of belonging in London and their legal status on the one hand, and their experience along the citizenship pathway on the other, they are living "rejected belonging". Their membership in Britain has been continuously contested through rejected immigration applications, restricted rights and entitlements and a hostile immigration regime. Their experiences along the citizenship pathway have not made young people feel any less British, but it has made them feel angry. As Shuri says: 'I'm an angry British person, as in... Everything I've gone through has just made me so mad that they don't understand... but I still feel very British, I don't feel Nigerian.'

The next chapter explores the relationship between belonging, immigration status and citizenship further by examining how this is impacted by experiences of racism and racial hierarchies present in contemporary postcolonial Britain. It will explore how being othered through everyday racism impacts on young people's sense of belonging in Britain, and how this exclusion and othering is reinforced through a racialised immigration system that separates the young people in this research out from other migrants in Britain.

Chapter 7 – The elephant in the room: Race and migration in post-empire Britain

Introduction

This chapter explores the intersections between immigration, “race” and racism, and immigration and empire. The first section examines how young people become aware of how they are racialised in the UK through their migration and experiences of racism. For most of the young people in this research, “race” was something they had to learn about after they migrated to the UK. Until then, they were largely unaware that people were racialised in terms of “black”, “brown”, and “white” and of the consequences of this on their lives. Experiences of racism varied significantly between generations and according to where young people lived. Growing up in more multicultural settings, experiences of overt racism were few or non-existent in comparison with growing up in predominantly white areas. As young people learned about what it meant to be racialised in certain ways in the UK, they gained an understanding of institutional racism and how, together with their immigration status, this put them at a disadvantage. At the intersection of immigration and “race”, a hierarchy of belonging is established which creates different experiences of migration in Britain according to someone’s racialisation (Anderson, 2013; Back et al., 2012; Bhambra, 2018; De Noronha, 2019; Sharma, 2015). This occurs despite the presentation of a “race-less” immigration system.

The second section explores how young people’s learning about “race” and racism continued through their participation in the campaign group by learning about the politics of “race” and racism. This meant on the one hand learning how their marginalisation through their immigration status connected with their racial position in UK society. As Back and Sinha point out, hierarchies of belonging ‘are unstable and shift and adapt to new circumstances while attempting to maintain the fundamental shape and ordered hierarchy’ (Back and Sinha, 2018a). On the other hand, it meant learning how their contemporary politics is situated in a longer history of anti-racist politics. To understand their contemporary situation in the context of shifting hierarchies, young people engaged with histories of the British Empire and anti-racist

political legacies. Some pursued such an analysis in their own time and through their studies, for others it was through their participation in the campaign group. The majority of young people were either children of postcolonial migrants or young people who migrated as children from former British colonies, such as Nigeria, Jamaica, Pakistan (then India) or Mauritius. This was often the elephant in the room that was rarely explicitly referenced: all participants in this research and young people in the campaign group were of ethnic minority background, or racialised as black or brown. Most came from countries that were connected to Britain through colonisation as former dominions as opposed to citizens of former white settler colonies. In this chapter, I argue that making these historical connections to legacies of empire and anti-racist politics in Britain, illuminates our understanding of contemporary immigration in the UK, and how the hierarchies of immigration statuses and belonging are shaped.

Leo

Leo was born in Jamaica, where he grew up with his grandmother while his mother lived in the UK. She had been trying to get Leo to the UK for a long time but the acrimonious separation between herself and Leo's dad meant that he refused to sign Leo's papers saying that he could leave. Eventually, and after two of his brothers were murdered, he and his mother were successful in securing his visa and flights to the UK. Leo was sixteen when he arrived in Birmingham. When I met him a few years later his Jamaican accent was still thick. In Britain he was made to think of himself as black for the first time and to learn the generally negative consequences this carried for him. In Jamaica, he says, his skin colour was hardly remarked upon and seemed to carry little consequence for him. Not so in the UK. At first, he lived in a mostly white area where he was the only "mixed-race" person and he said that people looked at him "funny all the time". His experiences continued in this vein as white people avoided sitting next to him on the bus or held their bags more tightly as he passed by. Once he was stopped and searched by a police officer as he was cycling home. Living in the UK taught him that "race" matters. He says, 'over here what I realised, they don't see you as a person, they see you as a colour.' He was also aware of the contradictions of the global immigration regime and how historical colonial ties between Britain and Jamaica did not work to his advantage. It remains hard for Jamaicans to settle in the UK: 'we were

a colony for about 290 odd years.’ Instead, one of the few countries Jamaicans can easily get visas for is Georgia: ‘We’re closer to Britain and America than to Georgia’.

In this chapter, I grapple with the elephant in the room that is “race”, and the different migratory experiences which occur as a consequence of migrants’ racialisation. The first section looks at how young people learned about “race” as a new concept and how they learned to navigate it in their everyday life. On the one hand, this involved experiences of “low-key racism”, as Sarah called it. On the other, it was about understanding institutional racism as young people made sense of being black in a white-dominant society. In the second section I explore young people’s engagement with the politics of “race” and racism, contemporary and historical, by drawing predominantly on discussions amongst young people within the campaign group. While understanding historical trajectories and Britain’s colonial legacies was important to young people, it was less clear whether this would be helpful to their current politics. Overall, this chapter contributes to an understanding that living at the intersection of immigration and “race” leads to distinct experiences, which need more explicit iteration in the migration literature.

‘I used to think white people lived on TV’: Learning about “race”

In his lecture *Race – The Sliding Signifier*, Stuart Hall ‘presents us with a concentrated account of why the race concept stubbornly persists, despite every demystification showing its realities to be socio-historical and not biological’ (Mercer in Hall, 2017: 3). When talking about “race” as a discursive construct, Hall argues, that it is ‘one of those major or master concepts...that organize the great classificatory systems of difference that operate in human societies. Race, in this sense, is the centrepiece of a hierarchical system that produces difference’ (Hall, 2017: 32–33). Despite the evidence and knowledge that “race” is not a biological fact, “race”, he argues, powerfully persists in classifying and grouping people, and organising social life, with real social effects for people. This is reflected in the experiences of young people, who had little or no knowledge of “race” as a classificatory concept, or of the consequences of this for their lives in the UK, when they first arrived.

For most young people in this research, migrating to the UK as children did not only mean learning about a new culture, a new language, making new friends, navigating a new country, and coming to terms with life governed as a migrant; it also entailed learning what it meant to be black in a dominantly white society. This, as Bhopal argues, was ‘that individuals from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, by virtue of their racial identity, are positioned as outsiders in a society that values whiteness and “white privilege”’ (Bhopal, 2018). Young people migrated largely from African, Asian or Caribbean countries where they had little or no interaction with white people. They commonly expressed that they had never met or seen white people in person before, like Daisy: ‘I’d never seen white people in my life before. I was asking my dad all sorts of questions, you know ‘are the different people in different places who are also different colours?’ Tobi had only seen white people on TV. In the UK was the ‘first I’ve seen white people... it was crazy (laughs) cause the ones on the plane I was like whoa! ‘Cause like in Nigeria a lot of white people like Caucasian people [are] on TV...so I used to think they lived on TV... Like they lived on like another planet, yeah, ‘cause where you live...the country is like your planet, especially if you don’t leave the country.’ Even then, Tobi never thought of the people on TV as “white”, ‘I just classed them as people on TV’ he explains. Others, like Leo, had seen white people as tourists in Jamaica but at the time he did not think of them as “white”, just as tourists perhaps from America. Few of the young people had come across people being described as “white” and “black” before they migrated to the UK.

Seeing white people in Britain for the first time, also meant seeing themselves as black for the first time. Tobi again: ‘people do say when you leave, well when I left Nigeria was when I knew I was black. So, I didn’t know I was like...anything such as black, white all of that... it was when I came to this country and people started talking about “race” and stuff. I didn’t know those words called “races”, and none of that. So, when...you come to a country where you are the minority...you tend to see your skin colour. But I feel it’s the same with everyone. Like if you go to another country, you wouldn’t notice it until you go to another country and you be put in the minority, and you notice that you are a different skin colour.’ Learning that “race” was a concept and had meaning for their lives in the UK could be a difficult process. Initially this involved a basic awareness that there was such a thing as “race” that was somehow, and also not,

connected to skin colour and other physical markers that made them “black” and others “white”. As Tobi pointed out, it meant that he was in the minority in the UK. Over time they learnt that “white” meant privilege and “black” meant disadvantage (Bhopal, 2018), which they often experienced. As young people got older, they developed their understanding of “race” and racism.

For young people, learning what it meant to be “black” was connected to their life-course and part of growing up. Most participants said that at primary school, they were largely unaware of racial differences. However, this changed when they went to secondary school. Tobi, who grew up in a multicultural area of East London, reflects on growing up there, rather than Nottingham where his mum was thinking of moving the family, he feels lucky because he thinks that is why he did not experience racism as a child. As he looks back on his early years in London he says: ‘No, I didn't think about it [racism]. Even when I came here...like I was just, in my head, I was adjusting to a culture...but it was like, but I was fortunate that I did not have no racist experiences at all. Probably if you grow up in London you don't...’ This made his transition from Nigeria to the UK easier, as he explains: ‘I didn't think about my skin-tone like skin-colour when I was back in Nigeria but when I came here, even when I was in primary school, I didn't think of none of that’. Eventually though, Tobi was confronted with “race”, how others classified him according to his skin colour and the way he looked: ‘it was like recent, like I would say from year eight, year eight upwards, like when you're getting older then you start noticing, like you're black, you're bla bla bla’. Growing up and coming of age in London for Tobi, and other young people, was on the one hand made more complicated by his immigration status and learning what this meant for him, and on the other by learning that he was racialised as black in the UK and the consequences of this for his everyday life. Together the intersection of immigration and “race”, significantly shaped the position of young people in Britain.

Learning the meaning of how young people were being racialised as black, foreign and different in the UK was a difficult and at times painful experience. When Leo started volunteering - unable to go to school or work because of his immigration status - he found himself in a mostly white environment and he was seen as the only “mixed-race” person there. He says, ‘some of them were kind of funny with me...because [the]

majority of them there was white so, some of them were kind of funny'. This was the first time he had ever experienced anything like it. He reflects, 'That was the very first time...and it was when I lived in that part of the world [Jamaica], I've never...coz in Jamaica everybody is well...obviously they see that I'm lighter than them and that...but coming down here and I'm realising that...they are - they don't really...some people are very small minority of people don't, I don't know [like] people like me or something like that.. you know foreigners y'kna what I mean...foreigners in general...any like any...whether you be European...African or whatever you come from I realise that they don't...some people very small as I said...don't like them. So, I learned uhmm - I learned from there that... uhmm - I learned from there that not everybody is going to be nice'. Unlike in Jamaica where his lighter skin tone made him more privileged, in the UK Leo quickly learned that being "mixed-race" was often equated with being foreign and not liked.

Leo thought that "race" is something that people learn, not a concept we are born with: 'As a child I bet you...any 5 or 6 year old, when they play with each other they don't see colour they just say that's a kid. As a child growing up, if you saw a black person you wouldn't even know that's a black person. They wouldn't even say "that black kid" or "that white kid" unless their parents said to them...or where they grow up or whatever, the people around them a child learns from what they hear, and society teaches them to live in the past.' As Leo was himself learning about how "race" persisted in his own life, how it grouped people, and how it grouped them differently in the UK to Jamaica, he also understood that "race" was something that was itself learned. Part of his learning process was distinguishing between different forms of racism. Sarah called these different forms of racism institutional racism and 'low-key racism', which I will discuss next.

'There's always institutional racism'

Today, it is often claimed that racism no longer exists, and that we live in post-racial times. Defenders of such a view, point out the civil rights movements, race equality legislation, Obama as a first black US president and so on. However, evidence from academic, policy and NGO research continues to show that 'vast inequalities between white and black and minority ethnic communities continue to exist', thus calling out a

post-racial-society as a myth (Bhopal, 2018). Or as Sarah pointed out: 'there's always institutional racism'. In his book on black mixed-race men, Joseph-Salisbury argues that 'the "post-racial" threatens the erasure of their lived experience', who, like Sarah, remain 'acutely aware of their racialisation and the ubiquity of systemic and institutionalised racism' (2018: 15). How are the young migrants in this research navigating their own experiences of institutional racism that become harder to name? And how do they come across it?

As discussed in the previous section, Hall argued that "race" powerfully persists in order to classify and group people and to organise them in hierarchical structures within a society. Racism - or 'racisms' (Goldberg, 1993) - can take many forms and can change over time, as has been studied in much greater detail by many scholars. In the literature these changes have been variously theorised, but it is generally acknowledged that it has undergone various transitions. For instance, Back and Solomos point out, that 'in the current period race and racism have been refashioned in ways that emphasise cultural difference' (2000: 4), and that race is furthermore coded in the language of the nation. Another way of putting this, is that from its initial overt forms at both individual and institutional level, racism has evolved into more covert, nonverbal, and subtle forms since explicit racism was no longer seen as acceptable and racial discrimination has been legislated against (e.g. Fleras, 2016). As Kandola points out, '[R]acism has, like a virus, mutated: it is still present but in much more subtle ways than in the past' (2018: 23). Even though it is more subtle now, this does not mean it is less powerful or less persistent throughout state or government institutions. Writing mainly about the US context, but just as relevant to the UK as a country with a history of colonisation, DiAngelo recently re-stated, institutional racism means that '[T]he default of the current system is the reproduction of racial inequality; our institutions were designed to reproduce racial inequality and they do so with efficiency' (DiAngelo, 2011: 153). As a result, positions of power remain dominated by white people, from schools, to higher education, political institutions, industry, business, and the media. However, there have been various definitions of institutional racism. Furthermore, as Essed points out, it is problematic in that it 'places individuals outside the institutional, thereby severing rules, regulations, and procedures from the people who make and enact them' (1991: 36). This section looks at the implications of

what has been called “institutional racism” for young people, i.e. the subtle ways that young people experience racial discrimination when engaging with institutions and those representing them, such as schools, universities, or the Home Office. As young people grew up in the UK, they learned about living the consequences of institutionalised racism. To them this meant having to work twice as hard at everything. While the next section is concerned with understanding how racism is experienced by young people in individual interactions, this section looks at how access to power is controlled through access to institutions and structures.

Going to university was, for the majority, the place where the consequences of structural racism became most visible to young people, representing a steep learning curve. As research and campaigns in recent years have shown, higher education institutions remain white dominated spaces for both students and staff (Alexander and Arday, 2015; Arday and Mirza, 2018). The *Aiming Higher* report by the Runnymede Trust points out, while there has been an increase in Black and Minority Ethnic students going to university, and ‘BME students are overrepresented in university entrance figures, they are concentrated in post-1992 and “new” universities, have lower levels of attainment and poorer graduate prospects than their White British classmate’ (Alexander and Arday, 2015: 4). Having come from mostly multicultural areas and schools, young people in this research were then often surprised to find themselves in white dominated spaces, even within London. After purposefully not choosing to go to Cambridge for those reasons, Maria was surprised to find that in her first year at university in South West London it was mostly white: ‘But yeah there's like a few black people, few Asians, there's a lot of like East Asians, for like international students and stuff, yeah. It's becoming, I think I can see it becoming more... so yeah, it's alright like, if I need to find a black person to talk to there's one over there, there's a white person to talk to as well. I can mix around with people if I need to basically, which is, which is good, kind of glad I didn't go to Cambridge. I think I would have felt really...isolated...Like people telling me stories of “I’m the one black person in my whole year!” that’s so depressing...I’ve can’t do it like, yeah, I need to be around different people’. Maria also did not want to talk about this further, reflecting a sentiment and observation expressed by Nosheen Iqbal discussing DiAngelo’s book *White Fragility* and her enthusiasm and energy as a white person to talk about race in

the Guardian recently. Iqbal writes, 'Isn't this itself a marker of white privilege? I can't think of a single non-white person who enjoys talking about race or feels energised by it. More often than not, it is awkward, uncomfortable and frustrating' (2019). After a brief conversation with Maria about race and racism and her university being a white space, she quickly moved the conversation on to a different topic: 'let's talk about something else, let's talk about relationships.'

Serena's experience of studying history at one of London's top university's was a similar experience. Having just completed her second year, she said, there were only three black people on her course including herself. She reflected on how strange this felt given that in her neighbourhood or other areas in London she was surrounded by black people, yet stepping into the walls of a Russell group university she entered a very white space. This was her first time experiencing this since arriving in the UK as a child and a clear learning experience of institutional racism. Her exclusion even extended to scholarships, which she was investigating until the day before her deadline to confirm or defer her university offer. She was not eligible for any, not even the Commonwealth ones.

Over time, and especially when interacting with state institutions like the Home Office or police, young people learnt that it was better to be white than it was to be black. Leila learned about institutional racism in relation to the police on the many occasions they had been called to her house for domestic violence issues and aggressive behaviour on the part of the white, male partner of her mother. Both felt that he got away with too much and perceived the police as racist, but also felt unable to press charges because of their own immigration issues. After one occasion where he had been arrested for 24 hours, he ordered Leila and her siblings to leave the property within two hours. Her mother at this point was not at home. Although the property legally belonged to her mother's partner, her mother had also been paying rent that had gone towards the mortgage and this was their home. Again, it was due to their immigration status that they were unable to formalise this arrangement. Although the request to leave so suddenly and while Leila's mother was at work felt unreasonable to Leila, she was also afraid to protest this as he had threatened to call the police. She explains: 'whether or not you wanna say the police are one way or another, it,

sometimes it comes down to race. When they come and see you, it's like, it's not your house, you don't really have any right to be here, and your race on top of that, we might as well just take you out, d'you know what I mean?'

Sarah became aware of the privileges of being white during her application to the Home Office. As she and her family were collating evidence to try and prove their value to British society; that they are deserving of status; will not be a burden on the taxpayer; and are fully integrated, her parents asked to collate pictures of her and her friends. More specifically of her and her white friends: 'I had to get all my pictures together, then I had erm where there were white people in the picture because...' I asked her why and she explained that 'you had to prove that you were integrated into the community but you know so...(laughs) I literally had to go through all my prom pictures and all my school pictures... and just basically gather together all the pictures that had white people in. I was like 'why am I doing this? This is really strange' like it was just so weird, it was just awkward and I was like 'what is going on?' but yeah we had to and printed them off and sent them to the lawyer to send with the application. I don't know if it helped or...just didn't matter but it was just the fact that I had to do it, I just thought it was, I don't know, it's just, it was, I don't know, I just didn't like it you know... It was just weird.' This also reflects what Sirriyeh has described as 'a process of responsabilisation' in citizenship and immigration applications, where 'attention rests on individual choices rather than structural causes; the aim being to produce citizens who make the 'right choices' (Sirriyeh, 2018a: 135). In the racial state, neoliberalism further oppresses some racialised populations since focus on individual responsibility and choice denies the role of structural racism' (Goldberg 2009).

Over time the young people learnt the different ways in which race mattered when engaging with institutions in the UK. Whether it was when they first arrived, discovering that there was such a concept as race that inscribed meaning and disadvantage on them based on their skin colour, or later experiencing the consequences of this in their everyday life and spaces that privileged whiteness such as universities or Home Office applications. As Leo sums up, 'here [in the UK] they don't see you as a person, they see you as a colour'.

'Low-key racism'

Sarah talked about having experienced 'low-key racism', which is subtle, implicit, and covert. This compares to her dad's experiences who had been the victim of more overt forms of racism, as Sarah explained. In this observation Sarah acknowledges the different experiences of racism in the UK according to gender and time period. More covert and subtle forms of racism have been variously theorised as aversive racism (Dovidio, 1993; Dovidio and Gaertner, 2004), everyday racism (Essed, 1991), and microaggressions (Fleras, 2016; Pierce et al., 2016; Sue, 2010). Racism's transition to more covert forms, has often meant that people from racialised minorities have felt that their experiences of racism were being denied (e.g. Joseph-Salisbury, 2018). It has also led to some (false) claims that we live in post-race times (Goldberg, 2015). For Sarah and her family these changes in racism meant that her dad had had eggs thrown at him by white boys on bicycles and her mother had been called "the N-word" when not knowing the time. Sarah's experiences on the other hand were indirect and felt harder to name. They are experienced in her everyday life, interpersonal interactions as well as institutional encounters. These experiences of racism are "low-key" because they do not represent hard, explicit institutional barriers or direct comments in interaction. Rather, "low-key racism" operates in an emotional space where certain subtle behaviours, gestures, or expressions provoke a way of feeling othered and less worthy in Sarah and others. This low and dull, almost subconscious, noise in the background constantly requires Sarah to filter her experiences in relation to "race". She explained: 'like I've never experienced something as downright rude and racist as that but... there's always stuff...like even in the job I do, erm so I'm a brand ambassador, so I do like sampling. Sometimes...I might be promoting a product of whatever it is, and sometimes you just stood there and the looks that people give me. I'm just like "is it because of what I'm doing or is it because I'm black?" I know it's not good to think like that, but sometimes I'm just like, because like... I know people who work for the same company, and they're white and like when sometimes I tell them my experiences and it's like "I never had that". I'm just like "oh ok cool". So yeah, it's just that, I don't know, it just makes me think. Maybe I'm just like stretching [it] but you know...but it's those things it's like, oh, you don't know what to think... It's hard. And you don't always just wanna jump to "yep you're a racist" like that, that's not

great from either end so...'. The kind of experience Sarah describes is hard to articulate for her. It is clear that something is going on, because as a young black woman she is being treated differently to her white colleagues. At the same time, nobody has said or done anything overtly racist towards her. In order to make sense of such interactions, Sarah needs to develop a kind of a compass to understand where her experiences are being shaped by subtle racism and where they are not. An almost impossible task, given the nature of the problem, yet without developing such an awareness Sarah is likely to negatively internalise such experiences.

Leo also noticed generational differences; however, these were in terms of how people of different generations reacted to him. He felt that it was the older generation who were funny with him and other black people, because as he thought 'in their time that was seen as taboo isn't it?'. To him it happened on several occasions: for example, when an older person did not want to sit next to him on the bus, but they then sat next to a white person. He recalls one particular situation on the train in Birmingham: 'I sat down, and the train was full, there was only one seat left, and I asked this lady if she wanted the seat and she said no. But as soon as somebody else got up she sat down beside that white person. I thought is she racist or did she not want to sit beside me. I never talked about it again, but I do know that's probably what she was thinking.' In his book *Black mixed-race men*, Remi Joseph-Salisbury discusses the need for young people to develop a 'racial literacy' to understand and navigate such experiences (2018). He argues, it requires 'a sense of double consciousness and a refusal to be duped by racism's apparent demise' in order to understand microaggressions (2018: 119). Sarah and Leo both knew on some level that what they experienced was related to racism, yet they were not confident enough to name their experiences as such.

Writing against the 'denial of racism' (Essed, 1991: 5), literatures on aversive racism, everyday racism and microaggressions discuss and validate experiences like those of Sarah and Leo above. They recognise such experiences as systemic and cumulative, oppressive or threatening for those on the receiving end. Subtle forms of racism are behaviours of the dominant group, in this case "white" people, usually carried out unconsciously in order to avoid interaction with people from the minority group, in this case "black" people. Behaviours, which are often based on deeply ingrained

prejudices and held without awareness, and which would likely be denied if directly questioned (Dovidio and Gaertner, 2010). Studies have exposed the discrimination of racial biases for people from ethnic minority backgrounds when seeking employment, in decisions by jurors, and in interactions with teachers at school. Fleras has argued that “Racism 3.0” should be theorized through micro-aggressions and the lens of claims-making (2016). He argues, ‘it’s about re-centring the lived-experience of racialized minorities by re-positioning the discursive politics of who decides what counts as racism, what racisms count’ (2016: 3). Through this re-centring of the claims of those who experience racism, macro and micro perspectives can be connected. And importantly, experiences of racism, regardless how subtle, cannot be denied to the person making the claim of this experience.

Sarah was also aware of the gendered dimension to racism, and that she, as a woman, was less likely to experience aversive racism than say her brothers, male friends or cousins. She says, ‘I don’t think I’ve ever experienced that, but I can’t imagine how it must feel to see that people are actively avoiding you because they’re scared of what you might do to them. It’s just really sad... and er, and yeah, even with a lot of my guy friends, like, they’ve said, and I was like “wow”. Like for instance, if you see like a group of like boys in the middle of the street, like, and a lot of people will cross let’s be real.’ For some time, Sarah’s older cousin lived with her and her family. He was a soldier in the British army and Sarah describes him as ‘a really tall guy, six something, yeah, and he was like dark skinned like me and stuff, and he always had his hood up which I’m just like, really?’ She remembers her cousin often telling her that people would genuinely cross the road to avoid him. Analysing the situation, Sarah understands on the one hand that people are crossing the road for their safety but also that it is from a prejudiced, assumed threat that is not real – she knows her cousin and ‘he’s not a bad guy’. She points out that ‘bad’ people exist in ‘every race and every society’, and therefore crossing the road based on an assumption when seeing a black man is a form of aversive racism. As Sarah points out ‘just because he’s black, that doesn’t mean anything’.

Another, more overt way that racism was expressed to Sarah, was by being told to “go home” on social media after having appeared on a TV documentary, despite her having

lived in the UK since she was four years old and, importantly, considering this her home. Sarah has no other home to go to. She commented on the fact that the person telling her this was mixed-race, and that this painful interaction made her feel both sad and angry. Not only was she being told she does not belong in Britain through her status by the immigration regime, she now was also being told to “go home” by the public at large because of how she was racialised. Being told that she did not belong in Britain was further reinforced to Sarah during the campaign for the 2016 referendum on Britain’s continued membership in Europe, when one day she was confronted with a UKIP van in her neighbourhood on her way home. Jones and colleagues, as well as others, have documented how racist calls of “go home” were reinvigorated after the EU referendum result, aimed at European migrants, minoritized groups, and those perceived as migrants (2017; see also Virdee and McGeever, 2018). As they point out, this harks back to the racist abuse and language that was used by far-right groups in the 1970s (Jones et al., 2017: 12). She says these are ‘aspects that make it feel like people don’t want you here, which can make it harder to feel like a home’.

For Maria racism came up in conversations with her white friends who refused to see racism. This refusal pointed out their white privilege, or as DiAngelo calls it their *White Fragility* (2011), and their usually unacknowledged or unknown racism, as discussed previously. In one such conversation they were discussing the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States. One of her friends did not understand the purpose of the movement and said something along the lines of “all lives matter”. As Dennis points out, an example that illustrates white fragility at a national level, is ‘the Black Lives Matter movement being contorted into “All Lives Matter” by white people’ (2019). Frustrated, Maria explained to him: ‘it means like Black Lives Matter as well. I feel like it’s very obvious, just looking at the stories that are out there. Like, that’s the whole [point], some kid died because the police killed him. And then some woman had a sign saying “Black Lives Matter”, that sign very clearly meant Black Lives Matter as much as every other life out there and it, it’s an incorporative message, whatever but I just feel like “if you can’t get that, how you would get anything else?”’. In this refusal of seeing racism when pointed out by someone of colour, we find another iteration of subconscious bias and covert racism, or as Sarah calls it, ‘low-key racism’. This denies its existence and therefore the experiences of those who racism is directed at. Young

people therefore have to learn not only what “race” means and how it affects their lives after migrating to the UK, but also become ‘racially literate’ and learn how to filter, navigate, and make sense of experiences that *feel* racist to them but cannot easily be named as such.

‘Look at all of you in this room’: Navigating the politics of “race” and racism in the UK

The previous section discussed individual understanding, experiences and learning about “race” and racism of migrants who are racialised as black in the UK. This section explores how this individual, everyday learning about “race” developed with their collective, political engagement. Over time young people learned that their marginalisation through their immigration status is connected to, and shaped by, “race”. They also learned that their work as activists on rights of migrants in the UK can be situated in a longer history of anti-racist politics in the UK. How did they engage with these histories in terms of their own contemporary politics? How did the connections they made help them understand their own situation? Does a historic understanding of “race” and racism help explain and contextualise their personal experiences? And finally, how do they understand their own politics given this longer view of anti-racist political activism? Drawing both on discussions observed as part of the fieldwork with the campaign group, as well as on one-to-one conversations, this section shifts the discussion from personal learning on “race” to how young people learned to understand and navigate the politics of “race” and racism in the UK.

First, I want to note here, that I observed a marked difference between these two types of conversations. The one-to-one conversations about “race” between me, a white, privileged researcher, and the participants, black or Asian, and in many ways disadvantaged, were more laboured, awkward and shorter. Conversations during campaign group gatherings and meetings amongst the young people that I observed, were more animated, free-flowing and less inhibited. As a researcher and the only white person in the room, I did not actively participate in these conversations (which was my usual approach), and at times my presence was even forgotten about. On one

occasion, Daisy remarked on the fact that the only white person in the room, and the only person who had not experienced what they had experienced, was Paul, the youth worker. Everyone started laughing as they pointed out that I was sitting next to her, also white, also without experience of the hostile immigration regime. This was mostly how “race” was noted within the campaign group: as matter of fact, that no one in the room was white, everyone was Black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME). White people did not have the same kind of problems with immigration as they did. The only white people who entered their space were their supporters. Like Paul or others from the charity they were based at. Or people they worked with, such as Sylvia, who had helped them set up scholarships at a London university. Or me, the PhD student, who had no personal, first-hand experience of racism or the immigration system in the UK. We were easily identified by our whiteness and privilege. For instance, before the gathering that Sylvia attended had started, everyone was asking who she was. Sarah pointed out ‘Sylvia is the other white woman here’ – me being the other one. For the group that had initially come together over education inequality and moved on to campaign for justice for young migrants, the connections between “race” and immigration were obvious.

One particularly intense gathering of the campaign group focused on these issues almost exclusively: young people discussed the role of racism and colonialism in the current immigration regime and their own situation; and whether and how to engage with this as part of their work. An invited guest speaker, Hannah, started the meeting. Although not a topic discussed at every meeting, when it did surface, as on this occasion, everyone had something to say and was actively engaged in the lively discussion. Opinions on how to situate themselves and their experiences in these histories and how to engage with them were varied, as we will see. This meeting, perhaps more than any other I attended, represented a collective learning experience that made the connections between the lived experience of immigration – the young people’s campaign focus – and “race” – the guest’s campaign focus – explicit. Racism, everyone agreed, continues to play a huge part in life in Britain, and therefore in their lives. And everyone there was a migrant, who came together because they could not go to university. Denying access to education through immigration, Hannah thought, was the biggest expression of racism yet. As a way of making the point she said: ‘I

mean, look at all of you in this room', pointing out that everyone in the room who was barred from accessing education because of their immigration status, was also a person of colour. But how did young people make sense of these new insights and connections?

This illustrates another aspect of what Back and Solomos discussed in relation to how "race" and racism changes and is refashioned (2000). While languages of culture and nation remain important in this process, immigration has increasingly been used to exclude racialised others - sometimes barely disguised. When in the past, immigration policies were explicitly racist, today they exclude certain groups of people indirectly, as discussed in chapter two. In practice they often have the same effect by primarily excluding migrants from ethnic minority backgrounds and privileging white migrants. As Back and Sinha argue, 'the echo of colonial racism is at play in the ways global population mobility is being filtered and ordered in Britain' (2018a: 74). Such an understanding of the immigration system, however, is not commonplace, and it often took young people a long time to learn this. This included an unlearning of the idea that the immigration system was fair and treated everyone the same. How the immigration system was racist, became the topic of another meeting shortly before the last UK general elections in June 2017. After an activity designed to educate group members on the parties' pledges on immigration, most concluded that racism was underlying and shaping these policies, and therefore applied differently to different groups of migrants. Quite opposite to most parties' stated intentions to create a fair and just immigration system, to these young people it felt anything but that. Some argued that based on the British Commonwealth and its colonialism, the immigration system nowadays functioned as a 'sorting system to allow some in and not others' based on race and class. Young people agreed that the foundations for such a system and its discourses, were laid during the times of empire and continue to this day. As Fernandes argues, 'Many of the cultural tropes and myths deployed in contemporary narratives have their genesis in this era of colonialism and slavery. [Such as] The tropes of bad masters and individual victims... have their genealogies in slavery and colonialism' (2017: 167). This kind of education, however, was largely not one they received in their London-based schooling. It was therefore only in the context of the campaign group or personal learning that young people developed an understanding

of the continuities of racist exclusions based on British colonial rule in the contemporary immigration system.

As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, young people were very aware that ‘the race concept stubbornly persists’, despite evidence and knowledge of its falsehood (Hall, 2017: 3). The reason that “race” persists, young people thought, was a lack of education, especially on the part of white people. The evidence and knowledge that “race” is not biologically “real” but rather socially and historically constructed exists and is plentiful. Having mostly gone through the British education system, young people felt that neither dispelling the myth of “race”, nor the racism and exploitation of colonial histories, were being taught. Heath agrees, and argues that England’s national history curriculum in 2013 does indeed ‘whitewash empire and its legacies’ by ignoring ‘the actual impact of empire on either colonised peoples on Britain – or its ongoing effects’, and thus creates a narrative of empire as triumph by telling a history only of white men (Heath, 2016). Young people’s experiences of going to school confirmed this. Connections are rarely drawn between the British history of empire and immigration, and racism and immigration. Having since learned about these connections, young people thought that rather than dispelling the myth of “race”, the consequence of not engaging with British colonial history when talking about contemporary immigration perpetuates negative connotations associated with the word migrant and discourses of “us” and “them”.

If this learning did not happen for young people in school, how did they become aware of the connections between “race” and the immigration regime? Serena developed her own understanding of colonial legacies and how they affect her life. Engaging with Nigerian history and culture, and studying history at university, made Serena see more historical connections in her situation today. She is no longer just grateful to be able to stay in the UK and study here - something that she has felt pressured to feel were she to listen to government or media discourses. Instead she now sees things as more complex. After reading Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s book ‘Half A Yellow Sun’, Serena made some connections between her racial identity in the UK today and colonization: ‘it opened up a can of worm[s] regarding colonization, and erm the impact of colonization on a people...one of my favourite quotes from it is, erm, Odenigbo. He

says, “I am Nigerian because a white man came to Nigeria and gave [me] that identity. I am black, because a white man came to Nigeria and gave me that identity. But my true identity is Igbo, I am an Igbo man.” And that was so profound for me, erm, because it was just like wow, you know. This guy was able to see that an identity was imposed on him. But was still able to accept that identity but then reject it. And then remember what his true identity was, before that identity was imposed on him. Sorry that was a lot.’ Being Nigerian herself, and having been rejected from British citizenship (previous chapter), Serena suddenly saw her own identity questioned. Nigerian, migrant and British identity were all to some extent imposed on her by the British – then and now.

She also started to question British cultural legacies in her childhood in Nigeria. Why did they wear Western clothes? Why did her mother use such harsh products on her black hair to make it look “white”, that it has now mostly fallen out? Why are people in Nigeria wearing suits to work rather than an agbada – the traditional robe worn by men in Nigeria and West Africa? To her, the answer is in colonial history: ‘Because, reading that story [Half of A Yellow Sun], it made me understand why Nigerians feel they need to assimilate to the Western culture, Western world, Western ideals... I mean it's not a problem, but these are the foundations of colonization... Why is this now the new norm, the new standard? And I wanted to understand you know, and that's why I am doing history.’ Studying history, to her, meant developing an understanding of history from the perspectives of both the colonized and the colonizer. She wants to understand the foundations that were laid then, which manifest themselves today; in Nigeria, in the UK and in her own life. For Serena, a historically contextualised understanding helps her navigate markers of cultural difference and “race” in Britain today.

However, not all young people agreed on the importance of bringing the histories of empire and colonisation into today’s debates. And this perhaps varied to what extent they had an awareness of these histories from a young age or more recently. In our one-to-one Leo told me that he thought these discussions should be left in the past. The question of the relevance of historical debates in today’s politics on migration is further discussed in the next section. It explores these questions by looking at the

concept of “political blackness”, how the young people in the campaign group learned about it, and whether they think it still has use today.

“Political blackness”

Having learnt an understanding that colonial legacies and the intersection between “race” and immigration produced a specific position for young migrants in contemporary British society, the next question was how to situate their own politics in this. One aspect was in how this affected their choices of who they collaborated with, as solidarities became strongest with anti-racist causes. More so than with migrants’ rights causes. Organisations that campaigned for migrants’ rights often did not represent this same historical analysis of the contemporary situation, or simply did not engage with it. As result, many ignored the connection between “race” and migration. This was especially the case for organisations that were not led by migrants. For example, young people felt it was hard to form alliances with European citizens who were having their privileged status threatened by Brexit, or British Citizens who were experiencing the harshness of the immigration system through non-British spouses. These groups were often unaware, and at times unwilling, to see their own privilege or whiteness, and how this affected their experiences with the immigration system. An organisation that the young people did work closely with, campaigned on easier and cheaper access to register children as British citizens. Its lawyer had helped many of them individually and understood the hierarchical and racist nature of immigration in the UK. Another organisation which focused on the rights and welfare of migrants and which was migrant led, was another close ally of the young campaigners.

Among anti-racist and decolonising activists was where young people felt these histories and connections more explicitly recognised. Two causes in particular stood out to the young campaigners. One was anti-racist and decolonising student activism in higher education, which clearly related to their own experiences in higher education and seeing universities as white spaces discussed earlier. The other was immigration detention, and related stop and search, and incarceration issues. Immigration detention was often directly related to young people through personal experience. What connected them with all these issues was that “race” was at the heart of them.

As Hannah explicitly stated in the above-mentioned meeting, when talking to the young people: solidarity among black people was important and necessary. During that same meeting the young people discussed the concept “political blackness”.

A concept strongly prevalent and ‘hegemonic’ in 1970s and 1980s Britain, as Modood (1994) and Hall (2017) point out, “political blackness” was based on the idea of unifying different ethnic minority groups who were marginalised and disadvantaged as a result of their racialisation in Britain. They were unified by ‘racial oppression and exclusion on the basis of colour’ on the one hand, and by ‘the shared history of colonization and imperialism’ on the other (Hall, 2017: 96–97). Their politics was an opposition to marginalisation based on “race”. ‘The term “black”’, as Mercer states, ‘became the signifier of an emergent identity that arose not from any basis in genetics, nor from shared customs, but from the discursive slide whereby contested meanings that gathered under the markers of cultural difference served to expand the ground on which political antagonism to the status quo articulated’ (2017: 5). “Black British Feminism” similarly aimed at bringing together fragmented ethnic minority feminist movements (Mirza, 1997). Whether it was in fact successful at unifying these groups is however contested, as is the usefulness of the concept and its continued relevance today. In the 1990s, Modood argued that the concept of “political blackness” harms British Asians in many ways. Instead he preferred a more multi-textured approach (1994). Interestingly, the only noticeable silences in the room full of young campaigners during the discussions on “political blackness” were from those with an Asian background. Since the 1980s, “black” political identity has fractured into a plurality of ethnic identities no longer unified by a common struggle (Hall, 2017). This, as Leo pointed out in our conversation, also has its challenges: ‘That’s so divided’. He continued, ‘almost everything you have to sign [in the UK], when you look at it, they ask about your ethnic background. I don’t think that’s needed...They want to know if you’re Afro Black Caribbean, mixed Caribbean, European, or if you’re Indian. That shouldn’t be on it I don’t think. They don’t need to put their colour of their skin. I don’t see that really man.’ In this statement Leo argues that although such ethnic naming might be more accurate in representing people’s individual identities, it continues to entrench differences and divisions rather than unity and cohesion.

Andrews has also argued that the concept of “political blackness” is problematic. He recently argued that it defines everyone as either white or non-white and so in relation to whiteness, which disempowers ethnic minorities and undermines complex identities and political histories (Andrews, 2016, 2018; Wilson et al., 2016). He argues instead, that different anti-racist political groups should come together over specific issues rather than as an identity. Mirza on the other hand still finds the concept useful, as it avoids essentialising people as white, black or Asian, in the way that colonialism ‘centralised racial differences and put people in boxes and categorised them’ (paraphrased Alemoru, 2019). She also recognises that it is a concept of its time and that the new generation may not want to use it if it no longer serves a purpose. In recent years, it seems, the discussion about political blackness and a unified politics on “race” and racism has resurfaced.

In the process of learning about “political blackness” and anti-racist political histories in the UK, opinions of young people diverged on whether the concept still had relevance today. Some thought that “political blackness” was still relevant today, and useful to bring about change. For others it was a concept and tool of a past politics on “race” and racism in the UK that no longer served the contemporary situation. Hannah was a proponent of “political blackness” – in the past and now. To her it had been important in Britain’s politics on “race” and racism in the past, as it brought oppressed groups together who as a result were stronger. Under the umbrella of “political blackness”, she believed that a lot of change was achieved in the UK. She acknowledged that there was a lot of confusion around what “black” meant in this context and thought that “black” as identity and “black” as politics should be clearly separated. To her, they are two different concepts. The difference, as Hall pointed out, is discursive and cannot encapsulate the multiple subjectivities contained in that category (2017). While she did not believe in “black” as something that described her or anyone’s identity – after all “black” was not used by “black” people to describe themselves anywhere outside of white-dominated societies in “the West” – she did believe in it as a term to unify people who are being racially discriminated against. In the UK, she explained, these were mainly people of African, Caribbean and Asian descent.

As Hannah presented her view on “political blackness” there was both agreement and scepticism in the room, as well as noticeable silences from young people with an Asian background. Was this concept from 40 years ago still relevant and useful as a way to conduct politics today? If so, how? Opinions remained split. Some thought that because of the discrimination they experienced in the immigration system as a result of the way they were racialised, “political blackness” remained important. It offered, they thought, a basis upon which to call out the uneven and hierarchical immigration system, and to build solidarity with other groups who were marginalised based on their race. This was the case of the Dreamer activists in the US, who initially campaigned exclusively on their own issues but later expanded that work to collaborate with other racially marginalised groups (Sirriyeh, 2018a). Others in the group found the concept problematic and limiting. They argued that it was exclusionary in terms of who they could build alliances with. Instead, similarly to Andrews point above, they advocated building broader alliances based on causes that had various overlaps with their own campaign. One thing everyone did agree on: the importance of acknowledging the history of anti-racist campaigning and politics in the UK and the work that “political blackness” did in the past to create positive change for them. Whether directly engaging with this concept or not, the young people saw their campaign work as building on this historical activism and politics. In addition to learning about “race”, how it affected their lives, and developing a specific literacy to navigate “low-key racism”, because of their migration and activism young people also had to learn about the history of anti-racist politics in the UK and how they fitted into this legacy.

Conclusion

This chapter looked at how young people learnt about the intersection of “race” and immigration in relation to their own lives and their activism. Their migration to the UK not only meant exclusions and restrictions based on their immigration status (as outlined in previous chapters of this thesis) but also learning that the concept of “race” – as Hall pointed out – persists in the UK in categorising people and grouping them in hierarchies (2017), where “race” and immigration interact to create a specific

experience for the young people in this research (Crenshaw, 1991). For the first time in their lives, young people were categorised as “black” in a “white” dominant society. In addition to marginalisation through their immigration status, they experienced exclusions because they were “black”.

Learning about “race” initially meant becoming racially literate, as Joseph-Salisbury called it (2018). This meant developing a filter through which to correctly identify and interpret certain situations in terms of their racial politics, initially in personal interactions, and later in their campaign work. Rather than direct racist attacks as their parents had experienced, young people were trying to understand aversive racism and microaggressions. These were, however, far from straight-forward to read, as a once overt racism has changed into more covert, nonverbal and subtle expressions that are often implicit and can be hard to name. Young people therefore rarely felt confident to call out certain experiences as definitely racist – even though they were sure something was not right or off. As young people got older, they also became aware of the racism in institutions and those representing institutions they were engaging with. The more they encountered exclusively white spaces, such as certain schools or university, the more they learned about racial inequality and how combined with their immigration status this disadvantageously positioned them in British society.

Young people’s learning about “race” continued through the campaign group, in terms of understanding Britain’s complicated history of racial politics, how this was implicated in their current situation, and how this affected their campaign work. Understanding their situation in terms of colonial histories between Britain and their countries of birth, helped them understand contemporary racial hierarchies in the immigration system. As a result, they engaged with histories of the politics of “race” and antiracism in the UK. They learned to see their own activism as a continuation of earlier anti-racist politics and the project of “political blackness” in the UK. How the young people developed their own politics that acknowledges both migration and “race” in their exclusion from British membership, is explored further in the next chapter. It delves deeper into the work of the campaign group, how young people experienced and reclaimed the migrant label, and carved out a unique position for themselves between migrants’ rights and antiracist organisations.

Chapter 8: 'Immigration was what connected us': From individual struggle to collective activism

Introduction

This chapter explores the tension between the individualisation and isolation that the immigration system imposes on people and how they resist this atomisation through coming together in collective activism. It follows young people's journeys from their individual struggle to becoming part of the group and how this shifts their understanding of their situation, their ability to change their situation, and their motivation to create change for others in the same situation. Here I argue that the very thing that made young people's lives hard growing up in London and that isolated them from friends and community, is what made them find the campaign group, "come out" to others, and become activists: the migrant label. It is through their collective process that participants reclaim their story, their struggle and being a migrant, saying it proudly and using it to fuel their campaign work.

This chapter is about how young people responded to the injustices and inequalities they experience as a result of their immigration status. After years of living in the UK without immigration status and the subsequent hardships of poverty, insecure housing, difficult relationships with family and friends, isolation, mental health issues and being invisibilised by a racist immigration system, these young people are reclaiming the label "migrant" through their stories and using it as the basis of their politics. No longer passive recipients of exclusionary politics, the young migrants take an active role in public debates through their campaign work. With their campaign group they resist the legal boundaries of citizenship imposed on them, produce counter-knowledge, and find resilience through solidarity and mutual support.

This chapter will mostly draw on ethnographic material collected from observing the campaign group, and participating in their meetings, gatherings, awareness-raising events and actions. It will also draw on some individual accounts, especially Daisy, who plays a key role in the group. Building on the previous chapters that explored the various implications of precarious immigration status on the lives of young migrants growing up in London, this chapter looks at young migrants' agency in the face of these

implications, by examining both their individual and collective political responses to their situation. The young people's contestation of their marginalised place in society points toward a different future for them as they create space for themselves in public and political debates on immigration. Rather than the hopeless places most of them have found themselves in throughout their struggles with immigration, their campaign work to change policy opens up alternative subjectivities for young people, a more hopeful future, and a pathway of how to get there.

The campaign group

The campaign group is youth-led and was started in 2014 by young people who were excluded from education based on their immigration status, to campaign for equal access to education for everyone. Their remit and scope have since evolved to being for young migrants to enable themselves and others like them to contribute fully to British society. What has not changed is that the group is led by those who have lived and experienced the issues first-hand. Key to the way they conduct their work is that they make their own voices heard in policy and public debates. The group is multifaceted, fulfils many roles and engages in a plethora of activities.

The first time I met the campaign group was on a hot summer's day and it was clear that they were a force to be reckoned with. There were about twenty young people between the ages of 18 and 25 in the room, all from an ethnic minority background – mostly Nigerian as I would find out later – and the majority were women. The room was full of energy as young people were loudly chatting to each other in animated conversations interspersed with laughter and big smiles. While I was nervous about starting my ethnographic work with this group, I knew little about the importance of it to the individual members and the migrants' rights movement in the UK. I spent just over a year attending campaign meetings, gatherings, actions, and school visits of the group to understand what they are about, how they go about their activism, their purpose, and the roles the group plays in young people's lives and the political arena.

The group has run successful and energetic campaigns around specific issues to create policy change involving creative direct actions such as taking mince pies to university vice-chancellors to discuss establishing scholarships for young people currently excluded to go to university. They go on trainings and provide training for each other

and other young people to build their campaign work, especially around public speaking and telling their own story. Raising awareness of their issues is another big part of their work, especially as their situation is one often overlooked in the sector where asylum, refugee and detention issues receive most of the attention. They reach out to young people in schools and colleges who might be affected by the same issues. The campaigners strongly believe that the earlier young people find out about their status, the better - as it is usually easier to regularise before young people turn 18. The young people also raise awareness by speaking at national events, such as Michael giving a Ted talk, or Sarah at the Women of the World Festival, as well as countless smaller events. Through their public speaking the group has built an extensive network with other community and campaign organisations internationally, such as the Dreamers movement in the United States, nationally and locally. Beyond organisations they have also built alliances with individuals such as Mayor of London Sadiq Khan.

Furthermore, they engage with the media to get their voices heard and have been in the Guardian, Newsnight, BBC, Channels 4 and 5, and many more. This media and public work is important for other young people to find them. Their message is simple: they are a group of young migrants who grew up in the UK, call this their home and want the chance to fully contribute to British society without the restrictions they are currently facing. Through telling their stories and making themselves heard they are contributing to alternative narratives of “the migrant”, countering the negative and untrue stereotypes often portrayed in the media.

Finally, they also run an advice line with the aim to reach and support as many young people restricted in their lives through their immigration status. This was one of the first things Serena did when she joined the group – something she valued highly because she was able to support others in a similar situation to hers. It was also a painful experience, she would often have to repeat her own story during these conversations.

Internally, the group fulfils many different functions. They exchange knowledge and information to educate each other better on their rights and entitlements and relevant changes in the law and experiences with the Home Office or lawyers. During the election campaigns for example, an activity was prepared where pledges relevant to

immigration had to be matched to the right party. They informed each other about the introduction of the landlord checks and, on another occasion, they organised a legal knowledge quiz. They often invited guests from other organisations to attend their gatherings – which were open to anyone - to learn more about other causes, such as detention or anti-racist campaigning in higher education.

In smaller core group meetings, they spent time strategizing, organising and setting campaign priorities. They covered updates about who had done what, made decision about event invitations, logistics, social media, and their philosophy and core issues.

Aside from their campaigning and awareness raising work, a major role of the group was that of a support group. For most it was the first time and place where they felt safe to openly talk about their immigration situation that they had kept hidden for most of their lives. As Serena explains before she was involved in the group, she never spoke about being a migrant: “Cause no one needs to know that aspect of Serena, that aspect is hidden, secret. Because my mum told me not to tell anyone, you know. That’s where the foundation was laid. It’s a secret, don’t tell anyone. So, me even telling my friend was like whoa, Serena literally, you’ve committed the biggest sin.’ Stories were usually shared at the end of gatherings and were listened to with the utmost respect and care. Cheers of support and applause were mixed with tears, as the stories were heard and acknowledged, and one person was able to start sharing their burden that they had been carrying on their own thus far.

This chapter is split into two main sections. The first section explores how young people overcame their demons, as Daisy called it, through sharing their stories and struggle with others in the same situation. As a result of this “coming out” young people start their healing process, and a contextualised understanding of their situation sets them on a path of political activism, which is explored in the second section. This examines how the power and understanding young people gain from being in a group, has led them to activists as “experts by experience” and built a multi-faceted group that does much more than campaign. Throughout their activism, young people are constantly balancing the limits that the individualisation of the immigration system imposes with their collective goals in this political project. The campaign group as a collective is necessary for individual healing and wins, as well as for broader

political or social change. Collective wins however remain limited in a hostile environment where systemic change is hard to achieve, especially for non-citizens.

The migrant label

The previous chapters of this thesis explored what it means for young people to live life being labelled a migrant in the UK. Despite having grown up in Britain, participants continue to be legally defined by where they were born rather than where they have lived most of their life, live now and feel at home. As a result, they are excluded from British citizenship and, instead, are citizens of countries they have not set foot in since they were children. And as a result, they experienced social isolation (see Gonzales et al., 2013 in US), shame and stigma, which reinforce legal exclusions and isolation (Abrego, 2011; Gonzales, 2011).

As outlined in this thesis, most participants migrated to the UK with their parents at a young age, feel British and say this is their home. It is usually not until later in their lives that they become legible and visible as a migrant. Here we find a contradiction as the moment of migration, i.e. crossing the international border, is at odds with the moment they become a migrant in the eyes of the state, which is often ten years after their physical migration. As De Genova argued, there would be no migration if there were no borders (De Genova, 2017), where borders are linked to the nation-state, defining its physical territory and fixing “its” people through citizenship. In the case of the participants, it is the *internal* border that retrospectively labelled them as migrants, long after they have settled into the UK. Through internal bordering mechanisms people are continuously reminded of their status as migrants and their deportability until they gain British citizenship – something hard to achieve (see chapter six). Daisy explains: ‘You see, I am a migrant. Until I reached 18, I didn’t really appreciate what that meant, but then it was brought home to me very forcibly that in the eyes of some people, including our government, I was seen as different and did not deserve to be treated in the same way or have the same opportunities as my school friends.’

Young migrants are governed on the one hand through restrictions of their rights and entitlements (Bosniak, 2006), and on the other through their deportability (De Genova, 2002). As a result, a key experience for them is thinking they are the only ones in that

situation. The immigration regime's individualisation of people's cases had succeeded in isolating young people and making them believe the unlikely scenario that no one else in the UK was going through the same situation. Eventually, however, young people confided in someone such as a close friend or a teacher. This often coincided with them seeking a new solution to their situation, feeling they had exhausted their close family network. And so, they found the campaign group.

Through the campaign group young people developed an understanding of their own situation in context, the immigration system and the governance of migrants beyond their individual case. The knowledge that their status as a migrant was restricting young people, motivated many to fight what they considered an injustice. Through being an active member of the campaign group and actively participating in politics, young people's shame and stigma at being labelled a migrant shifted to saying it loud and proud.

Overcoming demons: Sharing the struggle and healing

This section of the chapter looks at how young people found the campaign group, what role it plays in their lives and what it meant for them individually. Usually young people initially approached the group to get advice on and help with their own situation. However, over time, the group became much more to young people than about getting their immigration status and going to university. I argue that there are three key stages that young people progress through. The first is a sense of relief at the realisation that there are many other young people in the same situation as them and, with that, losing the sense of shame they had been carrying with them for being labelled a migrant. Secondly, young people were encouraged to "come out" about their status and situation through sharing their story with the group. Many described this as the first step in their healing process. And thirdly, as young people understood their situation in context and that their experience was systemic rather than individual, they became motivated to fight for justice for all young migrants subject to immigration control. While these were largely individual processes, the group was essential for this journey.

Support from the campaign group

Young people usually found the campaign group at a point when they felt they had exhausted all their options to sort out their situation. They still had not been granted status and were unable to take up their offers to study because they could not access a student loan. On their search for a solution they came across the campaign group and became hopeful that it could help them. Some read about a group member's story and the campaign in the news or online. For others it was a friend who found them. Tobi was introduced to the group through a teacher he eventually confided in – it turned out another student at his school was going through the same things and had already joined the group. Still, young people were often afraid to pick up the phone and tell a stranger about their situation or thought there was no point, as it would confirm what they already knew. After some encouragement from friends or family young people called the advice line and spoke to Paul (the youth worker that supports the group). Young people described Paul as direct, real and honest in telling them about their situation, but also encouraging young people to get involved in the group, attend gatherings, go out to schools and to share their story. Many say that had it not been for Paul's continuous calls, they may have never joined the group.

This is how and when Kareem found the group: 'so when I was applying to university and I found out this whole thing...I read about Daisy, so actually my dad's friend he, so my dad told his friend that "oh look this has happened, we weren't expecting it to happen 'cause we've done everything right." And his friend read about Daisy in a newspaper article, I think it was the Guardian. He sent it over to my dad and then my dad was like, Kareem look at this. And again, at that time I was like "yeah dad, no, it's just, nothing's gonna happen". He was like "you know what, just phone them up and see what happens". 'Cause at that time they won the Supreme Court case. So, I just phoned them up and said "hey I've read about this, so can I go to university?" So that sort of thing...I spoke to Paul, and Paul was like, I explained my whole situation to him and he, again Paul is quite a real person so he wouldn't say "oh yeah you can go to university", if it's like you can't he'll tell you. But he said, "you should get involved with the campaign, why don't you come over and meet the other guys?" Like he does... So, then Paul encouraged me to come and since that day I've always been involved.'

Since going to the group and meeting other young people like him, Kareem no longer felt like the odd one out. Suddenly he was surrounded by young people who were similar to him and had had similar experiences to him. In the group he found a shared identity with others and found crucial support for his mental and emotional health, keeping him hopeful about his future. Over time, Kareem and others built their resilience to continue their citizenship pathway. Importantly, knowing that others went through similar experiences made them realise that the reason they were in this situation was not a consequence of their own actions. It was because they were labelled a “migrant” by the British state. Although the labelling still restricted their life, being a migrant no longer felt so shameful. After all, they were in a room surrounded by other young migrants who they looked up to and who inspired them. Shifting feelings of shame entirely was difficult, as most acknowledged some of that feeling always remains.

Individual plight became a shared plight and solidarity among members grew. Kareem explains: ‘we would have so many similarities. So, you feel as if you’re not being singled out. It’s like, you are being singled out, but it’s not just you by yourself, it’s like a whole group of you that’s been singled out. So, it is much of a bigger thing in that context and then when you do something you don’t feel as if you’re just doing it for yourself.’ Gonzales and colleagues found similar dynamics in organisations of the DREAMers movement in the US: ‘Excluded from an American identity, though raised in this country, they [DREAMers] sought solidarity among others who shared their plight and dreamed for a better future’ (2013: 1188). The group formalised this support through having 1-2-1 partners and organising social activities.

Finally, young people felt like they could truly be themselves. Their shared experience created an implicit understanding between young people. Without having to explain themselves to other people as they “just got it”. Shuri explains it like this: ‘Being surrounded by so many people who could help you and understood what you were going through and you could actually talk to them and you could look them in the eye and they knew exactly what you were feeling at that moment... was just the best thing ever. It made me, like there were some days when I used to come home and cry because I was like “oh my god I found this group that was just so understanding, and

they just know what I am going through.” The young people created a space of belonging based on their common exclusions and the understanding that despite their exclusion Britain was their home without having to justify this.

Joining the campaign group, attending meetings and events, hearing everyone’s stories and being surrounded by other young people in a similar situation led many to feel less isolated and like a burden had been lifted. Tobi explained it like this to me: ‘there was a sense of like relief, like knowing that you’re not the only one going through the same like situation. ‘Cause in my head yeah, all I know was this was gonna only affect me and my brother.’ After some time, most young people were encouraged and felt brave enough to share their story with the group, which as Daisy said starts everyone’s healing process.

Coming out

Daisy is central to the campaign group and it was often her story that brought young people to it. By making herself vulnerable and sharing her story publicly she allowed others in similar situations to find her, the group and support. Daisy was key in establishing a supportive and safe environment to share personal stories in. She welcomed everyone with a beaming smile, open heart and kindness, putting them at ease immediately. She showed phenomenal solidarity and resilience, was funny and made everyone laugh. This was reflected by young people in the interviews who mentioned her support. It was also reflected in how the group celebrated individuals’ successes and felt for others’ continued struggle. Daisy and the group were present at everyone’s lowest and highest moments. Leila described the moment she told the group she got her status: ‘...literally the room shook. Like, you’d probably feel it if you were downstairs...Daisy just dropped the cake and she just jumped on me and she was like “I told you this would happen!” and she started crying and Mel was crying. And I was like “Wait, wait, wait! It’s not finished yet!” and I was like “I got access to public funds!” And they screamed again.’ Everyone in that group was celebrating Leila getting her status as if it were their own.

This environment was crucial for young people to share their story in a “coming out” moment. The group met once a month for gatherings, which ended with someone sharing their story. Most of the time this would be the first time the young person

shared their story beyond their closest friends and family. After one such occasion when Rachel, a young woman, had shared her story I made the following notes in my fieldwork diary: '[Daisy] said how it is so hard to tell your story and come out in this way for the first time, this will inevitably be the hardest time for Rachel to have to tell her story. But at the same time, she said, this is only the start of her journey. A massive milestone but this is where the healing process starts, and where she will learn how empowering it is for herself to be telling her story. As well as how powerful it is to tell her story to others.' It was such an intense emotional moment thick with feeling that you could almost cut the air with a knife. Everyone stayed in that moment with Rachel after she shared her story. Then they thanked her for sharing her story, followed by a round of responses and a heartfelt applause, cheers and clicking of fingers. When I spoke to Rachel afterwards, she emphasised how coming to the gatherings took away her sense of isolation and reminded her that others are in the same boat as her; something easy to forget in day to day life.

This process and the language used by participants echo of both the “therapeutic turn” associated with the feminist movement, and the “coming out” language of the gay rights and LGBTQ movement, also recently used by “undocumented” youth in the US. Chauvin and Garcés-Mascreñas argue that ‘it is no coincidence that the term “coming out” has started being used in the United States in the immigrant youth movement’, especially for those young people who have grown up in the States but who have had to keep their status hidden (2014). In the coming out process, Sirriyeh argues, young “undocumented” migrants in the US ‘rearticulated their exclusion as inclusion’ through the use of testimonio with the practice of “Coming Out of the Shadows” and declaring themselves as “undocumented and unafraid” (2018a: 140). Until the moment of “coming-out”, as Chauvin and Garcés-Mascreñas argue, “undocumented” youth live in the “undocumented closet” (2014). As I explored in chapter five, most participants in this research similarly keep their “undocumented” or precarious immigration status a secret until they shared their story in the context of the campaign group.

These “coming out” moments served multiple purposes for participants. Firstly, it is as Daisy points out to start people’s healing process from the trauma, struggle and hardship they experienced as a result of their precarity produced by the immigration

system. As Rodriguez argues, '[S]tories about oppression can guide us through understanding that oppression, in a sense, heals us' (2006: 1069). In her study of youth of colour, activists and teachers in urban schools in the United States, Ginwright argues that healing is key to social justice, especially for groups who have experienced a form of trauma as a result of structural issues or violence that represent collective experiences (2015). She argues that it is essential especially for young people, to see hope for their future. This purpose of healing also has similarities to groups established as part of the feminist movement 'which used psychotherapy to understand and analyse internalized oppression' (Fernandes, 2017: 21). The aim of these groups was to raise a consciousness among women about how they were being oppressed and isolated in the home, through sharing their stories with each other. Analogous to how the immigration system individualises people and isolates them so that they feel unable to change their situation, women were individualised in the household thus not realising how they were being oppressed and separated. As Robin Morgan explains: 'It is impossible to confront a common condition before you have recognized it...you can't begin to find your own power until you have conscientiously recognised your nonpower' (in Oakley, 1992: 77). Key to these conscious-raising groups was that people generalised and politicised from their personal situation. For participants in this study, sharing their story was individually healing through recognising their situation as part of a collective experience and shared in a "common condition". This became an empowering turning point. As Chauvin and Garcés-Mascreñas point out 'The dialectic of the closet is the missing link for understanding the passage from the "shadows" of everyday life to formal political claims-making' (2014: 425).

The second purpose of these moments is developing a common consciousness of individuals' situations in context and an understanding of their struggle as caused by structural issues rather than the result of individual failing. This was key in young people's transformation from personal struggle to collective, political claims-making for their inclusion. As Fernandes points out in the context of the domestic workers bill of rights campaign in the US: '[S]peaking aloud the stories for the first time was not just therapeutic for the women who had often suffered alone, but it was the basis for their organizing efforts' (2017: 80). For the young people in this research, sharing their

stories in the context of the campaign group was the beginning of their politicisation, activism and organising beyond their individual struggle for immigration status.

When Daisy shared her story in a newspaper, she took a risk. A risk that paid off for her and the campaign group. She realised that sharing and therefore owning her story was a turning point in her life. It became a way for her to reclaim the “migrant label” and resist the inequalities she and others were experiencing as a result through political action. As she explains: ‘[T]here are many other young people at [the campaign group] whose stories are incredibly similar to mine. Although not being granted student finance was how we found each other, immigration was what connected us. It was very clear that we were all broken regardless of whether we knew it or not. We just started by sharing our stories. And I remember at first sharing my story, it was difficult. I never shared my story publicly, but I wanted to heal from my wounds and face my demons.’ Sharing her story in the safe environment of the campaign group, allowed Daisy to heal and then work to open that space for others, for collective political action and organising. The next section looks at the transition from personal healing to becoming politically active.

Becoming political

Many young people were not overly political before they became involved in the campaign group. Like Sarah said: ‘I wasn’t like actively seeking politics. And then all of a sudden I found myself submerged into the world of politics and immigration and laws and legislation and it’s just like “oh for goodness’ sake”...the thing is like being, being in the situation I am [in], I can’t afford not to be politically minded. Like I can’t afford not to know what’s going on.’ The process of coming out about their immigration situation led young people to a contextualised understanding of their situation. The understanding of how it is the result of being governed as migrants in the UK, which compelled them to become politically active. As Chauvin and Garcés-Mascareñas argue, the moment of coming out ‘is a phase of resource acquisition and accumulation of civic capital which can later be mobilized as a political pivot. Its positive productivity provides the infrastructure of individual and collective agency’ (2014: 425). Becoming an activist was never Daisy’s plan. Like most of the young people in the campaign group, her plan was to go to university and pursue a career.

Then she learned she was not eligible for student finance or home fees because of her immigration status, despite having lived in the UK for nine years and thinking of herself as nothing other than British. With a new understanding of her situation and feeling empowered after telling her story, Daisy felt she had no choice but to become politically active.

Through coming out, young people overcame their sense of isolation, shame and stigma, and realised they were not the only ones in this situation. In the group they met other young people with similar experiences, - some worse, some better than their own. Some of the young people in the group had been able to regularise their status and access scholarships. This inspired hope. Others were still “undocumented” or having to regularly report to immigration. All of the young people’s lives were in one way or another impacted and restricted by their immigration status. For many, it was the understanding that their situation was part of a collective experience that spurred them on to become politically active. As Serena explains: ‘I hear other people’s stories you know, and I was just like “Serena, you haven’t even seen the worst of this...of this struggle.” There were people there that were homeless, you know. Their parents just left them. And just left them and said, gave them to an aunty...There’re people there that, as we spoke, as we stood there, they had nowhere to go home to, that was theirs, you know. They had to hustle for themselves and stuff like that. And I was just like, “Wow, Serena...this is such a bad thing to go through.” You know people are suffering as a result of this. That really opened my eyes. And I came home so overwhelmed...So...you know [I knew] what I need to, I need to take this seriously.’ In addition to Serena’s realisation that other young people went through similar and worse experiences as herself, her siblings and mother still did not have status. Although she was safe from deportation, she was still fearing for the safety of her family. Being politically active was then also about protecting them.

Being part of the campaign group led young people to see the structural and systemic discrimination and injustice they were experiencing as a group because of a postcolonial, racialised British immigration system. As Michael explains: ‘What I experienced was not a glitch in the system. There are calculated structures embedded in every layer of society designed to present a barrier to no one else but migrants. It is

clear, whether you are in Aleppo facing the refugee crisis or you're in the US, like the Dreamers, a similar campaign to ours. It is clear that the odds are greatly stacked against migrants globally.' This new-found understanding empowered young people to become politically active for greater equality in the immigration regime and fewer restrictions based on immigration status. It was no longer just about their individual success in securing status, home fees, a loan or a scholarship. Being part of a group of shared experience and overcoming their isolation was necessary for individuals to heal and come to this understanding. Young people's individual struggle with their immigration status and journey along the citizenship pathway eventually led them to a collective political project, feeling pride in being a migrant and their journey. As Serena says, 'when I see myself as a migrant [now], I don't really see the negative connotations. I just see someone that came through, that's gone through a lot of crap...and rejecting the, the stigma that's attached to it.' The campaign group helped Serena overcome her demons and heal; from lying about where she was born because she was too ashamed of the truth to saying that she is a migrant confidently. Now she is ready to help others along that same journey and fight for equal rights for migrants like her in the UK.

Being an immigrant activist and the collective political project

This second section explores the collective political project that young people are pursuing as a result of their contextual understanding of their situation and their desire and drive to achieve political change beyond their personal situation. It will start by exploring the kind of politics the young people are pursuing and how they are situating themselves in relation to other similar organisations that often reflect ethnic and racial differences. Being a youth-led campaign group consisting of people with lived experience only, they are unlike many migrant rights organisations in London or those in charge of making decision about young migrants, who more often than not are white, privileged individuals without personal migration experiences. Based on their shared experiences with the immigration system they are using "story of self" tools to connect and represent themselves in the political system by creating a

collective story. Through this process they are pursuing an activist path that is true to themselves.

Secondly this section will look at the collective activism of the group and the many roles it plays, both internally and externally, showing how ‘people can be, at the same time, both the subordinate objects of hierarchical power relations *and* subjects who are agents in their own lives’ (Lister, 1997). In addition to acting as a support group, as explored above, it is also a key place for learning and training as information and knowledge is shared and exchanged, and young people build their skills and capacities in campaigning. Amongst themselves they engage in vigorous discussion over their own organising, campaign priorities, and strategy going forward. Externally their activism is also multifaceted. They run their own direct campaigns and actions, raise awareness of their issue to support other young people that might be in the same situation and to place their issues on an agenda that is otherwise mostly overlooked in migrants’ rights organising. They network with other groups and organisations, make connections with other struggles and build strategic alliances to support their campaign goals. They do a lot of public-facing work through different media outlets such as newspapers and television and maintain their own social media channels. Recently they created a cartoon, blog and several information videos. In the process of this work they are creating a counter-narrative to the “bad and undeserving migrant” and claim their belonging in Britain regardless of their legal status and racial othering as discussed in the previous chapter. Reaching out to as many young people as possible and supporting them to go to university and get status is their biggest driver. As a result, a large part of their work involves responding to requests for advice from young people all over the country and producing online content that raises awareness of the issues, and shares important information on it. Throughout, this section explores how the activities of the collective political project are restricted by the individualising immigration regime that considers people on a case by case basis. This is reflected in the large volume of work being about one-to-one advice.

Experts by experience

Unlike many other organisations in the sector, the campaign group is made up only of people who have gone through the experience and issues they are campaigning about.

In other words, they are “experts by experience”. A recent advert for a volunteering role within the group named ‘personal experience of the issues dealt with’ as an essential requirement. The young people are therefore advocating on their own behalf and representing themselves. They are supported by a youth worker, and embedded within a legal charity for children and young people, that offer them resources: office space, meeting rooms, email addresses, website space, and advice from professional staff. The adults and organisation around them play a supportive and facilitating role, offering resources and advice where needed. As a white male with British Citizenship, the youth worker often emphasised this, as he and others like him are unable to know the experiences of the young people. Within the sector, their issue of restrictions based on their immigration status is therefore often overlooked.

The young campaigners frequently attended meetings with people who had little to no understanding of the different types of immigration statuses and the resulting stratification in terms of restrictions and entitlements. A lot of policy and NGO work focuses on unaccompanied asylum seeking children and age-assessments, children in detention and indefinite detention (Sigona and Hughes, 2012), and, more recently, also migrant care leavers. Children and young people in families and with more complex immigration situations therefore often find their issues sidelined. Even when meeting with university representatives about scholarships, young people would regularly have to explain the differences in entitlement and access to student loans based on their immigration status.

A reason for why their situation and issues were rarely the focus within migrants’ or children’s rights organisations was, they thought, because campaigns and their goals are often narrowly defined (see also Fernandes, 2017). Rather than looking at the immigration system as a whole and the consequences for all migrants, many organisations tend to break down the migrant groups according to the state’s legal categorisations to campaign for smaller wins. Young people reflected that in some circumstances choosing smaller sub-groups to advocate for is strategic. For example, a campaign focus on child migrants, is more likely to get support from a broader cross-section of society and politicians, than one on adult migrants. It could therefore be constituted an easier win. The young people in this campaign group however saw this

as problematic, not just because their own issues got left out as a result. Also, because this did not address the systemic marginalisation they and other migrants were experiencing as a result of the hierarchy within the immigration regime. As Kareem pointed out, 'it is better just to think of everyone as a migrant.'

Using their stories, experience and voice is a key strategy of the young campaigners, forcing others to confront the systemic discrimination, racism and injustice they are experiencing as a result of the British immigration regime. Basing their campaign work in their experiences knowing these as their truth, gives young people confidence in their cause, and makes them feel empowered in their politics. In my fieldnotes after a particularly intensive gathering I noted: 'We talked about the importance and powerful-ness of being an "expert-by-experience". How the voice speaking truth through their story cuts through any "vague" facts, rhetoric or discourse and how this is the most powerful thing people can use in terms of campaigning.' More than a connection to their 'lifeworld' spurring a social movement into action (Bassel, 2013), young peoples' experience formed the basis of their political work because their experience cannot be externally falsified. In a system that continuously doubts the narrative, trustworthiness and deservingness of migrants, they can hold on to their stories as truth and thus produce counter-knowledge that opposes the public discourses of the deserving vs undeserving migrant. In another gathering one young person said: 'the power is in the fact that it is your story and your story alone, it is your own and only truth, you own that, and non-one can take that away from you or dispute that.'

The format of storytelling by young people usually starts with individual stories of self, leading to the collective experience that exposes systemic practices of the immigration regime. By connecting individual stories to the collective and thus contextualising it, young people demonstrate how they are embedded in networks, structures, and historical, global and political processes. Through making these connections, young people are resisting the neoliberal subjecthood imposed on them by the immigration regime that assumes their situations to be the result of individual choices. Young people's experience and analysis thus becomes a counter-knowledge to the dominant Eurocentric discourse that often ignores legacies of empire present in the

contemporary UK immigration system (De Genova, 2010; Lentin, 2008). I therefore argue that, in this campaign group, we can find an 'example[s] of alternative and subversive storytelling project[s] that allow for complexity and context, in pursuit of a politics of transformation' (Fernandes, 2017: 133).

However, this political strategy of storytelling also entails risks for the young campaigners, as Polletta has argued (2009). Constantly telling your story, requires young people to relive it - which could be painful. There was an implicit agreement that those who were still in a precarious situation were not expected to share their story. Even for those who had told their story many times, as Daisy pointed out, someone can ask you a new question that catches you unaware and "the pain is back". This led her to question whether they can ever be truly healed from their experience because of all the layers attached to it. Others said they became numb or disconnected from their own story through the process of telling it over and over again.

Another concern for young people when telling their stories was that once a story had been told and in the public domain, the young people lose control over it and it can become appropriated. This is a particular concern when stories are re-told without context, and, as a result, become de-politicised as the protagonist is recast as a victim (Fernandes, 2017). Depending on the place of storytelling it is adapted to given parameters. For instance, a story as testimony in a court room will be told differently to a story told to a journalist, to the story shared within the safety of the campaign group. Sarah experienced this after she was featured on a major current affairs documentary series on Channel 4. Not all of her interview was aired. And she said she made the mistake of going on Twitter afterwards where among lots of supportive tweets were some that questioned her belonging in Britain. Although there were more supportive messages and her crowd-funding campaign quickly reached its target after the programme aired, she mainly thought about the negative messages she received and found them hard to stomach. So, while young people believed in the benefits and necessity of telling their story as part of their politics, they were also aware of its dangers.

This approach of storytelling as experts-by-experience in their political activism is one they pursued from early on. They took part in trainings on telling their story, and run

regular leadership programmes for members. Through their storytelling, in the words of anthropologist Michael Jackson, the young activist ‘reclaims some sense of agency, recovers some sense of purpose, and comes to feel that the events that overwhelmed one from without may be brought within one’s grasp’ (2002: 36). Telling their stories was a way for young campaigners to demand that their issues are put on the political agenda of other organisations in the sector, of universities, in courts and in parliament. It provided a way into British politics. Storytelling also helped young people to develop the group and its campaign focus, and to decide on the issues to pursue. The young people are the ones leading the campaign, with the adults supporting, training and protecting; and eventually letting go when they are no longer needed. Over time, the young campaigners worked more and more independently until they set up on their own, hosting their own website, and establishing themselves as an independent charity. As Gonzales and colleagues found in their study in the US, the young migrants in this campaign group regained a sense of self, purpose, role and hopefulness through their ‘participation in civic activities to effect change’ (Gonzales et al., 2013: 1188–1190). Through coming out, sharing their burden, and becoming politically active, young people reclaimed power over their situation and the migrant label that excluded them from the polis. By telling their story in different public arenas, the young people wrote their experience of a young migrant subject to immigration control back into British politics.

Changing policy for migrants

Having started their individual healing processes, built their resilience and understood their individual struggle as part of a collective experience through being part of the campaign group, young people embarked on their collective political journey to change the situation for all young migrants in their situation. The group was launched in 2015 with many aims: changing policy and legislation around access to higher education and student loans; changing scholarship eligibility criteria; raising awareness of their issue to reach young people that might be affected, and within the migrant’s rights sector, government and the public; acquiring and sharing relevant knowledge and information; and through all of this work combined contributing to a counter narrative of “the migrant” in public debates, showing themselves as “young and clever Londoners”. The campaign work has taken young people on a journey from issues

around equality in education to immigration justice. They have been involved and organised too many campaigns and actions to cover here. I will therefore focus on a few key campaigns that show that some policy changes are achievable through campaigning work and collective political action, the limits to success and the evolution of the group.

In 2011 the law changed so that no one with “limited leave to remain” could receive student finance. This meant that many young people could not take up university offers for at least 10 years. As an early campaign focus, the group supported a Supreme Court legal challenge as intervenors: *Tigere v Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills* [2015] UKSC 57 which disputed the restrictive eligibility criteria to access student loans based on immigration status for young people who had lived over half their lives in the UK. The young people submitted supporting evidence and organised a protest outside the Supreme Court that saw the support of MPs Dianne Abbot and David Lammy. The case and campaign were successful as the court, under Judge Lady Hale, ruled that the law was discriminatory. In a blog about the decision, Michael said that ‘the best thing about today was seeing that we actually have a voice and it has been heard!’ The student finance rules subsequently had to be revised by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and some members of the campaign group went to meet representatives of BIS to be consulted on the new rules. Once introduced in April 2016, they meant long term migrants could access student finance on the conditions that young people have held immigration status for at least three years and have lived in the UK for at least half their life.

Since then the group has set up a campaign expanding on education equality issues. In one action they visited Vice Chancellors with mince pies to ask them to either provide more scholarships for their specific situation or expand the eligibility criteria of existing ones. They consulted and worked closely with another organisation for this campaign which worked solely on promoting access to higher education for people who have fled persecution or sought asylum in the UK. Their tireless work meant that many scholarships were granted, and 24 universities now offer scholarship for young migrants who are unable to access a student loan because of their immigration status and who have lived in the UK for many years. Eligibility criteria vary in that scholarships

might only be available for specific courses or certain types of immigration status. However, if eligible, a scholarship usually means that a young person can go to university immediately. Several young people within the campaign group were also able to access scholarships outside of universities, like Michael, or crowdfund their university costs, like Sarah.

Another event that led to a significant win for the campaign group was when Shuri told her story in front of 6000 people at a mayoral hustings event during the election campaign for London Mayor in 2016. Apart from receiving the only standing ovation during the event, Shuri and the issues she represented were publicly acknowledged by both mayoral candidates: Sadiq Khan (now mayor) and Zac Goldsmith. Shuri told me about the event: 'it was scary as hell and then Zac Goldsmiths spoke and he was like "oh Shuri" - he remembered my name, I was pretty happy about that because I said my name only once and that was at the beginning of the speech, so he remembered my name - but Sadiq Khan, he took it to another level! He was like "Shuri, you are a Londoner!" So, I was like "yes mate, you were listening to the speech".' As a result of this event, Sadiq Khan promised to set up a new deputy mayor post to work on issues of integration and cohesion if he was to be elected. He kept his promise after he became Mayor of London, establishing the post of Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility, and Community Engagement. As Shuri said, 'the best moment from that is the fact that Matthew Ryder¹⁵ is now appointed Deputy Mayor for social integration.' The Mayor also set up a new citizenship initiative in 2017 that saw individuals from migrant rights organisations seconded to City Hall at the Greater London Authority (GLA), including two members of the campaign group. The initiative's aims, according to its press release, are 'encouraging the take up of British citizenship by Londoners, supporting young Londoners to secure their legal rights to residence, and celebrating diversity and shared identities in London' (Mayor of London Press Release, 2017). Shuri again: 'I'm just happy that one little action brought that kind of reaction and it's now like a chain thing and so many things are happening with it. I mean I gave Matthew Ryder his job, he should literally pay me!'

¹⁵ In November 2018 Debbie Weekes-Bernard took over the role.

Public facing work like Shuri telling her story at the mayoral hustings are not only important in achieving policy changes but also to raise awareness, especially to other young people who might be in the same situation. Being such a high-profile event, Shuri telling her story was videoed and made available online. It continues to be watched by many young people. Shuri still regularly gets approached by other young people telling her that watching her video made them check their own situation. As young people in the group found, they were often not aware of their immigration status and its implications for access to education. They have therefore become strong advocates for raising awareness of this issue and reaching as many young people as possible so that they can regularise their legal situation as early as possible and minimise delays in getting to university.

Reaching out to young people however is not always easy for the group. In addition to their public facing work in the news and social media, they organise assemblies in schools and stalls at college fairs to get the word out. It can often be hard to convince schools that this is an issue that needs to be discussed within the school. During one gathering Tobi told me how it is also challenging to get young people themselves interested and make them understand that they need to check their immigration situation. Another challenge, especially for assemblies, is how young people can be reached without the school profiling and singling out students in advance. Stalls at college fairs have the benefit that young people can approach the campaigners anonymously and without having to make themselves vulnerable.

Telling their story at events and putting it “out there” through social media and news outlets raised awareness of their issues – restrictions based on their immigration status despite living in the UK most of their lives – and contributed to a different understanding of “the migrant”. Young people were keen to change the overwhelmingly negative portrayal of migrants. However, they were also frustrated that this was something they even had to engage with. As Serena observed during a gathering, why was the negative story the accepted starting point that they then had to refute and argue against? She said that there should be no need to have that argument in the first place as it is not even based on any facts or reality. In the same discussion Sheila commented that it was difficult to hear the dehumanising discourses

in the media and other outlets was difficult to constantly hear. She said, it is as if the media is talking about you, albeit abstractly, yet you feel like it is not you that they are describing, which feels unfair. After all, you, the person they are talking about, is not given any space, voice or time, to talk.

As the campaign evolved and their analysis of their educational inequality became more refined, discussions at campaign meetings started to shift from educational issues towards the immigration system enforced through the “hostile environment” as the root cause of the injustice they were experiencing. Ala Sirriyeh observed a similar shift among the “undocumented” youth movement in the United States as they made connections with historical struggles and US citizens who are being marginalised: ‘they have brought to the forefront of their messaging a wider spectrum of concerns affecting the day-to-day lives and welfare of the wider undocumented community’ (2018a: 134). They started to connect their cause and situation to other immigration related causes such as detention, connected their current struggle to a longer historical anti-colonialist and anti-racist struggle, as discussed in the previous chapter. It was always obvious that I was the only white person in the room with them and the only person without status issues. There were no white migrants with these problems at the campaign, as discussed further in chapter seven. In the action #StillHiddenFigures they highlighted how their struggle is connected to the civil rights movement in the United States. They attended the premier of the film “Hidden Figures” about three black women who worked at NASA and significantly contributed to its achievements, yet were segregated and not recognised for their contribution for a long time in London. Through their hashtag the campaigners highlighted how barriers that existed then still exist now, although they are a bit different, they are similar.

They also started to connect their struggle to other contemporary causes globally, which led them on travels to Europe and the US. Tobi talks about his experience of meeting the Dreamers: we went to meet the Dreamers at their conference in Texas... It was good, like, ‘cause this was... a whole different crowd but it was also hard for us, because for us we could travel but for them they got something similar to what we have but they can’t travel out the country...so it was like...I didn’t want to feel like I was

showing off, like “oh we’ve got a better one” and also we’ve got a chance of becoming a citizen at the end, like there’s a goal for us. But for them they have no chance of becoming a citizen... but I really liked telling my story and hopefully they can use that as an argument.’ Making these connections became key to their campaigning and shifted their focus from being solely education focused to seeing the immigration regime as the cause of their situation.

Based on these developments, the group launched a new campaign with a parliamentary event hosted by Labour Party MP David Lammy in March 2018. The campaign is still ongoing and directly addresses their subjugation through the many short-term, precarious and costly immigration statuses they are forced to apply for, as outlined earlier in the thesis. Introducing the event, Victoria said the one thing she noticed over the years was how much immigration status defines all of their lives and opportunities, despite coming from 17 different countries, having arrived in the UK at different ages (though mostly at a young age) and under different circumstances. The campaign #FreezeOurFees asks the Home Secretary to stop increasing the fees for “limited leave to remain” applications which they have to renew every 2.5 years and have risen from £601 in 2014 to £2,033 in 2018. Weeks after the event, the application fees were increased again. Later, the immigration minister Caroline Nokes MP promised the young campaigners a meeting to discuss the issue of fees. A year later the group was still waiting for the meeting and decided to organise a second parliamentary event, this time hosted by the Scottish National Party MP Stuart McDonald, held in March 2019. On this occasion fees were not increased at the annual review, although a connection to the event cannot be evidenced. Some months later Home Office staff and the Minister finally held a meeting with the young people.

The group has had more and less significant wins through their activism. But policy or legal changes that majorly shift the systemic problems causing their situation and that would expand their inclusion in various aspects of citizenship are hard to achieve. Significant changes to young people’s lives remain based around individuals gaining immigration status or scholarships. As Rochon and Mamanian argue, however, activists not only have impact by changing policy but also by gaining access to the policy process: ‘social movements can have a significant effect on policy outcomes by

winning access to the policy process' (1993: 77). While influence over the policy process and subsequent changes in policy outcomes are hard to measure, especially as outcomes can often be much later than the intervention, the campaign group is being involved in the policy process more and more. They submitted evidence to a court case that led to revised guidance on eligibility criteria for student loans on which they were consulted. They were seconded to the Greater London Authority on a citizenship initiative, submitted evidence to consultations and met with ministers. As much as the young campaigners are including themselves in the polis through their activism and acts of citizenship, as non-citizens their power to hold government to account is limited. Through the process of their activism young people 'come into being as political actors' and 'narrate themselves into the chronology' of UK politics, as Sirriyeh argued for the US context (2018a: 141–142). Young migrants are contesting the boundaries of citizenship as non-citizens and demand to be included based on their practices of inclusion. However, their power to press the government for change is limited because this is precisely contained in the legal relationship between the state and its citizens through legal citizenship. Ala Sirriyeh refers to this as a 'paradox in migrant protest; people protest border controls and exclusionary citizenship, yet the right to have rights is inextricably bound up with citizenship' (2018a: 136). Non-citizen campaigners are therefore somewhat more reliant on the support of allies who hold citizenship and the right to vote. Even within their activism, young people's exclusion because of their immigration status is reinforced while making claims to their belonging and citizenship on the margins of the political community.

This section looked at how young migrants' individual journeys along the citizenship pathway, experiences with the immigration regime and personal transformations came together in a collective political project. It examines their overall political asks, their specific campaigns and activities and importantly their strategies of their political activism. It looked at the group's successes and failures, and examined the spaces where changes can be achieved and those where wins can feel small. In particular, this section argued that the young people in this campaign group derive their power from the use of their stories and advocating on their own behalf based on first-hand experiences of injustice. Throughout their struggle they individually and collectively re-

claimed the label “migrant” as a political tool. A label that had previously legally excluded and socially isolated them.

Conclusion: ‘Immigration was what connected us’

Young people usually found and sought out the campaign group to get help with their own situation regarding their immigration status and accessing university. After going through life thinking they were the only ones in this struggle, in this group they were surrounded by other young people who were in similar situations and had gone through similar experiences because of their immigration status. This journey from isolation to shared experience and struggle through a “coming out moment” where young people told their story to the group for the first time, allowed young people to feel relief, shifted their burden, and feelings of shame and stigma as a result of the “migrant label” became less powerful. As Fernandes points out in her book *Curated Stories* ‘[T]he spaces of everyday life and experiences of collective struggle can nurture alternative projects, forms of storytelling, and subjectivities’ (2017: 168).

Understanding that so many young people were affected in their daily lives and stopped from pursuing their future, young people became politicised and motivated to create change and seek justice for everyone restricted by the immigration regime.

Young people’s involvement in the group brought about an understanding of the context and systemic nature of their own situation. The longer the group was established the deeper their analysis developed as they connected their situation to historical processes and broader political, economic and global structures. As a result, they developed a way of telling their story that went beyond their individual situation, pointing out their collective situation and thus moving away from the individualised, neoliberal subjecthood imposed on them through the immigration regime. Telling their stories as “experts by experience” in their campaign and other political work creates awareness of their situation while resisting it being explained as the outcome of their, or their parents’ choices. Instead, they argue that it is the result of an immigration system that excludes them from fully living their life in Britain and refuses to accept their belonging. ‘These kinds of storytelling’, as Fernandes argues in the context of the

domestic worker movement from DWU in the US and grassroots actors in Venezuela, 'hark back to earlier genres of *testimonio* and narratives in the feminist movement that used personal stories in order to critique broader structures of oppression and to build collective struggles' (2017: 168).

Through this process of "coming out", understanding their situation within the context of boarder structures and developing a way of telling their story, the young people reclaim the label migrant. The migrant label that had previously negatively been ascribed to them by the state to fix them in place and which produced their vulnerabilities, and feelings of shame. Importantly it was the migrant label which had isolated them from others in the same situation, that now was what brought the group and their collective political struggle together. Returning to Daisy's story, she observed: 'There are many other young people at [the campaign group] whose stories are incredibly similar to mine. Although not being granted student finance was how we found each other, immigration was what connected us. It was very clear that we were all broken regardless of whether we knew it or not. We just started by sharing our stories. And I remember at first sharing my story, it was difficult. I never shared my story publicly, but I wanted to heal from my wounds and face my demons.' The young people are acting like citizens, while being legally excluded from citizenship.

In her book *Curated Stories*, Fernandes argues that 'Collective, grassroots, and global social movement organizing is the key for shifting from the terrain of the probable in which much non-profit and development work takes place to the terrain of the utopian, where we can start imagining a fundamental restructuring of work, reproduction, and the global economy' (2017: 170–171). The young people's collective political organising that transcended the individualisation of the immigration regime started to engage with such a shift. Despite the limitations placed on collective wins by the individualisation of the immigration system and young people's legal exclusion from the polis as non-citizens, they imagined a more just immigration regime for themselves and other migrants in Britain. Although the biggest changes in young people's lives came from changes in their individual status or being able to access higher education, they made demands beyond their own claims. Their collective work was necessary for everybody's individual healing process and to progress their

immigration case. It was also necessary for young people to see beyond the isolation and individualisation of the immigration regime and engage in a bigger political project going forward. Over time, this included an engagement with contemporary anti-racist politics as discussed in the previous chapter. This engagement extended the understanding, work and narrative of their situation in two ways. Firstly, young people saw their marginalisation through immigration status as connected to broader issues of structural racism in the UK. And secondly, it meant that they began to situate their own activism in historical legacies of anti-racist politics in Britain.

After reviewing the overarching themes explored and the main argument put forward in this thesis, the next and final chapter will do exactly that: consider where we go from here? Looking at both how we do this kind of research and if and how as researchers we can make useful contributions to this situation. How do we approach the kinds of injustices witnessed in this thesis and given the current political climate? Can the tensions between the necessary focus on resolving individuals' situations and the pursuit of a larger political project be resolved?

Chapter 9 – Conclusion: Young people subject to immigration control in London: Precarious lives

Introduction

In 2018, the campaign group published a video on the rising immigration fees for “limited leave to remain” applications and the long-term inaccessibility of citizenship for young people like themselves. In it, Maria said ‘I just really want the Home Office to be aware of the impact it actually has on people’. As DiAngelo comments, ‘Naming who has access and who doesn’t, guides our efforts in challenging injustice’ (DiAngelo, 2018: x). This thesis then aimed to do exactly that: to document and analyse how immigration policies affect those who are targeted by them. To name who has access to a secure future in the UK through immigration status and citizenship, and who does not. To understand how such stratifications are based on both a global hierarchy of mobilities (McNevin, 2013) and hierarchies of belonging in the UK (Anderson, 2013b; Back et al., 2012). To make visible the legacies of empire and racism in the contemporary immigration system. And to identify the resulting injustices for young people, who call Britain their home.

In this thesis I have argued that immigration status deeply affects all aspects of young people’s lives, and beyond the binary categorisation of “illegality”. Foregrounding immigration status as a category of analysis, rather than “illegality”, enables us to see the long-term precariousness and uncertainty that is produced through the British immigration regime for young migrants in the UK. Precariousness that extends well beyond “illegality”. Throughout the chapters, I have documented how immigration policies manifest at different life-course stages in young people’s lives, and the ways immigration status matters to young people living their lives. The debilitating fear of “deportability” that De Genova powerfully exposed (2002), does not end when legal status is obtained. Instead it continues through a cruel application process and renewal system that only guarantees safety from deportation for a time-limited period. Indeed, as the young people pointed out during a feedback session with me after the completion of my fieldwork and initial analysis, the time after having got their first status is worse than before. This is because the uncertainty stays, rather than dissipates, with getting status, and feels harder to manage mentally. The knowledge of

what's to come when renewing their immigration status, makes for painful anticipation of this moment. In addition to long-term precariousness, the immigration status often produces multiple immigration statuses within a family. As a result, different family members are varyingly deportable. Children's rights legislation, as outlined in chapter one, outlines that young people under the age of 18 should be protected from such experiences. Instead, their lives are dominated by an immigration regime that produces multiple vulnerabilities for young people.

Being subject to immigration control, impacts on young people's lives in several ways. Firstly, it impacts young migrants through imposing restrictions on access to welfare, education, healthcare and the labour market (chapter three). Not having immigration status furthermore excludes them from many everyday necessities such as ID cards or bank accounts. Such experiences of exclusion are contradicted by their everyday belonging and integration in their local neighbourhoods. Secondly, the proliferation of immigration enforcement mechanisms and internal bordering, rejected immigration applications, and public communication campaigns such as the "Go Home vans" strongly affect young people's sense of belonging in the UK (chapter six). Thirdly, the immigration bureaucracy imposes an unknown waiting time on young people (chapters four and six). A lengthy and costly citizenship pathway, involving multiple immigration applications and renewals, keeps young people stuck in the present, and uncertain about their futures during important life-course transitions. Young people often talked about 'when I get my status' when they did not have it, only to find out that getting status did not solve all their problems. Even with their 2.5 years' "limited leave to remain", young people remained excluded in many ways, especially from long-term safety through citizenship. As a result of these experiences, many young people felt isolated, separated from peers, and struggled with mental health, such as anxiety and depression (chapter five). Experiences of exclusion through their immigration status were amplified through encounters of racism, often a new concept young people had to grapple with as they migrated to the UK (chapter seven). The young people in this study overcame this impasse by taking back some of the control through becoming politically active in a campaign group (chapter eight). The support, solidarity and contextual understanding they gained from being part of the campaign group, made young people feel empowered as migrants and proud of their stories.

In this concluding chapter, I draw out the five themes that run through the thesis and the lives of the participants. The first theme is time and pathways. It asks how various temporalities shape young people's experience and encounter with the British state through the immigration regime. The result are multiple temporal zones, often inhabited simultaneously, criss-crossing through young people's lives, that they must navigate. Time variously slows down or speeds up at different moments, and young people can feel out of time with the rhythms of life that surround them. Young people's lives today are shaped by personal and global pasts, as they become stuck in a never-ending present. This affects their understanding of the future, and their dreams become seriously impacted by their immigration status. The second theme looks at the contradictions between the micro scale of lives lived, and the macro scale of immigration policies. The result is typically a set of uneven experiences of inclusion and belonging, which run alongside experiences of exclusion and rejection. Thirdly, this chapter looks at how (national) belonging and access to formal membership is stratified today. The fourth theme centres around young people's strategies to take back (some) control over their lives through becoming politically active, despite their formal exclusion from the polis. For the fifth and final theme, I turn to methodological considerations and make a case for the value of this research. Despite its challenges of different backgrounds between myself and participants, representation and privilege, I argue for trying to do research differently in order to address some of these issues, using a collaborative approach to my fieldwork.

In the final section of this chapter, I consider the contribution I believe this thesis makes to the existing literature. In doing so, I reflect on the implications for the field of migrations studies and myself as an academic within this field. Furthermore, I review the shortcomings and areas that require further development. It will discuss the tensions between individual wins, important and necessary as they are, and wins that offer limited structural change, and possible solutions to these.

Immigration times and pathways

As argued throughout this thesis, the lives of the young people in this research were profoundly affected by bordering mechanisms and the immigration regime in the UK.

Rather than controlling young people's mobility, however, the effect of these mechanisms was more about controlling young people's experiences of time and transitions through the life-course. Or 'temporal borders' as Cwerner calls them (2001b). The migration that resulted in young people being long-term subjects of such bordering mechanism, happened once, took no more than a few hours as most young people flew to the UK on a valid visa, and lay many years of the past. A brief moment, no more than a day, in young people's lives, permanently fixed them in the category of a "migrant" in the eyes of the British State. Rather than their mobility, it was the fact that they stayed – i.e. *not* moved – that made them subject to immigration control later in their life. Rather than their mobility, it is then young people's time, life-course transitions, and pathways to citizenship, that are most profoundly affected by the immigration regime.

Griffiths, Anderson and Rogers argue that, '[A]nother area warranting greater exploration is that of the state's control of time as it impacts on social inclusion and exclusion of migrants. In some cases, this will work against the temporalities of community building, for example officially categorising individuals as "illegal" even if they have lived in an area long enough to be considered as "belonging" by their neighbours. Such a disjuncture is temporal as much as it is legal (2013). There are a number of temporal zones and complexities that act upon the young people in this research. The state's control of time in relation to young people's immigration status, as shown in chapters four and six, is one of them. Contrary to this, young people's sense of belonging develops over time through the length of stay in their UK neighbourhood. These times pull young people in opposite directions. Time also affects young people's position on the hierarchy of immigration statuses in the UK: the past has shaped the hierarchy – both in terms of personal histories through countries of birth and in terms of broader histories of empire and colonialism. Young people's present is furthermore shaped by an uncertain future, determined by their 'stuckedness' (Hage, 2009) in the present in a cruel renewal system of short-term immigration statuses on a long and costly pathway to citizenship. The continuation of such experiences over many years and with no guarantee of eventual resolution, negatively affect young people's emotional well-being and mental health.

Contradictory scales of exclusion and inclusion

Another important theme that emerged from the research presented in this thesis, is that experiences vary according to the scale of analysis. Namely whether we look at the global, national, regional, local or neighbourhood level. Often, the experiences along one scale contradict those along another. For example, young people developed strong attachments to the UK and their local, usually multicultural, neighbourhood in London through everyday practices of belonging, and integrating into local institutions such as schools or churches. They often had close friendships, family, a strong community, and networks surrounding them. At the same time, they were excluded from the nation-state that considered them as non-citizens. This nation-state often rejected young people's sense of belonging through denied immigration applications.

At the global scale, young people lived somewhat transnational lives between their countries of birth and the UK. Many had left friends and family behind. Immobilised in the UK, family relations were often maintained through Skype and WhatsApp. Friendships, on the other hand, tended to fade over time. Transitioning into adulthood, young people often engaged more with the culture of their countries of birth, which they had largely suppressed trying to assimilate as young children.

In between these macro and micro scales were many different experiences. Entering public and political debates, could both reaffirm their sense of belonging in Britain and reject it. Similarly, at the regional level when dealing with local authority bureaucrats for instance, they often experienced simultaneous inclusion and exclusion, depending on their age, length of stay, immigration status or interpretation of their rights by individuals. Young people also acknowledged the differences between London and the rest of the UK. Many saw London as a multicultural place where many other people were like them, and as such they could feel at home. They did not think this equated to the rest of the UK, which they saw as mostly white British. They believed it would be hard to fit in outside of London. Britain and London could then feel both like home, and not like home, at the same time. Living through and navigating these contradictions further negatively impacted young people's mental health.

The persistence of “race” in bordering belonging and citizenship

Bordering mechanisms in the lives of young migrants then take place through both time and varying scales. In this section, I want to add another dimension: the historical legacy of empire and a resulting racial hierarchy in the British immigration system. As shown throughout the thesis, but particularly in chapters two and seven, citizenship and immigration regimes established under colonial rule privileged White European settlers throughout the empire. Rather than completely altered, these systems have morphed and transposed into the current British immigration regime, where “race” continues to be a determining factor in whether a person’s belonging is accepted, and their level of access to citizenship. While obvious to those racialised as “other”, “bad”, or “undeserving”, and consequently excluded from membership, the racial imprint on the immigration system is implicit, subtle, and hard to directly name. Using a language of culture, nation, and immigration instead of “race”, a sorting, grouping and categorisation of people persists. As discussed in chapter two, accessibility to mobility and entering the UK then is not equal across the globe. Rather it depends on the colonial history between a person’s country of birth and Britain. A person who holds citizenship of a former settler colony is likely to have easier access to the UK, than a person from a former dominion. Another language employed by the British immigration system to distinguish between “desirable” and “undesirable” migrants is wealth and poverty. As discussed in chapter two, wealthy migrants are preferred by the British immigration system, offering various fast-track application options. Global wealth distribution itself is also strongly influenced by the former British empire, thus further disadvantaging people from certain countries of origin. To young people, such difference became apparent and explicit in certain events such as the Windrush scandal or Brexit. To them, Windrush was a situation similar to theirs, closely tied to colonial histories. Many saw themselves as the next Windrush scandal in the making. The treatment of European migrants as part of Brexit negotiations, including the waving of the application fee and establishing an application app, demonstrated their desirability and privileged handling by the UK Home Office compared to the experiences of the young people in this research. Overall, young people felt, that this showed the continued racism in the immigration system. Once in the UK, colonial

legacies remain in institutional and aversive racism that young people have never experienced before. Race and legacies of empire are important factors in shaping young people's immigration journey in London and exacerbates marginalisation.

Taking back control through activism

Young people were left feeling out of control, as a result of their experiences with the immigration regime as well as their precarious immigration situation. Whether young people were waiting on lawyers, parents, friends or the UK Home Office, often there were few aspects they could control in relation to their immigration status. Which in turn seemed to control all other aspects of their lives, especially as young people grew older. Many felt the only area they could control was their educational achievements. Through working hard at school and achieving good grades, young people were able to maintain control over one area of their life. As Gonzales and colleagues argued, 'regaining control over their lives in avenues where this is possible, and establishing alternative pathways of hope are essential for developing and maintaining well-being' (2013: 1192). This extended to both their own situations, and broader political engagement when they joined the campaign group. Becoming part of a political struggle helped young migrants to no longer feel ashamed of their situation, understand their situation in context and feel able to fight their various exclusions. Through inserting themselves into the political process, young people took control over their situations. They controlled their story and how it was told. They controlled the agenda and campaign focus. And they were able to affect some change for themselves and others.

Collaborative ethnography and its limitations

In this last theme, I would like to return to methodology and make a case for the value of research and for *trying* to do research differently. In chapter one I discussed the challenges of power, privilege, and representation involved in carrying out this research, that were brought into focus through diverging migration experiences between participants and myself. I was usually the only white person in the room with

the young campaigners, despite the young people having been in the UK longer and from a younger age than me. The privilege of my British passport, inherited through my father, meant I had no immigration issues. My whiteness meant that my belonging in Britain was never questioned. My fluency in two languages is usually admired, as is my understanding and competence in two cultures, and continued strong attachment to Germany. Yet the young people in this research who have the same skills, just in two different cultures and languages, had their belonging in Britain continually rejected.

Despite these methodological challenges, I argue that research can still play a valuable role in this context. This, I argue, depends on the *intention* with which we carry it out and *how* we do it. For me the intention of doing research is to make powers visible to intervene in social injustice: power in the lives of participants enacted by the state but also power differences in the research process. I am also interested in research that is relevant to wider publics (Lassiter 2005), that is political and can challenge power through an understanding of how it operates and affects people within a system. Gonzales and Chavez writing in relation to their own research on “undocumented” youth in the U.S. put it as follows: ‘as academics, we must not sit on the sidelines as mere observers in this struggle, but build on research in our own struggles as engaged scholars’ (2012: 278). *How* we do our research, depends on a genuine and thorough engagement with our positionality as researchers, and acknowledging how these affect our knowledge production. Feminist and decolonising scholars have done a lot of work to further our thinking on *how to do* research ethically. A knowledge base that has been produced through collaboration and reflexivity brings us closer to such research. From my own research with young mobile and illegalised migrants I have learnt some important lessons on how research can be done differently, especially within the context of a PhD research project, and also what limitations and barriers we come up against that are impossible to shift. I will now lay out these lessons.

First, I learnt that raising difficult questions and confronting them genuinely is as important as finding answers. Often the answers are not what we want them to be, especially if pursuing a collaborative project. For instance, a PhD’s main purpose is to author a thesis and gain a qualification. No matter how much I try and give autonomy

to participants over the writing process, I cannot co-author my PhD with them. Power here is hard to shift. Still, raising and discussing these questions honestly can lend integrity to the research project, as Linda Tuhiwai Smith argued (2012).

Secondly raising these questions and having such discussions about power, difference, privilege and decolonising methods can be uncomfortable and therefore sometimes avoided. However, when we confront them in the research design, process, analysis and writing-up, as well as in conversation with participants, these can be productive moments of discomfort. In my case discussing with participants what they thought about me doing research about their situation, for example, shifted my focus and write up from only the telling of individual stories of marginalisation to a more structural analytic approach of how the marginalisation of these young people is part of a bigger racist immigration system. While the story of their experience belongs to the young people themselves, I can contribute a different analysis that they are unable to carry out individually at this moment in time. This, in turn, can potentially be useful to them in their campaign work. My contribution can be 'to situate and connect the research encounter to broader global processes' (Gunaratnam, 2003: 26) in this case to connect the lived experience of young "undocumented" migrants in a racialised immigration system in the UK and situate it in its historical and global context. Participants reflected on this in our feedback session, noting that me documenting these injustices from an outsider's perspective was important and added weight to the arguments.

Furthermore, through maintaining an openness throughout and listening in the in-between spaces that were not framed by my research questions, I added two topics that became thesis chapters. One was on the emotional burden and mental health – which eventually became chapter five - something often raised by the young migrants; and the other was about their own politics and agency. The young people often emphasised how important the group was to them. I also discussed the top-down approach of many organisations with the youth worker and how young people can become co-opted by larger organisations. This awareness prompted an approach in this campaign group that was directly opposed to that. Initially supported by a youth worker and larger organisation, the group eventually became independent. After this discussion, I made the following note in my fieldwork diary: 'This is making me think that a chapter of my thesis should be around campaigning, being political, self-

empowerment, social movement, representation, representation of the self or something like that.’ This subsequently became chapter eight.

Closely connected are the next two points. Firstly, I believe that we must recognise participants as “experts by experience”, owners and truth-holders of their own stories. As researches we can work with people’s stories to contribute an analysis and make connections between individuals’ stories and broader processes. We can never, however, claim their stories as our own. Secondly, we can use insights from collaborative ethnography to give more autonomy to participants in the research process. While the research design and questions will be the researcher’s, methods can be flexible and adaptable in a way that gives space to participants to shape themes, questions and ways of telling. This can mean adopting a flexible questioning guide where interviews are more like conversations and participants are given space to direct topics and themes. It also means working with a “portfolio of methods” so that participants can choose a way of telling their accounts that they feel most comfortable with. Acknowledging participants’ expertise and agency in this manner means that research involving people can become more than just the mining of data. Recognising participants as “experts-by-experience”, participants have influence over the research process and output, beyond a contribution of their individual story.

Finally, as many others have argued before me, I believe that we must take reflexivity and research ethics seriously and make it useful to us so that it is more than a tick-box exercise. In this process we grapple with how knowledge is produced, where power lies in the research process, and write from our own relative positionality. It does not mean we cannot do research if there are significant differences between the researcher and participants. Instead, it means we must work within a framework that acknowledges these differences and the limitations they bring in an honest way.

Taking these factors of a collaborative methodological approach together, I argue can support an approach of “connected sociologies” discussed in chapter two, to create space for a pluralism of voices that connect in a respectful dialogue across positionalities, historical, differences, global differences, and difference of privilege and marginalisation (Bhambra, 2014a).

White allies and the politics of representation?

Conversations about “white allies”, and whether and how to work with other individuals or organisations, especially white, middle-class, privileged, non-migrants, surfaced from time-to-time in campaign group meetings. A key principle of the campaign group was that the young people represented themselves. This was unlike many other migrants’ rights organisations in the UK, or policy events on migration and migrants. Young people regularly found themselves attending meetings or events about immigration, without any migrants speaking. As Michael, a participant, pointed out during a meeting where they were discussing his Ted talk, through their work and their presence in these usually mostly white spaces ‘we are being represented, [and] all the lost voices will be heard.’ When we co-organised a parliamentary event in March 2018, we were able to completely shift the balance the other way. It was satisfying to see a room full of ethnic minority young people in a room at the heart of the British government.

Telling their stories, in their own voice, was therefore an important part of their campaign work. During a gathering, one young person argued that it was important for them to tell their stories, because research they had done showed that those writing and speaking on immigration issues in the media are mostly white. She said, this is ‘white people talking about my situation’. However young people were also aware of the dangers involved in doing so. Once a story has been told and is in the public domain, the person who the story is about loses control over how it is used and circulated (discussed in chapter eight). During the parliamentary event, we were therefore mindful of both these aspects. We centred young people’s voices in the proceedings, while aiming to not expose them.

Another important aspect of their campaign work was to build alliances with other individuals and organisations that supported, or could further, their cause. On the one hand, the young people were aware of the benefits, and necessity, to work with other people or organisations, especially those with privilege and who had access to places of power. As Sarah explained, ‘I think when it comes to situations like this, that you as a person with lived experience, you can't do it by yourself. Because there will

always be a stage through, a door through which you can't pass on your own, because of something or another'. On the other hand, they were also wary of working with others, in case they lost control of their story. How and who to collaborate with is then not always straightforward. This came up regularly in discussions deciding which events to attend and speak at or who to invite to theirs.

On one occasion it was the focus of the discussion at a gathering. It was set up through "the privilege game", discussed in chapter six, which demonstrated to participants what it means to either have or not have privilege moving through life. In this case it was used to point out the differences in access to education and citizenship. The group that finished first did not go and help the group that took longer, but instead chatted and ate some of the snacks. In the subsequent discussion, this was likened to an uneven charity sector: charities who successfully secured funding charged ahead on their own, leaving struggling charities behind. The discussion then turned to whether these two groups should engage, and if so, how? Should the campaign group engage with people of privilege? For what reason should they do so? And what parameters should they consider?

The starting point of the discussion was that nobody could be expected to understand a situation they had not lived. For people who have not had the same experience as the young campaigners, they could not truly know their experience. People therefore could not be blamed for being born into (white) privilege, the same way that the young people could not be blamed for being born into a difficult situation. However, what mattered, they agreed, was, what people did with this privilege and how they acted. As Abbas argued, privilege, specifically white privilege, needs to be challenged in a politics of discomfort that requires to dislodge white privilege from its seat of comfort (2019). The young people therefore asked themselves, whether potential collaborators with privilege looked, saw, and engaged? Do they bring empathy and support to the table, help, or stand in solidarity with them?

How then, can we engage in these conversations and engage across our difference? Let us first look at how not to do it. Many expressed frustrations with the "white saviour complex". Shuri explains: 'Don't try and feel sorry for me just because...like...what do they call it again? Like the "white saviour complex"? That kind

of thing, I hate that, don't do that. No. It's not a cool thing.' Another young woman expressed a similar sentiment during one of the meetings explaining, 'I don't want to be helped, I just want you and other white people, and the white system, to stop being racist.' This sentiment can be expressed not only in engaging with other organisations as part of their campaigning work, but also in contact with individuals. Sheila explained, that was one of the amazing things about coming to the campaign group. She was no longer expected to explain herself, or then get insensitive comments, or little motivational speeches in response. As a result of such experiences, some young people were completely against working with white, privileged allies. This echoes of sentiments Eddo-Lodge expressed in her book *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race*. She explained that, amongst other reasons, 'I can no longer engage with the gulf of an emotional disconnect that white people display when a person of colour articulates their experience' (2017: ix). To her any conversations about race and racism between white and black and ethnic minority people, need to involve white people acknowledging their white privilege, and that structural racism continues to exist, creating real life consequences for people.

Other young people acknowledged differences among "white" people and how they engaged with these issues, making it sometimes okay to collaborate with them. For others, it was more a pragmatic concern, and question of necessity in order to progress a campaign. This was especially the case, to help broker access to spaces of power and privilege, that they as "black" and "brown" non-citizens were excluded from. Paul, the "white" youth worker supporting them, enacted this approach in his engagement. After regularly noticing that meetings he attended about young migrants, never had young migrants present, he started bringing a young person from the campaign group. As Sarah explained: 'he always takes along one of us to meetings because he's just like "oh I can't be like a white man speaking on behalf of you guys because I've never been through it".' When young people who are "experts by experience" are not present in places of decision-making, and decisions are made on their behalf instead, outcomes are often is questionable to the young people.

Whether across differences or within marginalised groups, Sarah argued that in order to effect change people need to work together: 'at the end of the day we all need to

work together to fix this situation. It can't be an "us and them" anymore, it has to be an "all of", because...if you want to, erm, portray the narrative of "us and them", you're not gonna get anything done...we all need to come together to get things done. And at the end of the day you're gonna need people from everywhere, every sector, every, everything... And I think that's what a lot of people maybe miss out, 'cause they think "oh yeah, we're the ones in power, we're the ones who need to deal with this. You guys just go over there and wait for us to sort this out". And then maybe the people with the lived experience, "oh we don't want you to help us, like you're the enemy". But you're not, like, we all need to work together to fix this situation.' Finding a way to work together, requires empathy from all involved, which is explored next.

'The only thing we have to overcome privilege is empathy'

This statement was the conclusion of a young woman at one of the monthly gatherings of the campaign group, where privilege had been hotly debated after a participatory activity. This was not the first time that privilege, racial differences, and colonial legacies in the present immigration system came up. However, it was the first time an entire meeting was dedicated to its discussion. These conversations could be uncomfortable for me, usually the only white person in the room, but I also felt privileged to be able to listen in on these honest and frank discussions. It is through these moments of discomfort that I could genuinely learn about how these young people felt about, and experienced, racism as an immigrant. The gathering ended with one young woman saying that it is nobody's fault what position they were born into, but it is about what people do with that situation. And the only thing we have, to overcome difference and privilege, is to empathise with each other, to see the racist immigration experience as legitimate. In his book *Where Do We Go From Here*, Martin Luther King, Jr. similarly emphasised empathy in order to move forward and 'bring an end to fears, prejudice, pride and irrationality, which are the barriers to a truly integrated society' (2010: 106). King continues, 'empathy', as opposed to pity, 'is feeling sorry with someone. Empathy is fellow feeling for the person in need - his pain, agony and burdens' (2010: 107). Leonardo also argued that the only way to transcend the race border, a privilege of white people only, is through empathy and humanity,

and to engage with the emotional (Leonardo, 2009). How then, do we research with empathy?

We must actively develop empathy, similarly to how we build trust. We build connections, look for similarities, share experiences and intimacy. In this process, methods become tools to encourage empathic connection between the researcher and participants. For Johnson, the aim of 'participatory research seeks to tackle this privilege by bringing participants into the research as equal status co-researchers' (Johnson et al., 2017: 3). Depending on the type of research project, the extent to which this is possible, can be limited. Walking interviews, however, can be one such method which helps to close the space between researchers and participants.

I was confronted with my own white privilege during a walking interview with Sheila, which we conducted in her local neighbourhood and park. We had just shared an intimate moment in her life story, when it started to rain. We decided to find shelter in a nearby pub. As we entered, I saw a big St George's flag hanging off the ceiling and only white men in there. I could feel all the eyes on us and felt tense. The thought that crossed my mind was 'had we walked in on EDL¹⁶ turf?' I was immediately on guard and ready to protect Michelle, feeling responsible for bringing her here. If this is how I felt, how did Michelle feel? I asked her if she wanted to leave but she wanted to stay. We managed to find a quiet side room to talk. In this instance I was able to come a small step closer to what Michelle must experience frequently, what it feels like to be a tall, attractive, young, black woman in a mostly white, male space. It was rather terrifying. Through having just heard her life-story, shared a very intimate moment with her and being open towards her emotions after our conversation, I was more able to experience this feeling.

Where do we go from here?

In this section I will discuss the contribution that this research sought to make in the field of migration studies, and in particular the study of "illegality", and the

¹⁶ English Defence League: An English far-right organisation.

implications for further research in this area. This research sought to contribute to the literature and body of research in the following ways. Firstly, there have thus far only been few in-depth ethnographic studies of young “undocumented” migrants, especially in the UK (Bloch et al., 2014; Bloch and McKay, 2016; Sigona and Hughes, 2012). And as Bloch et al. argue ‘[T]he phenomenon of undocumented migration and undocumented migrants is not going to disappear, making it increasingly important to understand their heterogeneous experiences’ (2014: 2). This thesis then responds to the call for more studies by Rusczyk and Barbosa (2016), as well as others. Building on this existing literature, as well as studies carried out in the US (Chavez, 1998; Gonzales, 2016), this research contributes an in-depth and nuanced understanding of how immigration status operates in the everyday life of young migrants in London. The circumstances of participants in this study are different to participants in previous studies, in that they have lived most of their lives in the UK, migrating here at a young age with their parents, instead of as young adults or more recently. This adds a layer of complexity more similar to the situation in the US that Gonzales describes in his book (2016). Participants in this research feel British through their participation in society and relationships and are informally included in Britain through attending school and their embeddedness in their neighbourhoods, while they are legally excluded through their immigration status.

Secondly, foregrounding immigration status within an intersectional approach, rather than starting with a state-defined immigration category, problematises these state categories and analyses how they, together with other positions, create a specific lived experience and marginalisation for young migrants. Bloch and colleagues argue in their study of young “undocumented” migrants, that their experience of Britain ‘is a product of the intersection of structure and agency, of differential circumstances, experiences, expectations, gender and social and cultural backgrounds’ (2014: 137). Based on this research, however, I would argue that certain experiences in specific moments of young people’s lives pertaining from the dominance of immigration status are surprisingly similar. This, I believe, is especially the case for young people who came to Britain at a young age and consider this their home. Those who are more at home in multicultural London than their countries of birth. As such, this work contributes to an understanding of how ‘the state [...] is thinking about itself when it is thinking about

immigration' (Sayad, 2004: 279), and how the state is producing vulnerability (Anderson, 2008). Furthermore, the analytical lens of immigration status challenges methodological nationalism and groupism that has dominated migration studies, which has tended either to look at national groups or those on a particular immigration status, such as refugees or asylum seekers (Gidley, 2014; Nowicka and Ryan, 2015; Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002). Similar to Sarah's statement above, Kareem, another participant, thought, it is better to just think of everyone as a migrant, rather than separate everyone into different, smaller groups.

Thirdly, this study demonstrates the importance of looking at time and temporality as an important factor in migration studies. Although Cwerner called to attention the neglected research area of time and migration in 2001, it remains largely neglected nearly two decades later (Cwerner, 2001b; Griffiths, 2014). As shown in this study, time is of importance to the experience of migration in many ways, and merits further examination and theorisation. In addition to the multiple temporal zones that young migrants are expected to navigate, time further impacts the study of migration, in that the past is often present. Specific histories have led to a specific contemporary moment of migration in the UK. So far, an amnesia and ignorance of histories of empire has only served to amplify negative sentiments towards migrants and entrenched differences and separation. Now, then, is also an important moment to unearth these histories and create a dialogue about them.

Finally, this research contributes to a body of work that engages a critical perspective on migration studies by drawing on the postcolonial framework of 'connected sociologies' (Bhambra, 2014a), and critical race theory, to situate the study of contemporary migration in/to "the West" in its historical and global context. My argument is that "migration studies" continues to be situated in a "Western-centric" framing that avoids the legacies of empire present in the racial construction of the contemporary situation. Examining the current immigration system and its bordering mechanisms in the UK through a historical lens, allows us to understand connections between its establishment during colonialism and contemporary stratifications. Furthermore, a large proportion of migration studies remains dominated by "white" scholars from "the West", indicating a crisis of representation in this field similar to

that in migrant organisations discussed above. While I myself fall into the same category, this study seeks to write from a collaborative approach that acknowledges differences in power and privilege in knowledge production, offering a historically situated account that connects past and present, structural determinants and lived experience. As discussed earlier, I accept that it is not possible for me to shift all the issues related to my positionality in this context.

One question that arises from this research, and needs further interrogation, is the significance of gender; something I was unable to explore. This question is raised by the observation that most young people in the campaign group, and therefore of my participants, were female. What explains this situation? How are young men and young women differently affected by immigration restrictions and precariousness? If young men are not engaging in politics, where are they, and what are they doing? This also has implications for the stories presented here, who therefore give a specific gendered picture.

So, where do we go from here? The data presented in this thesis exposes a tension between resolving individuals' situations and creating broader policy or legal change that will resolve everybody's situation. While the establishment of new scholarships and new eligibility criteria for student finance, for example, is significant for many young people, it does not offer a solution to everyone. Similarly, the solidarity and support the group offers individual young people that are part of it, is hugely important for every single one. At the same time, the group cannot reach everyone, and many young people will continue to struggle on their own. So, while campaign work can offer an important purpose, support, and greater sense of self and agency for those who take part in it, looking at the activism also demonstrated the limits of campaign work within the system as a whole. While a legal challenge was successful in effecting a policy change in education and student finance, and a campaign targeted at university chancellors led to the creation of considerably more scholarships, structural change that is dependent on central government, with its ever changing priorities, is much harder to achieve. This is especially the case in contested and highly polarised areas of politics such as immigration. More recent demands of the group on other topics, such as freezing immigration fees, is harder to achieve in the contemporary

climate of mainstream anti-immigrant sentiment. Fernandes has discussed how in the US, campaigners in the domestic worker movement have made difficult decisions, leading to splitting of groups (2017). The division was created because some group members accepted “smaller victories” through the courts. Others insisted on fighting for a bigger cause. One that connected their situation to the broader political and global contexts that created the injustice they themselves lived. The young people in the campaign group, are currently pursuing an opposite trajectory. That is, they started from a narrower focus on education equality and moved to a broader one that considers the understanding of their exclusion as a result of their immigration status. Their work therefore now focuses on justice for migrants more broadly. The young people are more than aware, that the structural problems resulting from an immigration regime that places them at the bottom of the hierarchy in the citizenship pathway, remain overwhelming for the majority of those affected by it. Campaigning to change policy and law is one way of achieving such broader changes. Another is to raise awareness, change conversations, and place their issues on the agenda. Through relentless publicity work, meetings and networking with media outlets, other organisations and advocates in the sector, as well as politicians and policy makers, the young people are getting their message out there. Furthermore, the group continues to engage in case work, offering support to young people excluded from education due to their immigration status.

Theoretically, the only way to solve the problem of this probationary and precarious life for young migrants and their immigration restrictions would be to do away with immigration controls, and therefore borders, all together. As De Genova has pointed out, migration would not exist if it were not for borders, there would be only mobility (De Genova, 2017). If borders were removed, immigration control could no longer be used to control people’s mobility across the globe, nor their access to resources depending on their citizenship. For as long as the state is accepted as sovereign over its borders and citizens, the unfolding of people’s lives will be affected by immigration and citizenship law. As Back and Sinha point out, ‘the access to international mobility is very uneven’ (2018a: 55). As a result, some groups will always remain excluded, and the way their mobility is controlled will serve the interests of those who hold power and privilege within that given nation-state.

A perhaps less utopian solution at this moment in time, could be the elimination of hierarchies created within a nation-state through immigration and citizenship laws. In this scenario, everyone resident in the UK would enjoy equal rights and entitlements. This would resolve the liberal tension of citizenship as a universal concept, discussed in chapter two. Furthermore, in this way the complex restrictions and entanglements with other areas of law, such as welfare and criminal law, are eliminated. Seemingly simple, establishing who is and who is not resident brings with it some serious challenges. Firstly, would this mean that anyone within UK territory has the same rights, no matter how long they have, or intend, to be here? The term “ordinarily resident” has, for just such reasons, long been contested in the courts. Secondly, such a solution would rely on a state being able to enforce entirely non-porous borders, which despite states’ hardest efforts has not been achieved thus far. Given our globally connected world and the need for a poor global workforce in our economic system, this is also unlikely in the future. This also hints at the complicated interconnections between migration and the economic system, which would need to be resolved in order to implement such a solution.

In the current climate of a hardening British nation-state with increasingly fortified borders, post-Brexit referendum, and post the recent general election of a right-leaning Conservative government, a no-borders world is unlikely to be achieved any time soon. In the meantime, Daisy, Sarah, Maria, Shuri, Tobi and Serena need a solution and better prospects. And their campaign work is offering them exactly that: necessary hope for a better future and the invaluable support for going through struggles along the way. The young people in this research, and many more like them, are unlikely to be removed from the UK. They have lived in the UK for too long and thus have acquired rights to private and family life according to the Human Rights Act. It is based on these rights that young people are granted short-term immigration statuses. A solution that offers a longer horizon and security to young people, rather than never-ending uncertainty seems beneficial both to the British government, British society and the young people themselves. Until then, young people are neither a citizen nor non-citizen, instead caught in an in-between space as a tolerated denizen on a temporary visa.

Bibliography

- Abbas M-S (2019) The promise of political blackness? Contesting blackness, challenging whiteness and the silencing of racism: A review article. *Ethnicities*: 1468796819834046. DOI: 10.1177/1468796819834046.
- Abrego L (2011) Legal Consciousness of Undocumented Latinos: Fear and Stigma as Barriers to Claims-Making for First- and 1.5-Generation Immigrants. *Law & Society Review* 45(2): 337–370. DOI: 10.1111/j.1540-5893.2011.00435.x.
- Abrego L and Gonzales RG (2010) Blocked Paths, Uncertain Futures: The Postsecondary Education and Labor Market Prospects of Undocumented Latino Youth. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk (JESPAR)* 15(1–2): 144–157. DOI: 10.1080/10824661003635168.
- Abu-Laban Y (2014) Citizenship and foreignness in Canada. In: Isin EF and Nyers P (eds) *Routledge Handbook of Global Citizenship Studies*. Routledge International Handbooks. Abingdon, New York: Routledge, pp. 274–283. Available at: https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=EtHpAAQBAJ&pg=PA275&lpg=PA275&dq=citizenship+%2B+indigenous%2Bwhite+settlers&source=bl&ots=xB061rTgFY&sig=rijXzclLzMfEJZVax8BWR7s-aE&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi9lv7d4_zSAhVKKMAKHfFtDZsQ6AEIMDAD#v=onepage&q=citizenship%20%2B%20indigenous%2Bwhite%20settlers&f=false.
- Adams G (2014a) Decolonizing methods African studies and qualitative research. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 31(4): 467–474. DOI: 10.1177/0265407514521765.
- Adams G (2014b) Decolonizing methods African studies and qualitative research. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 31(4): 467–474. DOI: 10.1177/0265407514521765.
- Adams M (2014) The Fiddle’s Voice: Timbre, Musical Learning, and Collaborative Ethnography in Central and Inner Asia. *Collaborative Anthropologies* 6(1): 149–169. DOI: 10.1353/cla.2013.0010.
- Alcoff L (1991) The Problem of Speaking for Others. *Cultural Critique* (20): 5–32. DOI: 10.2307/1354221.
- Alemoru K (2019) Bookmark this for the next time somebody asks you what political blackness is. In: *gal-dem*. Available at: <http://gal-dem.com/bookmark-this-for-the-next-time-somebody-asks-you-what-political-blackness-is/> (accessed 18 August 2019).
- Alexander CE and Arday J (2015) *Aiming Higher: Race, Inequality and Diversity in the Academy*. Runnymede Trust.
- Aliverti A (2012) Making people criminal: The role of the criminal law in immigration enforcement. *Theoretical Criminology*: 1362480612449779. DOI: 10.1177/1362480612449779.
- Anderson B (2008) “Illegal Immigrant”: Victim or Villain? *ESRC Centre on Migration, Policy and Society Working Paper Series* No. 64: 14.

- Anderson B (2012) The migrant as an invented subject: A response. In: *COMPAS Blog*. Available at: <https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/2012/the-migrant-as-an-invented-subject-a-response/> (accessed 13 October 2018).
- Anderson B (2013) *Us and Them?: The Dangerous Politics of Immigration Control*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Anderson B (2015) What to do about Calais, in 50 words. In: *COMPAS Blog*.
- Anderson B (2018) And about time too:...youth, precarity and temporalities. Unpublished.
- Anderson B and Hughes V (eds) (2015) *Citizenship and Its Others*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Anderson B, Gibney MJ and Paoletti E (2011) Citizenship, deportation and the boundaries of belonging. *Citizenship Studies* 15(5): 547–563. DOI: 10.1080/13621025.2011.583787.
- Andersson R (2014a) Illegal, Clandestine, Irregular: On Ways of Labelling People. In: *Oxford Law*. Available at: <https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/research-subject-groups/centre-criminology/centreborder-criminologies/blog/2014/09/illegal> (accessed 13 October 2015).
- Andersson R (2014b) *Illegality, Inc.: Clandestine Migration and the Business of Bordering Europe*. California series in public anthropology 28. Oakland, Calif: University of California Press.
- Andrews K (2016) The problem of political blackness: lessons from the Black Supplementary School Movement. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 39(11): 2060–2078. DOI: 10.1080/01419870.2015.1131314.
- Andrews K (2018) *Back to Black: Retelling Black Radicalism for the 21st Century*. London: Zed Books.
- Andy F and Fred C (2006) *Young People And Social Change*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).
- APPG Migration (2013) *Report of the inquiry into the new family migration rules*.
- Arday J and Mirza HS (2018) *Dismantling Race in Higher Education: Racism, Whiteness and Decolonising the Academy*. Springer.
- Arnot M and Pinson H (2005) *The Education of Asylum Seeker and Refugee Children: A study of LEA and school values, policies and practices*. Available at: <http://open.tean.ac.uk/handle/123456789/650> (accessed 13 October 2015).
- Back L (1996) *New Ethnicities and Urban Culture: Racisms and Multiculture in Young Lives*. Race and representation 2. London: UCL Press.
- Back L (2007) *The Art of Listening*. Oxford: Berg.
- Back L (2012) Tape recorder. In: Lury C and Wakeford N (eds) *Inventive Methods: The Happening of the Social*. Abingdon, New York: Routledge.
- Back L (2015) Why Everyday Life Matters: Class, Community and Making Life Livable. *Sociology* 49(5): 820–836. DOI: 10.1177/0038038515589292.

- Back L and Sinha S (2013) You've Got a Text from UKBA: Technologies of Control and Connection. In: *Discover Society*. Available at: <http://discoversociety.org/2013/10/13/stop-press-youve-got-a-text-from-ukba-technologies-of-control-and-connection-2/> (accessed 13 October 2015).
- Back L and Sinha S (2018a) *Migrant City*. 1 edition. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge.
- Back L and Sinha S (2018b) Waiting, dead time and freer life. In: *Migrant City*. 1 edition. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 77–100.
- Back L and Solomos J (eds) (2000) *Theories of Race and Racism: A Reader*. Routledge student readers. London; New York: Routledge.
- Back L and Tate M (2015) For a Sociological Reconstruction: W.E.B. Du Bois, Stuart Hall and Segregated Sociology. *Sociological Research Online* 20(3): 15.
- Back L, Sinha S and Bryan with C (2012) New hierarchies of belonging. *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 15(2): 139–154. DOI: 10.1177/1367549411432030.
- Badenhoop SE (2018) *Calling for the super citizen: contemporary naturalisation procedures in the United Kingdom and Germany*. PhD. University of Glasgow. Available at: http://encore.lib.gla.ac.uk/iii/encore/record/C__Rb3310664 (accessed 13 June 2019).
- Bailey AJ, Wright RA, Mountz A, et al. (2002) (Re)Producing Salvadoran Transnational Geographies. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 92(1): 125–144. DOI: 10.1111/1467-8306.00283.
- Barbosa GY and Rusczyk SP (2016) A second generation of immigrant illegality studies. *Migration Studies* 5(3): 445–456.
- Bassel L (2013) Contemporary Grammars of Resistance: Two French Social Movements. *Sociology* 48(3): 0038038513501022. DOI: 10.1177/0038038513501022.
- Bauböck R (2006) Citizenship and migration - concepts and controversies. In: Bauböck R (ed.) *Migration and Citizenship: Legal Status, Rights and Political Participation*. IMISCOE Reports Series. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Bauman Z (2016) *Strangers at Our Door*. Malden, MA: Polity Press.
- Berlant L (2011) *Cruel Optimism*. Durham: Duke University Press Books.
- Bhabha J (2008) *Independent Children, Inconsistent Adults: International child migration and the legal framework*. IDP No. 2008-02. UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre. Available at: <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/503-independent-children-inconsistent-adults-international-child-migration-and-the-legal.html> (accessed 2 January 2020).
- Bhabra GK (2007) Sociology and Postcolonialism: Another 'Missing' Revolution? *Sociology* 41(5): 871–884. DOI: 10.1177/0038038507080442.
- Bhabra GK (2014a) *Connected Sociologies*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Bhabra GK (2014b) Postcolonial and decolonial dialogues. *Postcolonial Studies* 17(2): 115–121. DOI: 10.1080/13688790.2014.966414.

- Bhambra GK (2015) Citizens and Others: The Constitution of Citizenship through Exclusion. *Alternatives* 40(2): 102–114. DOI: 10.1177/0304375415590911.
- Bhambra GK (2016) Brexit, the Commonwealth, and exclusionary citizenship. In: *openDemocracy*. Available at: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/gurminder-k-bhambra/brexit-commonwealth-and-exclusionary-citizenship> (accessed 11 February 2017).
- Bhambra GK (2017) Locating Brexit in the Pragmatics of Race, Citizenship and Empire. In: Outhwaite W (ed.) *Brexit: Sociological Responses*. London: Anthem Press.
- Bhambra GK (2018) Racial hierarchy and migration in Britain | Windrush 70th Anniversary series. In: *Media Diversified*. Available at: <https://mediadiversified.org/2018/06/25/racial-hierarchy-and-migration-in-britain-windrush-70th-anniversary-series/> (accessed 16 June 2019).
- Bhambra GK and Santos B de S (2017) Introduction: Global Challenges for Sociology. *Sociology* 51(1): 3–10. DOI: 10.1177/0038038516674665.
- Bhavnani R, Mirza HS, Meeto V, et al. (2005) *Tackling the Roots of Racism: Lessons for Success*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Bhopal K (2018) *White Privilege: The Myth of a Post-Racial Society*. Policy Press.
- Black R, Collyer M, Skeldon R, et al. (2006) Routes to illegal residence: A case study of immigration detainees in the United Kingdom. *Geoforum* 37(4): 552–564. DOI: 10.1016/j.geoforum.2005.09.009.
- Blauner R and Wellman D (1973) Toward the Decolonization of Social Research. In: Ladner JA (ed.) *The Death of White Sociology: Essays on Race and Culture*. Black Classic Press, pp. 310–330.
- Blinder S (2017) *Deportations, Removals and Voluntary Departures from the UK*. Migration Observatory Briefings, October. COMPAS, University of Oxford. Available at: <http://www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/deportations-removals-and-voluntary-departures-from-the-uk/> (accessed 8 December 2017).
- Blinder S (2018) *Naturalisation as a British Citizen: Concepts*. Briefing, August. Oxford: Migration Observatory. Available at: <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/naturalisation-as-a-british-citizen-concepts-and-trends/> (accessed 13 June 2019).
- Bloch A (2000) A New Era or More of the Same? Asylum Policy in the UK. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 13(1): 29–42. DOI: 10.1093/jrs/13.1.29.
- Bloch A (2013) The labour market experiences and strategies of young undocumented migrants. *Work, Employment and Society* 27(2): 272–287. DOI: 10.1177/0950017012460313.
- Bloch A and Chimienti M (2013) *Irregular Migrants: Policy, Politics, Motives and Everyday Lives*. Routledge.
- Bloch A and McKay S (2016) *Living on the Margins: Undocumented Migrants in a Global City*. Policy Press.

- Bloch A and Schuster L (2005) At the extremes of exclusion: Deportation, detention and dispersal. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28(3): 491–512. DOI: 10.1080/0141987042000337858.
- Bloch A, Sigona N and Zetter R (2009) *No Right to Dream. The social and economic lives of undocumented migrants in Britain*. Available at: <http://www.phf.org.uk/publications/right-dream/> (accessed 13 October 2015).
- Bloch A, Sigona N and Zetter R (2014) *Sans Papiers: The Social and Economic Lives of Young Undocumented Migrants*. London: New York: Pluto Press.
- Boal A, McBride CA and McBride M-OL (1979) *Theater of the Oppressed*. London: Pluto Press.
- Bosniak L (2000) Universal Citizenship and the Problem of Alienage. Available at: <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=232049> (accessed 30 May 2019).
- Bosniak L (2006) *The Citizen and the Alien: Dilemmas of Contemporary Membership*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Bourdieu P and Wacquant L (2000) The Organic Ethnologist of Algerian Migration. *Ethnography* 1(2): 173–182. DOI: 10.1177/14661380022230723.
- Bowling B (2013) Epilogue: The Borders of Punishment: Towards a Criminology of Mobility. In: *The Borders of Punishment: Migration, Citizenship, and Social Exclusion*. Oxford University Press. Available at: <https://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199669394.001.0001/acprof-9780199669394-chapter-17> (accessed 23 August 2019).
- Brace L (2015) Reflections on the Good Citizen. In: Anderson B and Hughes V (eds) *Citizenship and Its Others*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 14–41.
- Burnett J (2017) Racial violence and the Brexit state. *Race & Class* 58(4): 85–97. DOI: 10.1177/0306396816686283.
- Byrne B (2017) Testing Times: The Place of the Citizenship Test in the UK Immigration Regime and New Citizens' Responses to it. *Sociology* 51(2): 323–338. DOI: 10.1177/0038038515622908.
- Carrera S and Merlino M (2009) *Undocumented Immigrants and Rights in the EU: Addressing the gap between Social Science Research and Policy-making in the Stockholm Programme?* Centre for European Policy Studies. Available at: http://aei.pitt.edu/15103/1/Undocumented_Migrants__Zennstrom_Rpt__by_Carrera__Merlino_e-version.pdf (accessed 2 January 2020).
- Carver N (2019) On being permanently temporary and the Right to Family Life. In: *SLSA Blog*. Available at: <http://sfsablog.co.uk/blog/blog-posts/on-being-permanently-temporary-and-the-right-to-family-life/> (accessed 13 June 2019).
- Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (1992) *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain*. Routledge.
- Certeau M de (1984) *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Charsley K and Benson M (2012) Marriages of convenience or inconvenient marriages: regulating spousal migration to Britain. *Journal of Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Law* 26(1): 10–26.
- Chauvin S and Garcés-Mascreñas B (2014) Becoming Less Illegal: Deservingness Frames and Undocumented Migrant Incorporation. *Sociology Compass* 8(4): 422–432. DOI: 10.1111/soc4.12145.
- Chavez LR (1998) *Shadowed Lives: Undocumented Immigrants in American Society*. 3rd Revised edition. Fort Worth: Wadsworth Publishing Co Inc.
- Clayton G and Sawyer C (2012) *Textbook on Immigration and Asylum Law*. OUP Oxford.
- Cole P (2000) *Philosophies of Exclusion: Liberal Political Theory and Immigration*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Cole P (2014) Citizenship. In: Anderson B and Keith M (eds) *Migration: The COMPAS Anthology*. Oxford: COMPAS. Available at: <https://compasanthology.co.uk/citizenship/> (accessed 15 September 2018).
- Coutin SB (2000) *Legalizing Moves: Salvadoran Immigrants' Struggle for U.S. Residency*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
- Crenshaw K (1991) Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review* 43(6): 1241–1299. DOI: 10.2307/1229039.
- Cwerner SB (2001) The Times of Migration. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 27(1): 7–36. DOI: 10.1080/13691830020024849.
- Das V (2010) Listening to Voices: An Interview with Veena Das. *Altérités* 7(1): 136–145.
- De Genova N (2002) Migrant “Illegality” and Deportability in Everyday Life. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31(1): 419–447. DOI: 10.1146/annurev.anthro.31.040402.085432.
- De Genova N (2010) Migration and Race in Europe: The Trans-Atlantic Metastases of a Post-Colonial Cancer. *European Journal of Social Theory* 13(3): 405–419. DOI: 10.1177/1368431010371767.
- De Genova N (2017) Introduction. The Borders of “Europe” and the European Question. In: *The Borders of Europe: Autonomy of Migration, Tactics of Bordering*. Durham: Duke University Press Books, pp. 1–36.
- De Noronha L (2015) Unpacking the figure of the ‘foreign criminal’: Race, gender and the victim-villain binary. *Centre on Migration, Policy and Society Working Paper Series* (121): 37.
- De Noronha L (2016) Deportation and multi-status Britain. Available at: <http://discoversociety.org/2016/10/04/deportation-and-multi-status-britain/> (accessed 6 October 2016).
- De Noronha L (2017) Race and Racism in multi-status Britain. Goldsmiths, University of London.

- De Noronha L (2018) Deporting 'Black Britons': Beyond and Against Contribution. In: *The Sociological Review*. Available at: <https://www.thesociologicalreview.com/blog/a-blog-from-the-new-sociological-review-fellow.html> (accessed 26 March 2019).
- De Noronha L (2019) Deportation, racism and multi-status Britain: immigration control and the production of race in the present. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 0(0): 1–18. DOI: 10.1080/01419870.2019.1585559.
- Delva J, Horner P, Martinez R, et al. (2013) MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS OF CHILDREN OF UNDOCUMENTED PARENTS IN THE UNITED STATES: A HIDDEN CRISIS. *Jurnalul Practicilor Comunitare Pozitive* XIII(3): 25–35.
- Dennis C (2019) Book Review: White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism by Robin DiAngelo. In: *USAPP*. Available at: <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/usappblog/2019/01/27/book-review-white-fragility-why-its-so-hard-for-white-people-to-talk-about-racism-by-robin-diangelo/> (accessed 15 August 2019).
- Devine D (2018) Hate crime did spike after the referendum – even allowing for other factors. In: *LSE BREXIT*. Available at: <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/brexit/2018/03/19/hate-crime-did-spike-after-the-referendum-even-allowing-for-other-factors/> (accessed 9 August 2019).
- DiAngelo R (2011) White Fragility. *The International Journal of Critical Pedagogy* 3(3).
- Dovidio J (1993) The Subtlety of Racism. *Training & Development* 47(4): 51.
- Dovidio JF and Gaertner SL (2004) Aversive Racism. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* 36: 1–52.
- Dovidio JF and Gaertner SL (2010) Aversive Racism. In: *Encyclopedia of Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc., pp. 49–52. DOI: 10.4135/9781412972017.
- Dustmann C and Frattini T (2013) *The Fiscal Effects of Immigration to the UK*. CDP No 22/13, Discussion Paper, November. London: Centre for Research and Analysis of Migration. Available at: http://t.cream-migration.org/publ_uploads/CDP_22_13.pdf.
- Eddo-Lodge R (2017) *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race: The Sunday Times Bestseller*. 01 edition. London, UK: Bloomsbury Circus.
- Essed P (1991) *Understanding Everyday Racism: An Interdisciplinary Theory*. Sage series on race and ethnic relations ; v. 2. Newbury Park: Sage Publications. Available at: <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/londonschoolecons/detail.action?docID=997233> (accessed 7 January 2020).
- Evans J and Jones P (2011) The walking interview: Methodology, mobility and place. *Applied Geography* 31(2): 849–858. DOI: 10.1016/j.apgeog.2010.09.005.
- Fargues É (2017) The revival of citizenship deprivation in France and the UK as an instance of citizenship renationalisation. *Citizenship Studies* 21(8): 984–998. DOI: 10.1080/13621025.2017.1377152.

- feministkilljoys (2014) White Men. In: *feministkilljoys*. Available at: <https://feministkilljoys.com/2014/11/04/white-men/> (accessed 14 September 2016).
- Fernandes S (2017) *Curated Stories: The Uses and Misuses of Storytelling*. 1 edition. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Fleras A (2016) Theorizing Micro-aggressions as Racism 3.0: Shifting the Discourse. *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 48(2): 1–19. DOI: 10.1353/ces.2016.0011.
- Frankenberg R (1993) *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Fransman L (2011) *Fransman's British Nationality Law*. Haywards Heath: Bloomsbury Professional.
- Freire P (1985) *The Politics of Education: Culture, Power, and Liberation*. Hadley, Mass: Bergin & Garvey.
- Gardner K (2002) *Age Narrative and Migration: The Life Course and Life Histories of Bengali Elders in London*. London: Berg Publishers.
- Gäsche D (2014) *Eingereist und abgetaucht: Illegal in Deutschland*. Leipzig: Miltzke Verlag GmbH.
- Gell A (2001) *The Anthropology of Time: Cultural Constructions of Temporal Maps and Images*. Reprint edition. Oxford; Providence: Berg 3PL.
- Gentleman A (2019) *The Windrush Betrayal: Exposing the Hostile Environment*. Guardian Faber Publishing.
- Gibney MJ (2013) Should citizenship be conditional? The ethics of denationalization. *The Journal of Politics* 75 (3): 646–658.
- Gibney MJ (2018) Beware States Piercing Holes into Citizenship. In: Bauböck R (ed.) *Debating Transformations of National Citizenship*. IMISCOE Research Series. Cham: Springer International Publishing, pp. 219–223. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-319-92719-0_41.
- Gidley B (2014) Integration. In: *Migration: The COMPAS Anthology*. Oxford: COMPAS, pp. 168–169. Available at: <https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/2014/migration-the-compas-anthology/>.
- Gidley B (2019) Failing better at convivially researching spaces of diversity. In: *Studying Diversity, Migration and Urban Multiculture: Convivial Tools for Research and Practice*. London: UCL Press, pp. 123–140.
- Gidley B, Hanson S and Ali S (2018) *Identity, Belonging & Citizenship in Urban Britain*. January. London: CUCR.
- Gilroy P (2004a) *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?* London: Routledge.
- Gilroy P (2004b) *Between Camps: Nations, Cultures and the Allure of Race*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge.

- Ginwright S (2015) *Hope and Healing in Urban Education: How Urban Activists and Teachers Are Reclaiming Matters of the Heart*. Routledge.
- Goldberg DT (1993) *Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning*. First Edition. Oxford England; Cambridge, Mass: John Wiley & Sons.
- Goldberg DT (2001) *The Racial State*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.
- Goldberg DT (2015) *Are We All Postracial Yet?* Malden, MA: Polity Press.
- Goldring L, Berinstein C and Bernhard JK (2009) Institutionalizing precarious migratory status in Canada. *Citizenship Studies* 13(3): 239–265. DOI: 10.1080/13621020902850643.
- Gonzales RG (2011) Learning to Be Illegal: Undocumented Youth and Shifting Legal Contexts in the Transition to Adulthood. *American Sociological Review* 76(4): 602–619. DOI: 10.1177/0003122411411901.
- Gonzales RG (2016) *Lives in Limbo: Undocumented and Coming of Age in America*. Oakland, California: University of California Press.
- Gonzales RG and Chavez LR (2012) “Awakening to a Nightmare”: Abjectivity and Illegality in the Lives of Undocumented 1.5-Generation Latino Immigrants in the United States. *Current Anthropology* 53(3): 255–281. DOI: 10.1086/665414.
- Gonzales RG and Sigona N (2017) Mapping the soft borders of citizenship: An Introduction. In: Gonzales RG and Sigona N (eds) *Within and Beyond Citizenship: Borders, Membership and Belonging*. (Sociological Futures). London; New York: Routledge, pp. 1–16.
- Gonzales RG, Suárez-Orozco C and Dedios-Sanguinetti MC (2013) No Place to Belong: Contextualizing Concepts of Mental Health Among Undocumented Immigrant Youth in the United States. *American Behavioral Scientist* 57(8): 1174–1199. DOI: 10.1177/0002764213487349.
- Gonzales RG, Sigona N, Franco MC, et al. (2019) *Undocumented Migration*. Cambridge; Medford, MA: Polity Press.
- Gonzales, Roberto G. and Sigona N (2013) Illegality, Youth, and Belonging. In: Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2013. Available at: https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/files/immigrant_youth_2013/files/conference_panels_moderators_102413_final.pdf (accessed 2 January 2020).
- Gordon I, Scanlon K and Whitehead C (2009) *Economic impact on the London and UK economy of an earned regularisation of irregular migrants in the UK*. London: LSE.
- Griffiths M (2014) Out of Time: The Temporal Uncertainties of Refused Asylum Seekers and Immigration Detainees. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 40(12): 1991–2009. DOI: 10.1080/1369183X.2014.907737.
- Griffiths M (2015) The Convergence of the Criminal and the Foreigner in the Production of Citizenship. In: Anderson B and Hughes V (eds) *Citizenship and Its Others*. Migration, Diasporas and Citizenship. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Griffiths M (2019) 'My passport is just my way out of here'. Mixed-immigration status families, immigration enforcement and the citizenship implications. *Identities* 0(0): 1–19. DOI: 10.1080/1070289X.2019.1625568.
- Griffiths M and Morgan C (2018) *Operation Nexus*. January. Bristol: University of Bristol. Available at: http://www.bris.ac.uk/policybristol/policy-briefings/_operation_nexus/ (accessed 22 August 2019).
- Griffiths M, Anderson B and Rogers A (2013) *Migration, Time and Temporalities: Review and Prospect*. COMPAS Research Resource Paper, March. Oxford: COMPAS, University of Oxford.
- Gunaratnam Y (2003) *Researching 'Race' and Ethnicity: Methods, Knowledge and Power*. SAGE Publications.
- Gunaratnam Y (2013) *Death and the Migrant: Bodies, Borders and Care*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Hage G (2009) *Waiting*. MUP academic monograph series. Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Publishing.
- Haile S, Rezaie H, Tahiru Y, et al. (2017) Music, the Arts and Widening Participation in Research. St Antony's College, University of Oxford. Available at: <https://becomingadultproject.files.wordpress.com/2017/11/conference-programme-final.pdf>.
- Hall S (2017) *The Fateful Triangle: Race, Ethnicity, Nation*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP.
- Hammar T (1990) *Democracy and the Nation State: Aliens, Denizens and Citizens in a World of International Migration*. Research in ethnic relations series. Aldershot: Avebury.
- Hampshire J (2005) *Citizenship and Belonging: Immigration and the Politics of Demographic Governance in Postwar Britain*. 2005 edition. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hansen R (2003) Migration to Europe since 1945: Its History and its Lessons. *The Political Quarterly* 74: 25–38. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-923X.2003.00579.x.
- Haraway D (1988) Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. *Feminist Studies* 14(3): 575–599. DOI: 10.2307/3178066.
- Heath D (2016) School curriculum continues to whitewash Britain's imperial past. *The Conversation*. Available at: <http://theconversation.com/school-curriculum-continues-to-whitewash-britains-imperial-past-53577> (accessed 18 August 2019).
- Hesse B (2007) Racialized modernity: An analytics of white mythologies. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30(4): 643–663. DOI: 10.1080/01419870701356064.
- Hickman K (2019) Bad news for overstayers in latest hardening of British citizenship policy. Available at: <https://www.freemovement.org.uk/overstaying-good-character-british-citizenship/> (accessed 5 May 2019).
- Hockey JL and James A (2017) *Social Identities Across Life Course*. Macmillan International Higher Education.

- Holmes DR and Marcus GE (2010) Collaboration Today and the Re-Imagination of the Classic Scene of Fieldwork Encounter. *Collaborative Anthropologies* 1(1): 81–101. DOI: 10.1353/cla.0.0003.
- Home Office (2016) *Right to Rent Document Checks: a User Guide*.
- Honig B (2001) *Democracy and the Foreigner*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press.
- Huddleston T (2013) *The naturalisation procedure: measuring the ordinary obstacles and opportunities for immigrants to become citizens*. European University Institute: Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies.
- Hughes V (2015) Can family migrants be good citizens? In: Anderson B and Hughes V (eds) *Citizenship and Its Others*. Migration, Diasporas and Citizenship. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hund WD and Lentin A (2014) *Racism and Sociology*. Wien: Lit Verlag.
- Iqbal N (2019) Academic Robin DiAngelo: ‘We have to stop thinking about racism as someone who says the N-word’. *The Observer*, 16 February. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/feb/16/white-fragility-racism-interview-robin-diangelo> (accessed 15 August 2019).
- Isin EF (2016) *Two Perspectives on Citizenship*. Open University, Milton Keynes.
- Isin EF (2017) *Brexit: A Genealogy*. Goldsmiths, University of London.
- Isin EF and Nielsen GM (2008) *Acts of Citizenship*. London; New York: New York: Zed Books Ltd.
- Jackson E (2010) *Young homeless people and urban space: displacements, mobilities and fixity*. PhD thesis. London: Goldsmiths.
- Jackson E (2015) *Young Homeless People and Urban Space: Fixed in Mobility*. Routledge advances in ethnography 15. New York: Routledge.
- Jackson M (2002) *The Politics of Storytelling: Violence, Transgression, and Intersubjectivity*. Museum Tusulanum Press.
- Jasso G, Massey DS, Rosenzweig MR, et al. (2008) From Illegal to Legal: Estimating Previous Illegal Experience among New Legal Immigrants to the United States¹. *International Migration Review* 42(4): 803–843. DOI: 10.1111/j.1747-7379.2008.00148.x.
- Johnson H, Carson-Apstein E, Banderob S, et al. (2017) ‘You Kind of Have to Listen to Me’: Researching Discrimination Through Poetry. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 18(3). DOI: 10.17169/fqs-18.3.2864.
- Jones H (2018) Windrush and Go Home: the whittling away of both rights and responsibility. In: *Mapping Immigration Controversy*. Available at: <https://mappingimmigrationcontroversy.com/2018/04/20/windrush-and-go-home-the-whittling-away-of-both-rights-and-responsibility/> (accessed 21 August 2019).
- Jones H, Jackson E and Rhys-Taylor A (2014) Introduction: Moving and being moved. In: Jones H and Jackson E (eds) *Stories of Cosmopolitan Belonging: Emotion and Location*. Abingdon: Routledge.

- Jones H, Gunaratnam Y, Bhattacharyya G, et al. (2017) *Go Home?: The Politics of Immigration Controversies*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Joppke C (2007) Transformation of Citizenship: Status, Rights, Identity. *Citizenship Studies* 11(1): 37–48.
- Joppke C (2010) The Inevitable Lightning of Citizenship. *European Journal of Sociology / Archives Européennes de Sociologie* 51(1): 9–32. DOI: 10.1017/S0003975610000019.
- Jordan B and Düvell F (2002) *Irregular Migration: The Dilemmas of Transnational Mobility*. E. Elgar.
- Joseph-Salisbury R (2018) *Black Mixed-Race Men: Transatlanticity, Hybridity and 'Post-Racial' Resilience*. United Kingdom: Emerald Publishing Limited.
- Kalyvas A (2010) An Anomaly? Some Reflections on the Greek December 2008. *Constellations* 17(2): 351–365. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-8675.2010.00597.x.
- Kandola B (2018) Racism, Old and New. *Training Journal; London*: 22–24.
- Kapoor N and Narkowicz K (2019) Unmaking citizens: passport removals, pre-emptive policing and the reimagining of colonial governmentalities. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 42(16): 45–62. DOI: 10.1080/01419870.2017.1411965.
- Kaptani E and Yuval-Davis N (2008) Participatory Theatre as a Research Methodology: Identity, Performance and Social Action Among Refugees. *Sociological Research Online* 13(5). DOI: 10.5153/sro.1789.
- Karatani R (2003) *Defining British Citizenship: Empire, Commonwealth and Modern Britain*. Psychology Press.
- Khosravi S (2014) Waiting. In: Anderson B and Keith M (eds) *Migration: The COMPAS Anthology*. Oxford: COMPAS. Available at: <https://compasanthology.co.uk/waiting/> (accessed 12 September 2018).
- King (Jr.) ML (2010) *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos Or Community?* Beacon Press.
- Kirkup J (2012) Theresa May interview: 'We're going to give illegal migrants a really hostile reception'. 25 May. Available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/immigration/9291483/Theresa-May-interview-Were-going-to-give-illegal-migrants-a-really-hostile-reception.html> (accessed 21 August 2019).
- Knight A, Chase E and Statham J (2008) *Emotional Well-Being of Unaccompanied Young People Seeking Asylum in the UK*. British Association for Adoption and Fostering.
- Koser K (2005) *Irregular migration, state security and human security*. Global Commission on International Migration. Available at: https://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/policy_and_research/gcim/tp/TP5.pdf (accessed 13 September 2016).
- Kubal A (2013) Conceptualizing Semi-Legality in Migration Research. *Law & Society Review* 47(3): 555–587. DOI: 10.1111/lasr.12031.

- Ladner JA (1973) *The Death of White Sociology: Essays on Race and Culture*. Black Classic Press.
- Lassiter L (2005a) Collaborative Ethnography and Public Anthropology. *Current Anthropology* 46(1): 83–106. DOI: 10.1086/425658.
- Lassiter L (2005b) *The Chicago Guide to Collaborative Ethnography*. University of Chicago Press.
- Lentin A (2008) Europe and the Silence about Race. *European Journal of Social Theory* 11(4): 487–503. DOI: 10.1177/1368431008097008.
- Lentin A (2014) Postracial Silences: The Othering of Race in Europe. In: Hund WD and Lentin A (eds) *Racism and Sociology*. Racism Analysis B. Wien, Berlin: Lit Verlag GmbH & Co., pp. 69–106.
- Let us Learn (2019) *'Normality is a luxury': How 'limited leave to remain' is blighting young lives*. July. London. Available at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VXwkZOOiBA8PO9dFDuA9RF2IqVr4HYYG/view>.
- Lister R (1997) Citizenship: Towards a feminist synthesis. *Feminist Review* 57(1): 28–48. DOI: 10.1080/014177897339641.
- Lorek A, Ehntholt K, Nesbitt A, et al. (2009) The mental and physical health difficulties of children held within a British immigration detention center: A pilot study. *Child Abuse & Neglect* 33(9): 573–585. DOI: 10.1016/j.chiabu.2008.10.005.
- Mares S and Jureidini J (2004) Psychiatric assessment of children and families in immigration detention – clinical, administrative and ethical issues. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health* 28(6): 520–526. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-842X.2004.tb00041.x.
- Mares S, Newman L, Dudley M, et al. (2002) Seeking Refuge, Losing Hope: Parents and Children in Immigration Detention. *Australasian Psychiatry* 10(2): 91–96. DOI: 10.1046/j.1440-1665.2002.00414.x.
- Mayor of London (2020) *London's children and young people who are not British citizens: A profile*. London: Greater London Authority. Available at: https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/final_summary_londons_children_and_young_people_who_are_not_british_citizens.pdf (accessed 9 January 2020).
- Mayor of London Press Release (2017) Sadiq hosts first citizenship ceremony. Available at: <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/plans-to-help-londoners-be-more-active-citizens> (accessed 19 July 2019).
- McNevin A (2013) Ambivalence and Citizenship: Theorising the Political Claims of Irregular Migrants. *Millennium* 41(2): 182–200. DOI: 10.1177/0305829812463473.
- Meloni F (2017) The ambivalence of belonging: The impact of illegality on the social belonging of undocumented migrant youth. *Anthropological Quarterly*.
- Meloni F and Chase E (2017) *Transitions into institutional adulthood*. Becoming Adult Research Brief 4. London: UCL. Available at: www.becomingadult.net.
- Menjívar C (2006) Liminal Legality: Salvadoran and Guatemalan Immigrants' Lives in the United States. *American Journal of Sociology* 111(4): 999–1037. DOI: 10.1086/499509.

- Mercer K (2017) Introduction. In: *The Fateful Triangle*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Middleton D, Levi M and Middleton D (2015) Let Sleeping Lawyers Lie: Organized Crime, Lawyers and the Regulation of Legal Services: Table 1. *British Journal of Criminology* 55(4): 647–668. DOI: 10.1093/bjc/azv001.
- Milligan C and Bartlett R (2015) *What Is Diary Method?* Bloomsbury Academic.
- Mirza HS (ed.) (1997) *Black British Feminism: A Reader*. 1 edition. London; New York: Routledge.
- Mirza HS (2009) Black women and real citizenship. In: *Race, Gender and Educational Desire: Why Black Women Succeed and Fail*. London: Routledge, pp. 101–114.
- Modood T (1994) Political Blackness and British Asians. *Sociology* 28(4): 859–876.
- Momartin S, Steel Z, Coello M, et al. (2006) A comparison of the mental health of refugees with temporary versus permanent protection visas. *Medical Journal of Australia* 185(7): 357–361. DOI: 10.5694/j.1326-5377.2006.tb00610.x.
- Monforte P, Bassel L and Khan K (2019) Deserving citizenship? Exploring migrants' experiences of the 'citizenship test' process in the United Kingdom. *The British Journal of Sociology* 70(1): 24–43. DOI: 10.1111/1468-4446.12351.
- Mongia RV (1999) Race, Nationality, Mobility: A History of the Passport. *Public Culture* 11(3): 527–555. DOI: 10.1215/08992363-11-3-527.
- Morris L (2003) Managing Contradiction: Civic Stratification and Migrants' Rights. *International Migration Review* 37(1): 74–100. DOI: 10.1111/j.1747-7379.2003.tb00130.x.
- Mouritsen P (2012) Beyond Post-national Citizenship: Access, Consequences, Conditionality. In: Triandafyllidou A, Modood T, and Meer N (eds) *European Multiculturalisms: Cultural, Religious and Ethnic Challenges: Cultural, Religious and Ethnic Challenges*. London: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 88–115.
- Murray C (2016) *Becoming One Of Us. Reforming the UK's citizenship system for a competitive, post-Brexit world*. August. London: Institute for Public Policy Research. Available at: http://www.ippr.org/files/publications/pdf/Becoming%20one%20of%20us_summary_Aug16.pdf (accessed 13 June 2019).
- Neal S and Murji K (2015) Sociologies of Everyday Life: Editors' Introduction to the Special Issue. *Sociology*: 0038038515602160. DOI: 10.1177/0038038515602160.
- Ngai MM (2004) *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*. Politics and society in twentieth-century America. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press. Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.06691> (accessed 13 October 2015).
- Oakley A (1981) *Subject Women*. Oxford: Robertson.
- Oakley A (1992) *Taking It like a Woman*. London: Flamingo.
- Oakley A (2005) *The Ann Oakley Reader: Gender, Women and Social Science*. Policy Press.

- Oliver C (Forthcoming) Irrational rationalities and governmentality-effected neglect in immigration practice: legal migrants' entitlements to services and benefits in the United Kingdom. *British Journal of Sociology* In production.
- Oliver C and Hughes V (2018) Bordering education: migrants' entitlements to post-compulsory education in the United Kingdom. *International Studies in Sociology of Education* 27(2–3): 128–144. DOI: 10.1080/09620214.2018.1426997.
- Oxford Economics (2018) *The Fiscal Impact of Immigration on the UK*. Available at: <https://www.oxfordeconomics.com/recent-releases/8747673d-3b26-439b-9693-0e250df6dbba> (accessed 21 August 2019).
- Paoletti DE (2010) Deportation, non-deportability and ideas of membership. (65): 29.
- Penny E (2017) Charter Flight to Jamaica Threatens Mass Removal of Migrants. *Novara Media*, 1 March. Available at: <http://novaramedia.com/2017/03/01/charter-flight-to-jamaica-threatens-mass-removal-of-migrants/> (accessed 5 April 2017).
- PICUM (n.d.) Words matter • PICUM. In: *PICUM*. Available at: <https://picum.org/words-matter/> (accessed 26 August 2019).
- Pierce CM, Carew JV, Pierce-Gonzalez D, et al. (2016) An Experiment in Racism: TV Commercials. *Education and Urban Society*. DOI: 10.1177/001312457701000105.
- Platt L (2014) What do we know about national and local belonging and civic participation and what are the key emerging issues? In: *Global Exchange Briefing*. Available at: <https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/2014/what-do-we-know-about-national-and-local-belonging-and-civic-participation-and-what-are-the-key-emerging-issues/> (accessed 1 July 2019).
- Pogge TW (2007) *World Poverty and Human Rights*. 2nd edition. Cambridge: Polity.
- Polletta F (2009) *It Was Like a Fever: Storytelling in Protest and Politics*. University of Chicago Press.
- PRCBC (2015) Information and resources: Children and their rights to British Citizenship. Available at: <https://prcbc.org/information-and-resources/> (accessed 29 August 2019).
- Price J and Spencer S (2015) *Safeguarding children from destitution: Local Authority responses to families with 'no recourse to public funds'*. Oxford: COMPAS, University of Oxford. Available at: https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/PR-2015-No_Recourse_Public_Funds_LAs.pdf.
- Punch S (2002) Research with Children The Same or Different from Research with Adults? *Childhood* 9(3): 321–341. DOI: 10.1177/0907568202009003005.
- Rochon TR and Mazmanian DA (1993) Social Movements and the Policy Process. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 528: 75–87.
- Rodriguez D (2006) Un/masking Identity: Healing Our Wounded Souls. *Qualitative Inquiry* 12(6): 1067–1090. DOI: 10.1177/1077800406293238.
- Rodriguez EG and Boatcă M (2016) *Decolonizing European Sociology: Transdisciplinary Approaches*. Routledge.

- Rojas-Flores L, Clements ML, Hwang Koo J, et al. (2017) Trauma and psychological distress in Latino citizen children following parental detention and deportation. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy* 9(3): 352–361.
- Ruhs M and Anderson B (2010) Semi-compliance and illegality in migrant labour markets: an analysis of migrants, employers and the state in the UK. *Population, Space and Place* 16(3): 195–211. DOI: 10.1002/psp.588.
- Sainsbury D (2012) *Welfare States and Immigrant Rights: The Politics of Inclusion and Exclusion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sawyer SM, Azzopardi PS, Wickremarathne D, et al. (2018) The age of adolescence. *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health* 2(3): 223–228. DOI: 10.1016/S2352-4642(18)30022-1.
- Sayad A (2004) Immigration and ‘State Thought’. In: *The Suffering of the Immigrant*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Shachar A (2009) *The Birthright Lottery: Citizenship and Global Inequality*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Sharma N (2015) Racism. In: Anderson B and Hughes V (eds) *Citizenship and Its Others. Migration, Diasporas and Citizenship*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Sigona N (2012) Deportation, non-deportation and precarious lives: The everyday lives of undocumented migrant children in Britain (Respond to this article at <http://www.therai.org.uk/at/debate>). *Anthropology Today* 28(5): 22–23. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-8322.2012.00900.x.
- Sigona N (2013) Constructing Precariousness: Understanding the Experiences of Undocumented Children Beyond Deportability’. Harvard Graduate School of Education.
- Sigona N and Hughes V (2012) *No Way Out, No Way In. Irregular migrant children and families in the UK*. May. Oxford: COMPAS. Available at: https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/fileadmin/files/Publications/Reports/NO_WAY_OUT_NO_WAY_IN_FINAL.pdf.
- Sinha S and Back L (2013) Making methods sociable: dialogue, ethics and authorship in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*: 1468794113490717. DOI: 10.1177/1468794113490717.
- Sirriyeh A (2008) Young Asylum Seekers’ Conceptions of ‘Home’ at a Time of Transition to Adulthood. *International Journal of Migration, Health and Social Care* 4(1): 12–27. DOI: 10.1108/17479894200800003.
- Sirriyeh A (2013) *Inhabiting Borders, Routes Home: Youth, Gender, Asylum*. 1st Edition. Studies in Migration and Diaspora. London and New York: Routledge.
- Sirriyeh A (2018a) ‘Felons are also our family’: citizenship and solidarity in the undocumented youth movement in the United States. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. Available at: <https://livrepository.liverpool.ac.uk/3019257/> (accessed 30 May 2019).
- Sirriyeh A (2018b) *The Politics of Compassion: Immigration and Asylum Policy*. Bristol Chicago: Bristol University Press.

- Sirriyeh A and Ní Raghallaigh M (2018) Foster care, recognition and transitions to adulthood for unaccompanied asylum seeking young people in England and Ireland. *Children and Youth Services Review*. Available at: <https://livrepository.liverpool.ac.uk/3019258/> (accessed 3 May 2019).
- Skeggs B (2002) Techniques for Telling the Reflexive Self. In: May T (ed.) *Qualitative Research in Action*. London: Sage, pp. 349–375. Available at: <http://research.gold.ac.uk/13712/> (accessed 12 May 2016).
- Smith LT (2012) *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Second Edition. London and New York: Zed Books.
- Solomos J (2003) *Race and Racism in Britain*. 3rd ed. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Soysal YN (1994) *Limits of Citizenship: Migrants and Postnational Membership in Europe*. Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Spencer S (2011) *The Migration Debate*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Spencer S and Hughes V (2015) *Outside and In: Legal Entitlements to Health Care and Education for Migrants with Irregular Status in Europe*. Oxford: COMPAS. Available at: https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/fileadmin/files/Publications/Reports/PR-2015-Outside_In_Mapping.pdf.
- Steel Z, Silove D, Brooks R, et al. (2006) Impact of immigration detention and temporary protection on the mental health of refugees. *The British Journal of Psychiatry* 188(1): 58–64. DOI: 10.1192/bjp.bp.104.007864.
- Steel Z, Momartin S, Silove D, et al. (2011) Two year psychosocial and mental health outcomes for refugees subjected to restrictive or supportive immigration policies. *Social Science & Medicine* 72(7): 1149–1156. DOI: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2011.02.007.
- Stumpf JP (2006) The Crimmigration Crisis: Immigrants, Crime, and Sovereign Power. *American University Law Review* 56(2): 367–419.
- Sue DW (2010) *Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation*. New Jersey: Wiley.
- The Economist (2018) Migrants contribute more to Britain than they take, and will carry on doing so. *The Economist*, 26 September. Available at: <https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2018/09/26/migrants-contribute-more-to-britain-than-they-take-and-will-carry-on-doing-so> (accessed 21 August 2019).
- Thompson B (1973) Afterword. In: Ladner JA (ed.) *The Death of White Sociology: Essays on Race and Culture*. Black Classic Press.
- Thomson R, Holland J, McGrellis S, et al. (2004) Inventing Adulthood: A Biographical Approach to Understanding Youth Citizenship. *The Sociological Review* 52(2): 218–239. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-954X.2004.00466.x.
- Travis A (2011) Super-rich to be given fast-track to settle in Britain. *The Guardian*, 16 March. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2011/mar/16/new-immigration-rules-super-rich> (accessed 30 March 2017).

- Triandafyllidou A (2009) *CLANDESTINO PROJECT: FINAL REPORT*. European Commission. Available at: <https://emnbelgium.be/sites/default/files/publications/clandestino-final-report.pdf>.
- United Nations D of E and SASD (2017) *Handbook on Measuring International Migration through Population Censuses*. New York. Available at: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/Standards-and-Methods/files/Handbooks/international-migration/2017-draft-E.pdf> (accessed 21 March 2019).
- Vargas-Silva C and Sumption M (2019) *The Fiscal Impact of Immigration in the UK*. February. Oxford: COMPAS, University of Oxford. Available at: <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Briefing-The-Fiscal-Impact-of-Immigration-in-the-UK-2.pdf>.
- Virdee S and McGeever B (2018) Racism, Crisis, Brexit. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 41(10): 1802–1819. DOI: 10.1080/01419870.2017.1361544.
- Volpp L (2015) The Indigenous As Alien. *UC Irvine Law Review* 5(2): 289.
- von Werthern M, Robjant K, Chui Z, et al. (2018) The impact of immigration detention on mental health: a systematic review. *BMC Psychiatry* 18. DOI: 10.1186/s12888-018-1945-y.
- Weaver M (2018) Hate crime surge linked to Brexit and 2017 terrorist attacks. *The Guardian*, 16 October. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/oct/16/hate-crime-brexit-terrorist-attacks-england-wales> (accessed 9 August 2019).
- Willen S (2007) Toward a Critical Phenomenology of “Illegality”: State Power, Criminalization, and Abjectivity among Undocumented Migrant Workers in Tel Aviv, Israel. *International Migration* 45(3): 8–38. DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2435.2007.00409.x.
- Wilson A, Andrews K and Chok V (2016) Is political blackness still relevant today? | The panel. *The Guardian*, 27 October. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/oct/27/political-blackness-black-history-month-zayn-malik-sadiq-khan> (accessed 18 August 2019).
- Wimmer A and Glick Schiller N (2002) Methodological nationalism and beyond: nation–state building, migration and the social sciences. *Global Networks* 2(4): 301–334. DOI: 10.1111/1471-0374.00043.
- Woodcock C (2016) The Listening Guide: A How-To Approach on Ways to Promote Educational Democracy. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 15(1): 1–10. DOI: 10.1177/1609406916677594.
- Wray H (2013) *Naturalisation Procedures for Immigrants*. EUDO Citizenship Observatory. European University Institute: Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies.
- Yeo C (2017) The rise of modern banishment: deprivation and nullification of British citizenship. In: *Free Movement*. Available at: <https://www.freemovement.org.uk/rise-modern-banishment-deprivation-nullification-british-citizenship/> (accessed 2 May 2019).

- Yeo C (2018) How is the government using its increased powers to strip British people of their citizenship? In: *Free Movement*. Available at: <https://www.freemovement.org.uk/british-nationals-citizenship-deprivation/> (accessed 26 March 2019).
- Yeo C (2019) What is the OISC? In: *Free Movement*. Available at: <https://www.freemovement.org.uk/what-is-the-oisc/> (accessed 21 August 2019).
- Yuval-Davis N (1999) The 'Multi-Layered Citizen'. *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 1(1): 119–136. DOI: 10.1080/146167499360068.
- Yuval-Davis N (2006) Belonging and the politics of belonging. *Patterns of Prejudice* 40(3): 197–214. DOI: 10.1080/00313220600769331.
- Yuval-Davis N (2011) Power, Intersectionality and the Politics of Belonging. *FREIA Working Paper Series* (75).