The Language of Asylum

Refugees and Discourse

Steve Kirkwood
Simon Goodman
Chris McVittie
Andy McKinlay

The Language of Asylum

Also by Chris McVittie and Andy McKinlay

IDENTITIES IN CONTEXT: Individuals and Discourse in Action

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY AND DISCOURSE

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Refugees and Discourse

Steve Kirkwood
University of Edinburgh, UK

Simon Goodman
Coventry University, UK

Chris McVittie
Queen Margaret University, UK

Andy McKinlay
University of Edinburgh, UK

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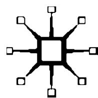

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Introduction

> It was a battle between me and death. I was sure that death was going to win and I would lose, but Alhamdulillah, finally I won when I arrived to [the] UK alive ... None of us could believe afterwards that we were in that kind of situation and were still alive.
>
> (Kennedy, 2012)

Seeking asylum and the journey

Above we see the words of 15-year-old Qadir describing the effects for him of a two-year journey made to the UK to escape imminent danger in his local village outside Kabul, Afghanistan. In making this journey without any legal guardian, support or legal documents, Qadir was trafficked by people-smugglers and, when not being transported by lorry, was required to walk for lengthy periods across desert and snow-covered mountains without adequate clothing or food. Many of Qadir's companions on this journey were forced to steal for their captors, physically beaten or sexually abused. Some who were at points unable to continue were simply abandoned to their fate. In reaching the UK, and being granted temporary discretionary leave to remain there, Qadir was one of the fortunate ones of those who started out on the arduous and horrendous journey from Afghanistan.

Qadir's journey, comprising personal suffering and endurance, dealing with risk as a matter of routine, and leading to an uncertain future, is in many respects typical of the journeys made by many who flee places of danger in the hope of finding safety elsewhere. Yet this geographical transition is only the first journey that a person seeking asylum in a new country will have to make: arrival at the country of destination

marks the end of one journey but signals the beginning of another one, a journey that in its own way might be every bit as demanding and uncertain as that of the escape from danger to apparent physical safety. The processes involved in seeking asylum in a country that is inevitably unfamiliar, and in contexts that would be difficult even for those who might be more aware of what would be asked or expected of them, present their own challenges. It is, however, the challenges of this journey that the asylum-seeker must negotiate in order to succeed in achieving his or her aim of securing refuge in a country of safety.

This text

It is this second journey, and how asylum-seekers and refugees travel along it, that provides the focus for this text. Here we examine in detail the chain of events and consequences that the asylum-seeker, or would-be refugee, requires to negotiate following arrival in the UK.

In adopting this focus, this book examines a social concern that lies at the heart of a number of social and political debates within contemporary Britain. At the same time, this book addresses a major gap in contemporary research literature. The topic of refugees and asylum-seekers, and associated topics such as integration and prejudice, are of long-standing interest to social researchers. However, to date, little work has explored the discourse of UK refugees and asylum-seekers themselves as they seek to describe and explain their own lived experiences. The people whose talk is presented in this book do just that. The reader is given a lively understanding of how people in this situation talk about their countries of origin, and how such talk does or does not impact on whether they are accepted or rejected as 'genuine' refugees and asylum-seekers. At the same time, the book explores the same issues in the talk of local residents and also in the talk of those who, through their work in non-governmental organizations, are closely tied up with the experiences of these refugees and asylum-seekers.

Yet our intention here is not merely to understand how refugees, asylum-seekers, locals and professional refugee workers make sense of these experiences. We are equally concerned with understanding what the outcomes of such understandings are for this set of people. Thus in this book we also explore the choppy waters of contemporary debates on integration, as they are understood by the people we talk to. We also look at how our participants talked about asylum-seekers' right to work, and explore how such rights and entitlements are presented as bound up

with more fundamental questions of who the refugee or asylum-seeker is and how he or she got here.

In these ways, we aim to give the reader a sense of the refugee and asylum-seeker 'journey': from those processes that impact on whether people are deemed to be appropriate for entry into the UK, through the experiences of what happens to them while they are here, to the eventual outcome of integration (whatever that might mean) or exclusion. At the end of the text, we provide an overview of how the findings set out in this book contribute to broader questions of policy and practice towards refugees and asylum-seekers in twenty-first century Britain.

One of the major advantages in this text is that the contents are presented in terms of readily identifiable themes that reflect large-scale social concerns. This approach has clear benefits for the student, the teacher and for the researcher. For student and teacher, each chapter provides an account of one particular aspect of the experience of refugees and asylum-seekers. In part, this will provide the teacher with an easily accessible 'narrative', which will support the production of teaching materials such as lectures and seminars. For the researcher, there is an additional benefit. As well as providing distinct research themes across the book, they also represent an integrated whole in which potential research themes and linkages across themes can be readily identified. The text is specifically designed so that, depending on the interests of the reader, it can be read as a whole or the reader may treat each chapter or set of chapters as 'self-contained'.

Structure of the book

The text is structured into five main parts. In Part I we examine the contexts within which the journey of asylum might be understood. Chapter 1 outlines the history of the idea of asylum and how it came to be taken up and recognized on an international scale, along with elements that enact key elements of the asylum process as it is recognized today. Here we consider also the role that the UK has adopted in relation to acknowledgement and acceptance or non-acceptance of those who arrive on these shores seeking asylum. These are set alongside the context of previous research findings on the topics of seeking asylum and refugee status, and of possible integration into UK society. Going on from there, Chapter 2 takes up the question of how the experiences of those who seek asylum can be studied. Many previous studies have offered findings that attempt to shed some light on the experiences of asylum-seekers and refugees; rather fewer, however, have

done so through detailed analysis of the descriptions that those involved actually provide and how they make sense of what they are engaged in.

Parts II, III and IV of the book each focus on one part of the asylum journey within the UK. The chapters in Part II, therefore, consider the ways in which asylum-seekers and refugees construct themselves as clear candidates for inclusion into UK society, and how such constructions are taken up or challenged in the talk of others, such as that of local residents. In Chapter 3, we see how asylum-seekers and refugees describe the places that they have left, while in Chapter 4 we examine how they construct the UK, their chosen destination, as a place of refuge and asylum. Chapter 5 moves on to consider how such descriptions are taken up in descriptions of who is to count or not to count as an asylum-seeker or refugee. Chapters in Part III of the book thereafter examine aspects of the experiences of refugees and asylum-seekers as they live in the UK. Here, issues of the right to work and of relationships with locals become the focus of attention in Chapters 6 and 7, respectively, including the question of how prejudice is experienced by refugees and asylum-seekers. Part IV of the book turns our attention to the last part of the journey: Will refugees or asylum-seekers be successful in their attempts to settle in the UK? Will they gain acceptance into British society, or will they face the long, arduous, dangerous and sometimes fatal journey back to their countries of origin? Chapter 8 looks at the issues that remain to be attended to, even at this stage of the journey, in examining integration, what it means, and for whom. Chapter 9 considers more difficult outcomes of the journey and their impact on refugees and asylum-seekers and integration, in the forms of destitution, detention and forced return.

The final chapter, Part V Chapter 10, discusses issues that have been raised in the book and offers some conclusions and possibilities for future research.

Part I

Seeking Asylum and the Journey

1
Policy and Research on Refugees and Asylum-Seekers

> What Britain does welcome and what Britain does want – of course, we'll welcome asylum-seekers genuinely seeking asylum and take them to our hearts as we have over centuries. And of course people who can legitimately come here and work or study, we'll make you feel at home. But we do need to send, frankly, a clearer message to people that we're not a soft touch in terms of people coming here.
>
> Cameron (2013)

Introduction

Above we see an excerpt from a speech given by the UK Prime Minster, David Cameron, on the topic of immigration and welfare reform. In the course of his speech, encapsulated within this excerpt, Cameron sets out coalition government policy on these issues in terms of an apparently clear binary distinction between those people who come to the UK as 'asylum-seekers genuinely seeking asylum' and those who by implication do not fall into this category. Whereas people in the former category will be made 'welcome', those in the latter category are to be given 'a clearer message . . . that we're not a soft touch'. Yet, this supposedly clear distinction that describes UK Government policy immediately raises two questions that are central to understanding current policy on these issues: first, who is to count as an asylum-seeker 'genuinely seeking asylum' and who is not; and, second, how will those deemed 'genuine' be accepted into UK society. Such questions form the basis of this chapter.

Seeking asylum and the UK context

The need for asylum

The widely recognized principles of applying for refuge in a country other than one's country of origin are set out in the United Nations Convention of 1951 relating to the Status of Refugees (United Nations, 2010). Article 1 Section A (2) of the convention defines a *refugee* as someone who:

> owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his (sic) nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself (sic) of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his (sic) former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

This definition and the Convention itself, although first codified in 1951, in effect simply recognized principles of seeking asylum and refuge that had been widely in existence for some time previously. Indeed, the scale of international conflict and the forced migration of people over the course of the twentieth century have led some commentators to describe the twentieth century as a time that was defined by refugee movements (Kushner & Knox, 1999). Mass movements of displaced groups and populations required practices that acknowledged their problems and the risks that they faced, and provided them with safety and new opportunities. Now, in the early part of the twenty-first century, the need for refuge and for the principles enshrined in the Convention is ever more apparent. In a global context, recent statistics show that there are 42.8 million people in the world who are 'of concern' to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2013). This figure includes 11.7 million refugees, and 1.17 million *asylum-seekers*. To take but one example, it is estimated at the time of writing that, as a result of the ongoing war in Syria, almost one half of the entire Syrian population has been displaced internally and externally, many of them fleeing in no more than the clothes in which they stand due to extreme fear for their lives, notwithstanding the harsh winter conditions that they will have to endure as they seek to escape (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2015). Recently, the Mediterranean Sea has been termed 'the world's most dangerous sea' (Amnesty International, 2014), reflecting the number of deaths at sea of those who seek to make the

crossing from the dangers of Africa and Asia to the relative safety of the European Union, commonly doing so at the hands of *people smugglers*, and in vessels that are not or are barely seaworthy. Thus, as processes of globalization unfold, and as war, famine, disease, recession and a multiplicity of other international catastrophes stride across the global stage, the consequences are, as always, felt by those least able to bear them.

All such circumstances point to the need for the 1951 Convention and principles of refuge as people leave their countries of origin and seek refuge elsewhere. It is unsurprising that the Convention has been described as the one piece of legislation that has saved the most lives in history (Yeo, 2011). Yet, even since its inception, implementation of the Convention has been subject to criticisms that the protection offered to refugees comes not just from a humanitarian aim to help those in most need but is instead bound up with other, less altruistic, motivations. In particular, the Convention came into being during the period of the Cold War when international relations between Western and Westernized countries and the then Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) were at a political low point. During that period, every person who fled the USSR (which was not a signatory to the Convention) to Western nations, particularly the United States, was treated as an indication of the superiority of capitalist democracy over communism (for example, Boswell, 2005; Westin, 1999). Schuster (2003) notes that this has resulted in a system that privileges those persecuted in terms of civil and political rights (that is, those freedoms valued by the West) rather than economic and social rights. In consequence, only 5 per cent of all refugees are actually accepted into developed Western countries, with the remainder being harboured within the world's poorest countries (Summerfield, 1999). A similar emphasis can be found in the current policies of many countries that seek primarily to attract only 'highly skilled' migrants. While, then, signatories remain committed in principle at least to the provisions of the 1951 Convention, their agreement to enact its provisions does not mean that, in practice, any who arrive seeking asylum will be welcomed. Rather the tension between espousing humanitarian principles and the reality of dealing with claims for asylum can be seen to be reflected in the policies and practices of countries (the UK included) that now find themselves potentially faced with claims from people fleeing from different parts of the globe.

UK asylum policy

The UK has a long history of granting asylum to those in need, with people fleeing persecution finding refuge in the UK since at least the

nineteenth century. This practice was given a formal legal structure in the 1951 Convention. The Convention has been cited, albeit some time later, in UK statute law since the Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act 1993 (O'Sullivan, 2009). Subsequently, the European Convention on Human Rights became part of UK domestic law through the Human Rights Act 1998. In recognizing the application of human rights to asylum-seekers, the Act explicitly restricts the use of detention as well as specifying the rights of all to enjoy family life. Most importantly for those seeking asylum, it explicitly prohibits the return of people to places where they risk torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Thus the Act extends the rights of asylum-seekers previously recognized under the 1951 Convention.

By contrast, however, most of the asylum legislation introduced since 1993 has sought to restrict the scope and possibilities of applying for asylum. Much of this seeming 'change of heart' has come about in a political context where provisions for allowing asylum and refuge are now viewed within a broader context of the immigration of non-UK nationals into the country. Indeed, it is in this context that we saw the current UK Prime Minister talk about asylum-seekers in the excerpt with which we began this chapter. Notwithstanding that they arrive in the UK for specific reasons, and not through freedom of choice in where to live their lives, asylum-seekers become viewed as one part of the overall group of those who arrive in the UK seeking leave to remain there. While the conflation of the interests of asylum-seekers with other immigrants goes back some way, it can be seen clearly in the policies of the Labour Government during its time in office in the UK between 1997 and 2010. That government officially advocated a multicultural society, stating that it encouraged immigrants who would make a positive contribution to British society to come to the UK, and provided asylum to those fleeing persecution, through the process of 'managed migration' (Young, 2003). This included 'toughening' the processes for those seeking asylum, ostensibly because so-called *economic migrants* were masquerading as refugees in order to take advantage of the UK's 'soft' approach on asylum-seekers (Bagilhole, 2003).

Evidence suggests that this approach is inherently flawed, as very few asylum-seekers have prior knowledge of the UK immigration system or benefit entitlements. Instead they often choose to come to the UK due to having friends or relatives in the country and/or general beliefs about the UK being a safe and tolerant society. Many, of course, have no choice over their destination as they rely on human smugglers to reach any destination of safety (Gilbert & Koser, 2006; Robinson & Segrott, 2002).

Moreover, policy initiatives such as the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996, which was intended to reduce the number of immigrants into the UK, have been judged as a failure given that the number of asylum applicants decreased before the legislation was brought in and rose for each of the three years following (Schuster, 2003). With regard to 'toughening' policies related to asylum, Bagilhole (2003, p. 17) stated that the government's role in the 'moral panic surrounding the issue [was] both dangerous and damaging to race relations'. Despite these flaws and failures, subsequent UK Governments, first Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition and since May 2015 Conservative, have continued these attempts to 'tighten' the immigration system, with a stated aim of bringing annual net migration to the UK down to 'tens of thousands' rather than 'hundreds of thousands' (Cameron, 2011).

Many commentators, therefore, have characterized the UK's recent immigration and asylum policies as founded on a model of deterrence, based on the assumption that only the most needy – and the most likely to be genuine – will make the effort to apply (for example, Bagilhole, 2003; Malloch & Stanley, 2005; Pearce & Stockdale, 2009; Phillips & Hardy, 1997; Wren, 2007; Zetter, 2007). In fact, it is almost impossible to enter the UK legally as an asylum-seeker, as visa requirements mean that it is necessary to attain false documents to enter the country; the policy of fining airlines and other transport companies for carrying passengers with false documents makes it more difficult for asylum-seekers to travel on this basis and requires many to rely instead on human smugglers (Barsky, 2000; Burnett & Peel, 2001; Westin, 1999). Westin (1999, p. 39, emphasis in original) argued that this essentially means that *access to the asylum procedures is blocked*. Owing to greater restrictions on immigration to the European Union, applying for asylum is one of the few methods for immigrating to the UK from less developed countries (Castles, Korac, Vasta & Vertovec, 2002). Those who arrive without appropriate documentation are treated as criminals, justifying the use of detention and expulsion, even though this increases the chances of imprisoning those who are legitimately in need of asylum and have all the likelihood of being victims of trauma and abuse (Bosworth, 2008; Bracken & Gorst-Unsworth, 1991). The use of illegal means of entry – often the only means of entry – may also increase the likelihood of refugees being perceived as economic migrants (Harding, 2000). Overall then, these policies and practices are in opposition to the spirit of the 1951 Convention and effectively prevent many people from entering the UK and accessing protection from persecution.

UK asylum practice

Since March 2013, all matters relating to UK asylum have been under the direct control of the Home Office through its two directorates of UK Visas and Immigration, and Immigration Enforcement. Asylum applications are considered within three categories: (1) asylum claims under the 1951 Convention; (2) claims for humanitarian protection or discretionary leave; or (3) claims under the European Convention of Human Rights or the Human Rights Act 1998 (O'Sullivan, 2009). If an application is accepted, the applicant receives refugee status, which may provide them with five-year 'limited leave to remain' – and applicants may later apply for indefinite leave to remain – or they may receive five-year Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave of no more than three years. If unsuccessful, an applicant may be able to appeal to the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal and then to the High Court, and in some cases to the House of Lords or the European Court of Human Rights.

Over recent years, the number of people applying for asylum annually in the UK increased to a peak of 84,130 in 2002, but has since dropped to 23,507 in 2013 (Home Office, 2014). This figure, however, represents only part of the total number of people currently seeking asylum in the UK. Prior to March 2013, matters relating to asylum fell within the remit of the former UK Border Agency (UKBA), a quasi-autonomous agency distinct from the Home Office. Major criticisms of the lack of transparency in conflicting cultures operating within the UKBA, and the apparent absence of accountability for its actions led the Home Secretary to abolish the UKBA in 2013 and to subsume responsibility for asylum and immigration issues within the remit of the Home Office itself (UK Comptroller and Auditor General, 2014). This transfer of functions has led to improved performance on various fronts but has failed to deal with accumulated backlogs of asylum claims. As the Public Accounts Committee (House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts, 2014) recently noted, around 29,000 asylum applications dating back to at least 2007 remain to be resolved, with 11,000 of these applicants still awaiting initial decisions. Moreover, the backlog of undecided claims continues to grow, with the number of claims awaiting an initial decision in the first quarter of 2014 rising to 16,273, an increase of 70 per cent compared to the first quarter of 2013 (House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts, 2014). All such figures point to the increasing number of those caught up in the UK asylum system who are unrecognized (at least as yet) as 'legitimate' refugees and awaiting confirmation of their status.

Those who await the outcomes of their asylum applications are spread throughout different areas of the UK. Since the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, the UK has operated a policy of dispersing asylum-seekers in need of support to a number of different locations around the UK. *Dispersal* was officially introduced in order to 'spread the burden' of accommodating and supporting asylum-seekers, who were previously concentrated in the South East of England. In practice, however, dispersal has resulted in other tensions within the asylum process. The power to regulate asylum and immigration is a matter reserved to the UK Parliament, the responsibilities being exercised by the UK Home Office. Other issues related to the concerns of asylum-seekers lie elsewhere. Thus, for asylum-seekers who find themselves dispersed to Scotland, their asylum claims fall to be determined in the UK context, while other matters, such as entitlement to education and to health services, come within the control of the Scottish Government as devolved matters. What this has led to, in practice, are some differences in the treatment of asylum-seekers in Scotland when compared to the rest of the UK. Whereas *integration* has been stated to be a policy objective of successive UK Governments of different parties (Home Office, 2002, 2008; May, 2010) the effects of this policy vary. For example, the Scottish Government has tended to treat integration as starting from arrival (Scottish Executive, 2005; Scottish Government, 2013), whereas at the UK level, integration is taken to apply only to those whose claims have been successful (that is refugees) rather than those who are awaiting the outcome of their application for asylum (that is, asylum-seekers; Da Lomba, 2010). In principle, therefore, there is the potential for asylum-seekers located in Scotland to enjoy greater access to education and other resources while awaiting the determination of their claims. Across the UK, however, most asylum-seekers are not permitted to work before their application is approved: regardless of the date from which integration might appear to commence, integration into full participation in the UK is less likely to occur before a successful outcome of a claim for asylum.

Who are asylum-seekers and refugees?

Categorizing asylum-seekers and refugees

We now turn to the first of the questions raised at the beginning of this chapter. In the excerpt earlier, we saw the UK Prime Minister, David Cameron, in describing the government's policy on asylum, refer to 'asylum-seekers genuinely seeking asylum'. This *categorization*, while offering a description of people who would be 'welcome',

simultaneously implies that those who fail to meet the criteria for inclusion in the category will, by contrast, not be welcome in the UK. Stated government policy thus rests on the allocation of those who arrive in the UK to one or other category. As, however, many writers have argued, the process of categorizing people is not simply a perceptual or a cognitive task that requires the matching of features of those who are being categorized to the criteria used to signify membership of a particular category. For example, Edwards notes that categorization is not (merely) a process of allocating people to a relevant social group but a rather more constructive one that is designed to accomplish one of a range of possible social outcomes: 'categorisation is *something we do*, in talk, in order to accomplish social actions (persuasions, blamings, denial, refutations, accusations, etc.)' (1991, p. 517, emphasis in original). And, as we start to examine how asylum-seekers and refugees have been categorized in political speeches and in other media, both in the UK and elsewhere, we see that how they are described does not simply reflect how processes of seeking asylum operate. Instead, these descriptions function to justify and account for specific policies and for social practices that restrict opportunities for asylum.

Here, a recurring categorization is one that questions the entitlement and motives of those who find themselves applying for asylum. For example, Zetter (2007), examining the labels that have been applied over several decades to those seeking asylum and refuge, notes that many labels in recent (and current) use are highly negative and critical. Descriptions such as 'illegal asylum-seekers', 'bogus asylum-seekers', 'economic refugee' and 'illegal migrant' all serve to associate refugees with indications of criminality and/or marginality, thereby undermining their right to enter or to remain in a host country. On a similar note, Lynn and Lea (2003) in an analysis of letters to British newspapers noted that contributors commonly deployed categories such as 'bogus refugee' or 'economic refugee' to argue against giving resources to asylum-seekers. Through these descriptions, letter-writers were able to portray themselves as interested in equality and justice, while depicting asylum-seekers as greedy and as abusing the system, and thereby as undeserving of help in the UK.

Descriptions of this sort are, moreover, used not just to criticize asylum-seekers, but also to argue for and justify particular elements of the asylum process itself. Phillips and Hardy (1997), for example, in a study of four organizations within the UK refugee system, found that definitions of a refugee differed across the organizations involved. Organizations, however, used the categorization 'bogus asylum-seekers' to

reclassify those seeking asylum as 'disguised economic migrants', and in so doing to justify the process of determining who is and who is not a refugee: without the existence of this group there would be no justification for such an expensive system. On a related point, Malloch and Stanley (2005) argued that descriptions that associate asylum-seekers with criminality work to justify tighter immigration controls for the purposes of security and control, the use of detention centres and segregation (see also Leudar, Hayes, Nekvapil & Baker, 2008). Similarly, Goodman and Speer (2007), in an analysis of texts from political speeches, TV debates and newspaper articles, found that categories of 'illegal immigrants' and 'asylum-seekers' could readily be conflated, implying that asylum-seekers are potentially illegitimate, and justifying suspicion and harsh policies towards them. Furthermore, they note that the term 'asylum-seeker' itself emphasizes what people seek to take from the host society, rather than highlighting the relevant moral obligations of the UK. For this reason, they argued that 'the construction of asylum-seekers is always fundamentally a *political* action' (Goodman & Speer, 2007, p. 179, emphasis in original).

Other descriptions of asylum-seekers are, of course, also available. Often, however, these are used to produce arguments that are every bit as critical as suggestions that many asylum-seekers are not genuine. Thus a categorization of those seeking asylum as helpless, dependent and marginalized, due to war, for example, can be used to suggest that they will be a drain on a host society and thereby to support government asylum policy (Phillips & Hardy, 1997). Descriptions of the families of asylum-seekers can be used to criticize policies that lead to children being separated from parents, but equally are available to criticize them on grounds of 'breeding' in order to gain sympathy from the public. For example, dehumanizing terms such as 'knock out a couple of sprogs' and 'siring children', found on internet sites, work to criticize asylum-seekers for not taking responsibility for their children and to present them as undeserving of empathy, thereby legitimizing restrictive legislation (Goodman, 2007).

The findings outlined above are not specific to the UK context. In many respects, the findings set out here resemble those found in an Australian context. A series of studies conducted there have pointed to ways in which asylum-seekers are presented as 'bogus' (Every, 2006), and how Australia has already been very generous to those in need with its limited resources (Every & Augoustinos, 2008). In consequence, again asylum-seekers can be presented as undeserving of empathy and ongoing moral obligations, justifying current asylum policies (Every, 2006).

A further justification for how asylum-seekers are categorized, and for current asylum practice, lies in how the categorizations that are used are presented to or taken up by a wider audience. Goodman (2008) illustrated how politicians argued that 'tougher' asylum policies were needed to address the views of members of British society, in the interest of maintaining a peaceful society and avoiding increased public support for right-wing political parties. It is, of course, something of an irony for politicians to argue for the introduction of more extreme policies in order to prevent extremism. Therefore, when Cameron refers to sending out 'a clearer message', that talk in itself is designed to orient to the prospect of other politicians delivering a message that is even clearer in its terms.

Asylum and racism

Categorizations of asylum-seekers and refugees are, of course, not limited to those produced by politicians and others who reside in countries of destination. The 1951 Convention (United Nations, 2010) itself offers a particular categorization of a refugee, one that includes the feature that a refugee is 'outside the country of his (sic) nationality'. This description, although ostensibly describing a matter of location, can easily be taken up in ways other than that originally intended. Thus, in practice, those who seek asylum and refuge can be identified as belonging to races other than that of the host country and potentially become the targets of *racism*.

Racist talk, as defined by Wetherell and Potter (1992) in their seminal text *Mapping the Language of Racism*, is that 'which has the effect of establishing, sustaining and reinforcing oppressive power relations between those defined as racially or ethnically different' (p. 70). The studies discussed above have indicated how categorizations of asylum-seekers and refugees commonly found in host countries operate to disadvantage and marginalize such refugees from acceptance in these countries. As we have seen, the arguments that speakers deploy in such instances often take the form of distinctions between who is 'genuine' and who is 'bogus', issues of legality and illegality, or descriptions of family matters. Rarely do those making such arguments rely on categorizations based on race. A number of writers, however, argue that talk of this sort should not be taken to indicate that asylum-seekers and refugees are not targets of racism; instead, it indicates that speakers are carefully designing their talk to avoid being accused of being racist.

One example is seen in a study of a political speech by a former leader of the UK Conservative Party, Michael Howard. In their analysis of this

speech, Capdevila and Callaghan (2008) show how Howard drew upon his own migrant ancestry to position himself as an example of a 'good' migrant who had 'integrated' and was making a contribution to British society. Identifying himself in this way, they argue, allowed Howard to contrast his own experience with that of refugees who were dependent upon the generosity of the UK, and who sought to exploit its generosity and tolerance. In deploying this form of argument, Howard could seek to justify harsh immigration policies and criticize asylum-seekers without necessarily being treated as racist. Arguments of this sort are by no means confined to politicians. Goodman and Burke (2010) for example, in a focus-group study conducted with UK students, found that their participants did not necessarily treat opposition to asylum-seekers as racist and instead viewed it as legitimate if grounded in economic concerns.

One difficulty in approaching talk about asylum-seekers and refugees as racism lies in the issue of who gets to define what is to count as racist. Rarely do individuals support racist policies, although such instances can be found in social media, where people are potentially less likely to be challenged in expressing such views (Burke & Goodman, 2012). More commonly racism, if present, appears in less overt forms, making it more difficult to challenge on such grounds. In a study of Australian political discourse, Every and Augoustinos (2007) show how politicians opposed to stricter asylum laws sought to challenge the government's treatment of asylum-seekers on a number of grounds, namely the use of categorical generalizations in talk about asylum-seekers, the unequal treatment of asylum-seekers compared with other categories of 'illegal' immigrants, talk about the nation and cultural-difference talk. As Every and Augoustinos (2007) note, though, accusations of racism have to be handled very carefully. Any such challenges are themselves open to being contested on the grounds that the accuser is being over-sensitive and intolerant (van Dijk, 1992). Thus, in debates about asylum, speakers usually treat the issue of racism and what is to count as racist as a 'no-go area': accusing others of being racist can be just as problematic as expressing views that potentially are racist in their descriptions of asylum-seekers and refugees (Goodman, 2010; Riggs & Due, 2010).

Integration of asylum-seekers and refugees

Integration as a strategy

A second question regarding those who seek asylum and refuge in the UK concerns their relations with the host society: how might they

integrate into or with UK society? Integration is a central issue in debates about asylum-seekers and refugees, and is widely used in policies and practices relating to their presence in the UK. Yet integration is a complex concept that is open to a wide variety of definitions and interpretations, many of which involve very different expectations of what social relations between asylum-seekers and refugees and the population of the host country might involve or require.

One notion of integration that was for long influential is found in the framework of *acculturation* (Berry, 1997). A common definition of 'acculturation' is 'those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups' (Redfield, Linton & Herskovits, 1936, p. 149, as cited in Berry, 1997, p. 7). We should note that acculturation is not the same as *assimilation*, requiring one group (immigrants) to assume the attributes of another (host society). Instead, the notion of acculturation allows for different strategies and outcomes when these two groups come into contact (Sam, 2006). More specifically, the acculturation approach posits that there are two main factors in relation to resettlement: the extent to which people maintain aspects of their original culture and the extent to which they become involved in the new culture (Berry, 1997). To those coming into the UK, this allows four possible acculturation strategies: integration (engagement with both cultures); separation (engagement with own culture only); assimilation (engagement with host culture only); and marginalization (engagement with neither culture).

Not all of these strategies, however, need be equally available. Berry points out that the attitudes and responses of the host culture will necessarily affect the choices open to the migrant group. For example, societies that encourage multiculturalism will facilitate integration, whereas societies that are hostile towards migrants will make it more difficult for them to integrate and render other strategies more likely. Research suggests that integration is generally the best strategy for the well-being of the migrant group (Berry, Poortinga, Breugelmans, Chasiotis & Sam, 2011) and Berry has pointed out that failure to integrate can have a negative impact on both the migrant group – in terms of poor psychological well-being – and the host group – for example, in terms of conflict.

Although allowing for different outcomes, the notion of acculturation has been critiqued on a number of grounds. One such critique can be found in the work of Kumsa (2006) who argued that the notion of

acculturation offers little scope for studying how intercultural contact can shape and construct culture, leading to new possibilities for asylum-seekers and refugees to identify who they are in a new country. Equally, the notion of acculturation takes little account of how the culture of a host country such as the UK evolves over time in responding to the presence of those who arrive. Instead, acculturation relies on the assumption that culture and identity are pre-formed and static, and provides an impoverished view of integration and other forms of social relations.

Integration as a process

In contrast to treating integration as one possible strategy for individuals to adopt where possible, as suggested by the acculturation framework, other theories have proposed a more dynamic role for integration in contexts of intercultural contact. Following an extensive review of the research literature then available, Castles and colleagues (2002) argued that integration might usefully be understood as a process in which refugees establish relations with a host society. Alongside this, and in contrast to the acculturation approach that places the responsibility for integration primarily on immigrants, Castles and colleagues argued that integration should be understood as a two-way process. In this sense, it is not just for newcomers to make efforts to build up relations with the host society but the host society also must adapt to meet the needs of those who enter it.

This approach to integration allows for examination of the processes involved between refugees and the host society in two different ways. First, Castles and colleagues suggest that we might usefully ask the question 'integration into what?' They argue that integration (or lack of integration) can occur in many different ways, depending on whether we are talking about integration into a local community or into UK society more generally, for example. Integration, therefore, can be understood as relevant at different levels and how we understand integration might well vary from level to level. Second, in order to understand how the process is working and whether integration is being achieved, we can look at *indicators of integration*. These indicators, Castles and colleagues (2002, pp. 30–1) suggested, included the following: education, training and employment; social integration; health; legal integration; political integration; and overall integration (including 'personal assessments of satisfaction with one's achievements and situation in the receiving society').

In this way, indicators of integration can be seen as pointing to different possibilities for participation, opening up to inquiry if and how

integration occurred throughout separate areas of social activity. The framework of 'indicators of integration' was subsequently developed further by Ager and Strang (2004) who outlined ten 'domains' in four categories. This overall framework conceives of integration as a *process* as well as defining successful integration as *achievement* in the range of stated domains.

Integration in practice

The model of integration, and the use of domains and indicators by which it can be assessed, provides for a more fluid understanding of integration than seen in acculturation studies. This approach, however, brings its own problems. As Ager and Strang (2008) note, applying this understanding broadly would lead to a finding that not all members of a host society are 'integrated', let alone those who arrive within it. Their framework provides for an 'ideal' situation that highlights possibilities for integration but with less attention to the obstacles that commonly preclude asylum-seekers and refugees from meaningful participation in UK society.

Some research into the experiences of asylum-seekers and refugees has offered a mixed picture that indicates some degree of satisfaction with life in the UK. For example, a study by Bowes, Ferguson and Sim (2009) of the views and experiences of service providers, asylum-seekers and refugees in Glasgow found that people had a complex mixture of good and bad experiences in terms of integration: many were generally positive regarding their local area, although many had also experienced harassment from locals. Another study of refugees in Glasgow (Sim, 2009) found that some had made good social connections and had developed an affinity with the city but that others reported struggling to find suitable employment and did not feel part of the community. On a similar note, Mulvey (2011) found that most of the asylum-seekers and refugees he surveyed were satisfied with their life in Scotland and happy with the neighbourhood they lived in, as well as most having good access to health care and education. Many, however, reported difficulties in accessing paid employment and most said they had experienced discrimination while in Scotland. Deuchar (2011), in a study of young refugees in Glasgow, found that many refugees had developed connections with other refugees or ethnic minority group members but few connections with young white Scottish people in the local areas. The same mixed picture can be observed in Coventry, where Liebling, Burke, Goodman and Zasada (2014) found that some refugees reported positive experiences, with others reporting a range of problems including lack of

employment and housing, and experiences of domination by the Home Office.

Studies such as these might be taken in part to reflect the range of indicators proposed by Castles and colleagues (2002) and by Ager and Strang (2004), with people reporting some experiences as successful and others less so. Other findings, however, stand in marked contrast to the 'ideal' situation in which integration can potentially occur in a range of different ways. Unsurprisingly, in many instances, asylum-seekers report experiencing the social impact of the negative categorizations and outcomes that were seen above, and of the consequences of a system that is designed to restrict, at least initially, their participation in UK society.

Thus, studies have pointed to the generally negative attitudes that the public express towards asylum-seekers and refugees (Lewis, 2005, 2006), and resentment and hostility towards the provision of assistance and support to them (Ahearn, Loughry & Ager, 1999; Barclay, Bowes, Ferguson, Sim & Valenti, 2003; Wren, 2007). In consequence, incomers often feel obligated for any support that they get rather than being entitled to it in terms of international law (Harrell-Bond, 1999), and isolated from and not part of local communities (Ager, Malcolm, Sadollah & O'May, 2002; Barclay et al., 2003). Other studies report the impact of UK Government policies on the integration, or more accurately, lack of integration of asylum-seekers and refugees. Not just asylum-seekers but refugees too have difficulty in accessing suitable paid employment (Bloch, 2000; Brahmbhatt, Atfield, Irving, Lee & O'Toole, 2007) and many, although highly skilled and motivated, work in jobs that are below their skill level (Charlaff, Ibrani, Lowe, Marsden & Turney, 2004). Furthermore, some aspects of the asylum process can be detrimental to integration, such as long delays in receiving a resolution on asylum claims, which results in asylum-seekers not having the security they require to fully engage and settle in the host society (Spicer, 2008).

While all of the findings discussed above identify issues that work against asylum-seekers and refugees in participating fully in UK society, there is one factor above all that makes meaningful integration highly problematic: housing. As we noted earlier in this chapter, UK Government policy since 1999 has been to disperse and house asylum-seekers in different parts of the UK. What this has meant in practice is that, for the large part, asylum-seekers, who the government generally sees as unwelcome, have been housed in highly undesirable housing stock that is unwanted by most members of the UK population (Phillips, 2006). Often asylum-seekers are dispersed to and housed in deprived areas alongside the unemployed, and those with mental health issues or drug

or alcohol addictions (Harrell-Bond, 1999). More than this, however, asylum-seekers can find themselves accommodated in housing stock that is deemed unsuitable for habitation in being scheduled for demolition (Wren, 2007). In extreme cases these circumstances combine, with asylum-seekers being dispersed to housing stock that is scheduled for demolition and located in areas of multiple deprivation. Where it becomes questionable if there is any existing community at all for newcomers to integrate into (Barclay et al., 2003), there is little to be gained by debating whether integration is a strategy or a process.

Summary

In this chapter, we have considered the broad context of asylum and refuge, and how this is reflected in current policy of the UK Government and its practices towards those who arrive here. Notwithstanding stated policy that 'genuine' asylum-seekers will be welcome, those who arrive here are usually treated with suspicion by a system that is designed to deter. Current government policy is reflected in and reflects the ways in which those who seek asylum are commonly categorized. Descriptions that are designed to question their motives and genuine need for asylum, and to associate them with illegality and criminality, all routinely present a highly negative view of asylum-seekers, one that potentially borders on racist at times.

Against this background, it should be no surprise that much research in this area has focused on how asylum-seekers and refugees are described, and on the possibilities for integration, whatever we take that to mean. Research to date offers some insights into the difficulties faced by asylum-seekers and refugees in the UK, and their experiences here in orienting to public expressions of negative views – and on some occasions hostility – and in dealing with the problems of everyday life resulting from a system that routinely marginalizes them from UK society.

Yet many aspects of these processes and experiences remain to be examined further. For example, there is the issue of if and how asylum-seekers and refugees might seek to challenge the prevailingly negative categorizations and outcomes they have to confront; there is also the issue of integration, a concept open to many interpretations. More study is required of what it means for those involved and what version, if any, is relevant to them. These and related questions we take up in the chapters to follow. In Chapter 2 we consider the question of how we might most usefully make sense of the experiences of asylum-seekers and refugees.

Activity

Make a list of five features that you consider would indicate that a person newly arriving in the UK deserves to be given asylum or refuge. Now make a list of five features that you would take to suggest that a person who arrives does not deserve to be allowed to remain. Compare the two lists. To what extent, and how, do you view the two lists as distinctive? Are any features similar on both lists? If these were to be used in assessing people's claims for asylum or refuge in the UK, which features should be treated as most important, and why?

Further reading

Barclay, A., Bowes, A., Ferguson, I., Sim, D. & Valenti, M. (2003). *Asylum-Seekers in Scotland*. Retrieved from: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2003/02/16400/18346.

A useful description of the problems that face many asylum-seekers and refugees in their attempts to settle in and belong to local communities.

Ager, A. & Strang, A. (2004). *Indicators of integration: Final report*. Retrieved from: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110218135832/http:/rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/dpr28.pdf.

A conceptualization of integration that has been very influential. Although somewhat idealized, it does recognize a range of the different forms of experience that those arriving in the UK might encounter and offers some ways of bringing these together.

2
Theory and Method in Understanding the Experiences of Refugees and Asylum-Seekers

> 'I don't know what you mean by "glory" ', Alice said.
>
> Humpty Dumpty smiled contemptuously. 'Of course you don't – till I tell you. I meant "there's a nice knock-down argument for you!" '
>
> 'But "glory" doesn't mean "a nice knock-down argument" ' Alice objected.
>
> 'When I use a word', Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less'.
>
> 'The question is', said Alice, 'whether you can make words mean so many different things'.
>
> 'The question is', said Humpty Dumpty, 'which is to be master – that's all'.
>
> (Carroll, 1872, p. 72)

Introduction

In the excerpt above, taken from the well-known children's story *Through the Looking Glass*, we see a debate between Alice and Humpty Dumpty as to how words are to be understood. Alice's argument, as we see, is that words have recognizable meanings and are not available for individuals to use in any way of their choosing; should they attempt to do so, the meaning is lost. The counter-argument, advanced by Humpty Dumpty, is that words do not have meanings that are pre-determined: what they mean derives from how people use them. At first sight, Alice's

argument is one that is familiar to us and that might appear self-evident, in that, without some shared sense of meaning, language does not function effectively as a means of communication. Yet, as we look more closely, Humpty Dumpty's position, however counter-intuitive, comes to offer a richer and potentially more useful view of how people do use language in communicating with each other. In everyday talk, we do not ordinarily consult dictionaries or rules of English grammar in order to check the meanings of words that are uttered. And, in everyday conversation, there is continually scope for people to ask questions such as 'what do you mean by that?' Questions of this sort would have little purpose if the meanings of words were always pre-determined and clear. Meanings, then, do not inevitably follow from the actual words used but rather from how people respond to them, whether accepting or perhaps querying terms such as 'glory' as Alice does above. On closer inspection, it appears that often the meanings of the words that people utter are possibly uncertain and that words can mean different things, as Humpty Dumpty argues. The value of approaching language in this way will become all the more apparent when we turn to studying talk of asylum.

Talk about asylum

Language and construction

In the last chapter, while discussing UK policy on asylum and refuge, we noted that certain terms play a central role in policy and in the operation of the asylum system. For example, the description 'genuine asylum-seeker' can be used to depict those who will be welcomed into the UK following their arrival, and a 'soft touch' used to describe the mistaken belief of those who are not 'genuine' and who will be made less welcome. Terms such as these are also used to justify and legitimate a system that is designed ostensibly to distinguish between different people arriving in the UK. Moreover, previous research has found that distinctions of this sort, whether between 'genuine' and 'bogus' asylum-seekers, between 'genuine asylum-seekers' and 'economic migrants', or between those who are unreasonably separated from their children and those who 'breed' merely in attempts to gain sympathy, are found in arguments relating to asylum across a diversity of contexts.

As we also saw, the use of specific terms is central not just to the question of how people seeking asylum in the UK should be described but is also central to how their relations with members of the host community are to be understood. The term 'integration' offers a prime example.

Integration is used variously by different writers and theorists to describe one of a potential range of strategies that asylum-seekers can use to become part of a community, or to denote both a process and a goal of establishing relationships across a diversity of realms of experiences. Evidence, however, also suggests that asylum-seekers and refugees describe their lived experiences somewhat differently, often varying from one realm of social life to another, potentially allowing for further versions of what it means to achieve 'integration'.

What all of this points to is the importance of examining how words are used in particular contexts and the meanings that they have for those participating in those contexts. When we examine language in use, what becomes immediately apparent is that language functions as *construction*: language does not (merely) describe groups of people who can be differentiated on the basis of their attributes and according to specific criteria, but instead constructs versions of social groups and identities that can be ascribed to people, resisted, reworked or otherwise negotiated as the case might be (for a fuller discussion, see McKinlay & McVittie, 2011). Nor does language reflect existing states of affairs in the world that can be perceived and applied as appropriate. What is to constitute integration, for example, can be proposed in different forms, debated, reworked and otherwise conceptualized according to the demands of varying contexts. In line with Humpty Dumpty's argument, descriptions such as 'genuine' and 'bogus', and the meaning of 'integration' cannot be read off from the words themselves. To understand the meanings of these and other descriptions, we instead need to look to what they are being used to denote as people use them.

Language as action

As well as constructing versions of people, states of affairs, events in the world and so on, language in use has the property of action. We have already seen one example of this in discussing categorization in Chapter 1. As we noted there, categorization is not a (mere) process of allocating individuals to readily identifiable categories of people but a process whereby talk is used 'to accomplish social actions' (Edwards, 1991, p. 517). We also noted there some of the uses to which categories can be put, such as using a categorization of 'economic migrant' to impugn the motivations of some people who arrive in the UK, or a categorization of 'illegal asylum-seeker' to argue against people's right to remain in the UK and to justify asylum practices. Categorization thereby offers a prime example of how language is used to accomplish particular social actions. The use of linguistic terms to perform actions, however,

is not limited to categorizations but applies equally to all talk. As Potter and Wetherell (1987) note, in their landmark text *Discourse and Social Psychology*, language always has an *action orientation*:

> [p]articipants' discourse or social texts are approached in *their own right* and not as a secondary route to things 'beyond' the text like attitudes, events or cognitive processes. Discourse is treated as a potent, action-orientated medium, not a transparent information channel.
>
> (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 160, original emphasis)

In talking about issues of asylum, then, speakers should not be taken to be expressing representations of such matters, either those that reflect what asylum-seekers and refugees are *really* like in some sort of experienced external sense, or alternatively their internalized views of those involved and the practices that operate or might operate in relation to the determination and provision of asylum. Rather all such descriptions are performing social actions, whether arguing for or against the presence of asylum-seekers, justifying or criticizing current practices, or claiming or denying the emergence of good social relations between newcomers and members of the host society. From this perspective, there is no neutral description available of asylum provision in the UK: all descriptions of asylum and refuge are tailored towards some outcome according to the requirements of the local context within which these descriptions are produced.

Rhetoric

Another property of language that we should note at this point is that of *rhetoric*. The versions of people, events and other features of life that individuals produce in their talk are not only deployed towards some social outcome, but also are designed to persuade others towards that outcome. When, as in the quote from David Cameron in Chapter 1, we see politicians offering a distinction in terms that delineate entitlement or non-entitlement to asylum, that talk goes beyond simply stating existing policy and is used in efforts to persuade a listening (and voting) audience of the utility and possible veracity of making decisions based on that distinction. Thus, it is both a justification of current policy and an attempt to persuade those being addressed to accept and to agree with the policy as expressed. Rhetoric is not, however, the prerogative of politicians: all talk functions in this way. As discussed above, speakers in talk construct particular versions of social phenomena according to the demands of the local context and the outcomes that are sought.

Yet, multiple potentially competing versions of what is being described are always available. To take the oft-quoted example, one person's freedom-fighter is another person's terrorist. In constructing one version, then, a speaker is offering that version to the recipients of the talk. Certainly, in doing so, the individual offering the talk might explicitly discount other possibilities. We saw, for example, Cameron's distinction between those who should be treated as welcome in the UK and those who should not be welcomed. Similarly, we saw participants in research studies draw very similar distinctions. Talk, however, does not have to be this explicit in arguing for one version and also discounting other possibilities. Michael Billig (1987) in his landmark text *Arguing and Thinking* notes that argument always works in this way, in that in expressing one view speakers are at the same time working to undermine potentially competing arguments. Thus, the descriptions that people offer in language always are presented to persuade recipients of that version as opposed to others. That is not to say that people's descriptions necessarily always lead to agreement; far from it, as we shall see in the chapters to come. Nonetheless, the talk that people produce inevitably has a rhetorical aspect to it, in descriptions of issues of asylum as elsewhere.

Analysing talk about refuge and refugees

Advantages of analysing discourse

A focus on language, and its properties of construction, action and rhetoric, brings particular advantages in examining the journeys of asylum-seekers and refugees in the UK, and their experiences of the asylum system and relations with the host community.

First, it opens up for investigation how people use terms such as 'genuine asylum-seeker' and others. Instead of assuming a priori knowledge of what such descriptions mean, we can turn our attention to how these are constructed and deployed, the actions that they are designed to accomplish, and the rhetorical design and effects of the descriptions.

Second, instead of attempting to decide between competing versions of what is be treated as integration and related concepts, we can examine how these are used by different speakers in different contexts and the consequences of these uses. Thus, we are not required to consider for example whether integration is most usefully treated as a strategy, a process, or a goal or otherwise; rather, we can focus on the variations found in language even from the same speaker how these are situated within particular contexts to deal with interactional concerns.

And, third, a focus on language allows us to consider how asylum-seekers, refugees and other UK residents describe the issues in their own terms. We do not need to work out whether these are in any sense 'genuine' or not, or whether they meaningfully reflect what is to be recognized as comprising integration. This is especially important if we are to understand the stories of asylum-seekers and refugees of their journeys through UK asylum policies and practices. Given that those arriving in the UK are immediately faced with a system that is designed to deter and (in Humpty Dumpty's terms) to be 'master' of words, it becomes all the more important to hear the words of those who are positioned disadvantageously to argue for their versions of themselves and their experiences. Therefore, instead of imposing any pre-determined notion on the form that their descriptions might or should take, our aim here is to consider in detail their accounts of their experiences of coming to the UK and of living here.

Varieties of discourse analysis

Adopting a focus on studying the language that people use in describing asylum-seekers and refugees leads us to the question of *how* that language should most usefully be understood. As in recent years an ever-increasing volume of research has turned to language as the site of study, so too has grown the range of approaches to studying the language that people use in various contexts. An extended discussion of the variety of forms of analysing talk is beyond the scope of the present text, and is indeed available in many other works on the subject (see, for example, McKinlay & McVittie, 2008; Wetherell, Taylor & Yates, 2001a; Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008). For present purposes, therefore, we restrict ourselves to a discussion of the main features of two broad approaches to analysing discourse, in the form of *micro approaches* and *macro approaches*.

Micro forms of discourse analysis have their roots in the traditions of *ethnomethodology* (Garfinkel, 1967; Heritage, 1984) and *conversation analysis* (Sacks, 1992; Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974), and have since been taken up in more recent forms such as *discursive psychology* (Edwards & Potter, 2005; Potter, 2003). Within this approach, interest lies primarily in the study of the fine-grained detail of talk and of talk as found in everyday interaction. Drawing especially on ethnomethodology, micro analysis is concerned with speakers' own understandings of the interactions in which they are engaged and how they negotiate their own concerns in the context of the immediate talk. Conversation analysis prioritizes the study of how speakers construct

and organize their turns in talk, their uses of particular lexical items and forms, and how these are demonstrably and sequentially relevant for the interaction as it proceeds. Taking these interests together, micro forms of analysis are concerned with examining how individuals in their everyday interactions deploy and work up discursive versions of people, events and social phenomena. Analysis of this sort does not assume that broader social practices are necessarily relevant to each and every interaction in which individuals talk about refuge or any other topic. Such broader patterns are treated as relevant only to the extent that participants themselves display that they are treating these as relevant, in which case attention turns to consider how they are negotiating and managing what they take these broader patterns to comprise. Such forms of analysis, therefore, can in some respects be seen as 'bottom-up', starting with the talk in the immediate local context and developing an understanding from there of what participants are engaged in.

By contrast, macro forms of discourse analysis are less concerned with the immediate and the everyday than with the study of how broader patterns of social structures and practices shape and are enacted in the interactions that people have with each other. Thus, the approach of *critical discourse analysis* (Fairclough, 1995; Meyer, 2001; van Dijk, 2001; Wodak, 2001) seeks to examine the way in which people's talk instantiates forms of social or political inequality. For example, critical discourse analysis examines how dominant ideologies are produced and reproduced in language. Part of this endeavour is directed at exposing the inequalities that are sustained through social practices in order to effect change and, in this way, critical discourse analysis is usually bound up with aims of emancipation. Other versions of macro analysis draw particularly on the work of Michel Foucault (for example, 1980, 1990) as taken up in *Foucauldian discourse analysis* and the perspective of post-structuralism. In such cases, the emphasis is not so much on how language reproduces social inequalities as on how it reflects the social and ideological practices of particular historical periods. On this view, the discourses circulating within any specific period of time make available certain forms of being or *subject positions* that individuals take up and occupy. They thus provide ways of understanding the world that appear to make everyday sense, and with which individuals can identify, but that reflect power and ideology at a broader level. Macro approaches, thus, are often described as adopting a 'top-down' perspective with what happens on the ground in everyday life taken to be indicative of and shaped by broader social practices.

These different approaches to discourse analysis, then, have somewhat different interests and concerns. Micro approaches direct attention

to how people themselves make sense of and negotiate the detail of everyday life, while macro approaches argue that everyday experience is shaped and organized by broader social practices, and that it is such practices rather than everyday language itself that provide the main locus of interest. The differences between these approaches to studying discourse, and the consequences of each approach for understanding how people manage their social interactions with others, have provided the bases for recurring debates over recent years, with various researchers advocating and arguing for the superiority of one or other approach. Thus, those in favour of micro analysis argue for the advantages of attending closely to the details of the immediate context without the unwarranted importation of broader social elements (Schegloff, 1997, 1998, 1999a, 1999b), while writers arguing from a macro perspective point to the need for consideration of broader social and historical context in order to develop a useful account of specific instances (Billig, 1999a, 1999b; Fairclough, 2003; Wetherell, 1998).

Here we do not need to dwell on the finer details of these arguments; the points at issue are unlikely to be resolved in the near future and the debates will continue on (for a discussion, see McKinlay & McVittie, 2008, chapter 12; Wetherell, Taylor & Yates, 2001b, chapter 27). For the present study, we adopt a perspective that draws on both micro and macro approaches to the analysis of discourse. A main aim of the present text is to study how individuals themselves make sense of issues of asylum, either in negotiating who they are and their journey towards potentially being granted refuge, or in describing their understandings of refuge and those who seek it. To address this aim requires a focus on the fine detail of interaction and on what it means for those involved, without any assumption as to how the interaction will be shaped by external social forces. The points of particular interest are those of how individuals themselves negotiate, make sense of, and rework descriptions of the relevant factors, in other words a micro approach to the study of interaction. At the same time, however, we recognize that those involved in these conversations and interactions do so against a background of international upheaval, of the implementation of certain UK Governmental policies on asylum and immigration, and of the dispersal of refugees across many parts of the UK that provide varying circumstances within which those seeking refuge live and possibly seek to integrate. For such reasons, a sole focus on the immediate context would not in itself be sufficient for us to understand the experiences of those who come to this country seeking asylum and those living in the UK with whom they come into contact. All such matters require a focus that goes beyond the immediate here and now to recognize

the broader social practices that surround refuge in the UK, while not treating those practices as necessarily constitutive of the everyday experiences of individuals on the ground. The approach that we use here, therefore, is one that 'aims to focus on people's situated activities in talk, but also . . . to locate the forms of making sense evident in talk within more global accounts of their place in the broader social and cultural context' (Wetherell, 2004, p. 12; see Classic text box). Through the application of this approach, we aim to provide a richer and more detailed account of issues of refuge, integration and social relations than would be available through the sole exclusive use of either of the approaches outlined above.

Classic text

Wetherell, M. (2004). Racism and the analysis of cultural resources in interviews. In H. van den Berg, M. Wetherell & H. Houtkoop-Steenstra (eds.), *Analyzing Race Talk: Multidisciplinary perspectives on the research interview* (pp. 11–30). West Nyack, NY: Cambridge University Press.

In this chapter, Margaret Wetherell discusses many of the arguments made by micro analysts for focusing on the immediate context of talk and the counter-arguments made by post-structuralist and other writers for taking fuller account of broader social and historical context. She discusses what she takes to be the advantages of drawing on elements of both forms and sets out in detail how such a synthesis might usefully be applied to study of talk about race.

Transcribing talk

In the chapters to follow, we shall be examining in detail numerous and wide-ranging extracts taken from the talk of refugees and UK residents. These extracts might at first sight appear daunting to the reader who is unfamiliar with the detail of discourse analysis. In particular, you will find in these extracts not just the words uttered by individuals but also speech particles where words are not completed or are broken off. You will also find they contain a range of apparently strange symbols that do not constitute letters, let alone words. These symbols form part of a system devised by Gail Jefferson (2004) for *transcription* of talk. The

aim of transcribing talk in this way is to retain much of the information relevant to how the talk was uttered as well as providing details of the talk itself. By doing so, the transcription will make available to a reader much information that is potentially relevant to understanding how the speaker delivered the talk; for example, points of emphasis, the pitch and intonation used, the length of pauses between utterances, occasions where the contributions of two or more speakers overlapped and so on. The point is not that all of these features will be analysed in any specific instance but that they render the talk intelligible in a way that provides a reasonable approximation to actual speech. We shall in the course of analysing extracts pick out features that are of particular relevance, and hope that readers who are initially unfamiliar with such transcription will become more accustomed to it in the course of the text. A guide to the *transcription notation* symbols used is provided at the end of this chapter.

Data

Locations and participants

As previously noted, UK Government policy since 1999 has been to disperse those who arrive here seeking asylum around a range of sites that are spread across the UK. The data that we shall be mainly concerned with in the remainder of this text come from two sets of studies conducted at different sites in the UK. One set of studies was conducted in Coventry, England, and the other in Glasgow, Scotland. The advantage of drawing on data from these particular locations, within different constituent countries of the UK, is that it affords opportunities to consider the experiences of refugees and asylum-seekers in a broad UK context. For example, we noted that powers to regulate within Scotland matters such as education and health provision have been devolved to the Scottish Government, while equivalent powers for England are exercised by the Westminster Government. Potentially, at least, refugees' experiences of these matters and the consequent effects for local residents might vary between England and Scotland. Power to regulate asylum and immigration, however, is reserved to the Westminster Government to legislate for the whole of the UK. By detailed examination of data from different sites within the UK, therefore, we aim to focus on issues that are central to refugees within the UK more generally rather than on matters that are perhaps more ancillary to their experiences.

The Coventry study involved collection of data from nine asylum-seekers and refugees who were being supported by the Coventry Refugee

and Migrant Centre. Of these participants, four were men and five were women. Four were awaiting a decision on their asylum application and the remaining five were appealing the rejections of their applications. Of those who gave their age, the range was from 28 to 41 years old, and participants had been in the country between two and ten years (with some of the longest stayers awaiting their decisions). Participants had originated predominantly from African countries, such as Ivory Coast and Mauritius, but the Middle East was also represented. Interviews were conducted by members of the research team (for example, Goodman, Burke, Liebling & Zasada, 2014) and the gender of the interviewer and participant were matched.

The Glasgow studies involved collection of data from three groups of participants. The first group comprised 15 asylum-seekers and refugees who, following their arrival in the UK, had been located in Glasgow. These participants included ten men and five women, who had come from 11 different countries of origin in Africa and the Middle East. Four had active asylum claims, four had their asylum claim refused, three had temporary leave to remain and four had indefinite leave to remain. Prior to participation in the research, they had been living in the UK for between seven months and 11 years (approximately six years on average). A second group comprised 17 individuals who worked in (13) local organizations that were involved in supporting and/or campaigning for asylum-seekers and refugees in Scotland, and who, through that work, would have first-hand experience of being involved in issues relating to refugees. Sixteen of the individuals were paid for their work and one was a volunteer. Of the participants, ten were men and seven were women; 13 were British and the remaining four were from different parts of Africa, including two refugees. The third group was made up of 13 'local' people who lived in the area. These participants consisted of ten women and three men. All participants were white Scottish and had been living in the local areas for between three and 43 years (approximately 21 years on average). These three groups were not treated as 'pre-analytic' explanatory variables; that is, any differences were not to be explained merely through someone's apparent membership of one of these groups. Inclusion of members of these groups, however, was likely to open up different perspectives on the issues involved and thereby contribute additional layers of richness to the data set.

Discourse analysis and research interviews

In the chapters to follow, we shall be looking at data derived from a range of sources that include political statements, media sources and

research interviews. The use of research interviews within discourse analytic research has been the topic of much debate in recent years. Specifically, various writers have argued against the use of interviews in discourse analytic work on the grounds that the data that are generated in interviews will vary in a number of respects from those that can be obtained in other ways, and that such data offer more useful insights into the experiences and understandings of those being researched. Thus, for example, Potter and Hepburn (2005) point to what they view as a range of limitations inherent in interview-based research, some of which might be addressed but others of which inevitably permeate the data that result. Given that interviews are almost always initiated by a researcher to pursue pre-determined topics, and that the interviewer and interviewee have divergent interests in the outcomes, Potter and Hepburn suggest that researcher-led interviews will necessarily be 'flooded' with social science agendas and categories. On a similar note, Stokoe and Edwards (2007) argue that we learn little from interview studies about what goes on in everyday life because interviewees' responses are guided by the interviewer's agenda and research interviews constitute their own form of social interaction. According to this argument, research interviews are *researcher-saturated* settings and the *stakes are low* for participants in contrast to participation in other settings (Stokoe, 2010). For such reasons, these writers and others argue against the use of research interviews for data collection and for the use of *naturally occurring data* that have not been elicited by the researcher for the purposes of research.

As however, other writers have argued, the use of interviews in qualitative research does not render the data necessarily flawed, but rather requires that careful attention is given to interviews as interactions and not just as data collection procedures. Potter and Wetherell (1987), for example, proposed that discourse analysis of interview data should focus as much on the interviewer's turns as on the interviewee's turns in order to provide an appropriate sense of the interview as an interaction. More recently, Griffin (2007) has argued that the preference for naturally occurring data proceeds on an overly simplistic view of how different forms of interaction function: research interviewees are quite capable of interacting in ways that do not stem directly from the researcher's turns, and they can and do introduce their own interests into the encounter. Furthermore, as Kirkwood, McKinlay and McVittie (2013a) point out, detailed analysis of an interviewer's turns can usefully show how these are treated by an interviewee and become consequentially relevant for how the interviewee tells his or her own story. Interviews thus can be

used to explore details of an interviewee's descriptions in ways that are especially relevant for the interviewee.

Interviews in the present studies

For the reasons discussed above, we used research interviews in the present studies to collect data from all groups of participants. These interviews followed a semi-structured format, in which the sequence and wording of questions was allowed to vary according to the local context. This format made for a more naturalistic and conversational context that might be achieved otherwise, allowing not only the interviewers but also the interviewees to introduce what they took to be most important at any point. The topics covered broad areas that included issues of experience and support, social inclusion, contact between refugees and the local communities, perceptions others held of refugees, and more general issues such as what more might be done to help refugees in the UK.

Ethical approval for the studies was granted by the relevant institutional ethical committees. All participants were free to respond or not to respond to specific questions as they chose and given opportunities to raise topics not otherwise covered that they wished to talk about. We audio-recorded the interviews and later transcribed them using the notation devised by Jefferson (2004). The extracts seen in the chapters below, therefore, are designed to reflect reasonably the talk of the interviewees as they uttered it and how this related to the questions asked, and other turns of the interviewer.

As well as treating these encounters as interactions, however, there was one other especially important advantage to using interviews in the present studies. Often, whether due to the process itself of seeking asylum or resulting from exclusion from full participation within communities, the voices of asylum-seekers and refugees are not found in other channels such as the media. In short, there are fewer opportunities available to them to tell their stories. Participation in (research) interviews, therefore, provides possibilities for them to describe their experiences that otherwise might quite simply not be there. For this reason, many recent studies of racism, integration and/or refugees have relied on data collected from qualitative interviews or focus groups (for example, Colic-Peisker, 2005; Durrheim & Dixon, 2005; Goodman & Burke, 2010; Hardy, 2003; Kumsa, 2006; Lacroix, 2004; Leudar, Hayes, Nekvapil & Baker, 2008; Pearce & Stockdale, 2009; Saxton, 2004; Wetherell & Potter, 1992). These studies have produced a range of highly useful and relevant findings that shed some light on the issues that matter for those

who are involved at first hand. Interviews can and often do provide opportunities for interviewees to describe what is meaningful for them, as suggested by Griffin (2007). Therefore, there is no basis for assuming that for participants in interview studies the 'stakes are low' (Stokoe, 2010). Instead, we shall see in the following chapters that the stakes for the present participants are often far from low, as their stories unfold.

Summary/conclusion

Here we have examined how the meanings of language and of specific words should be understood as produced in local contexts of language use. In doing so, we have considered three properties of language: in the form of its constructive properties, its action-orientation and the rhetorical effects of speakers' utterances. Furthermore, we have seen how different approaches to analysing language – micro and macro approaches – focus on and emphasize different aspects of language use. For the purposes of the current text, an approach that draws upon micro and macro forms of analysis will be used to analyse how those most involved in the issues of asylum, and refugees themselves, make sense of these issues. In the chapters below, we shall see how this approach, as applied to the data collected and described here, allows us to understand how refugees and local people depict and construct the journey through asylum processes.

Activity

In this chapter we discussed the importance of transcribing interview talk to a level that reflects many features of the talk and how it was spoken. Go to https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/subjects/psychology/tqrml/interviews/shazia, where you will find a Jeffersonian transcript of an interview with Shazia and links to Parts 1–4 of Shazia's interview. Listen to Part 1 while reading the interview transcript. Consider if and how the different elements of the transcript reflect the talk. Are there elements of the talk that are not adequately incorporated into the transcript? Now try reading the transcript aloud. To what extent does this reproduction resemble what Shazia herself said during the interview?

Further reading

Griffin, C. (2007). Being dead and being there: Research interviews, sharing hand cream and the preference for analysing 'naturally occurring data'. *Discourse Studies, 9*, 246–269.

Potter, J. & Hepburn, A. (2005). Qualitative interviews in psychology: Problems and possibilities. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 2*, 281–307.

It is worth reading at first hand the arguments in favour of and against the use of interviews in discourse analytic research, as set out by leading exponents of these arguments.

Appendix: Transcription notation

The table summarizes some of the main features of Jefferson's transcription notation, which is described more fully, together with explanatory examples, in Jefferson (2004).

Transcription Notation

[]	Overlapping talk is shown by square brackets, with '[' indicating where the overlap begins and ']' indicating where the overlapped utterance (or part of an utterance) stops.
=	An 'equal to' sign '=' at the end of one line and another at the end of the succeeding line indicates that there is no gap between the two lines.
(.) (dot)	A dot in parentheses '(.)' indicates a very slight gap.
: (colon)	A colon ':' indicates that the sound immediately preceding the colon has been elongated, with the lengthening of the sound indicated by the number of colons.
↑	An upwards pointing arrow '↑' indicates that the speaker is raising pitch.
↓	A downwards pointing arrow '↓' indicates the speaker is lowering pitch.
Numbers	Numbers in parentheses, for example (0.3) indicate time elapsed in tenths of a second.
Underlining	Underlining of letters or words (for example '<u>Doh</u>') indicates that the speaker is stressing that part of the speech by increasing volume or raising or lowering pitch.
Upper case	Upper case indicates that the speaker's utterance is produced with a particularly high volume (for example, 'DOH').

Punctuation	Punctuation markers indicate the speaker’s intonation. For example, the question mark ‘?’ indicates a ‘questioning’ intonation.
°(degree sign)	The superscripted degree sign ‘°’ indicates unvoiced production.
< (left caret)	Placed before a word, a left caret ‘<’ indicates a hurried start. Placed after a word it indicates that the word stopped suddenly.
> < (right/left carets)	Right/left carets ‘> <’ surrounding an utterance (or part of an utterance) indicate the speech is speeding up.
< > (left/right carets)	Left/right carets ‘< >’ surrounding an utterance (or part of an utterance) indicate the speech is slowing down.
– (dash)	A dash ‘–’ indicates that an utterance is ‘cut off.’
hhh	A row of instances of the letter ‘h’ ‘hhh’ indicates an out-breath.
.hhh	A row of instances of the letter ‘h’ prefixed by a dot, ‘.hhh’ indicates an in-breath.
( )	Empty parentheses () indicate that the transcriber could not make out what was said or, alternatively, who was speaking.
(Doh) (word in parenthesis)	Placing parentheses around a word indicates that the transcription is uncertain.
(SG: okay) (speaker’s initials and words in parenthesis)	A speaker’s initials and words in parenthesis is used to indicate short instances of speech from the interviewer that occur while the interviewee is speaking.

Part II

Getting Here

3

Places of Death – Constructing Asylum-Seekers' and Refugees' Countries of Origin

> I mean in the war (0.6) in ((country of origin)) (.) I've been through (1.2) and people were dying on my hands people I know, people I don't know, people (.) just next to me . . . so (.) I've seen a lot (.) my own family, most of them they got
>
> (Kirkwood, 2012a, p. 95)

Introduction

Becoming a refugee means leaving one's home and being an international refugee means leaving one's country of origin behind, which is true of asylum-seekers in the UK. The literature on asylum-seeking and refugees suggests that there are a number of reasons that cause refugees to leave their countries of origin. According to Neumayer (2005), oppression, violence and human rights abuses are among the main reasons for refugees fleeing their homes. The countries from which most refugees in the UK come do indeed have poor records on human rights and tend to have ongoing conflict, including Pakistan, Iran, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2011). While it will be shown (in chapters 4 and 5) that asylum-seekers' reasons for coming to the UK can be challenged, the accounts of asylum-seekers themselves suggest that they are fleeing extremely harsh and difficult situations. For example, Crawley argues that 'conflict is the single most significant factor associated with most flows of asylum-seekers to the countries of Europe' (2010, p. 20), a claim that is backed up with an example from an Iraqi refugee experiencing conflict:

> I am not Muslim, I am a Sabian Mandaean. You either have to leave Iraq or change your religion. I went with my parents to stay with a

> Christian friend but this was not safe. While we were staying with our friend, many Christians were killed. My parents considered this to be a very dangerous situation and began planning for me to leave. There were just two good things under Saddam Hussein, he had security under control and there was no threat with regard to different religions – but only these two things.
>
> (Iraq, male, 25–34) (Crawley, 2010, p. 22)

In this chapter an analysis of the talk of asylum-seekers is presented in which it will be shown that their countries of origin are presented in extremely negative ways. For some, they present their country as a place of hardship; for example, 'Nyasha', a refugee from Zimbabwe, states

> yeh I do I keep like want to forget a (.) about about like the sufferings (6.0) and you err you keep yourself strong like you think that's the life in Zimbabwe, that's the life in Zimbabwe (2.0) it h, it happened to everyone else.
>
> (Clare, Goodman, Liebling & Laing, 2014, p. 88)

However, more than presenting countries of origin as places of hardship and suffering, asylum-seekers overwhelmingly construct their countries of origin as a place of death. In some cases countries of origin represent a place of death for the self, in some accounts they represent death of others, while in other accounts countries of origin represent death for both the self and others. These constructions will now be addressed in turn.

Constructing countries of origin as a place of death for the self

In this first section it will be shown how refugees construct their home countries as places of death for themselves. In these examples, being in the country of origin is equated with death. This first example shows a female asylum-seeker claiming that returning to her country of origin will mean death for her.

Extract 3.1: Participant Nine

1. P9: It was very very cold I feel so many difficulties because of all those
2. experiences but I can't go back because I can go back and I would die. I

3. can't go back because if I go back I would die I do not have a good life
4. here ((crying)) as I struggle a lot

(Goodman, Burke, Liebling & Zasada, 2015)

In this example, the country of refuge, the UK, is presented as problematic (l. 1). A number of features of the talk are used to build up the account of the UK being particularly problematic. First the repetition of 'very' (l. 1), then the generalizing term 'so many' (l. 1) and 'all those' (l. 1) to refer to her experiences (l. 2). However, presenting being in the UK in these very negative terms follows the 'but' which precedes the main point that returning to her country of origin will mean death for her. This main claim is made rhetorically effective through an 'if x then y' structure, where if she were to 'go back' (l. 2) she 'would die' (l. 2). In this way dying is presented as the inevitable and only outcome of her return. This point, using the same structure is then repeated (ll. 2–3) to add extra emphasis. Throughout this extract participant nine goes to lengths to show that being in the UK is not desirable, her claim about 'difficulties' (l. 1) precedes the claim about not returning and is then followed by more work to highlight the difficulty of her situation in the UK (ll. 3–4). The main point about not returning is, therefore, placed between claims about not wanting to be in the UK. Overall, this effectively works to present her as not wanting to be in the UK but that she is left with no choice, as she cannot return home. By constructing the UK as a very negative place to be, but as still far better than her country of origin, her country of origin is, therefore, presented in the most extremely negative way. While it is noteworthy that the claims made in the extract are designed to present the speaker as a legitimate asylum-seeker and as completely unable to return to her country of origin, this nevertheless works to present the country of origin as a place of death for her. In this next example we see a more detailed construction of participant nine's country of origin.

Extract 3.2: Participant Nine

1. P9 The group are called Mugika. They are rebels and they rape many women and girls. They
2. rape them. When I was asleep they came so many and they raped me one after another I
3. cannot tell how many there was this one that one they were so many who raped me and

4. after that experience the people help me after and I come here as they could kill me. There
5. is no way I can go back to there as they will come and kill me. I can't return back
6. there so maybe I will die here now even my life is not good here but it is better as
7. someone can beat me or someone can kill me there so it is difficult for me I cannot
8. go back. I suffered as they beat and raped me and now I am suffering. It is not safe
9. for me to return back there.

(Goodman, unpublished)

Here participant nine elaborates on her account of her country of origin. She begins with an account of a group she describes as rebels. This group is presented as being extremely problematic because of their use of sexual violence. The claim 'they rape many women and girls' (l. 1) works to present them in an extremely negative way. The reference to rape already has exceedingly negative connotations, but this is upgraded to something they often do (many) and then the reference to women and particularly 'girls' works to present the behaviour as exceedingly depraved and morally abhorrent. The claim that 'they rape', after presenting them as rebels suggests that this behaviour is typical and characteristic of the group; it is the kind of thing they do. More information about the assault is given ('there were so many' l. 3) that adds to the presentation of it as a horrific event. Next comes the claim that, as well as experiencing the assault, her life was also in danger ('they could kill me' l. 4). This claim about her life being in danger is repeated (ll. 5 and 7). This danger is presented as justification for not returning home (see the discussion of safety in the following chapter). The extract concludes with participant nine summarizing her experience in her country of origin as having 'suffered' on account of her violent and sexual assault. This works to provide a particularly bleak picture of her country of origin as being a place of suffering and as somewhere that represents death.

Constructing countries of origin as a place of death for others

In the examples presented above the participant's country of origin is presented as one offering death for her. In the following examples, the

asylum-seekers' countries of origin are again presented as a place of death, but in these cases they construct them as places of death for others, often family members. In this next example is one such case, where an asylum-seeking woman gives an account of the killing of others' family members in her country of origin.

Extract 3.3: Participant Two

1.	P2	sometimes I said, (2.0) unless, at least, me I've got () those
2.		children, there are some who are there (.) with nothing (I/mm)
3.		with anyone in their family (.) most of all of them been killed
4.		(.) and you'll be there just alone.
5.	I	(3.0) children?
6.	P2	yes

(Clare et al., 2014, p. 89)

In this extract, participant two begins by talking about her children and more specifically that hers are with her. While her overall account is one of hardship (see Clare et al., 2014 for more on this), these difficulties are presented as being moderated by having her children, which is presented as being in contrast with others who do not have their children. This contrast is brought about by claiming to 'at least' (l. 1) have her children whereas 'some' do not (l. 2). Indeed these others, who are presented as being less fortunate are described as having no family members at all (ll. 2–3). While not having family members and being 'alone' (l. 4) may appear problematic enough, this is presented as even more serious by claiming that 'most' (l. 3) (and then upgrading this to 'all of them', l. 3) have been 'killed' (l. 3). After a long pause (l. 5) the interview asks if those killed include children, which is confirmed by participant two (l. 6). This paints a picture of an extremely serious situation where innocent people, including children, are at risk of being killed. In this way, the country of origin is constructed in an extremely negative way because it represents death for others. As with the previous example, children can be seen to be victimized. Overall the country of origin is constructed as no place to live because of the threat of death for others (and the implied risk to self). In this next extract, the country of origin is again constructed as a place of death for others, as well as problematic for other reasons.

Extract 3.4: Participant Eight

1.	SB	Did something happen that made you think I've got to go or
2.	P8	My country
3.	SB	Was it just ongoing that you couldn't
4.	P8	Oh
5.	SB	Take anymore
6.	P8	Oh very my problem (SB: mm) I don't know how can I
7.		explain I don't know (SB: right okay) somebody my family
8.		two peoples kill it's very dangerous very very dangerous is
9.		my country (SB: yeah) oh kill all people I don't know (SB: yeah)
10.		no organize [unclear] like this you know very err no (SB: mm)
11.		human right no anything (SB: really) in the country
12.		(SB: no) yeah make like this I don't know oh (SB: mm)
13.		how can I explain I don't know I don't know but

(Goodman, unpublished)

This extract begins with the interviewer (SB) asking participant eight for her reason for leaving her country of origin (l. 1). After some clarification (ll. 2–5) participant eight begins to answer. Initially she claims that it is difficult to explain, through the use of a rhetorical question 'how can I explain' (ll. 6–7) which suggests that what follows is a dispreferred response (Pomerantz, 1984). When the response does come she refers to family members being killed (ll. 7–8). This means that again there is a claim that family members have been murdered in the country of origin. Next, comes the claim about danger (l. 8) which is emphasized first with one 'very' before being further upgraded to 'very very dangerous' (l. 8). As with the previous extract, as well as constructing the country of origin as a place of death for others, the murders are presented as widespread and indiscriminate ('kill all people' l. 9), and as typical for the country. In addition to presenting the country as dangerous and as a place of death for others, participant eight goes on to make further complaints about her country of origin: there is no organization (l. 10) and no human rights (l. 11), which works to further present her country of origin as problematic. It is noteworthy that she refers to her country of origin as 'my country' (l. 9) because this shows that despite the harsh criticism, she still presents herself as connected to it, rather than the UK, where she is living at this point. This means that, despite its faults, it is

still her country. However, once again it can be seen that the country of origin is presented as a place of death for others and family members in particular, as well as being dangerous and lacking proper laws and protection. Again it is implied that this is in contrast to the country of refuge which offers safety and the rule of law (as discussed in the next chapter). This next example also constructs a bleak picture of the country of origin as being a particularly dangerous place and again a place of death of others, in this case including parents.

Extract 3.5: Participant One

1.	SG	Yeah okay. So the first main question I want to ask is what
2.		was your experience in Afghanistan before you left? So what
3.		was it like there before you left?
4.	P1	There was war and my parents they been killed (SG: right)
5.		and they where we live there is all Taliban (SG: right) our
6.		area is (SG: okay) all Taliban (SG: yeah) and there our my
7.		parents been killed in war and because of Taliban I left the
8.		country (SG: okay) they wanted me to go with them to the war
9.	SG	So the Taliban [wanted] you to join them
10.	P1	[yeah]
11.		Yeah they ask everyone (SG: okay) in the village (SG: right)
12.		I used to live in village I was like eighteen years old
13.		(SG: okay) and I didn’t want it to go to war (SG: no)
14.		you know that’s why I scared
15.	SG	Yeah okay fair enough okay so
16.	P1	I didn’t have anyone you know
17.	SG	Yeah okay
18.	P1	Have anyone
19.	SG	So I was gonna say what events caused you to leave your
20.		country but I think you’ve explained what happened there
21.	P1	Yeah
22.	SG	Okay. Um was it before the war happened was it was it a
23.		good place to live would you say? Was it was it okay?

24. P1 I heh I don't remember any good days
25. SG Right [okay]
26. P1 [there] always there was fight (SG: right) I never
27. remember any days that was you know good [laughs]
28. SG [Right okay]
29. P1 Was always war and you hear a bullet you know
30. SG Right [oh really]
31. P1 [Gun]
32. SG Even when you were a child?
33. P1 Yeah

(Goodman, unpublished)

This extract begins with the interviewer asking what the asylum-seekers' country of origin, Afghanistan, was like (ll. 1–3). This question is immediately responded to with 'war' (l. 4), which contains connotations of a serious ongoing lack of safety, and implies a risk of death both for the self and for others. It is notable that this is the very first word used to describe what Afghanistan was like, as this suggests that it was the most prominent and striking characteristic. The second feature of the country of origin that is mentioned is the killing of his parents (l. 4). This is a very serious claim (although a common one for asylum-seekers; see, for example, Liebling, Burke, Goodman & Zasada, 2014). While the examples so far refer to death of family members, this is the first to explicitly state the killing of both parents. The next reason given is that the Taliban are a threat where he lived (ll. 5–6). The Taliban are an Islamic fundamentalist group, who fought the American/British forces when they were involved in Afghanistan, so by drawing on this group he gives legitimacy to his claim that where he lived was problematic. At this point, three characteristics of the country of origin have been given: the country is at war, his parents have been killed and the Taliban operate in the area where he lived. Together these paint a picture of an extremely dangerous situation where there is a threat of death for all, and the actual death of the asylum-seeker's parents. The country of origin is presented as a place of death for family members and a place of great danger.

While the question asked by the interviewer was about what the country of origin was like before leaving, the asylum-seeker orients to this question as regarding his reasons for leaving the country (ll. 7–8), so this demonstrates that asylum-seekers are *accountable* for being outside of their country of origin and may be responding to the common representation of asylum-seekers as being illegitimate (see Leudar, Hayes,

Nekvapil & Baker, 2008 and Chapter 5 for more on this). At this point, a further reason for choosing to leave the country is given: he claims that the Taliban wanted him to join the war (ll. 8–9). This adds to the construction of the country of origin as being a dangerous place, and one that represents death and killing. It also provides further justification for leaving the country of origin and travelling to the UK. This claim is responded to by the interviewer as surprising and noteworthy, demonstrated through his question which is used to seek confirmation that this is the case (l. 9). Confirmation is given (l. 10) and participant one goes on to elaborate on this claim by generalizing the behaviour of the Taliban to his whole village, so it is not just him that is encouraged to join the war but 'everyone in the village' (l. 11). By generalizing the Taliban's behaviour in this way, participant one presents this as an ongoing threat which further presents his country of origin as a place of danger and war.

Participant one continues with his account of the danger in his country of origin by presenting himself as vulnerable by referring to living in a 'village' (l. 12) and being young ('like 18 years old' l. 12) both of which are used to support his unwillingness to take part in war (l. 13). In addition to this, following agreement from the interviewer (l. 13), he claims that he was 'scared' (l. 14), which adds more weight to the suggestion that he was in danger and that his country of origin represents a place of death. The use of 'you know' (l. 14) functions to present his claim as common sense and as something that everyone would understand, which works to present him as reasonable and justified in choosing to leave. This strategy is successful in that the interviewer agrees and glosses this fear as understandable ('fair enough' l. 15). Participant one next makes another claim, which is that he 'didn't have anyone' (l. 16), which is repeated (l. 18) following the interviewer's continuer (l. 17). This extreme case formulation refers again to the killing of his parents but also goes further by suggesting that there are no other family members or friends in his country of origin. This hints at the possibility that everyone he knew in his country of origin has been killed or has fled as a result of the war, and further builds the case that this country is a place of danger that represents death for others. It also suggests that he has no link to his country of origin and, therefore, no reason to remain there. This, therefore, provides further justification for choosing to leave his country of origin and works to pre-empt suggestions that he should not have left or should return.

After this, the interviewer starts his next question, but orients to the fact that the question has already been answered previously (ll. 19–20).

While the current question is about reasons for leaving the country of origin, these reasons were already covered following the previous question regarding what the country of origin was like, because into this description was built the rationale for leaving. This supports the discursive psychological theoretical claim that descriptions perform attributions (Edwards & Potter, 1992) because it was in participant one's description of his country of origin that he builds in his reasons for leaving. The interviewer then moves to another question, this time asking what the country of origin was like before the war (ll. 22–3). Participant one responds by suggesting that the war was not new and that it was always a place of war throughout his whole childhood (ll. 26–33). This even further extends his claim that this country of origin is a place of danger and death because he claims to only know it as a place of war. Overall then, this participant constructs his country of origin overwhelmingly as a place of danger and killing; the risk of death comes from the war which is presented as an ongoing feature of the country, something responsible for the death of his parents (as well as possibly others) and something that he is at risk of becoming involved in, as he claims the Taliban tried to recruit him.

In this section it has been shown that asylum-seekers construct their countries of origin as places of death for others, including children and family members. It is this extreme danger and harm caused to others that is used to present the countries of origin as problematic. Up to this point it has been shown that countries of origin can be presented as a place of death for the self or as a place of death for others (including family members). In this final section it will be shown that countries of origin can also be presented as both a place of death for the self and for others.

Constructing countries of origin as a place of death for the self and for others

In this next example a refugee can be seen describing his country of origin as a place of death for himself and for others, despite not being directly asked about his reasons for leaving the country, as the interview in which he was taking part was aimed to specifically address experiences of being an asylum-seeker in the UK.

Extract 3.6: Refugee Five

1. R5 I (1.0) escape from my country, I have many problem (.)
2. SK mm-hmm

3.	R5	with the government, the crazy government, ((interviewee's nationality)) (.) you
4.		know (0.6) they are Muslim, ↑I was Muslim before↓
5.	SK	mm-hmm
6.	R5	but uh (2.5) I never (0.8) wanted to be a Muslim (0.8) because I know them (0.8)
7.		very well (2.8) they are very (1.0) I don't know what you call it (1.8) extremist? (1.2)
8.	SK	okay
9.	R5	yeah very (.) dangerous people in government (.)
10.	SK	right
11.	R5	(.) I love my country but
12.	SK	mm-hmm
13.	R5	(.) the problem (1.8) was the religious (.) government (.) I don't like them (.) and
14.		(1.5) when I came ↑here (1.5) I convert my (0.8) religion from Muslim to Christianity
15.	SK	ah right okay=
16.	R5	=the big problem (.) in ((country of origin)) if you (1.0) uh in ((country of origin)) or
17.		some country (1.2) like Saudi Arabia like (0.6) Afghanistan, if you convert your
18.		religion from Muslim to (.) Christianity
19.	SK	mm-hmm
20.	R5	they kill you
21.	SK	right
22.	R5	yeah (0.8) everybody knows the Sharia law
23.	SK	sure
24.	R5	(1.0) they will kill (2.0) and also I had a big problem with the government (.) you
25.		know very (1.0) political (.) problem with them (.)
26.	SK	okay
27.	R5	(0.8) and I (1.8) finally (.) I could (.) escape from my country (.) come in here (1.5)
28.		and ↑I am very happy↓ here

(Kirkwood, 2012b, pp. 71–2)

This account of the country of origin is offered despite not being asked about it. Immediately refugee five refers to escaping his country (l. 1) which implies that it was dangerous enough to have to flee (and also suggests that the host country, the UK, is by contrast safe). He then goes on to refer to problems with the government (ll. 1–2),

which is then upgraded to 'crazy' (l. 3), which constructs it as irrational and unreasonable. Next follows an account of religious persecution and extremism where the government is presented as being Islamic fundamentalist. This draws on the well-established *repertoire* (see Classic text box) of fundamentalism, which underpins the political rhetoric of the 'war on terror', perceived problems with Middle Eastern countries and militia. Like participant one above, who refers to another extremist group (the Taliban), refugee five is able to both align himself with mainstream Western ideology while simultaneously presenting himself as a victim of this extremism; this type of rationale for leaving a country of origin is difficult for Westerners to oppose, as it is in line with Western ideology. Indeed, refugee five makes a show of distancing himself from this extremism by claiming that it is precisely because of this extremism that he didn't want to be Muslim (ll. 6–7). After agreement from the interviewer (l. 8), refugee five explicitly refers to 'dangerous people in government' (l. 9). This claim works to present the country as particularly dangerous because that danger is institutional in the form of the government (which is a stronger claim than, for example, saying that some people in the country are dangerous). At this point then, his country of origin is presented explicitly as a place of danger because of the extremist government.

Classic text

Potter, J. & Wetherell, M. (1987). *Discourse and Social Psychology, Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour*. London: Sage.

The book sets out how discourse analysis can be applied in psychology. It introduces the notion of the interpretative repertoire to psychology and develops the notion of the action orientation of talk, which is central to discursive psychology, the approach used for the current analysis.

After another continuer from the interviewer (l. 10), refugee five goes on to make a disclaimer (Hewitt & Stokes, 1975): 'I love my country but' (l. 11). This disclaimer works to distance him from possible criticism for not being patriotic or for somehow not liking his country of origin. The risk here is that, if he says he does not 'love' his country, one potential interpretation of his account is that he moved to the UK simply because

he did not like his country of origin. Such an interpretation would jeopardize the legitimacy of his asylum claim. After the 'but' comes the main claim (that could potentially imply that he does not love his country), which is that he has a problem with the government (l. 13). Again it is the religious (l. 13) nature of that government that is presented as being problematic, rather than the government per se; in contrast with his 'love' for his country, he claims not to like his country's government. He then claims that he converted away from his government's religion to Christianity (l. 14). What was previously described as 'the problem' (l. 13) is now upgraded to 'the big problem' (l. 16), which is that, in his country of origin, as well as in other countries, this conversion will result in death. A number of features of the talk here work to present this as a general and widespread issue. The reference to three countries, including his country of origin, but also 'some country like' (l. 17) the two examples given, works to suggest that this problem is a widespread regional issue. Then the phrase 'everybody know the Sharia law' (l. 22) suggests that there is widespread knowledge of this fact. Together, it is presented as a well-known fact across a large area that there is a risk of death if you choose to convert religions.

On top of this, refugee five claims to have an additional 'political problem' (l. 25), which he refers to so as to further justify his claim that he fled his country when the opportunity arose. It is noteworthy that he claims to be 'very happy' (l. 28) in the UK because this contrasts with some of the examples in the following chapter where refugees claim to be unhappy living in the UK. At this point the country of origin is presented as a dangerous place because of a dangerous government, where religious conversions are punishable by death. This threat of death is generalized to everyone, so that the country of origin is presented as a place of death for both the self and for others. In this final extract the country of origin is once again presented as a place of death for both the self and the other, this time as a result of conflict.

Extract 3.7: Refugee Nine

1. R9 always no matter what happens to me
2. SK mmm
3. R9 (0.5) I look on the bright side
4. SK mmm
5. R9 yeah because I mean at least I'm alive (.)
6. SK mmm

7.	R9	and (.) as also (.) uh if I look on the (1.0) the th- (0.5) the best (0.6) bright side (0.8)
8.		that's (.) I mean in the war (0.6) in ((country of origin)) (.) I've been through (1.2)
9.		and people were dying on my hands
10.	SK	°yeah° =
11.	R9	= people I know, people I don't know, people (.) just next to me, people that don't
12.		(press for) me (.) so (.) I've seen a lot (.) my own family, most of them they got (0.8)
13.	SK	°jeez yeah°
14.	R9	so at least also one other thing I'm happy is I'm alive

(Kirkwood, 2012a, p. 95)

As with the previous extract, this account of problems in the country of origin follows a question about experiences in the UK, showing that different refugees respond to this type of question by giving an explanation for leaving their countries of origin. He had previously given an account of losing teeth in an attack while living in the UK, something he refers to from the start. He begins by downplaying the seriousness of his attack with his claim that despite this 'at least I'm alive' (l. 5). This claim is supported with a logic structure 'whatever x, then still y': whatever happens to him in the UK, he will 'look on the bright side' (l. 3), which is reminiscent for the 'keeping strong' repertoire identified by Clare et al. (2014). A detailed explanation follows of why being alive is enough for him to claim to be positive despite serious problems such as being assaulted, which is brought about through a contrast with his prior experience in his country of origin. This experience is presented as extremely severe by referring to 'the war' (l. 8) that he's 'been through' (l. 8). This is, therefore, yet another account that includes a reference to war in the refugee's country of origin.

While a reference to experiencing a war is already a rhetorically robust explanation for being traumatized, and sufficient grounds for downplaying the impact of a violent assault, the account is given more weight through references to death. His claim that 'people were dying on my hands' (l. 9) works in a number of ways: first, by presenting the death as widespread and generalized in a way that presents the country of origin as overwhelmingly and predominantly a place of death. The claim that this happens 'on my hands' presents him as being personally emotionally and physically close to this death; this gives more credibility to his ability to be able to 'look on the bright side' because he himself is alive.

Directly following the continuer from the interviewer, spoken quietly so as to orient to the seriousness of what is being said (l. 10), the account continues and is further upgraded to become even more serious. Refugee nine presents a long list to demonstrate how widespread this death that he witnessed was. He begins by saying that the dead include 'people I know' (l. 11), which immediately works to present this death as even more serious because it represents a personal loss for him. Next in the list of those that died around him are 'people I don't know'. While this appears less serious than the experience of the death of those he did know, it serves to emphasize the widespread nature of the death he experienced, as does his following claim 'people just next to me' (l. 11), which in addition to highlighting the generalized nature of the death, again locates him as physically close to the death. The next point in the list is rather unclear, but after that comes a claim about his own family (l. 12) in which he claims to have experienced family members being killed. He begins by referring to 'a lot my own family' (l. 12) and then upgrades this further to 'most of them they got' (l. 12). This means that, as well as constructing his country of origin as a place of death and killing, it is a place of death for his own family. This is a common theme in our accounts from refugees.

Following the interviewer's quietly spoken continuer (l. 13), refugee nine uses what he has just said to explain why he is glad to be in the UK despite any problems he may experience. The account of his experience of death is, therefore, used to downplay problems in the UK (even serious ones including a violent assault against him) as not as serious as those he would experience in his country of origin. This works to present him as a legitimate refugee who is grateful to be in the UK. His claim that 'I'm happy is I'm alive' (l. 14) works to emphasize the likelihood of his being killed in his country of origin and, therefore, the importance for him of being in the UK, even if this may mean enduring violent assaults.

Discussion

It has been shown in this analysis that refugees' countries of origin are presented extremely negatively as places of death. This can take the form of a risk of death for the self, experiencing the death of others, or both of these together. A particularly common claim made in the data refers to the killing of parents and other family members. While such claims work to present the speakers as traumatized and rational in their decision to leave their countries of origin, they also work to present these

countries not just as places of death but also as places where killing is commonplace. This means that a range of different countries, from which these refugees originate, are characterized as having killings as a key feature. Killing is normalized and generalized to the entire country of origin so that it is presented as an everyday and common feature of the country. Killing as a feature of a country is more rhetorically effective than simply referring to the killing of some individuals, even if the victims are known to the speaker.

The killing of parents represents a particularly harrowing experience, and this works to present the refugees as vulnerable and in need of support. By drawing on the death of parents, speakers are also able to rhetorically distance themselves from their countries of origin. By stating that their parents, along with other family members, are no longer in the country of their birth, the refugees are able to construct their connection with their country of origin as severed. This disconnection is built up further by references to other family members and acquaintances also being killed, and is summed up by participant one's claims that he 'doesn't have anyone' in his country of origin. This means that the country of origin is not just constructed as a place of death and killing, but also as somewhere with which refugees no longer have a connection. Thus, the country of origin is no longer 'theirs', as they have no family connections there, and what constitutes home is reconstructed as being where their current connections are, rather than where family members were killed; this works to present them as belonging in their country of refuge, rather than their country of origin.

In addition to constructing countries of origin as places that represent the threat of death for the self and of widespread killing, other features of these countries are also described: they are places of war and conflict, where there is pressure to join militias; sexual violence; no safety for children; and religious intolerance. The main reason for the threat of death and the killing of others is ongoing war and conflict – so many countries of origin are constructed as places of conflict. While the purpose of this analysis is not to take accounts at face value or to assess their truthfulness, the suggestion that refugees flee war and conflict is overwhelmingly supported by the literature on asylum-seeking (for example, Burnett & Peel, 2001; Crawley, 2010; Neumayer, 2005). One refugee talked about the pressure on him to join a militia to justify his decision to leave his country of origin. This argument built on the construction of the country of origin as a place of conflict and worked to present him as someone who did not want to fight.

Further problems with countries of origin were also recounted. These countries were presented as places where sexual violence, especially towards female refugees, is prevalent. As with killing, sexual violence was described as widespread and characteristic of countries of origin, providing an additional justification for choosing to leave such places. Sexual violence was not just presented as a risk to adult women, but also to children. These claims accomplished a number of things. Again they work to present the problem as widespread, so that even children are vulnerable, they also work to present countries of origin as lawless and unable to protect citizens, and finally they work to present the countries of origin as morally inferior to the country of refuge. By claiming that *even* children are vulnerable to sexual violence, countries where this happens are constructed as particularly ineffective. This works to present further justification for leaving a country of origin. Again literature does point to sexual violence against refugees (for example, Sherwood & Liebling-Kalifani, 2012). Finally, countries of origin are also constructed as places of religious intolerance and extremism. Such constructions work to present refugees as not belonging to their countries of origin and instead as having more in common with their host country. This also works to distance them from their countries of birth and repositions their home as being in the UK, rather than where they were born.

Together, the ways in which the refugees construct their countries of origin as extremely dangerous and representing death works to manage their own identity as legitimate refugees. By drawing on place-identities (Durrheim & Dixon, 2005) that construct countries of origin as terrible places where one cannot live without the risk of being killed and as places with which they no longer have connections, asylum-seekers build accounts of themselves as being legitimate (or 'real') refugees in genuine need of refuge from dangers abroad. In addition to this, by characterizing countries of origin as being unsafe, a favourable contrast with the UK can be made. Throughout these extracts, the asylum-seekers can be seen to construct their accounts as factual through a range of devices and particularly by drawing on personal experience, which is hard to refute. As will be shown in the following chapters, constructing countries of origin in this way is important, especially as asylum-seekers are forced to deal with challenges that they are not really in the UK for refuge, but for financial gain. As will be explored further in Chapter 5, presenting countries of origin as extremely dangerous helps asylum-seekers to challenge the suggestion that they are not legitimate. By drawing on the dangers of their countries of origin, asylum-seekers

can also make a show of how safe the UK is, and it is this that will be addressed in the following chapter.

Activity box

The asylum-seekers in this chapter constructed their countries of origin as a place of danger and death. What do you imagine countries that asylum-seekers flee to be like? Does your idea of what you think these countries are like match the accounts here and, if not, in what ways do they differ? Under what circumstances do you think you would decide to leave your country of birth?

Further reading

Neumayer, E. (2005). Bogus refugees? The determinants of asylum migration to Western Europe. *International Studies Quarterly, 49*, 389–409.

This paper provides an in-depth analysis of the factors that cause asylum-seekers to choose to leave their countries of origin.

Sirriyeh, A. (2013). *Inhabiting Borders, Routes Home: Youth, Gender, Asylum*. Farnham: Ashgate.

This book addresses narratives about ‘home’ by young asylum-seekers in the UK.

4

Places of Safety – Constructing Countries of Refuge

> I like [a] safe country you know I don't see any problem like this it's better for me even I sleep outside no [one will] kill me no [one] makes problems
>
> (Liebling, Burke, Goodman & Zasada, 2014, p. 210)

Introduction

There is a range of evidence to suggest that asylum-seekers in the UK are fleeing dangerous situations in their countries of origin as shown in the previous chapter. These situations include persecution based on: gender (Crawley, 2010); sexual violence and the murder of family members (Sherwood & Liebling-Kalifani, 2012); torture (Behnia, 2004); and oppression and violence (Neumayer, 2005). A unifying characteristic of asylum-seekers is that they are from areas experiencing conflict and a lack of human rights. Taken together, this suggests that asylum-seekers were born into extremely dangerous countries and have been forced to leave for reasons of safety. In this chapter it is shown how refugees construct the UK as a place of refuge and – importantly – safety, which constitutes a specific place-identity (Durrheim & Dixon, 2005). While the UK is presented as a place of safety, it is not necessarily presented as a happy place or an ideal place to live, but safety is placed above this. While safety provides the main explanation for asylum-seekers coming to the UK, asylum-seekers' claims about safety are not always accepted (the following chapter addresses the notion of the 'bogus' asylum-seeker who is deemed to be interested in financial gain), so claims about asylum-seekers being interested in safety are shown to be contested and debated. In addition to this, the safety of the UK as a host country is also debated, with some suggesting that asylum-seekers being housed

in deprived communities can increase the safety in those areas, while others suggest that the presence of asylum-seekers can be damaging to safety.

Asylum-seekers come to the UK to avoid danger

A key way in which asylum-seekers construct the UK as a place of safety and refuge is to refer to its relative lack of dangers when compared with their country of origin. In the following examples it is demonstrated how a lack of danger in the UK is presented as the main reason why refuge has been sought there. This first extract comes from an interview with an asylum-seeker from Mauritius.

Extract 4.1: Participant Five, England interview

1.	SB:	You came on your own okay. So once you decided to leave
2.		was Britain the first place that you decided to come here =
3.	P5:	= Here in Coventry
4.	SB:	Okay so what was it about Britain that made you come here?
5.	P5:	Err this problem make me come in Coventry here
6.	SB:	Yeah what was it about the UK?
7.	P5:	UK is good (SB: yeah) because there is nice people here (SB:
8.		yeah) the law also is nice I respect the law (SB: yeah) I want to
9.		have my my leave to remain here (SB: okay) yes I like to live
10.		in the UK because I'm free here (SB: yeah) my life is not in
11.		danger (SB: yeah) and I feel the law also protect me

(Goodman, unpublished)

This extract begins with the interviewer (SB) asking the asylum-seeker if the UK was always her intended destination (l. 2). After the asylum-seeker clarifies the question (l. 3), the interviewer restates her question, asking about the features of Britain that caused her to choose it as her destination ('what was it about Britain' l. 4). This question arguably refers to the ongoing suggestion that asylum-seekers come to the UK for reasons other than safety (the next chapter focuses on the pervasive notion of the 'bogus' asylum-seeker who is really coming to the UK for financial gain; see also Goodman & Speer, 2007; Leudar, Hayes, Nekvapil & Baker, 2008). At the very least, such a question leaves open

the possibility that there are a number of different reasons for asylum-seekers to opt for Britain as their destination, with safety only being one of them.

Participant five responds to this question with a number of different reasons, the first being the very general claim that the UK is 'good' (l. 7). Four main reasons are presented for wanting to be in the UK: people (l. 7), a good law system (ll. 8 and 11), freedom (l. 10) and a lack of danger (l. 11). The reference to 'nice people' (l. 7) does two main things. First, by praising British people, she is able to position herself as a good refugee, someone who appreciates being in the country rather than someone opposed to or critical of the host country (see Goodman, Burke, Liebling & Zasada, 2014; Kirkwood, McKinlay & McVittie, 2013a for discussions of the difficulties of criticizing the host nation). Second, the reference to nice people in the UK opens up the possibility that this is somewhat different from her experiences in her country of origin, and so this serves to present her as someone needing sanctuary as well as being appreciative.

Two references are made to British law (ll. 8 and 11). The first is a statement that the law is 'nice' (l. 8), which works in the same way as the claim that British people are nice; she displays gratitude towards this British quality, while also suggesting that the law in her home country is problematic. This point is immediately followed by her claim that she respects the law (l. 8). Such a claim manages her identity and presents her as a law-abiding person, which further bolsters the attempt to position herself as a grateful citizen (rather than a potential lawbreaker); this again adds weight to her suggestion that the law system in her home country is problematic, which provides further grounds for her decision to leave. Her next reference to law (l. 11) presents it as protecting her, which again implies that the law in her home country does not, which is why she prefers the UK.

The next reason provided for choosing to seek asylum in the UK is freedom (l. 10). As with the references to people and law, this reference to freedom functions to present her in a positive light: a freedom-loving person is a good person, especially in light of current rhetoric that emphasizes freedom as a key Western value (for example, Leudar, Marsland & Nekvapil, 2004), and once more suggests that this freedom is in contrast with the situation in her country of origin, which further supports her case for seeking refuge in the UK. The last reason for choosing the UK as her destination she gives is that 'my life is not in danger' (ll. 10–11). This is a clear reference to safety, and works to make an explicit contrast between life in the UK and the

situation from which she is fleeing. By highlighting the lack of danger in the UK (something that most UK residents would normally take for granted) she is able to build her credentials as a legitimate refugee who has left behind danger in search of safety. In light of this comment, the claims about good people, a law that protects and freedom in the UK all work together to present her as desiring and needing safety: something that is lacking in her country of origin but that she has in the UK. It is for these reasons that she states that she wants 'leave to remain' (l. 9) and to 'live in the UK' (ll. 9–10). In the following example, another asylum-seeker can be seen constructing the UK as being desirable because it is safe, when asked about her experience of being in the UK.

Extract 4.2: Participant Seven, England interview

1.	P7:	Err it's like err this country and my country is so different
2.		(SB: mm yeah) the different is about security (SB: yeah)
3.		here there is higher security (SB: mm) so if like if somebody if
4.		the police in this country it's not like in my country (SB: oh
5.		right) because in my country there's like if someone did a
6.		crime if he doesn't want to be arrested he can he can not be
7.		arrested (SB: really?) because people what we call it like what
8.		you call it in in England corruption (SB: oh right okay) they
9.		can do corruption with the police (SB: mm) even me if I go to
10.		Malawi that man if he want to catch me it's very easy (SB:
11.		yeah) it's very easy because in Malawi corruption is
12.		everywhere (SB: oh right) and it's very high in Police
13.		especially the Police (SB: yeah) so but in here (SB: no) no
14.		no (SB: okay) security there is high security in here that's why
15.		(SB: yeah) I like it because it's high security's here and I'm safe

(Goodman, unpublished)

This extract begins with a clear contrasting of the UK and the asylum-seeker's country of origin, Malawi, based around security (ll. 2, 3, 14 and 15) and safety (l. 15). The UK (and specifically England, where she lives) is explicitly presented as more secure than Malawi, and this is the main

reason given for liking the UK and having a positive experience here. The superior security in the UK is illustrated with an example of police corruption, where the police in Malawi are presented as being easily subject to bribes, so that people can buy their way out of being arrested (ll. 5–7). This corruption (ll. 8 and 11) is presented as the main reason why she would be in danger in Malawi (ll. 9–13) in a way that she is not in England because she claims that England lacks this corruption. This lack of corruption is presented as providing 'high security' (l. 14), and it is this security that is lacking in Malawi and present in the UK that is presented as her reason for liking (l. 15) the UK. This security is presented as providing safety, so again safety is given as a key reason for an asylum-seeker liking the UK. As with the previous extract, a favourable contrast is made between safety in the UK and a lack of safety in the country of origin.

Throughout these accounts of superior safety in the UK, the speakers position themselves as being aligned with British (and more generally Western) values of freedom and the rule of law, which also works to position them as good potential citizens who are aligned with the values of their host nation more than those of their countries of origin, thus further building their claim to belong – and that they should stay – in the UK. Common to these two extracts is the suggestion that being in the UK is desirable for asylum-seekers, especially when compared to their country of origin, particularly because of the safety provided in the UK. In the following sections it will be shown how asylum-seekers speak of being safe in the UK, despite not choosing to go to the UK, and even if they are not happy here.

Ending up in the UK because of a need to be somewhere safe

At this point it has been shown that the relative safety of the UK, especially in contrast with a lack of safety in asylum-seekers' countries of origin, is presented as a key reason why the UK has been chosen as a destination for refuge and, as a result, why asylum-seekers claim to be happy in the UK and want to stay there. In the following examples it will be shown that, while safety remains a key reason for asylum-seekers being in the UK (and a key justification for avoiding forced return), the UK is *not* presented as the desired location after fleeing their country of origin and in some cases can be described as a very unhappy place to live. In this next extract, taken from an interview with an asylum-seeker in England, the UK is not presented as the desired location after he fled

Afghanistan. The extract begins after the interviewer asked him if he had a specific destination in mind after leaving.

Extract 4.3: Participant One, England interview

1. P1: Well I wanted to go to Europe (SG: okay) cause I knew that
2. it's a safe place (SG: okay) you know just wanted to go to
3. Europe
4. SG: Was there any particular country in Europe?
5. P1: No
6. SG: Okay so you didn't choose Britain in particular
7. P1: Not really no
8. SG: Okay so so how come you ended up in Britain?
9. P1: [Well]
10. SG: [what] events cause that to happen?
11. P1: I went to I will tell you all the story anyway (SG: yeah) I went
12. to Iran (SG: okay) yeah it's (another) place to live (SG: yeah)
13. they don't give (a shit about) refugees (SG: right okay) then
14. we paid a agent
15. SG: Okay so that's how you got from
16. P1: The thing is we paid agent (SG: yeah) and agent say we will
17. take you to somewhere safe (SG: yeah) he say like ten
18. thousand dollar (SG: right) it's not cheap (SG: no) and we
19. had some land from my father yeah (SG: yeah) I say I got this
20. land if you can take me somewhere safe I will give you the
21. land (SG: yeah) he said yeah okay and we I gave land and
22. everything you know sign the paper and everything and he
23. took me to Europe

(Goodman, unpublished)

The participant answers the question about his desired destination with a general rather than a specific answer, citing Europe (ll. 1 and 3) precisely because it is deemed 'safe' (l. 2). This means that, as with the previous extracts, safety, rather than anything else, is presenting as the main reason for seeking asylum. Where this extract differs is that the UK is not presented as the desired destination. The interviewer attempts to nail down (Matoesian, 2005) the participant by asking if he was aiming for a specific country within Europe, something which he denies. The interviewer then reformulates his question by specifically stating

that he didn't choose Britain (l. 6). This is a negatively framed question that invites a 'no' response (Clayman & Heritage, 2002; see Classic text box), which is what is given, albeit in a vague and hedging way ('not really no' l. 7). In a further attempt to pin down the participant, the interviewer asks him to account for being in the UK (l. 8). This line of questioning can be seen as orienting to the notion that refugees seek asylum in the UK for reasons other than asylum (as discussed in the next chapter), an issue that has been particularly prominent in the asylum debate (Goodman & Speer, 2007), and especially put forward by opponents of asylum-seeking (for example, Goodman, 2007).

Classic text

Clayman, S. & Heritage, J. (2002). *The News Interview: Journalists and Public Figures on the Air*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

This book provides a detailed analysis of news interviews and panel discussions, like that featured in extract 4.8. It focuses on a range of features of these interviews that are also relevant for non-televised interviews.

The participant starts to answer the question in the form of a 'story' (l. 11), which is presented as long and complicated (signalled through 'all the story', l. 11). The 'story' begins with him moving to Iran (which borders Afghanistan and has one of the highest refugee populations in the world); however, this is presented as an unsuitable place to live for refugees, signalled through the idiom 'they don't give a shit' (l. 13). This lack of care is presented as the warrant for his next step: paying an agent. It is exactly at the point where the use of the agent and the problems associated with this are introduced that safety is mentioned again. Here safety is emphasized as especially important because, despite the cost of the agent (which is presented as potentially prohibitively expensive), safety is presented as desired above everything. He is, therefore, able to point to a noteworthy sacrifice (the land he inherited), which works to highlight and emphasize the importance of safety above all else. This sacrifice works to make a display of how important moving is to him while also showing that he made a very real severance from his country of origin by selling land he owned there so he could go somewhere

safe. While the use of agents (otherwise known as people smugglers) is controversial, his reference to the agent removes his own agency so that he can no longer be held responsible for what happened throughout the rest of the journey towards the desired destination because it promises safety.

In this example, safety is prioritized over reaching the UK, which it is not presented as somewhere he intended to go; it is through this display of a lack of intention that he is able to present safety as more important to him than where he ends up, even though the UK can potentially offer safety (although, as his claim was rejected, he lives with the threat of forced return). While participant one does present the UK as a good home (and as somewhere he later claims he wants to stay), in these next extracts we see examples of asylum-seekers who claim not to be happy in the UK, and wish to stay only because it offers safety and, therefore, is presented as preferable to being sent back to the country of origin.

Extract 4.4: Participant Nine

1. A3: So you would never return to Kenya because you would be worried about
2. yourself? =
3. P9: = How can go I I face death how can I go I face death? How even if
4. yourself how you can go to a place where you face death (A3: no I
5. know) I can die there it is better I die here better than I go.
6. A3: No you're right it's better to be safe
7. P9: Because here I don't have anything good here I don't have any life here
8. you understand my life what I explained to you I do not have a good life
9. here but I am safe I stay here because (.) for here I have never been
10. happy even one day here (A3: no) I have never been happy one day

(Goodman et al., 2014, pp. 27–8)

This extract begins with the interviewer reformulating what had been said previously, which relates to safety (here glossed as 'worried about yourself' ll. 1–2). This question is responded to with an upgrading of the 'worry' to which the interviewer referred. Leaving the UK is equated

with facing death (ll. 3 and 4), which is clearly an extreme case. The rhetorical question ('how can I go' l. 3) works to present leaving the UK as particularly unreasonable, precisely because this would mean giving up safety. The participant then poses this rhetorical question to the interviewer (ll. 3–4). By asking the interviewer if she would be willing to leave the UK and face death, she is able to further highlight the seriousness of the situation and how unreasonable is the suggestion that she return. This rhetorical question serves its function by eliciting agreement from the interviewer (ll. 4–5). Participant nine then completes her turn with a final statement that underlines the dangers associated with leaving the UK (l. 5). Together she builds a strong case to support her reluctance to return to her country of origin and desire to stay in the UK. These comments are met with agreement from the interview in which the term 'safe' (l. 6) is first used in this extract.

The importance of safety has already been established in her previous turn and brought about agreement from the interviewer, so now she works to demonstrate that being in the UK is solely for safety and not any other reason. Participant nine continues by making a distinction between safety and happiness by stating her lack of happiness in the UK. This is brought about first with her claim that she doesn't 'have anything good' (l. 7), which as well as being a claim about her negative situation in the UK can also be seen as orienting to the suggestion that asylum-seekers are in the UK for financial gain (for example, see Leudar et al., 2008 for more on how asylum-seekers respond to such claims). This is followed by the claims about having a bad life (l. 7) and not being happy (l. 10) in the UK, a claim that is upgraded through the extreme case formulation 'not even for one day'. The reason for enduring this suffering is presented simply as 'but I am safe' (l. 9). This means that all the talk about lacking happiness is used to support the claim that she is only in the UK for safety; leaving the UK means that she is likely to be killed. In this example, therefore, the UK is presented as a place of safety and refuge, but not a desirable place and not one that will bring happiness, which works to present her as particularly in need of safety at all costs as an absolute priority. The next extract contains a similar construction of the UK as a place of safety and refuge, even if not as a place of comfort and happiness.

Extract 4.5: Participant Eight, England interview

1. SB: When you first came to the UK what was it like?
2. P8: I like, safe country you know (SB: yeah) I don't see any

3. problem like this (SB: okay) it's better (SB: yeah) for me
4. even I sleep outside no somebody kill me no somebody
5. make problem (SB: right okay) it's a (SB: yeah) big thing for
6. me my life you know (SB: yeah, yeah absolutely) yeah

(Goodman, unpublished)

This extract starts with a question about first impressions of the UK, which is different from the safety-focused question that started the previous extract. However, this question is responded to immediately with a positive response based on safety (l. 2), which again works to highlight the importance of safety in the talk of asylum-seekers. The narrative that follows does not present the UK in a particularly positive light (albeit more positive than the account given in the previous extract) but it is presented as offering safety. The reasons for presenting the UK as somewhere she likes are that no one will make problems (l. 5) or try to kill (l. 4) her. This safety is presented as very significant thing for her, despite this situation being presented as far from ideal, as the reference to sleeping outside (l. 4) highlights. Overall here a rather bleak picture is presented of asylum-seekers living in poor conditions (for example, sleeping rough and being unhappy) but accepting these in return for safety.

In this way the UK is presented as a place of safety and refuge, but as nothing more, and certainly not as somewhere that asylum-seekers would intentionally choose for an easy or happy life. The example in extract 4.3 contains the suggestion that asylum-seekers do not choose the UK and together these extracts work to present asylum-seekers as not looking for anything other than safety. At this point the talk of asylum-seekers has been addressed and it has been shown that safety is presented as the key reason for them being in the UK. In the first examples (extracts 4.1 and 4.2), asylum-seekers were seen praising the UK for providing safety, especially when compared to countries of origin, and the UK was seen as a good place to live as a result of this. In the next examples, the UK was presented as less desirable, so in extract 4.3 the UK was presented as not being the intended destination. In the previous extracts, the UK was presented as being a negative place, containing unhappiness and destitution, but as being preferable to countries of origin because it offers safety. This suggests that asylum-seekers construct the UK as a place of safety and refuge, with variability over whether it is also a desirable and happy place in which to live. In the next section we turn to the talk of others and how they draw on the notion of safety in relation to asylum-seekers.

Others' talk about asylum-seekers

It has now been shown how asylum-seekers talk about safety. In this section, we address how others talk about safety in relation to asylum-seekers. In this next example, a white Scottish woman claims that having asylum-seekers move into her housing estate results in increased safety for both the asylum-seekers and the existing residents.

Extract 4.6: Local 2 (white Scottish woman)

1.	L2	I always say that (0.7) this community (0.7) was brushed clean because we had quite a
2.		nasty (.) time wi' drug (1.1) drug abusers
3.	INT	right=
4.	L2	=etcetera (0.8) and when we got the asylum-seekers (.) to me (.) it was family again (0.7)
5.	INT	okay
6.	L2	they came all right from all over different places and there was language problems, yes
7.		(1.0) but they were so happy to get safety (1.0) and (0.5) the drug (.) dealers (.) didn't
8.		get the flats, the asylum-seekers got the flats so (.) me personally I was very happy

(Kirkwood, McKinlay & McVittie, 2013b, p. 460)

This extract begins with the speaker claiming that drug dealers and users had been causing difficulties in the local area. Asylum-seekers are presented as being favourable to these drug dealers and users because they consisted of 'family' (l. 4). Family has been shown to have positive connotations (see Goodman, 2007 for a discussion of this in relation to asylum-seeking families threatened with separation), and is in clear contrast with the particular negative connotations of drug use and crime, which are here presented as causing a 'nasty time' (l. 2). There follows a concession (Antaki & Wetherell, 1999) that there are problems associated with asylum-seekers moving in (diversity and language l. 6); however, the problems that are acknowledged are presented as minor in comparison to the benefits that are received. The first of these benefits is that the asylum-seekers gained safety by moving in, something that is described as making them happy (l. 7).

This is significant because these representations present asylum-seekers as especially interested in safety, which aligns with the

suggestion that asylum-seekers are in the UK for safety rather than something else. This is particularly pertinent as this claim about asylum-seekers wanting safety is made in regard to housing, which can be controversial when asylum-seekers are viewed as getting housing ahead of British people (see, for example, Lynn & Lea, 2003). Indeed, in this account, it is precisely because the asylum-seekers were housed instead of undesirable British people (those associated with drug use) that the asylum-seekers moving in is presented as a source of her own happiness. According to this resident then, not only have the asylum-seekers gained safety but, as a result, so has she; both parties are presented as having gained safety and being happy as a result. In this account, asylum-seekers are presented as desiring safety, so safety is used as a way to support asylum-seekers and present them as legitimate. Again the UK is presented as a place of safety and refuge. However, as can be seen in the following examples, the notion of safety can also be used to challenge and undermine asylum-seekers' claims.

The notion of safety is used to oppose asylum-seekers

In this next example, from a discussion forum post following a speech in which Michael Howard set out a policy of setting a quota of asylum-seekers that could move to the UK, the notion of safety is drawn upon in relation to asylum-seekers. Rather than being presented as being in need of safety, asylum-seekers are presented here as a threat to the safety of the UK.

Extract 4.7: Howard's asylum plans: Your views. BBC, January 26, 2005

1. For too long, anyone who dared challenge the immigration
2. system was shouted down as a racist, but it isn't about racism, it is
3. about protecting the way of life of this country, and providing a
4. safe future for our children.
5. Richard Dixon, Herts, UK

(Goodman, 2010, p. 7)

This post is used to show support for Howard's policy, which is glossed as being about 'the immigration system' (l. 1) rather than asylum specifically (see Goodman & Speer, 2007 for a discussion of how these terms

can become confused and conflated) and contains a challenge to the idea that limiting this can be 'racist' (l. 2) (see Goodman, 2014 for more on criticisms of accusations of racism). What is of particular note here is that immigration (including asylum) is presented as being a potential threat to the UK because challenging immigration is equated with safeguarding the UK. A clear 'us and them' (Lynn & Lea, 2003) distinction is drawn between immigrants and a British us ('our children' l. 4) in which the outsider is a threat to the culture ('way of life' l. 3) and children (l. 4) in the UK. Whereas safety has been shown to be a key reason that refugees give for being in the UK, here their presence is portrayed as a threat to that very safety. It is not explained why immigrants or asylum-seekers may pose a threat to safety in the UK but they are certainly not presented as requiring safety, which serves to undermine their arguments, such as those seen above, for needing safety. While this post may represent a more extreme anti-asylum argument, it is not uncommon for talk about safety to be used to challenge asylum-seekers. In this final extract, taken from a televised debate programme about asylum-seeking, we can see an asylum-seeker being challenged, and responding, to the implication that he is not in the UK just for safety.

Extract 4.8: 'Asylum: Face the Nation', BBC1, July 23, 2003

1.	DM	OK Sheila that's your point (.) let's just er bring in an asylum
2.		seeker here (.) er doctor Mohamed Nasser is in our Cardiff
3.		studio er Doctor Nasser can you er (.) tell us first of all (.) that's
4.		Oliver Letwin there and there's Doctor Nasser Doctor Nasser
5.		can you tell us first of all (.) why (.) did you come to the UK
6.		you're from Afghanistan (.) why didn't you go to any safe
7.		country why Britain?
8.	MN	(.) er (.) at first (.) I didn't know that I'm coming to Britain (.)
9.		but at the time when I left Afghanistan it was (.) Taliban on the
10.		power (.) or (.) control of Afghanistan (.) and that time I left
11.		Afghanistan becau- because of fear of my life (.) and I came I

12. paid the agents (.) er cash money and after that I left
13. Afghanistan and I arrived in Britain

(Goodman, unpublished)

This extract begins with the chair and host of the programme, Dermot Murnaghan, inviting an asylum-seeker, Dr Mohamed Nasser, to speak (ll. 1–3). Nasser is immediately challenged about his choice for arriving in the UK. By beginning this question 'can you tell us first of all' (l. 5) Murnaghan does three things. First, 'can you tell us' makes Nasser accountable for his actions (Edwards & Potter, 1992) and suggests that he has done something problematic that he must account for. Second, 'tell us' suggests that Nasser is accountable to a collective, presumably those already living in the UK, so this works to set out another 'us and them' distinction (Lynn & Lea, 2003), where asylum-seekers are presented as the other, here needing to explain themselves to the British 'us'. Third, the phrase 'first of all' elevates the status of the question that follows to being a particularly important one, the implication being that, if Nasser is unable to explain this, he may not be a 'genuine' asylum-seeker at all (see the following chapter for debates around what counts as a genuine asylum-seeker).

The question, when it does come, is presented in two parts, with information between these two. The first part is simple ('why did you come to the UK' l. 5); however, it is the insertion of the information that he came from Afghanistan (l. 6) that changes the question and introduces a challenge and a preferred response to the rest of the question, 'why didn't you go to any safe country' (ll. 6–7). Together with the information that Nasser came from Afghanistan, this question now invites a particular response, which is that he now must account for coming to the UK for reasons other than safety because it is implied that he should have chosen other safe countries that are nearer to Afghanistan. The response to this question is very similar to that given in extract 4.3, which is unsurprising given the similar question topic: Nasser denies knowledge about (l. 8) and, therefore, agency in regards to choosing his destination; he refers to the dangers in Afghanistan (ll. 9–11) and his use of agents. Again safety (ll. 11–13) is provided as his reason for being in the UK even though the UK is presented as not his intended destination (note the passive 'I *arrived* in Britain' l. 13). Therefore, what this extract shows is that, while asylum-seekers construct the UK as a place of safety and refuge, the notion of safety can be used to challenge asylum-seekers' motives for being in the UK so that asylum-seekers are forced to defend

their claims that they are in the UK for safety rather than for any other reason.

Discussion

In this chapter it has been shown that asylum-seekers construct the UK as a place of safety and claim that it is only because the UK is safe that they are there. The UK is, therefore, constructed with a particular 'place-identity' that is used to justify asylum-seekers' being in the UK. While some present the UK as a good place because of this safety, others do not, claiming that they are unhappy in the UK and often that they are experiencing great hardships, but that they must remain because it is safe. It has also been shown that British people respond to this in a number of different ways. There is evidence of British people arguing that housing asylum-seekers in the UK can increase local safety; however, it has also been shown that British people can also suggest that asylum-seekers may reduce safety in the UK. Furthermore, it has also been shown that asylum-seekers can be challenged and made accountable for being in the UK on the grounds of safety.

Asylum-seekers themselves present the UK as a safe place, and it is this safety that is used to explain their being in the UK. Two types of reasoning around safety were identified. In the first, asylum-seekers present the UK as desirable and a good place to live because it is constructed as a safe place, especially when compared with the situations they have fled, as discussed in the previous chapter. This is the case for participants five and seven in extracts 4.1 and 4.2. In this way, the UK is presented as being a particularly positive place to live and that the safety it offers is a major contributor to this. The second type of reasoning around safety is that the UK is not a happy place at all but that, despite this, it is still worth being in it because of the safety it offers. Here asylum-seekers can be seen presenting the UK as a place of safety, but also as a negative place to live. For example, participant eight argues that, even if she has to sleep rough, this is better than being in her country of origin because she will be safe; further, participant nine explicitly claims that she does not have a good life in the UK.

Common to both of these arguments is the importance of safety, so it does seem that, for asylum-seekers, the construction of the UK as a safe place is a standard strategy. Both types of safety reasoning come with their limitations, so for those asylum-seekers who claim to be happy in the UK, they can be presented as too satisfied to be genuine refugees and can have their claims to be interested in safety

challenged, as was the case in some of the examples presented here. Those who claim not to be happy in the UK appear to have a stronger claim for being in the UK, but at the same time run the risk of appearing ungrateful to the host nation and potentially as people prone to complaining, which in itself could potentially undermine their claim for needing safety in the UK (see Goodman et al., 2014 for further discussion).

British people also refer to safety and do so in a number of different ways. In one example (extract 4.6), a Scottish women claimed that having asylum-seekers move into her community improved safety in the area because this meant that asylum-seeking families were housed instead of problematic local people. This represents a reversal of the anti-asylum strategy identified by Lynn and Lea (2003), in which the needs of British people were presented as more important than those of asylum-seekers. It also suggests that, for some British people, asylum-seekers are presented as good neighbours and as people requiring safety, which matches what the asylum-seekers said in the examples in this chapter. However, other British representations of asylum-seekers were more negative; for example, one poster on a discussion forum suggested that asylum into the UK may be damaging to its safety. In this way the notion of safety is drawn upon again, in a different way, so that asylum-seekers aren't in need of safety in the UK but their presence can damage safety.

Asylum-seekers' claims for being in the UK on the grounds of safety are not always simply accepted and can also be challenged. In a television discussion programme (extract 4.8), we can see one such example where the chair and presenter of the programme inferred that an asylum-seeker may be in the UK for other reasons than safety. This was achieved by highlighting the existence of other safe countries, and the large distance between his country of origin and the UK. Of course, as the UK only borders relatively safe countries, this would suggest that no asylum-seekers at all should go to the UK. In addition, the suggestion that there may be other reasons for seeking asylum in the UK implies that asylum-seekers may be in the UK for other reasons, so this draws on the notion of the 'bogus asylum-seeker'. This has been shown to be a common hostility theme (Leudar et al., 2008) towards asylum-seekers and will be addressed in the following chapter. The asylum-seeker who was challenged on the grounds of safety, like another asylum-seeker who was questioned about his choice for going to the UK (extract 4.3), responded by denying that he had a choice in getting to the UK, citing people smugglers as those who made the decision to get to the UK.

Instead, as with all the examples of asylum-seekers' talk in this chapter, the lack of safety in the country of origin and the relative safety of the UK was given as the main reason for being in the UK.

Activity box

The asylum-seekers featured in this chapter presented the UK as a place of safety. Think about, and discuss with your peers, how you understand safety. What makes you feel safe and what concerns do you have about not being safe? What do you think you would be willing to sacrifice to keep yourself safe?

Further reading

Crawley, H. (2010). *Chance or Choice? Understanding Why Asylum-Seekers Come to the UK*. Leeds: Refugee Council.

This report looks at the reasons given by asylum-seekers for claiming asylum in the UK. With quotes from asylum-seekers living in the UK, it explores the importance of safety and the lack of choice asylum-seekers have in arriving in the UK.

Robinson, V. & Segrot, J. (2002). *Understanding the Decision-Making of Asylum-Seekers*. London: Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate.

This report looks at a whole range of situations in which asylum-seekers make decisions about leaving their country of origin and moving to the UK. It presents the UK as being desirable because it offers safety.

5
Who Counts as an Asylum-Seeker or Refugee?

> you really start feeling bogus (after a while), you think maybe I've come here for the benefits, maybe.hh::: you know you start believing it.
>
> (Leudar, Hayes, Nekvapil & Baker, 2008, p. 212)

Introduction

As demonstrated in Chapter 1, a refugee is defined by the 1951 Refugee Convention as someone who:

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

This is different from an asylum-seeker: 'in the UK an asylum-seeker is someone who has asked the Government for refugee status and is waiting to hear the outcome of their application' (United Nations High Commission for Refugees, 2014). An immigrant is someone who leaves her/his country of birth and moves to another. This means that all refugees and asylum-seekers are immigrants, but not all immigrants are refugees or asylum-seekers. However, 'immigrant', 'refugee' and 'asylum-seeker' will be shown not to be the only terms used in the asylum debate, nor are these official definitions the only way that these terms are used; instead, it will be shown that contributors to the asylum debate argue over these terms in ways that either support or challenge the ways in which asylum-seekers in the UK are treated. The most prominent

of these is that of the 'bogus' asylum-seeker, who is presented as not really an asylum-seeker at all, but someone interested only in money. In response to this, it can be seen how asylum-seekers, and their supporters, work to focus instead on the reason people have for seeking asylum: safety.

Talk about asylum-seekers: 'Bogus' and 'genuine' asylum-seekers

The terms 'bogus' asylum-seeker has been shown to be a prominent and problematic aspect of the asylum debate. Lynn and Lea (2003) were the first to explore the use of this term and their analysis showed how the term is used to distinguish a 'deserving' and 'undeserving' asylum-seeker. In this first extract, from their analysis, we see a letter written to the *Daily Express*.

Extract 5.1: *Daily Express*, August 15, 2001

1. Bad feeling occurs when refugees are housed ahead of homeless British citizens. No-one
2. begrudges genuine refugees a home, but when bogus ones are housed within
3. weeks and UK citizens, black and white, are left to rot in hostels, it does seem unfair?

(Lynn & Lea, 2003, p. 433)

The use of categories in this extract is interesting, particularly because so many categories are used. First refugees (l. 1) are referred to, then 'genuine refugees' (l. 2), followed by 'bogus ones' (l. 2) alongside British citizens (ll. 1 and 3). Here we can see a direct reference to 'bogus ones' (l. 2) as part of a wider complaint that bogus asylum-seekers are being favoured over British citizens – which is a key argument Lynn and Lea (2003) identified. The distinguishing of 'genuine' and 'bogus' refugees is used as part of an argument based on fairness so that helping real refugees is presented as reasonable (although certainly not positive, as can be seen through the term 'no one begrudges' (ll. 1–2)), whereas helping fake refugees is presented as not reasonable. Distinguishing 'genuine' and 'bogus' refugees in this way does two things. First, it prevents the writer from appearing to be unreasonable or uncaring (or worse still, racist, which the explicit reference to 'black and white' (l. 3) is designed to prevent). Second, this presents the existence of bogus

refugees as common knowledge, so that the writer is able to assert that 'bogus refugees' (l. 2) are unfairly housed ahead of needy British citizens without any supporting evidence. This separation of categories, therefore, allows an anti-asylum argument to be made while still allowing the writer to be presented as respecting refugee rights and being reasonable.

In other cases, however, it is not just the case that refugees are distinguished into different categories so that anti-refugee arguments can be made. In the following example we see how speakers attempt to categorize asylum-seekers simply as illegal immigrants. Here Peter Hitchens of the *Daily Mail* is arguing that asylum-seekers are wrongly categorized.

Extract 5.2: Asylum: Face the Nation, BBC1, July 23, 2003

1. the most in inflammatory language which is used is the is the
2. false use of the word of the word of the words 'asylum-seekers'
3. to describe people who are in fact
4. illegal immigrants (.) it's polluted the whole the whole debate

(Goodman & Speer, 2007, p. 170)

In this example the speaker is explicitly topicalizing the categories that can be used to describe different types of immigrants. For Hitchens, 'asylum-seekers' (l. 2) is not just an inaccurate term, but a damaging one. Instead, Hitchens uses his talk to attempt to reposition asylum-seekers as something far more negative: 'illegal immigrants' (l. 4). By trying to reposition asylum-seekers in this way, Hitchens is drawing on the notion of bogusness, in which asylum-seekers aren't really deserving of asylum, but takes it even further so that none of the nuances seen in extract 5.1 are present here. There is no attempt to suggest that *any* asylum-seekers may be legitimate or that there should be any sympathy or support for them. The reference to 'illegal' (l. 4) contains a whole range of negative connotations, so here the entire category of asylum-seeker is presented as part of this immoral group (see Tileaga, 2007 on groups and morality). Presenting asylum-seekers in this way removes any possibility of them being a group deserving of support or sympathy, and instead presents them simply as a problem.

At this point it has been shown that asylum-seekers are separated into 'bogus' and 'genuine' asylum-seekers and 'illegal immigrants'. However, it has also been shown that categories such as these aren't simply

distinguished; instead, the categories can become blurred so that all asylum-seekers can come to be viewed as somehow 'bogus' or 'illegal'. The following example is from *The Sun* newspaper, where the categories 'asylum-seekers' and 'immigrants' are used interchangeably.

Extract 5.3: 'Asylum Inc.', *The Sun*, May 11, 2004

1. Headline: ASYLUM INC. (across the centre of the page)
2. Subheading: HOW THE IMMIGRATION CRISIS HAS SPAWNED
3. A CASH-RICH NEW INDUSTRY (smaller, top of page)
4. Inset: LANDLORDS. LANDLORDS across the country are raking in
5. millions of pounds by providing accommodation for asylum
6. seekers. They are charging the Government up to £350 a week
7. for a basic room.
8. Inset: ADVISORS. An army of advisers now help illegal immigrants
9. try to beat the system.

(Goodman & Speer, 2007, p. 182)

This article spread over two pages and was, therefore, particularly prominent. The first thing to notice here is that the heading refers to 'asylum' (l. 1), whereas the subheading refers to 'immigration' (l. 2). This mixing of categories continues when both asylum-seekers and immigrants, now upgraded to 'illegal immigrants' (l. 8), helps to blur the different categories, so that asylum-seekers are no longer noted for their claims for refugee status but are instead associated with more generalized immigration. This means that the conflation of categories in this way works in much the same way as Hitchens' claim that asylum-seekers are really illegal immigrants, as here the two become confused. The references to illegality, attempts to make money and specific costs to the government further work towards presenting asylum-seekers as a financial burden. As the focus of this article is on the costs of immigration and those who supposedly benefit, the status of asylum-seekers as in need of safety is here removed from this discussion about them. This example goes further to show that categories of asylum-seekers are not neutral descriptions or based on legal definitions; instead, the categories used to describe asylum-seekers work to present asylum-seekers as deserving, or in most cases undeserving, of support and sympathy (see Classic text box).

Classic text

Philo, G. & Beattie, L. (1999). Race, migration and media. In G. Philo (ed.), *Message Received*. Glasgow Media Group Research 1993–1998. Harlow: Longman.

This chapter assesses the arguments over immigration (rather than asylum-seeking specifically) and presents a study full of examples of the media coverage of immigration, focusing on the negative effects of the way they are presented.

Given the conflation and confusion of terms used to describe asylum-seekers, it is perhaps unsurprising, therefore, that there is confusion about exactly what constitutes an asylum-seeker in the UK. The following example from a focus group with undergraduate students in the UK serves to illustrate the misinformation and misunderstanding of asylum.

Extract 5.4: Focus Group One

1.	P1:	It's not just about the Polish people like we get like a lot of beggars come to us like
2.		from Romania and places and they're like sort of the asylum-seekers that really piss
3.		me off it's just like they do get some sort of benefits they're obviously living here
4.		you know they've got gold teeth and all sorts
5.	P2:	[Yeah]
6.	P3:	[I've seen those ones]
7.	P4:	[Yeah] they've got like
8.	P1:	There's a lot of fraud ones and they actually knock on your house and say 'oh no
9.		food, money' so if you actually I don't know pass them like a bag of fruit just to see
10.		what they react a lot of them like say 'no I don't want the fruit I want the money'
11.		that just shows that they're not genuine they're the ones that give everybody a bad
12.		name sort of thing

(Goodman, unpublished)

Here asylum-seekers are presented as synonymous with 'beggars' (l. 1) and specific national categories (Polish and Romanian). As these are European countries, the people that the speaker is referring to may be EU migrants but they cannot be asylum-seekers (EU citizens cannot claim asylum in the UK, as they are deemed appropriately safe in their home countries). P1 goes on to give an account of the characteristics of these 'asylum-seekers' that are provided as a warrant for her disapproval, which all relate to financial advantage: 'benefits', 'living here' and 'having gold teeth' (ll. 3–4). This account makes no reference to asylum-seekers' plight. This initial comment is met with support from three other participants in the focus group (ll. 5–7) and no one challenges the comments in any way. After this agreement, P1 goes on to continue her account and begins by referring to the notion of the 'bogus' asylum-seeker (here using the term 'fraud ones' l. 8). This account is bolstered with a reported personal experience of people who are only interested in money, which is used to support the following claim that 'they're not genuine' (l. 11). So while there appears to be some misunderstanding of asylum, given the previous reference to Europeans in the UK, there is nevertheless an orientation to the types of category seen in the previous examples, where there is a 'genuine'/'bogus' distinction and where there is a sense of criminality and greed built into the 'bogus' category. This account contains the suggestion that the 'bogus' (or 'fraud') asylum-seekers are actively harming the 'genuine' (l. 11) asylum-seekers, who are perhaps worthy of sympathy and support.

At this point it has been demonstrated that, in talk about asylum-seekers, there is not one single category of 'asylum-seeker' but a number of different categories, including 'genuine asylum-seeker', 'bogus asylum-seeker' and 'illegal immigrant'. The use of these categories is not straightforward, as different categories work to achieve different outcomes in the interaction so that, for example, the category 'bogus asylum-seeker' works to present asylum-seekers as only in the UK for financial gain while also presenting the speaker as caring about the 'genuine' asylum-seekers. It has also been shown that, as well as distinguishing these different categories, they can also be blurred so that criticism of immigrants and asylum-seekers can be worked up together in ways that remove the important features of asylum-seekers (that they are fleeing persecution) from the debate. Therefore, in answering the question 'who counts as an asylum-seeker or refugee?', the answer is almost no one, only those 'genuine' asylum-seekers that the 'bogus' ones are harming. However, the presentation of asylum-seekers

as overwhelmingly 'bogus' does not go unchallenged, and it is these challenges that we turn to next.

Talk about asylum-seekers: Challenging the 'bogus' asylum-seeker

It has now been demonstrated that there are discursive attempts to reposition asylum-seekers as illegal immigrants. However, it is not only the case that opponents of asylum attempt to reposition asylum-seekers as 'bogus' or 'illegal', with those supporting asylum attempting to highlight their refugee credentials. In the following example from a newspaper column in *The Guardian* newspaper by George Monbiot, the very opposite can be observed. Here Monbiot is arguing that *The Sun* newspaper (the paper featured in extract 5.4) is wrongly calling rejected asylum-seekers illegal immigrants.

Extract 5.5: 'Immigrants the rich love', *The Guardian*, May 25, 2004

1. The Sun, of course, has devoted page after page to the menace of illegal
2. immigration. But when you read past the headlines, you see that the 'illegal
3. immigrants' it foams about are not undocumented workers but asylum
4. seekers whose claims are rejected. As asylum-seekers are forbidden to work,
5. they are of no use to the rich men's trade union

(Goodman & Speer, 2007, p. 171)

This extract provides further evidence for the way that categories of asylum-seekers are contested and topicalized by participants in the asylum debate. Here 'illegal immigrants' (ll. 1–2 and 2–3) are recast as rejected asylum-seekers, and as with Hitchens' attempt to reclassify asylum-seekers above (extract 5.2), this isn't a simple attempt to correct or clarify what categories mean, instead this classification is designed to do practical work (see Leudar, Marsland & Nekvapil, 2004). In this case, Monbiot is making a complaint directed towards the anti-immigration press (here *The Sun* newspaper is referenced). Where Hitchens attempts to reduce the moral status of asylum-seekers by attaching the label 'illegal' to them, Monbiot attempts to remove the negativity ('menace' l. 1) from 'illegal' immigrants by drawing on the morally inferior group of

'asylum-seekers whose claims are rejected' (l. 3–4). It is noteworthy that Monbiot retains the term asylum-seeker rather than choosing a term such as 'failed' or 'bogus' because in this way the asylum-seekers retain their legitimacy despite having their claims rejected – especially given a 68 per cent rejection rate of asylum claims, of which 78 per cent appeal with 24 per cent having leave to remain granted (Blinder, 2014). This example shows that arguments about who counts as an asylum-seeker, refugee and immigrant are on-going because how people are categorized can have real implications for how they are received, particularly regarding sympathetic or non-sympathetic responses, and how they may be treated. In this next extract we see a Scottish man responding to the notion of the 'bogus' asylum-seeker in an account where he claims that he has come to realize that this bogusness is not warranted.

Extract 5.6: Local 1 (white Scottish man)

1.	L1	before I came here (0.8) I'll class myself as the wider society
2.	INT	okay
3.	L1	(.) I assumed they were (1.2) people looking for a cheap way of living (.) running from
4.		their own country coz they had nothing then coming to the UK and (0.6) Italy and
5.		Germany because we had plenty of money and we'd (.) give them it
6.	INT	(.) right
7.	L1	that was the way I portrayed them (0.6) they were just selfish people just running for
8.		where they get the best (0.8) but once I've come here and listened to a few stories
9.		(0.8) I realised these countries have got problems, they've been splitting up families
10.		they're war-torn (0.8) they're actually in fear of their (0.5) lives (2.0) so you realise
11.		there is problems that they weren't just running away to get a better life they're (1.0)
12.		they're running away because they had to (.)
13.	INT	right =
14.	L1	= they've had to leave their home they would probably like to go back to (.) if it was a
15.		better country

(Kirkwood, McKinlay & McVittie, 2013b, p. 456)

L1 begins by saying that he is typical of Scottish society (l. 1), which also suggests that he may be speaking on behalf of others ('footing', see Goffman, 1981). He then goes on to give a now familiar account of the 'bogus' asylum-seeker or illegal immigrant similar to that described in the previous section: people who had chosen the UK purely for financial gain and nothing to do with safety. They had come from a poor country in the knowledge that they could get money from a rich and generous western nation. This post, however, takes the form of: 'I used to believe something; I now know it to be wrong' because, after again admitting to thinking of them as 'selfish' (l. 7), he talks about changing his mind. The reason for changing his mind is given as listening to the 'stories' (l. 8) of refugees when meeting with them. It is these meetings that have caused him to claim to come to the 'realization' that he had misunderstood them. Instead he builds up an account of refugees – of the 'problems' (l. 9) the countries of origin have – through the use of a three-part list (Jefferson, 1990): 'splitting up families' (l. 9), being 'war-torn' (l. 10) and being in 'fear' for their lives (l. 10). Jefferson (1990) shows how three-part lists work to suggest completeness, in this case demonstrating the many problems associated with asylum-seekers' countries of origin. It is this list that is presented as the warrant for changing his mind from viewing them as 'bogus' to viewing them as actual refugees in fear for their lives who have come to the UK for safety and nothing else. The extract finishes with a comment about choice, where asylum-seekers are presented as not having a choice in leaving their countries, or in returning to them (ll. 14–15), because of the seriousness of their situation.

As people are accountable for what they say and have previously said (Edwards & Potter, 1992), being shown to change one's mind, especially to a position that contradicts a commonly accepted view (in this case that asylum-seekers are really 'bogus'), can be rhetorically difficult. It is for this reason that L1 works up an elaborate account for why he has changed his position, drawing on the stories that he has encountered in his own personal experience with refugees. However, accounts where people admit to previously being wrong (in this case falsely assuming that refugees were 'bogus asylum-seekers') have extra potency, precisely because of the problems associated with being seen to have changed views. This means that L1's claims that refugees are legitimately fleeing trauma works as a powerful contrast to the claims above, where refugees are presented as only interested in financial gain.

At this point we have now seen that the categories of asylum-seeking are debated so that asylum-seekers can come to be viewed as 'bogus' or

'illegal', but we have also seen that such representations can be challenged by people in the UK. Given the prevalence of this portrayal of asylum-seekers as 'bogus', it stands to reason that asylum-seekers themselves orient to the argument that presents them as in the UK for financial reasons. Their talk responds to this argument by drawing on their legitimacy through focusing on safety. It is this talk we turn to next.

Asylum-seekers respond: Challenging the 'bogus' asylum-seeker

In this next example we see a refugee in Scotland directly orienting to, and challenging, the notion of the bogus asylum-seeker during questioning about antagonism from within the host community.

Extract 5.7: Refugee 10

1.	R10	there's some people who are (0.8) no trouble at all,
2.		there will be no problems
3.	INT	yeah
4.	R10	(.) with (.) asylum-seekers
5.	INT	yeah
6.	R10	(.) mm (1.0) you will tell them oh I'm an asylum
7.		seeker (0.8) they're happy that you're here heh
8.	INT	sure yeah
9.	R10	(.) yeah (.) but there's other people again (2.2) they're
10.		not happy (.) eh (1.5) it's em (1.0) like those who are
11.		happy (.) who are not happy (.) about it, they just see
12.		you (1.0) as a person (.) who has
13.		probably come over to take something out of the
14.		country
15.	INT	yeah
16.	R10	but every day you don't take anything you know heh
17.	INT	right yeah
18.	R10	(.) mm but that's the way they they see you
19.	INT	mmm
20.	R10	as maybe someone's (come to go a?) job or get the
21.		benefits or things like that you know
22.	INT	yeah
23.	R10	mm (1.0) and that's (.) the negative (1.0) thing that
24.		most of the some- some or a few (.) people in society

25.		have towards them
26.	INT	yeah
27.	R10	asylum-seekers (1.2) mm (1.0) I know most of it's it's
28.		not- it's got nothing to do with your (0.8) colour or
29.		y-
30.	INT	oh okay
31.	R10	mm
32.	INT	right
33.	R10	it's just a minority those who just think that (1.6) you
34.		just coming in to get a job or things like that heh

(Kirkwood, 2012a, pp. 97–8)

R10 begins by distinguishing those members of the community who are happy and those who are not happy about asylum-seekers being present. Those who are happy are not discussed any further but, as the questioning in this interview is about antagonism from locals, it makes sense that the remaining talk is about those who are presented as not happy. While neither term 'bogus asylum-seeker' nor 'illegal immigrant' is explicitly referred to, the concept is, nevertheless. This can be first seen in the suggestion that asylum-seekers are viewed as being in the UK 'to take something out of the country' (ll. 13–14). This is qualified with the term 'probably' (l. 13), which supports the idea that the category use around asylum-seekers, and the conflation of 'asylum' with 'illegal immigration' in particular, means that all asylum-seekers are presented as at least likely to be 'bogus' (Goodman & Speer, 2007). R10 then contrasts this perception ('that's how they they see you' l. 18) with what he is claiming to be the reality ('every day you don't take anything' l. 16). This contrast works to present asylum-seekers as not being here to 'take' things as factual rather than the inaccurate perception that they are here for financial gain.

Next R10 elaborates on the 'negative' (l. 23) portrayal of asylum-seekers that he is claiming to be unwarranted, by stating that there is a belief that asylum-seekers are in the UK for work or for benefits, again pointing to financial interests which are associated with the idea of the 'bogus' asylum-seeker or 'illegal immigrant'. R10 then reduces the amount of people that this negative view is attributed to so that he begins by claiming that 'most' (l. 24), then 'some' (l. 24) and then downgrades this further to 'a few' (l. 24) who are presented as having these negative views. This demonstrates the difficulties for asylum-seekers associated with directing complaints towards the host nation (Goodman, Burke, Liebling & Zasada, 2014; Kirkwood, McKinlay &

McVittie, 2013a) because of the risk of appearing to be ungrateful and potentially not really in need of safety at all. R10 then explicitly denies that this opposition is due to racism 'it's got nothing to do with your (0.8) colour' (l. 28), which also demonstrates the problems associated with making accusations of racism generally (van Dijk, 1993) and within the asylum debate (Goodman, 2010), and particularly by asylum-seekers themselves (Kirkwood et al., 2013a). After some agreement from the interviewer (ll. 30 and 32), R10 completes the extract by referring to those who hold this view, now a 'minority' (l. 33) who believe asylum-seekers to be bogus.

As well as demonstrating that it is difficult for asylum-seekers to make complaints, especially those containing accusations of racism, this example also shows that asylum-seekers can be seen to be responding to the concept of the 'bogus' asylum-seeker, which we saw developed earlier in this chapter. The suggestion that asylum-seekers are in the UK only for financial gain can be seen to be a pervasive one that permeates much of the asylum debate; as such, it has been termed a 'hostility theme' – that asylum-seekers must deal with – by Leudar et al. (2008). This extract, therefore, adds weight to this idea by showing how R10 challenges the notion of the 'bogus asylum-seeker' in his account of antagonism towards him; asylum-seekers are forced to deflect the idea that they may be 'bogus' even when not directly questioned about it. In the following extract we see another refugee attempt to challenge the notion of bogusness.

Extract 5.8: Case F

1. F: you really start feeling bogus (after a while), you think maybe I've come here for the
2. benefits, maybe.hh::: you know you start believing it, think maybe I'm imagining my
3. life in Pakistan, maybe I wasn't er::, you know? like, maybe I've come for the money
4. even though (0.2) what I earn here now is not even half of what I was earning in (0.4)
5. Pakistan an Pakistan is a cheaper place (0.8) and plus it's (.) err (0.2) it's your country it's
6. your- whatever it is, you're at least a first class citizen, you know? you feel you belong,
7. here you never get that feeling that (0.3) you belong even

(Leudar et al., 2008, p. 212)

In this extract, the refugee (F) rhetorically works to present the idea of the bogus asylum-seeker as both pervasive and damaging. This is done through her account of beginning to question herself so that she is internalizing the notion of the bogus asylum-seeker. This display of self-doubt ('you really start feeling bogus' l. 1) works to present the idea of the 'bogus asylum-seeker', signalled here through the reference to 'benefits' (l. 2) and 'money' (l. 3), as being a notion that is constantly put to her. While bogusness is presented as a constant challenge to her, F contrasts her economic situation in the UK unfavourably with her economic situation in Pakistan, her country of origin (ll. 4–5), which works to present her as not gaining financially from being in the UK. Next F implies that, in the UK, she is a second-class citizen (l. 6) and then states that she does not feel she has a sense of belonging in the UK. Both of these work to present F as not being in the UK for financial benefit, which directly challenges the suggestion that she is. By arguing that she is not in the UK for financial reasons, F infers that she has been forced to be here and is not here through choice (much like L1 argued in extract 5.6). This further works to challenge the suggestion of bogusness and present her as being in the UK instead for other reasons, reasons that are associated with genuine asylum-seekers. In this next example we can see the key reason for being in the UK that is given by asylum-seekers – safety – being presented.

Extract 5.9: P1

1.	P1:	No I did a fresh claim in 2005 (SG: yeah) and in 2009 they
2.		said that been refused (SG: okay) and then
3.	SG:	So same reason again [it's safe go home] okay
4.	P1:	[the same reason it's safe]
5.	SG:	(That's difficult)
6.	P1:	and I did a further submission (SG: yeah) in 2009 and since
7.		that I'm waiting for that (SG: right) to see when they gonna
8.		refuse that one ((laughter))
9.	SG:	So you expect that to be refused
10.	P1:	God knows I don't know (SG: okay) my hope
11.	SG:	[You're hoping that they accept it]
12.	P1:	[I been here ten years] you know
13.	SG:	Yeah so you can say I've been here ten years
14.	P1:	I been here ten years no trouble no crime (SG: yeah okay)
15.		the country is still war there (SG: yeah) you know

(Goodman, Burke, Liebling & Zasada, 2015)

Here P1 is giving an account of his experience with the asylum system, where he has been waiting for an outcome for a decade. His complaint is worked up around the reason for his refusal, which is that his country of origin (Afghanistan) is safe. That Afghanistan is safe is presented as unreasonable both through the repeated applications for asylum that he reports and his claim that the country is still at war (l. 15). In this extract the reference to bogusness is less explicit than in the previous examples. However, his reference to safety, and his criticism of having his claim rejected because of the claim that Afghanistan is safe to return to, work to highlight the importance of safety and challenge the suggestion that he could have entered the country for any other reason; it is this suggestion that he is challenging which is associated with the notion of bogusness.

While P1's argument here is that he is interested in safety, there is also a direct criticism of the Home Office, who make decisions about asylum applications. Goodman et al. (2014) have shown that asylum-seekers are critical of the ways in which they are treated by the Home Office, a major source of this criticism being their claim that the Home Office lacks knowledge about the interviewee's country of origin. This example adds weight to that claim, as P1's criticism of having his asylum application rejected on the grounds of safety is shown by his pointing out that this purportedly safe country is at war. An additional criticism made in this particular example is that the Home Office have a bias towards rejecting claims, even when the claim is valid (claiming his application was rejected because his country is deemed safe while a war continues). This means that while safety is being offered as the main reason for wanting asylum (in direct contrast with the 'bogus' notion where money is the main reason), the safety of asylum-seekers is also being presented as ignored in the Home Office by this asylum-seeker, which implies that it is very difficult for asylum-seekers to become labelled as official and 'genuine'.

Discussion

This analysis has demonstrated that who counts as an asylum-seeker or refugee is not simple or straightforward. Instead, there are a range of different categories into which asylum-seekers and refugees can be placed. These different categories are not simply legal distinctions, but instead are moral categories which are used to do rhetorical work to position asylum-seekers and refugees as either deserving or undeserving of refugee status. The main categories that are used in the asylum debate

involve the terms ‘bogus’ and ‘genuine’ asylum-seekers and (illegal) immigrants. The term ‘bogus asylum-seeker’ is used to suggest that people claiming asylum are not really asylum-seekers at all, but that they are actually in the UK for financial gain. The term ‘genuine’ asylum-seeker is used to refer to those who really are in need of asylum, although this term tends only to be used alongside talk about ‘bogus asylum-seekers’, as the analysis demonstrates; therefore, even this term can be used to cast doubt on all asylum-seekers (see Goodman & Speer, 2007). The term ‘immigrant’, like ‘bogus asylum-seeker’ is used to refer to those who are in the UK for financial gain only, and the addition of ‘illegal’ is used to position these people in an even more immoral status.

The categories used to describe asylum-seekers carry many inferences. Perhaps the most important of these is the deserving or undeserving nature of the asylum-seekers. Those who are deemed ‘bogus’ or ‘illegal’ are clearly presented as undeserving, especially when directly compared to the ‘genuine’ asylum-seekers. By making arguments on behalf of ‘genuine asylum-seekers’, speakers are, therefore, able to present themselves as caring about ‘real’ asylum-seekers often even when arguing against the rights of most (or all) asylum-seekers. These categories are, therefore, moral categories (Tileaga, 2007) which means that, when these categories are invoked by speakers, different moral statuses are also being invoked. Clearly ‘bogus asylum-seekers’ and ‘illegal immigrants’ are categories that infer very low moral status, as Zetter (2007) showed; using these terms, therefore, cannot be seen as a neutral description of people, but as a discursive accomplishment that attributes moral status to these people and, in so doing, presents people as either worthy or unworthy of support and leave to remain in the UK.

It is precisely because the categories used to describe asylum-seekers are so inference-rich that the participants in the asylum debate attempt to impose their classifications onto the debate; so we see Peter Hitchens attempt to reclassify asylum-seekers as illegal immigrants in order to argue against support for them. Later, we see the very opposite with George Monbiot in his attempts to reclassify illegal immigrants as asylum-seekers who have had their claims turned down (which does very different work from describing them as ‘failed’ or ‘bogus’ asylum-seekers). It would also seem that those who seek to reclassify asylum-seekers as ‘bogus asylum-seekers’ or ‘illegal immigrants’ are setting the debate so that there is evidence of members of the public also speaking in terms of ‘bogus’ and ‘genuine’ asylum-seekers (including the resident who spoke of coming to realize that this was unwarranted), or displaying even more confusion and mixing up asylum-seekers with broader categories of immigrants (including apparently unwanted European

immigrants). It is worth noting that the term 'illegal asylum-seeker' has been criticized by the UK Press Complaints commission (PCC, 2003), which ruled that the term is inaccurate and should no longer be used by media in the UK.

It appears that, as a result of the classification of asylum-seekers, there has developed a constant requirement for asylum-seekers to prove that they are genuine. This again shows that it is those who use the concept of 'bogus asylum-seekers' that are setting the agenda so that asylum-seekers and their advocates must respond to this. The examples of the talk of the asylum-seekers themselves show that they do indeed respond to the on-going suggestion that they may be bogus. We can see that they do this in a number of different ways. First, asylum-seekers can be seen directly orienting to the concept by talking about unspecified others who may think they are in the UK for financial gain (as we saw in extract 5.7). This illustrates the impact that the notion of the 'bogus' asylum-seeker has had on people seeking asylum in the UK, as they are forced to deny this. In another example we see an asylum-seeker claim to doubt herself because she is so often in contact with the idea that she may be bogus (extract 5.8). Here the asylum-seeker goes on to challenge this bogusness by claiming she is financially worse off in the UK as an asylum-seeker than in her country of origin. Such an argument works to undermine the argument that asylum-seekers are in the UK for financial grounds and, therefore, the whole category of the 'bogus asylum-seeker'.

After displaying knowledge of the notion of the 'bogus asylum-seeker' and denying that asylum-seekers are in the UK for financial reasons (that is that they are 'bogus'), the final strategy that is used by asylum-seekers to challenge the notion of bogusness is through talk about safety. By presenting themselves as in the UK for reasons of safety, asylum-seekers are able to position themselves as genuinely in need of refuge and, therefore, as 'genuine asylum-seekers', rather than 'bogus'. It is for this reason that so much talk of asylum-seekers is about safety (see Goodman et al., 2015) and why P1 built his case upon a lack of safety in his country of origin. That asylum-seekers are 'bogus' was identified by Leudar et al. (2008) as a 'hostility theme', that is an anti-asylum argument to which asylum-seekers are forced to respond. The evidence in this analysis supports such an idea, as asylum-seekers can be seen responding to the challenge of being a 'bogus asylum-seeker'.

While arguing for the importance of safety, P1 can also be seen implying that the Home Office is unwilling to take his request for safety seriously when he claims that he has been told that this country, Afghanistan, which was at war at the time of his application, was a

safe place to return to. This does provide evidence for the notion of 'the culture of disbelief' (Souter, 2011), where it has been argued that asylum application decisions are made with the assumption that the applicant is not genuine and should be returned wherever possible. This 'culture of disbelief' is inherently intertwined with the notion of the 'bogus asylum-seeker' because it is based on the assumption that asylum-seekers are possibly – and most likely – not really asylum-seekers at all. The rates at which asylum-seekers are accepted and given refugee status would indeed support the idea that most applicants are not genuine; however, the rate of appeal and the large number of asylum-seekers that are granted leave to remain at appeal, and the criticism of many cases that are refused (for example, Blinder, 2014), strongly indicate that the issue of 'bogusness' has been, at the very least, overstated.

In this chapter is has been shown that who counts as an asylum-seeker or refugee in the UK is a deeply political and discursive issue. Asylum-seekers have been shown to be rhetorically distinguished into a number of different groups – 'genuine', 'bogus', 'illegal', 'immigrant' – and together these different terms all work to position asylum-seekers as, at least, likely not to be asylum-seekers at all. Asylum-seekers respond to this category work by denying that they are 'bogus' – by highlighting the problematic financial situation being an asylum-seeker causes and by drawing on the notion of safety to emphasize their credentials as genuine asylum-seekers in need of refuge. An associated problem for asylum-seekers is that it has been shown how a 'culture of disbelief' is in operation – where even the Home Office starts with the assumption that asylum-seekers are 'bogus' – making it extremely difficult for asylum-seekers to be accepted successfully as refugees in the UK.

Activity box

In this chapter we have demonstrated the varied categories that are used to describe asylum-seekers and the ways in which these different descriptions influence how asylum-seekers are understood. Find some media outputs where asylum-seekers are discussed and look for the different categories that are used to describe them. Think about who is using which category and what the category they are using does in terms of how asylum-seekers are presented. Next, look at debates outside of asylum-seeking – what different categories are used in different debates and what are these different categories used to do?

Further reading

Tileaga, C. (2007). Ideologies of moral exclusion: A critical discursive reframing of depersonalization, delegitimization and dehumanization. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 46*, 717–737.

This study addresses the ways in which moral work, and particularly moral exclusion, is achieved through the ways in which groups are described.

Leudar, I., Marsland, V. & Nekvapil, J. (2004). On membership categorization: ‘Us’, ‘them’ and ‘doing violence’ in political discourse. *Discourse and Society, 15*, 243–266.

This study focuses on the political speeches made after the September 11th terrorist attacks and shows how category work, such as that seen in this chapter, operates to achieve practical actions.

Part III

Being Here

6
Asylum-Seekers and the Right to Work

> Most asylum applicants are not allowed to work while we consider their application. This is because entering the country for economic reasons is not the same as seeking asylum, and it is important to keep the two separate.
>
> – UK Visas and Immigration (2014)

Introduction

For many people, the right to work is taken for granted. It is assumed that being in employment of some kind, earning a wage to support yourself and your family, is something to which everyone is entitled. However, it is also often accepted that there is not necessarily an automatic right to work when someone is outside his or her country of nationality, where work visas and other restrictions might apply. As highlighted in the quote above, the UK and other jurisdictions tend to restrict the scope for asylum-seekers to work, in effect making it illegal for people to work before and unless their application for asylum is accepted. Currently in the UK, asylum-seekers who have waited more than 12 months for a decision on their asylum claims, and who are deemed as not responsible for the delay, are eligible to apply for permission to work, although this is restricted to jobs on the shortage occupation list (Gower, 2011). The effect of these restrictions is such that it results in a total ban on working for almost all asylum-seekers. The quote above also makes a connection between entering a country on the grounds of seeking asylum and entering for employment purposes, in this sense restricting asylum-seekers' rights in order to prevent someone entering to work under the guise of seeking asylum. This argument – whereby the ends are treated as justifying the means, and any

negative impact on asylum-seekers may be portrayed as regrettable and unintended – leads to unfavourable outcomes for asylum-seekers and demonstrates an overriding focus on deterrence and exclusion.

In this chapter we explore various arguments in relation to asylum-seekers' right to work, including accounts of asylum-seekers themselves, to highlight the relationships between such discourse and related policies and experiences. This builds on the previous chapters, which focused on discourse related to asylum-seekers' right to be in the host country, to explore this important aspect of asylum-seekers' lives while in the host country and awaiting the outcome of their asylum application: the right to access paid employment. The chapter is split into three main sections: the first focuses on asylum-seekers' desire to work and the impact of the barrier to employment; the second explores some of the dilemmas and tensions around access to employment and how this positions asylum-seekers in various ways as either 'sponging' or contributing; and the final main section addresses issues of fairness and the connection to economic migration, particularly in terms of arguments against the right to work.

Asylum-seekers in the UK bring with them a range of employment-related skills and qualifications, and tend to be well educated (Charlaff, Ibrani, Lowe, Marsden & Turney, 2004; Crawley, 2010). However, the legislative barriers prevent them from using these skills in paid employment while awaiting a decision on their asylum claim (Da Lomba, 2010). In relation to the UK Visas and Immigration agency's justification of restricting asylum-seekers' access to employment, as quoted above, Fekete (2001, p. 24) suggested that the UK Government has made ' "deterrence" (of "economic migrants"), not human rights (the protection of refugees), the guiding principle of its asylum policy'. Mulvey (2010) argued that this policy was based on the unsupported assumption that the right for asylum-seekers to work functions as a 'pull factor' for attracting false asylum claims. Therefore, it appears that the removal of the right for asylum-seekers to work is based on the idea of the 'economic migrant' or 'bogus asylum-seeker', who uses the asylum system to enter the UK in order to work rather than because they are being persecuted, despite the lack of evidence to back up this argument.

However, this policy may have a range of negative effects on asylum-seekers while they await the outcome of their claims, some of which may carry on once the asylum applicants have been given leave to remain in the UK. In particular, this can lead to a loss of skills, increasing reliance on the benefit system, greater isolation in society and more difficulty accessing appropriate employment at a later stage (Da Lomba,

2010; Liebling, Burke, Goodman & Zasada, 2014; Mulvey, 2010; Smyth & Kum, 2010). Moreover, this enforced reliance on the benefit system reinforces the discursive construction of asylum-seekers as a drain on society (Lynn & Lea, 2003). Leudar, Hayes, Nekvapil and Baker (2008, p. 212) illustrated that the resulting 'enforced idleness' may then be taken to be an inherent part of their nature, so that they are blamed for a situation that is a result of the asylum system rather than their individual choices, and may lead to greater antagonism towards asylum-seekers in the host society. This is despite evidence that asylum-seekers may wish to work, including taking on voluntary work (Liebling et al., 2014). This policy, therefore, appears to have a range of negative effects that are both material and discursive, and is thus worthy of exploration in terms of the discursive constructions and subject positions that are involved.

Inactivity and the desire to work

The first section of this chapter focuses on the way in which asylum-seekers may portray themselves, or be portrayed by others, as having a desire to work, as well as the negative impact of the barrier to paid employment. The following extract is from an interview with a refugee who discussed the problems with this policy in detail; the extract is from the beginning of the interview, during which the interviewee gave background information about himself and outlined some of the problems he had in the UK.

Extract 6.1: Refugee 5 (Scotland)

1. R5 I am uh (1.0) about twenty five years (1.0) I was graduated from university
2. SK right
3. R5 I have a masters degree in ((subject area)) =
4. SK = right okay yeah
5. R5 (0.6) and the (2.0) the big problem for me (1.0) was I couldn't work (.) you know
6. (1.0) because Home Office (.) they didn't permit (0.5) any permission to me (.) for
7. working
8. SK sure yeah
9. R5 and (0.8) I told them (0.6) I'm ready (.) even working with- for you as a volunteer (.)

10.		because I have (0.6) good (0.6) experience
11.	SK	yeah
12.	R5	in ((subject area))
13.	SK	sure
14.	R5	more than thirty years
15.	SK	yeah
16.	R5	(1.0) but (0.6) even some- somewhere could find (.) a job (.) but quickly after one
17.		week they called me ((interviewee name)) sorry (0.8) because Home-Home Office
18.		says (.) you cannot work
19.	SK	right
20.	R5	volunteer working you know
21.	SK	yeah
22.	R5	(1.6) I don't know (1.6) this is their problem (1.5) they should think about their
23.		country, not me

(Kirkwood, 2012b, p. 174)

In this extract, the interviewee constructs himself as having a large amount of work-related qualifications and experience, emphasized through references to the length of time in years: 'about twenty five years' (l. 1) and 'more than thirty years' (l. 14). This means that, when he highlights his 'big problem' (l. 5) as not being able to work, the source of the problem is placed with the 'Home Office' (l. 6), for not permitting him to work, rather than, for example, his own lack of experience and skills. Moreover, the interviewee portrays himself as 'ready' to work even 'as a volunteer' (l. 9). He, therefore, presents himself as willing and able to work, and suggests that his motivations for work are not related to money. This construction seems to contradict more antagonistic discursive constructions that portray asylum-seekers as being a drain on society and/or as coming into the host society for economic reasons (Lynn & Lea, 2003).

The extract goes on to reinforce this construction of the asylum-seeker as active and the Home Office as being part of the problem. Specifically, the interviewee states that, even when he did find a job, the experience would be cut short due to the interventions of the Home Office (ll. 16–18). Moreover, while he initially describes the problem as 'his' – 'the big problem for me (1.0) was I couldn't work' (l. 5) – towards the end of the extract, he suggests that the problem belongs to the Home Office: 'this is their problem' (l. 22). Given the narrative of having skills,

qualifications and experience, and identifying appropriate jobs in the UK, the Home Office is explicitly positioned as being responsible for the negative outcome. Importantly, the interviewee implies that the Home Office is, therefore, creating a situation that runs counter to the national interests: 'they should think about their country, not me' (ll. 22–23). Portraying the right of asylum-seekers to work as being in the national interest works both to criticize the actions of the Home Office and to present the interviewee's desire to work as being something that everyone in the country should support, rather than simply being in the interests of him as an individual (see Reicher & Hopkins, 2001; see Classic text box). In this way, the interviewee positions himself as concerned about the interests of the UK, whereas the Home Office is positioned as working against these interests.

Classic text

Reicher, S. & Hopkins, N. (2001). *Self and Nation*. London: Sage.

This study, which focuses on Scotland, explores the ways that various constructions of the nation and national identity are put together and utilized to support a range of personal and political projects. In particular, it demonstrates how portraying one's own agenda as being in the interests of the nation is a powerful source of legitimization in the contemporary world.

The following extract, in common with the previous extract, illustrates an asylum-seeker discussing the negative impact of being unable to work, although in a slightly different way. Here we can see greater emphasis on the personal impact of being unemployed, as opposed to a focus on the wider implications for the host society.

Extract 6.2: P8 Asylum-seeker (England)

1. A2 What would you like for your future?
2. P8 I like I like maybe I save my (.) life I want work I want voluntary work I
3. A2 you do?
4. P8 yeah I think like this my dream is this

5. A2 yeah
6. P8 really
7. A2 Okay that's what you'd really like =
8. P8 = Yeah yeah
9. A2 To work
10. P8 I have a house I have a some I want to cook my food
11. A2 mm
12. P8 I want work even I don't know twenty four hour twenty four hours I work I don't
13. know
14. A2 okay
15. P8 I'm not happy
16. A2 yeah
17. P8 you know
18. A2 yeah
19. P8 but (.) °I'm okay°
20. A2 okay yeah
21. P8 how can explain I don't know but
22. A2 no
23. P8 you understand me yeah?

(Goodman, Burke, Liebling & Zasada, 2014, pp. 26–7)

This extract begins with P8 being asked about her hopes for the future (l. 1). P8 responds to this by saying that she would like to work; however, the importance of this is emphasized in a number of ways during this turn. First, working is presented as having the potential to save her life (l. 2); second, it is presented as a 'dream' (l. 4); and third, the type of work that she states she wants is highlighted as being voluntary work. After the interviewer reformulates this (ll. 7 & 9), P8 goes on to state her other hopes, this time in a three-part list: she wants a house (l. 10), the opportunity to cook (l. 10) and to work (l. 12). P8 again presents working as extremely important by suggesting that she would be willing to work excessively long hours (l. 12). As with the interviewee in the previous extract, portraying herself as being willing to work on a voluntary basis counters those portrayals of asylum-seekers as either a burden on society or as entering the country for economic reasons, while the other reasons emphasize the intense personal value of working. Whereas the previous interviewee invoked the interests of the nation to justify access to employment, P8 can be seen to reference her own subjective and negative experiences in relation to being unemployed, while carefully managing the *subject side* of this complaint by

downgrading the seriousness of the account through portraying herself as 'okay' and saying 'I don't know' (Edwards, 2005). Here we can see how an account regarding the personal impact of unemployment is delicately constructed, suggesting an orientation to such complaints as potentially problematic and as requiring the management of the speaker's own *stake* in the matter (see Kirkwood, 2012a).

The next extract also addresses asylum-seekers' desire to work, but is from a professional who is involved with the support of asylum-seekers. While he does not have to manage his own personal stake in the matter in the same way as asylum-seekers, the account still illustrates the sensitive way in which arguments regarding access to employment may be produced. The extract forms part of the interviewee's response about the issues that asylum-seekers and refugees find most difficult, and constitutes an explanation for the social isolation that he suggests many asylum-seekers experience.

Extract 6.3: Professional 4 (Scotland)

1.	P4	the isolation comes from not having any ability t- t- (.) they have no (1.0) ability to
2.		work
3.	SK	right
4.	P4	(0.8) you know and that (0.8) is often a major factor
5.	SK	mm-hmm
6.	P4	(.) in (.) in people being excluded from their own communities
7.	SK	mmm
8.	P4	(1.0) because as we both know immigrant communities (.) tend to be the ones who
9.		(4.0) are are l- are almost less likely to be unemployed
10.	SK	right =
11.	P4	= less likely to accept unemployment as a (.) as a as a state of (.) being
12.	SK	sure
13.	P4	y- y- ya know (.) um (0.5) th- th- (1.0) in my experience certainly (.) and (2.0) this
14.		isn't supposed to be political comment uh (.) because people (.) of course I don't
15.		want a (.) th- th- the political bit being that (.) you know (.) straying into uh defining
16.		people as economic migrants or asylum =

17. SK =I see
18. P4 claimants (1.5) irrespective (.) of whether they are an asylum claimant (.) the
19. individual (.) wants to be able to work
20. SK right sure
21. P4 okay now of course there are legisl- legislative barriers
22. SK yeah
23. P4 to that (1.5) which obviously doesn't deter some people, they will work anyway
24. SK right
25. P4 illegally
26. SK heh hhh
27. P4 um we shouldn't be heh heh heh heh heh we shouldn't be naïve about the extent to
28. which people work
29. SK yep
30. P4 um again th- that doesn't- (1.0) that shouldn't (.) whether somebody works or not
31. should not prejudice (.) their asylum claim if they're caught working because (.) it
32. doesn't mean to say they still don't have a valid (.) claim for asylum

(Kirkwood, 2012b, p. 176–7)

In this extract, the interviewee gives an account of why asylum-seekers and refugees often experience 'isolation' (l. 1). Specifically, the interviewee suggests that a 'major factor' (l. 4) in this isolation is that asylum-seekers 'have no (1.0) ability to work' (ll. 1–2). As with the previous extracts in this section, the prevention of asylum-seekers from working is portrayed as a problem. Furthermore, the argument that this results in 'people being excluded from their own communities' (l. 6) can be heard as a criticism as it is implied that people should be a natural part of communities that are their 'own'. In lines 8–11, the interviewee presents a form of shared knowledge – 'as we both know' (l. 8) – implicitly referencing the fact that neither the interviewer nor the interviewee is from Scotland. He then initially constructs immigrants as 'almost less likely to be unemployed' (l. 9) and then alters this to 'less likely to accept unemployment as a [...] state of (.) being' (l. 11). This shift deals with the issue that almost all asylum-seekers in the UK are likely to be unemployed due to legal barriers to paid unemployment;

instead the interviewee presents them as being unwilling to accept this positioning, rather than being actually less likely to be unemployed. In this way asylum-seekers, as a category of immigrant, are positioned as being essentially opposed to unemployment. As with the previous extracts, this construction works against those discourses that portray asylum-seekers as being a drain on the host society.

In lines 13–16, the interviewee highlights that there are potentially political implications of his comments. Specifically, he identifies the political aspects being 'straying into uh defining people as economic migrants or asylum [...] claimants' (ll. 15–18). This touches on the distinction made by Zetter (2007), and illustrated in the previous chapter, that such labels are used as non-political bureaucratic categories within the asylum system itself yet are politicized within public discourse. More specifically, Phillips and Hardy (1997) suggested that governments have an interest in perpetuating the idea that many asylum-seekers are in fact 'economic migrants in disguise', as this legitimizes strict border controls on the basis of deterring 'bogus' asylum-seekers. The interviewee could be seen as orienting to the way in which his previous comments potentially imply that all asylum-seekers are in fact economic migrants, as they have a drive to work. This repair is signalled by the hesitations and repetitions in this part of the extract, for example: 'y- y- ya know (.) um (0.5) th- th- (1.0) [...] of course I don't want a (.) th- th- the' (ll. 13–15).

The interviewee then deconstructs this binary opposition between asylum-seekers and economic migrants by explaining that 'irrespective (.) of whether they are an asylum claimant (.) the individual (.) wants to be able to work' (ll. 18–19). This usefully deals with the politically charged nature of the issue by separating immigrants' inherent drive to work from the grounds on which people seek to remain in the UK. This addresses the more hostile discourse whereby asylum-seekers are portrayed as either a drain on society or as 'economic migrants in disguise' (Leudar et al., 2008; Lynn & Lea, 2003). The interviewee then goes on to mention the 'legislative barriers' (l. 21) to asylum-seekers working. Interestingly, he suggests that some asylum-seekers will ignore these barriers and 'work anyway [...] illegally' (ll. 23–5). While the portrayal of asylum-seekers as potentially criminal could be seen as antagonistic and as legitimizing their harsh treatment (Malloch & Stanley, 2005), the interviewee rather treats this is a simply being realistic about the situation: 'we shouldn't be naïve about the extent to which people work' (ll. 27–8). Moreover, he separates out the issue of someone working

illegally from the validity of their asylum claim, so that the illegal act is not presented as defining the person as 'criminal' and, therefore, undeserving or ineligible for asylum (ll. 30–2). In this way, the interviewee addresses the issues of 'economic migrant', asylum-seeker and illegal behaviour by carefully distinguishing them in particular ways that position asylum-seekers as driven to work without necessarily being economic migrants and separating out any illegal acts from the validity of their asylum claims.

This extract, therefore, portrays the prevention of asylum-seekers from working as being a problem, specifically in relation to their integration. Moreover, he does this through constructing asylum-seekers as having a natural desire to work but separating out this natural desire from people's actual intentions regarding entry to the host society. Furthermore, the distinction between the validity of an asylum claim is separated from any illegal activities in the host society so as to distinguish between someone committing an offence and having a legitimate claim for asylum. Overall then, this counters the way the asylum system, and related discourse, positions asylum-seekers as idle or a drain on the host society, as potential economic migrants or as being criminal if they work illegally, and instead suggests that they are naturally inclined to work and should not be demonized for this.

'Sponging' vs. contributing

While the previous section focused on the desire of asylum-seekers to work and the negative impact of unemployment, this section explores the argument that working is important, as it constitutes contributing to the host society, and is contrasted with the alternative of 'sponging' off the host society or abusing the protection that is provided to refugees and asylum-seekers. The next short extract, from an interview with a Scottish local, specifically addresses this issue in the context of public discourse that portrays asylum-seekers as a drain on the host society. The extract follows the interviewee stating that asylum-seekers are unable to work.

Extract 6.4: Local 3 (Scotland)

1. SK and what are your views on that, the um fact asylum-seekers are not able to work?
2. L3 (.) I think it's wrong, they should be contributing to the system (1.2) it would stop a

3. lot of (0.5) people saying that they're spongers
4. SK right
5. L3 contri- allow them to contribute something (.)
6. SK yeah
7. L3 then they're paying taxes and (1.0)
8. SK yeah

(Kirkwood, 2012b, pp. 179–80)

Whereas some of the previous extracts argued that asylum-seekers should be able to work on the grounds that preventing them working is damaging for them or is not in the national interests, this extract develops its argument in a slightly different way. It begins with the same negative evaluation of this policy – 'it's wrong' (l. 2) – but then focuses on what asylum-seekers 'should' (l. 2) be doing, not in terms of benefits to themselves, but rather through contributions to 'the system' (l. 2). This is then presented as being important for preventing negative attitudes from members of the local community: 'it would stop a lot of (0.5) people saying that they're spongers' (l. 3). Importantly, allowing asylum-seekers to 'contribute' would allow them to move positions, in the alleged views of other people, from being seen as 'spongers' to being 'contributors'. As identified by Leudar and colleagues (2008), it is the negative positioning of asylum-seekers as 'idle', due to being prevented from working, which may reinforce hostile responses from the public. Importantly, the interviewee states that then the asylum-seekers would be 'paying taxes' (l. 7), which would position asylum-seekers as earning their right to be in the UK and as benefiting the wider society. This extract, therefore, illustrates how construing the situation in this way works to portray asylum-seekers' right to work as a benefit both in terms of positioning them more positively and countering negative views. However, through suggesting that asylum-seekers should 'contribute' to the host society through paid employment, it also reinforces the view that those who do not work are acting immorally, albeit that this implication is carefully managed through the use of footing (Goffman, 1981) that portrays this negative view as originating from people other than the interviewee.

The next extract also argues in favour of allowing asylum-seekers to work but does so in a very different way. That is, the interviewee, who is a refugee, makes reference to some people 'abusing' the asylum system. This extract is in response to a question about what could be done to better help asylum-seekers and refugees.

Extract 6.5: Refugee 1 (Scotland)

1.	R1	in my opinion (1.0) they have to give the chance to people (1.0) to start doing their
2.		work in here (.)
3.	SK	okay
4.	R1	u:h (1.0) they give them the opportunity to get their work permit (1.0) and then (0.8)
5.		they give them the places to work
6.	SK	right
7.	R1	and they will started you know to see the people how they (0.8) uh how can I say
8.		they (0.8) behave (1.0) themselves like that
9.	SK	right
10.	R1	if (0.5) there is some people they don't want you know to work (.) just why you are
11.		living here? just get back
12.	SK	okay
13.	R1	(1.2) because you know that it's not fair to live you know without do anything for
14.		example I will tell you there is some people they are abuse of the system
15.	SK	okay
16.	R1	(1.0) they try to abuse of the system (.) we know (0.8) u:h that (0.8) we can do
17.		something, we can do something (0.8) we try (1.2) do your best you know to do to
18.		give something (1.6) uh even if you can't you know for example it's you know you
19.		are not disabled, if you are not disabled why you not
20.	SK	mm-hmm (.) right
21.	R1	(0.8) to do something?
22.	SK	mm-hmm
23.	R1	(1.0) you have to understand you know these people here they are working hard (1.0)
24.		to build their country
25.	SK	mm-hmm
26.	R1	(1.2) and to get things you know they have to do a lot of things you know=
27.	SK	=mm-hmm
28.	R1	to get these thing

29. SK right
30. R1 so for that reason for us it will be the same
31. SK mm-hmm
32. R1 we have to do the same things
33. SK right
34. R1 if you got the right to work just go and work

(Kirkwood, 2012a, pp. 104–5)

As with the previous extracts in this section, this extract involves the interviewee stating that asylum-seekers should be given 'the chance [...] to start doing their work' (ll. 1–2). The interviewee goes on to explain that then 'they' will be able to 'see' how people 'behave' (ll. 7–8). Although ambiguous, the statement suggests that, in allowing asylum-seekers to work, asylum-seekers will be found to 'behave themselves' by working well and/or the way that asylum-seekers behave will reveal useful information about their disposition. Here the following statement is of particular interest: 'if (0.5) there is some people they don't want you know to work just why you are living here? just get back' (ll. 10–11). This is interesting because very similar statements were made in other interviews but presented as reported speech attributed to *locals* who had negative views of asylum-seekers (see Chapter 7). As with the other examples, the rhetorical question contains two elements that are somewhat in tension: it both suggests that there is no good reason for the person being in the country and that the speaker does not have knowledge of the reasons for them being in the country. Whereas when this is stated as being the voice of a local person the implication is that they are not aware of the persecution that asylum-seekers are forced to flee or the legal and moral obligations of the UK to provide asylum, here when voiced by an asylum-seeker this aspect would seem to be absent, as an asylum-seeker would be assumed to have an understanding of these issues. The use of the rhetorical question, therefore, suggests that persecution in itself is not a good enough reason for someone to be in the UK claiming asylum, but rather they need also to be contributing to society through work.

The statement 'just get back' (l. 11) suggests that asylum-seekers can easily return ('just' return), which similarly ignores the reasons for them having to flee in the first place. However, whereas this type of reported speech can be heard as a form of racism or ignorance when associated with local people, when voiced by an asylum-seeker this takes on a slightly different role: it suggests a hard line on those who are unwilling to contribute to the UK, implying that the speaker places

importance on this form of contribution while also making a strong case for allowing asylum-seekers to work, as it would purportedly bring attention to those asylum-seekers who are unwilling to contribute and can, therefore, be assumed to be in the country illegitimately. However, as with the previous extract, it also implies that the right to asylum includes a requirement for people to contribute to the host society.

The interviewee goes on to provide further explanation for her position. Her argument draws on the concept of fairness: 'it's not fair to live you know without do anything' (l. 13). This construction implies that there is a transactional element to the provision of asylum: if someone gets asylum, then they must also contribute to the country of asylum. This is interesting as this is an argument in favour of the rights of asylum-seekers (that is, the right to work) but it draws on individualistic notions of contribution and payback rather than broader notions of international legal and moral obligations. The interviewee continues to make her case by highlighting that some people 'abuse [...] the system' (l. 14). Whereas this could be heard as bringing attention to fraudulent cases in order to justify tighter restrictions within the asylum system, here it functions to bolster the interviewee's own case – that is, she is legitimate whereas others may be illegitimate – and functions to justify increasing the rights of asylum-seekers.

As with extract 6.1, the argument draws on notions of the national interest: 'you have to understand you know these people here they are working hard (1.0) to build their country' (ll. 23–4) and 'we have to do the same things' (l. 32). Similar to the previous extract, which drew on the notion of 'contributing', here the extract suggests that asylum-seekers need to act like other members of the nation by 'working hard' and should, therefore, be allowed to work. Again the interviewee uses the word 'just' to suggest that something is easy to do: 'if you got the right to work just go and work' (l. 34). Together, then, the argument works by suggesting that asylum-seekers should be working, that it is easy to access work, that asylum-seekers who do not work should not be in the UK and, therefore, that the Home Office should allow asylum-seekers to work, particularly because this will draw attention to those who are using the asylum system in a fraudulent manner. Unlike extract 6.3, whereby working was clearly separated from the validity of someone's asylum claim, here the two are closely linked so that those who do not work are positioned as not belonging in the UK. This extract is particularly interesting because it draws on notions that are often used to argue against the presence of asylum-seekers and refugees (for

example, Lynn & Lea, 2003), but in this case argues for the extension of asylum-seeker rights.

It is also worth considering the relationship between the constructions evident in the last two extracts and the arguments supporting the presence of asylum-seekers and refugees based on the benefits they bring to the host society (Chapter 4). In the earlier chapter, asylum-seekers were sometimes portrayed in ways that legitimized their presence in the host society through the benefits that they bring. The extracts in this section illustrate the other side of the coin in the sense that not working constitutes asylum-seekers in negative ways – as 'spongers' (extract 6.4) or people who abuse the system (extract 6.5) – that delegitimize their presence. In extract 6.5, this specifically works by constructing the host society as being a place where people 'are working hard' (l. 23), so that people who do not work hard are construed as not belonging in the country. In this way, notions of *place-identity* (Durrheim & Dixon, 2005) can be seen to regulate both who belongs in a place and the sorts of policies to which people should be subjected.

Fairness and 'economic migrants'

Whereas the previous sections of this chapter have focused on the negative impact of unemployment and the arguments in favour of asylum-seekers working, this section considers the arguments against asylum-seekers' right to paid employment. More specifically, it addresses notions of fairness in relation to other members of the host society and makes greater reference to the relationship between seeking asylum and entering the country in order to access paid employment, which was referred to in the quote at the start of this chapter. This extract, from a Scottish local, comes after the interviewee had been stating that it was difficult for people to access paid employment in the local area and acknowledged that asylum-seekers are not allowed to work.

Extract 6.6: Local 8 (Scotland)

1.	SK	I was just wondering if um you had any views on that (1.9) like the fact that they're
2.		not like allowed to work (.) um (0.8) before they've (.) had their claim determined
3.	L8	(1.9) I personally feel as if (0.8) just (.) with the current climate it's probably the right
4.		way to go

5.	SK	okay
6.	L8	I do think with the fact that with the way things are jobs are so scarce (0.9) places I
7.		mean I was (0.6) laid off twice in two years (0.6) because of companies have folded
8.		(0.7) so (0.5) I do think (0.8) I would be extremely upset (0.7) if someone that didn't
9.		come from the country
10.	SK	mmm
11.	L8	(.) walked into a job that I could've had
12.	SK	ah I see =
13.	L8	= you know I I as I so I do feel (0.8) unless their (0.8) asylum's been (1.1) granted
14.	SK	mm-hmm
15.	L8	(0.6) then (0.6) no they should wait it out (0.7) maybe do voluntary, integrate
16.		theirselves, let people know that they're there and
17.	SK	mm-hmm
18.	L8	what they can do
19.	SK	okay
20.	L8	what they can do and I do feel that voluntary is (0.7) possibly the best way for them
21.		to go

(Kirkwood, 2012b, pp. 184–5)

Unlike most other interviews in our sample, in this extract the interviewee stated that disallowing asylum-seekers from working is 'probably the right way to go' (ll. 3–4). Importantly, she placed this within a specific context – 'the current climate' (l. 3) – which can be heard as implicitly referencing the current economic or employment climate (the years following the global financial crisis of 2008) and is made more specific when she says 'the way things are jobs are so scarce' (l. 6). Tempering the argument in this way works to present it as more reasoned; it is not simply the case that asylum-seekers should never be allowed to work, but rather it is external factors that make this the best course of action at the moment.

The case for this argument was further built up by drawing on the interviewee's personal experiences – 'I was laid off twice in two years' (l. 7) – which can be heard as both a negative experience for the interviewee and a reflection of an unfavourable job market. The personal reference works to make the argument more sympathetic as the interviewee then suggests they would be 'extremely upset (0.7) if someone that

didn't come from the country [...] walked into a job that I could've had' (ll. 8–11). The stated emotions suggest that the outcome would be hurtful and, therefore, unfair in some way. Furthermore, similar to some previous extracts (for example, extracts 6.1 and 6.5), embedded in this line of talk is the implication that jobs are tied to place in such a way that nationals of a country have a right to jobs, whereas people from other countries do not have the same claim to these jobs. Moreover, describing it as 'walked into a job' (l. 11) suggests that they would be able to gain the job with virtually no effort, therefore, suggesting that the person had not 'earned' it and thus it was not rightfully theirs.

As alternatives to paid employment, the interviewee lists a number of activities asylum-seekers 'should' get involved in (ll. 15–18). This includes voluntary work, integrating themselves, letting people know they're there and what they can do. Listing in this way gives the impression that there are a range of activities in which asylum-seekers could get involved; this is in contrast to the constructions in extract 6.5, whereby not working was equated with 'doing nothing'. Presenting the situation in this way suggests that asylum-seekers can still be active even if not in paid employment and presents this period as a reasonable lead-in to paid employment.

Overall then, this extract illustrates how the policy of preventing asylum-seekers from working can be supported through drawing on a context of an unfavourable employment environment, implying that jobs are naturally associated with members of a nation in a way that suggests people coming in from other countries gain jobs 'unfairly', and by presenting the 'waiting period' as consisting of opportunities to prepare oneself for the employment market and otherwise engage in society. Those who would otherwise access paid employment are positioned as acting 'unfairly' and potentially leading to antagonism from the host society.

The final extract in this section is taken from the interview with Professional 4, from whose interview extract 6.3 was taken. This extract offers an interesting contrast to the previous extract from the same interviewee, and illustrates one of the rare examples in our sample whereby someone who worked with asylum-seekers and refugees argued that asylum-seekers should not be given permission to work.

Extract 6.7: Professional 4 (Scotland)

1.	SK	what do you think um could be done to better help asylum-seekers and refugees in
2.		Scotland?

3. P4 (8.0) you see this is a difficult issue and I know of course th- th- top on top on the list
4. for debate is permission to work
5. SK right sure
6. P4 (1.0) but then if you (1.5) if you provide asylum-seekers (1.5) with permission to
7. work (.) you then open the door again to economic migrancy
8. SK okay
9. P4 and the abuse of the system
10. SK sure
11. P4 (.) and that's always been the argument
12. SK yeah
13. P4 and I I there's a (.) and I support (.) I sorta support that argument (1.0) it's it's a, it's a
14. DIFFICULT one
15. SK yeah
16. P4 because I've seen how as I've said before because I've seen how (.) the impact on
17. people who ↑I (2.0) sorta know are genuine- people who're genuinely fled (1.5)
18. horrific circumstances
19. SK yeah
20. P4 (2.0) and and the impact that it's had on on those people (.) the the whole abuse of (.)
21. the system for economic migrancy reasons

(Kirkwood, 2012b, p. 187)

When asked about what could be done to better help asylum-seekers and refugees, the interviewee suggested that permission for asylum-seekers to work is 'top on the list for debate' (ll. 3–4). This form of expression highlights that this is a potential way of helping asylum-seekers but, by portraying it as an issue for 'debate', he avoids giving it unmitigated support. He presents his arguments as balanced by weighing the potential immediate benefits to asylum-seekers against the potential abuse of the system this may allow (ll. 6–7). In particular, this is presented as potentially being responsible for greater 'economic migrancy' (l. 7), which can be heard as undesirable, and equated or associated with 'abuse of the system' (l. 9). In this way, the prevention of 'abuse of the system' is portrayed as a reasonable rationale for limiting the rights of all asylum-seekers; arguments along these lines

have also been identified in political discourse (Goodman & Speer, 2007).

In line 11, the interviewee uses a form of footing (Goffman, 1981), as he says 'and that's always been the argument', which allows him to distance himself from this argument to some extent and provide only partial agreement: 'I sorta support that argument' (l. 13). The interview highlights the complexity of weighing up the benefits with the problems, describing this as a 'difficult issue' (l. 3) and a 'DIFFICULT one' (l. 14), which functions as a way of putting off a commitment to either side of this 'issue'. Ultimately he is able to withhold his full support for providing permission to work due to the negative consequences that he has 'seen' (l. 16) this have on people he believes have fled persecution. In a process described by Lynn and Lea (2003, p. 432) as 'differentiating the Other', the category of people who 'abuse' (l. 20) the asylum system becomes a category of person who poses a threat to the UK as well as to genuine refugees, and unintended harm to asylum-seekers is justified by the need to ensure that economic migrants do not enter the country under false asylum claims. As with the same interviewee's extract earlier in this chapter (extract 6.3), here the interviewee manages his position in part by displaying empathy for 'people who're genuinely fled (1.5) horrific circumstances' (ll. 17–18), and it is this separation between those who are 'genuine' and those who enter the UK for the purposes of 'economic migrancy' that helps to legitimize the restriction of all asylum-seekers' access to paid employment.

Summary and conclusions

The analyses in this section illustrated a range of ways in which interviewees could argue for or against the right of asylum-seekers to work. In particular, arguments in favour of asylum-seekers' right to work constructed asylum-seekers as skilled and willing to work, whereas the Home Office was constructed as being a problem. Some of these extracts carefully managed issues around the construction of asylum-seekers as potential economic migrants; for instance, asylum-seeker interviewees managed this by constructing themselves as willing to work without pay, and a professional interviewee distinguished between a person's reasons for entering the UK and immigrants' general disposition towards working. The right to work was also justified in terms of the potential benefits to the country, its ability to counter isolation and its potential to alter the negative perceptions of asylum-seekers as 'spongers'.

Arguments against the right to work either drew on the notion that jobs belonged to people of a particular country and, therefore, asylum-seekers had no right to them, or that allowing asylum-seekers to work would encourage 'economic migrants' to enter the UK through the asylum system. These constructions have consequences in terms of the way asylum-seekers are discursively positioned – for instance, as skilled and motivated, or as 'spongers' and potential frauds – that may function not only to justify particular policies within the asylum system, but also to reinforce or challenge negative views among the public.

This type of construction is closely related to the policy of preventing asylum-seekers from accessing paid employment. In particular, the UK Visas and Immigration agency (2014) states that asylum-seekers are not allowed to work on the grounds that this would encourage people to use the asylum system in order to access the UK for economic reasons. In this regard, some of the interview extracts seemed oriented to challenging this argument. For instance, a refugee portrayed himself as skilled, qualified and experienced, and as willing to work on a voluntary basis. This type of construction counters the portrayal of asylum-seekers both as a 'drain' on society and as being in the UK for economic reasons. That is, having the skills necessary for working portrays asylum-seekers as not needing to be reliant on benefits, while portraying them as being willing to work without pay suggests they are not in the host society for economic reasons. In this regard, the government was positioned as preventing asylum-seekers from working and thereby operating against the interests of the nation. Alternatively, the dichotomy between genuine refugees and economic migrants could be deconstructed by suggesting that all migrants have a general drive towards working and being employed, and that this exists independently of people's reasons for entering the UK. In this way, the issue of employment and the basis of people's asylum claims are separated.

It was interesting to note that the idea that some asylum-seekers were 'abusing' the asylum system could be used to argue for or against the right to work. For instance, one refugee argued that asylum-seekers had an obligation to contribute to the country and that, if they did not contribute, then they should be returned to their country of origin, thus portraying the right to work as bringing attention to those in the country fraudulently. Alternatively, in line with the UK Visas and Immigration agency (2014) statement, one interviewee argued against the right to work on the grounds that it could encourage people to use the

asylum system to access the UK for economic purposes. Both of these arguments position asylum-seekers as potentially 'bogus' or as potential 'economic migrants', and yet argue for or against the extension of their rights in the UK.

It is worth noting that the hostile themes of asylum-seekers being a drain on society and as entering the UK for economic reasons rather than because they are persecuted (Leudar et al., 2008) are contradictory in such a way that they position asylum-seekers negatively regardless of their situation. That is, those who are reliant on benefits are positioned as a drain on society while those who work are potentially positioned as economic migrants rather than 'genuine refugees'. The argument that asylum-seekers should be allowed to work in order to 'contribute' to the host society, while arguing in favour of access to employment, simultaneously reinforces the idea that those who do not work are 'sponging' off the host society. In this regard, it is worth noting how the first two extracts in this chapter positioned asylum-seekers as desiring work, including voluntary work, as a way of countering both the suggestion that asylum-seekers are a 'drain' on society or that they are 'economic migrants' in disguise. Moreover, drawing on the interests of the nation (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001) works to criticize the policy of preventing asylum-seekers from working and shift the focus off the wishes of individual asylum-seekers and onto the needs of the country as a whole. This illustrates some of the ways that people are able to counter the 'enforced idleness' of asylum-seekers (Leudar et al., 2008). We return to these arguments in Chapter 9 in focusing on some particularly harsh and traumatic aspects of the asylum system: destitution, detention and forced return.

Activity box

Rights regarding access to paid employment tend to play a key part in immigration policies. Identify materials that relate to this issue – for example, find a political speech or parliamentary debate on employment and immigration/asylum policy. How are arguments about access to employment constructed? How are asylum-seekers and other migrants portrayed in these debates? What does this tell you about the relationship between paid employment, citizenship and belonging?

Further reading

Leudar, I., Hayes, J., Nekvapil, J. & Baker, J. T. (2008). Hostility themes in media, community and refugee narratives. *Discourse & Society, 19*, 187–221.

This study highlights the relationship between media, refugee and locals' accounts of asylum-seekers, with a focus on the production of discourses that are hostile towards asylum-seekers.

Goodman, S., Burke, S., Liebling, H. & Zasada, D. (2014). 'I'm not happy, but I'm OK': How asylum-seekers manage talk about difficulties in their host country. *Critical Discourse Studies, 11*, 19–34.

This study explores how asylum-seekers produce complaints about their situation in the host society, while also managing the presentation of their own circumstances.

7

Relationships with Local Residents – Antagonism, Racism and Belonging

> We expected a land without war and, I suppose, a land without misery.
>
> (Eggers, 2006, p. 13)

Introduction

Research has found that public attitudes in the UK towards asylum-seekers and refugees are characterized by ambivalence and can include open hostility (Kushner, 2006; Lewis, 2005, 2006). More worryingly, many refugees and asylum-seekers in the UK have experienced discrimination or harassment (Bowes, Ferguson & Sim, 2009; Mulvey, 2011), including some high-profile murders, such as that of Firsat Dag in Glasgow in 2001 (Coole, 2002). However, there have also been instances where members of the local community have come together with asylum-seekers and refugees and advocated on their behalves (Bates & Kirkwood, 2013). As reflected in the quote above from Valentino Achak Deng, a refugee from Sudan, those fleeing persecution would hope to find peace and happiness in their place of asylum. So what do our interviewees have to say about relations between asylum-seekers, refugees and local residents?

While the previous chapters have explored general arguments about the rights of asylum-seekers and refugees to belong or to access employment, this chapter brings greater attention to the public perception of their presence in the UK and to relations between them and other members of the local population. It is important to analyse their accounts, as they are likely to justify or challenge particular sets of social relations in the host society and, therefore, impact on asylum-seekers' and

refugees' experiences. Moreover, the way in which they are constructed may justify particular policies for changing attitudes and/or allocate blame in particular ways.

First, the chapter addresses local residents' accounts of the public perception of asylum-seekers and refugees before moving on to asylum-seekers' and refugees' own accounts of these perceptions, ending by addressing asylum-seekers' and refugees' experiences of violence and harassment in the host society. Key questions for our research are: How do people describe the motivations of those who are antagonistic towards asylum-seekers and refugees? Do they condemn it? Do they excuse it? Do they portray it as racist?

Previous research suggests that ethnic majority group members may deny the existence of racism (for example, Augoustinos & Every, 2010; Condor, Figgou, Abell, Gibson & Stevenson, 2006). However, little discursive research has explored minority group members' views on, or experiences of, racism (for exceptions, see Colic-Peisker, 2005; Kirkwood, McKinlay & McVittie, 2013a; Stokoe & Edwards, 2007; Verkuyten, 2005). Some research suggests that minority group members, including refugees, may deny or play down the existence of discrimination, and this may function to justify their presence in the society, emphasize the role of individual responsibility and highlight the scope for social mobility (Colic-Peisker, 2005; Verkuyten, 2005). Furthermore, other discursive research has shown that making accusations of racism is a very sensitive act that may reflect negatively on the accuser (for example, Chiang, 2010; Every & Augoustinos, 2007; Goodman, 2010; Goodman & Burke, 2010; Riggs & Due, 2010). This chapter addresses the question directly, exploring how asylum-seekers, refugees and local residents describe and account for antagonism on the part of the host society.

Local residents' views on the public perception of asylum-seekers and refugees

This first section explores local residents' accounts of the public perception of asylum-seekers and refugees. The first extract is broadly typical of many of our interviewees' responses to questions about the public's views on asylum-seekers and refugees in that it presents the public perception as being previously hostile but now much improved, and suggests there is still an antagonistic minority whose views are influenced by ignorance.

Extract 7.1: Professional 5 (Scotland)

1.	SK	how do you think the local community perceives asylum-seekers and refugees?
2.	P5	(4.7) probably if you were goin' back the way (.) at the time (.) it was, they got
3.		everythin' (1.0) em (1.2) I don't think it's perceived like that noo (.)
4.	SK	okay
5.	P5	they're part of the community
6.	SK	right
7.	P5	(1.0) em (1.0) it might not <u>be</u> the way we would like it to be (1.2) but they are part of
8.		the community↑
9.	SK	mm-hmm
10.	P5	and people have accepted that↑
11.	SK	right yep
12.	P5	they're here (0.5) they have the- (.) they have other houses now (.) coz they've went
13.		from asylum-seeker to refugee (.) as I say you still have your <u>mi</u>nority (.) that em
14.		(1.5) don't agree wi' people being here
15.	SK	mm-hmm
16.	P5	(0.8) but not even that, I think it's just that they're ignorant (.)
17.	SK	right=
18.	P5	=and don't know the facts
19.	SK	sure, okay
20.	P5	(1.0) but I do think the biggest majority of people are are (1.5) part of the community
21.		now

(Kirkwood, 2012b, p. 104)

In lines 2–3, the interviewee draws on a perception, which was indeed very similar to the arguments put forth by some others in our sample, that 'they got everythin''. This construction implies that the asylum-seekers were easily and unfairly getting resources that might better be allocated to locals; voicing this position allows the speaker to distance herself from it and, therefore, present it as a position that may be criticized (Buttny, 2003). Moreover, the view is presented in a narrative

that suggests this it was held by people in the past but is no longer held, and this change is partly explained by stating 'they're part of the community' (l. 5). Placing asylum-seekers inside the notion of the community presents an alternative to a 'them and us' construction, whereby, for instance, resources that go to asylum-seekers are portrayed as being wrongly allocated, and should instead be going to 'locals' who are part of the community (Lynn & Lea, 2003). Furthermore, it presents the interests of asylum-seekers and 'locals' as coinciding through their joint position within the 'community', thus overcoming 'zero sum' presentations of the situation. Embedded in this construction is the implication that the allocation of resources to people not from the community is potentially problematic; the speaker deals with this problem by presenting asylum-seekers and refugees as belonging to the community.

The interviewee also discusses the 'minority (.) that em (1.5) don't agree wi' people being here' (ll. 13–14), thereby acknowledging the presence of an alternative view, but discrediting it to some extent by presenting it as a 'minority' and, therefore, lacking the legitimacy that comes with widespread support. Interestingly, the description is changed from those who 'don't agree wi' people being here' (l. 14) to 'I think it's just that they're ignorant [. . .] and don't know the facts' (ll. 16 and 18). This changes this group of people from being those who have a fundamental view that is against the presence of asylum-seekers and refugees to those who simply are not in possession of the full and accurate facts. This construction – common across many of our interviews – presents the dissenting minority as both less morally culpable for their views and as having the potential to change. Their moral culpability is reduced as there is an implication that, if they did not have the necessary information, then it is not their fault. In contrast, holding strong views against the presence of 'foreigners' when in possession of all the facts implies that the people are prejudiced and, therefore, responsible for such morally intolerant views, or that asylum-seekers and refugees really do not belong in the host society. Moreover, this construction works by implying that, if people do have access to accurate information, then they will accept asylum-seekers and refugees as being part of their community, as well as implying that asylum-seekers and refugees really do belong.

Overall then, this construction works by creating distance from and criticizing the view that asylum-seekers unfairly receive resources, constructing them as part of the community and, therefore, as legitimate recipients of support, and by undermining those who disagree with their

presence by presenting them as a minority who are not in possession of the facts. The following extract provides a more specific account of the potential conflict in relation to employment; in this case the account provides a more negative construction of some members of the local population. The extract follows a section of the interview in which the interviewee stated that some people at his work expressed negative views towards asylum-seekers.

Extract 7.2: Local 1 (Scotland)

1.	SK	why do you think it is you know some of the people (.) who have said some negative
2.		things, why do you think that they do have those negative views?
3.	L1	(0.6) most of the people at my work (0.8) work and we're all chasing work all the
4.		time and we're all chasing (.) big money
5.	SK	right
6.	L1	(0.8) and I think they're jealous that somebody else has come across and stole their
7.		work
8.	SK	okay
9.	L1	(0.7) I don't think they actually understand that these people have got problems at
10.		their home (0.7)
11.	SK	right
12.	L1	(0.6) I don't think they understand if they send all the British home from these
13.		countries (.) maybe these people could stay in their country and work heh (.)
14.	SK	ri(h)ght
15.	L1	(0.6) you get sorta (1.7) I think some people don't think before they open their mouth
16.		(.) they just think selfishness, me me me and then just slag off the rest of the world (.)
17.	SK	right=
18.	L1	=who need help

(Kirkwood, 2012b, pp. 110–11)

The response from local 1 constructs local people as working and also highlights the active nature of their attempts to access paid work: 'we're

all chasing work all the time' (ll. 3–4). The negativity is then explained with reference to the emotions, specifically being 'jealous' (l. 6), that comes with other people getting work when they are trying to get it. Importantly, gaining work is presented as them having 'stole their work' (ll. 6–7). This combines a possessive sense in which the work rightfully 'belongs' to the locals the interviewee is discussing, with the implication that refugees accessing this work is morally wrong. An 'us and them' construction is built into this line of argument: the 'we're' (l. 3) and 'they're' (l. 6) is contrasted with 'somebody else [who] has come across' (l. 6) and draws on implicit references to different national groups in terms of coming across from overseas (Billig, 1995; see Classic text box), therefore, suggesting that work in the UK naturally belongs to British people and should not be 'taken' by people from other countries.

This construction is not challenged by the interviewee; rather, he suggests that the people who hold negative views of asylum-seekers and refugees don't 'understand that these people have got problems at their home' (ll. 9–10). In a way these two discursive constructions hit on two potential portrayals of asylum-seekers: as those who come for economic reasons or those who come due to facing persecution in their countries of origin (see also Chapter 6). These also relate to the level of culpability in arriving in the UK: if they came for economic reasons, then they were responsible for choosing to come; if they came due to reasons of persecution, then they are not 'blameworthy'. Built into this argument is the implication that the jealousy is to some extent warranted, or at least understandable, and thus the jobs rightfully belong to British people. The local people are then faulted not for their logic but rather because they are not in possession of the facts. As with extract 7.1, presenting the negative views as being due to a lack of information reduces the culpability of the locals, while also legitimizing the presence of asylum-seekers and refugees by implying that a fuller understanding of the situation of asylum-seekers results in agreeing with their right to be in the UK.

The interviewee reinforces the view that work belongs to nationals through suggesting that asylum-seekers and refugees could stay in their own countries if the British people left. Furthermore, this suggests that British people hold some responsibility for asylum-seekers being in the UK and, therefore, should not hold negative views towards them. Similar to the construction that suggests ignorance is the cause, suggesting that locals 'don't think' (l. 15) implies that a correct view would result in people supporting the presence of asylum-seekers, but also puts more culpability on local people, who are responsible for the extent to which they 'think' about the issue. Moreover, this lack of thinking has a moral

aspect, as people are presented as being 'selfish' (l. 16) and, therefore, not thinking of others, in particular those 'who need help' (l. 18). Thus this construction works by presenting asylum-seekers as being in need of refuge, locals as having some responsibility for thinking of others, the UK as being responsible for offering protection to refugees and, therefore, the negative views of locals being wrong and unjustified.

Classic text

Billig, M. (1995). *Banal Nationalism*. London: Sage.

Michael Billig's text presents a thorough analysis of the way that aspects of nationalism are evident, if implicit, in everyday aspects of contemporary life. It highlights how 'the nation' is often taken for granted – such as in references to 'the Prime Minister' or 'the weather', and in symbolism such as flag waving – and explores its consequences.

Refugees' and asylum-seekers' views on the public perception of asylum-seekers and refugees

This section builds on the previous one by examining asylum-seekers' and refugees' own accounts of their public perception. This extract is from a refugee and illustrates how the types of constructions and arguments that were evident among the interviews with local residents were also present in the interviews with refugees. This extract comes during the interviewee's discussion of the public's misunderstanding of, and negative views towards, refugees and asylum-seekers.

Extract 7.3: Refugee 4 (Scotland)

1. R4 you know I don't quite blame the people really it's
2. SK mm-hmm
3. R4 I think the media (0.8) s:ome of the media people they just horrible and the way they
4. write (0.8) stories about asylum-seekers and refugees is=
5. SK =right=
6. R4 =just (1.2) it's not in a good light at all you know make people feel (1.5) probably

7. angry or so jealous, probably think oh asylum-seekers are getting everything
8. SK right=
9. R4 =you know this like that that (1.0) make people angry they're like well I'm here I
10. can't even get a house (0.8) why is this guy coming from nowhere and just all of a
11. sudden has got a house you know=
12. SK =mmm
13. R4 (.) it- and you can understand this
14. SK mmm
15. R4 (.) w:w- uh h- (.) how (.) maybe I would've felt the same thing if I was in my country
16. and (.) but it's all about understanding first, you know you need to be (.) I think the
17. people need to be educated
18. SK mm-hmm
19. R4 (1.5) on the realities of (0.8) people like us coming here
20. SK mmm
21. R4 (0.8) I'm not gonna say all asylum-seekers are genuine (.) it's not for me to say
22. SK sure
23. R4 but (1.0) there are real people with real trouble coming here
24. SK yeah
25. R4 and I think the (1.2) the media and the government or whatever should do more in
26. telling people the facts, the truth
27. SK yeah
28. R4 (0.6) and not (.) make asylum-seekers as (1.8) bad people or=
29. SK =right
30. R4 you know people like ourselves (1.4) I blame the media more
31. SK okay
32. R4 not educating or the government not educating you know people

(Kirkwood, 2012b, pp. 115–16)

In this extract the interviewee specifically addresses the issue of 'blame' (l. 1) in terms of the responsibility for the public's negative views

towards refugees and asylum-seekers. As with previous extracts that referred to ignorance, here the interviewee suggests that the public are not totally culpable for their views. Specifically, he states that the 'media' (l. 3) play a role in creating this negativity, suggesting that the media writes stories that are 'horrible' (l. 3) and 'not in a good light' (l. 6) which implies they distort the truth. The inference is that the public are responding to an untrue representation of asylum-seekers and refugees; the public are thus presented as not culpable due to having been misled.

The use of reported speech both portrays these views as real and allows the speaker to evaluate their validity (Buttny, 2003): 'they're like well I'm here I can't even get a house (0.8) why is this guy coming from nowhere and just all of a sudden has got a house' (ll. 9–11). The use of the rhetorical question both suggests that there is no good answer to the question – that is, it is obviously unfair that a house is being allocated to someone who has just come into the country – and that the speaker does not know why asylum-seekers are coming to the UK. In particular it is the use of 'nowhere' and 'just all of a sudden' (ll. 10–11) that suggest a lack of knowledge and rational explanation for the state of affairs; there is a lack of any content regarding the circumstances from which asylum-seekers are fleeing, and the moral or legal justifications for providing support. This lack of knowledge turns the seemingly rhetorical question into a question that has an answer, and indeed the solution that the interviewee puts forth – 'people need to be educated' (l. 17) – implies that the question can and should be answered through education about the 'realities' (l. 19), which would allay these negative feelings. The construction of empathy – 'maybe I would've felt the same thing if I was in my country' (l. 15) – creates a commonality between the interviewee and locals, suggesting that the locals' views are understandable, in a way that portrays locals in a positive light while also portraying the speaker as fair-minded.

However, the upshot is given in such a way that it trumps these negative attitudes: 'but it's all about understanding first' (l. 16). This suggests that, in the end, people need to understand each other, which involves education, so that negative views based on distortions of the truth are ultimately indefensible. The extract ends with a clear allocation of responsibility on the media/the government – 'I blame the media more [...] not educating or the government not educating you know people' (ll. 30–2) – that is explicit about the cause of negative views among the local population, and builds upon the way in which the reality of asylum-seekers and the role of media are constructed. Overall,

the extract portrays asylum-seekers as not coming to the UK for economic reasons, yet some local people believe this to be the case (or for them to be receiving benefits unfairly), and that the responsibility resides with the media and the solution is education. This builds commonality between asylum-seekers and locals, and provides a level of empathy for the views of locals, although ultimately they are constructed as being misguided. Placing the source of the problem as being external to both asylum-seekers and local people links the two groups together (that is, they have both been negatively affected by the media) in a way that usefully highlights their common situation (Kirkwood, Liu & Weatherall, 2005). This analysis illustrates how some aspects of the discourse produced by the locals and professionals are also evident in the interview responses from the refugees and asylum-seekers, and that these function to condemn the negative views while carefully managing criticisms of the local people themselves. The next extract builds upon these issues while also specifically addressing the issue of racism.

Extract 7.4: Refugee 10 (Scotland)

1.	SK	how do you think um asylum-seekers and refugees are perceived by the local
2.		community?
3.	R10	(5.5) mm-mmm heh heh (0.6) that's quite a tough one [heh]
4.	SK	[okay] nah just whatever
5.	R10	heh=
6.	SK	=heh
7.	R10	yeah no (2.0) I mean it's (1.0) it also depends just on the mentality of the people
8.	SK	[okay]
9.	R10	[yeah]
10.	SK	yep
11.	R10	(0.8) there's some people who are (0.8) no trouble at all, there will be no problems
12.	SK	yeah
13.	R10	(.) with (.) asylum-seekers
14.	SK	yeah
15.	R10	(.) mm (1.0) you will tell them oh I'm an asylum-seeker (0.8) they're happy that
16.		you're here heh=

17. SK =sure yeah
18. R10 yeah (.) but there's other people again (2.2) they're not happy (.) eh (1.5) it's em (1.0)
19. like those who are happy (.) who are not happy (.) about it, they just s- see you (1.0)
20. as a person (.) who has probably come over to take something out of the country
21. SK yeah
22. R10 but every day you don't take anything you know heh=
23. SK =right yeah=
24. R10 =mm but that's the way they they see you
25. SK mmm
26. R10 as maybe someone's (come to go a) job or get the benefits or things like that you
27. know=
28. SK =yeah
29. R10 mm (1.0) and that's (.) the negative (1.0) thing that most of the some- some or a few
30. (.) people in society have towards [the]
31. SK [yeah]
32. R10 asylum-seekers (1.2) mm (1.0) I know most of it's it's not- it's got nothing to do with
33. your (0.8) colour or y-
34. SK °oh okay°
35. R10 mm
36. SK °right°
37. R10 it's just a minority those who just think that (1.6) you just coming in to get a job or
38. things like that heh

(Kirkwood, 2012b, pp. 120–1)

The hesitation in answering the question and describing it as 'quite a tough one' (l. 3) presents the question as being problematic; in particular, the idea that there is a homogeneous perspective that can be applied to the local community, or even that there is a clear sense of what constitutes 'the local community' (ll. 1–2) is resisted. The idea of a unitary perspective on asylum-seekers by the 'local community' is more explicitly challenged through the interviewee stating that it 'depends just on the mentality of the people' (l. 7), suggesting individual variation within the community while locating the cause of that perception as resting on a psychological aspect: their 'mentality'. The local community is then

divided into two groups of people: those who are 'happy that you're here' (ll. 15–16) and those who are 'not happy' (l. 18). The perspective of those who are 'not happy' is described in further detail in lines 19–20: 'they just see you (1.0) as a person (.) who has probably come over to take something out of the country'. The use of 'just' implies that this perspective is limited; it does not take account of the full picture. The unhappiness is then associated with a view that asylum-seekers are taking things from the country; when this is challenged ('but' l. 22), rather than it being suggested that it is not right to think this, it is suggested that it is wrong because the asylum-seekers 'don't take anything' (l. 22). This implies that there is some legitimacy in being unhappy about people taking things out of the country; rather, the problem is that, in this case, it is not true.

This is continued further in lines 26–7, as it is suggested that people see asylum-seekers as taking jobs or benefits. The interviewee then orients to the suggestion that the negative views of some locals may be due to racism, as he says that 'I know most of it's it's not- it's got nothing to do with your (0.8) colour' (ll. 32–3). In line with several of the previous extracts, this argument places the responsibility or cause of the negative views as lying with a perception of the unfair access to resources to asylum-seekers. Placing responsibility on a false perception suggests that the negativity is not due to inherent racism and is amenable to change (that is, through being aware of the 'truth' that asylum-seekers are not in the UK to 'take' things). Moreover, stating that it is 'just a minority' (l. 37) who hold the negative attitudes avoids making a negative evaluation of the local community in general.

This analysis is in line with previous discourse research that has suggested making claims about racism is delicate and can have negative consequences for the speaker (Augoustinos & Every, 2010; Goodman & Burke, 2010), and that members of ethnic minority groups may argue against the presence of racism in ways that portray positive social change as possible (Verkuyten, 2005). In this case, asylum-seekers may have to manage the dilemma of referring to experiences or attitudes that could be understood as racist, yet making negative assessments of the whole local community could itself be seen as prejudice or being over-sensitive (Goodman, Burke, Liebling & Zasada, 2014; Kirkwood, 2012a). It would also suggest that the problem of integration of asylum-seekers is difficult to address, or even that asylum-seekers cannot have a place in the local community, due to inherent racism (Colic-Peisker, 2005). The arguments and

constructions put forth by the interviewee, therefore, manage this dilemma by associating the problem with distorted perceptions among a minority of the local community, explicitly denying the existence of racism.

Refugees' and asylum-seekers' experiences of violence and harassment

This section extends the analysis by focusing on how the asylum-seekers and refugees talked about being on the receiving end of violence or harassment in the host society. The next extract, therefore, deals with a refugee's account of having things thrown at him; this extract is from a section of the interview in which the interviewee was providing an account of his experiences in Glasgow and includes a comparison of two different parts of Glasgow in which he lived.

Extract 7.5: Refugee 4 (Scotland)

1.	R4	I had no troubles in ((a different part of Glasgow)) you know but when I came
2.		here (3.0) you know (.) I get- I started getting people calling me names and stuff
3.	SK	um=
4.	R4	=okay
5.		(1.2) throwing stuff at me, sometimes you know when I when I would be walking
6.		down this road (1.6) some bored people are up there (.)
7.	SK	yeah=
8.	R4	=you know when you'd walk past they're throw things at [you]
9.	SK	[right]
10.	R4	and stuff like that (0.6) I'm thinking that's just (.) that's probably about (.) my
11.		colour or something like that, you have to think like this because there's no other
12.		reason (.) but some people are just bored they would probably=
13.	SK	=heh=
14.	R4	=do it to anybody you know

(Kirkwood et al., 2013a, p. 752)

This extract begins with the interviewee distinguishing between his relatively positive experiences in one part of Glasgow and his negative experiences in another: 'I had no troubles in ((a different part of Glasgow)) you know but when I came here ...' (l. 1). Limiting these negative experiences both temporally and geographically works to give reality to the abuse that he has received while avoiding the identity of someone who might be overly sensitive to such behaviour; that is, it is not simply that he 'feels' abused wherever he is, but rather the abuse is specific to this area. In line with previous research that highlights the sensitivity of making accusations of racism (Augoustinos & Every, 2010), making the claims area-specific avoids making a generalized statement about Scottish, British or Glaswegian people, something which could make the speaker seem overly sensitive (van Dijk, 1992).

It is worth noting the ways in which the incidents are described. That is, the descriptions consist of vague and generalized terms such as: 'people calling me names and stuff' (l. 2), 'throwing stuff at me' (l. 4) 'and stuff like that' (l. 9). Furthermore, the perpetrators are described as 'some bored people' (l. 5); this presents them in non-specific terms as well as suggesting that their motivations are mundane. This is in contrast to research by Edwards (2005), which suggested people tend to use detailed description and emphasize the culpability of others when working up an account in the form of a complaint. In this sense, the use of vague description and the de-emphasizing of the perpetrators' culpability functions to downplay the seriousness of the events and avoids constituting the account as a complaint or the interviewee as a 'complainer'.

This extract is particularly interesting in terms of the explanations for the abuse. More specifically, the extract contains two competing explanations for the behaviour: the interviewee's 'colour or something like that' (l. 10) or the people being 'just bored' (l. 11). The 'colour' explanation suggests that the behaviour was racially motivated and was due to attributes related to the interviewee. Alternatively, the 'bored' explanation suggests an attribute associated with the people who threw 'stuff'; the behaviour is portrayed as not racially motivated and the interviewee being targeted had nothing to do with his appearance or group membership.

There are several aspects of the 'colour' explanation that mark it out as being produced in a sensitive manner: stating 'I'm thinking' (l. 9) presents it as requiring consideration; 'that's probably about' (l. 9) portrays it as tentative; and saying 'or something like that' (l. 10) reduces the specificity of the explanation. Moreover, the interviewee goes on

to say: 'you have to think like this because there's no other reason' (ll. 10–11). This suggests both that the motivation of racism is the *last* explanation that someone would come to and also that it is an explanation that you are *forced* to take. The reality of this explanation is, therefore, built through eliminating other explanations and suggesting that it is one a person comes to only reluctantly, rather than, say, because they are generally inclined to see racism in a variety of behaviour. This is in line with previous discursive research that has highlighted the sensitivity and potentially problematic nature of making accusations of racism (for example, Chiang, 2010; Every & Augoustinos, 2007; Goodman, 2010; Goodman & Burke, 2010; Riggs & Due, 2010).

Interestingly, however, once this explanation is given as the only conceivable motivation, the interviewee produces the possibility that it may instead be related to boredom, and therefore is not racially motivated or specifically directed at him: 'but some people are just bored they would probably [...] do it to anybody' (ll. 11–13). This highlights the difficulty of making accusations of racially motivated behaviour: the explanation is given only tentatively, only as a last possible explanation, and then it is withdrawn. However, the tentative production and negation of the racism explanation is one way of making the racism explanation available without undermining the speaker's ability to make the claim through seeming too eager to apply it. In a sense, this allows the speaker to put the issue of racism 'in play' while avoiding the potentially problematic consequences of committing to an accusation of racist intent.

The analysis of the following extract extends the investigation of this issue through addressing an account of violence that incorporates comments on the interviewee's nationality, a case in which the issue of 'race' is made relevant and, therefore, potentially more difficult to deny. The extract is in response to a question about the contact that the interviewee has had with local people in Glasgow.

Extract 7.6: Refugee 13 (Scotland)

1.	R13	it is common in the world that maybe in ((R13's country of origin)) somebody
2.		(0.8) uh doesn't like (.) anybody from another country
3.	SK	right=
4.	R13	=that's true because they <u>did</u>n't know (.) why (.) we are here
5.	SK	mmm

6. R13 (.) sometimes they told me (.) black (.) come back in your country (1.0) uh and my
7. and my son has a problem (0.8) in the street front my eyes
8. SK yeah
9. R13 um that um (.) the the mmm Scottish uh student (.) um (1.8) uh kick my son with
10. glass (1.0) and (0.8) I told (0.8) why? (0.7) with (.) the Scottish people, why? (0.6)
11. and he told (0.8) mmm oh (0.6) you c- and you must (.) come back in your
12. country, why you is (.) come here? (1.0) and uh (.) I told uh (.) I saw this problem
13. (.) uh (.) in the the school his school and (.) um the police in his school (.) and uh
14. (0.6) his head teacher (0.8) told (.) this uh (1.3) uh student (0.8) is very bad (1.0)
15. and his wr- his behaviour is very bad (0.6) and uh I told (0.8) no he is good (1.0)
16. he didn't know (0.9) uh (1.3) about everything (1.0) my head t- his his teacher told
17. no (1.0) he is no only about racist (0.8) only but he is very bad in the school and
18. he must go out (0.8) for one week (1.0) when he go out for one week (1.0) my son
19. was crying (0.8) it was ((number)) (0.8) uh ((number)) years ago (1.0) and he was
20. crying and he told no my mum (0.6) uh I (.) my heart (0.9) hasn't (.) my heart uh
21. (.) tell me he must come back in the school (0.6) because my son is very (.) uh
22. sensitive (0.9) and uh we try (0.8) and we told why? (.) his head teacher told no
23. about you (0.8) he must stay in the house (.) about three (.) or uh four complained
24. that (.) they had problem (1.0) okay after that when he came back in the school
25. (0.8) my son made for him (0.7) a good relationship
26. SK °yeah°
27. R13 (0.8) and uh now (0.8) they are very good friend

(Kirkwood et al., 2013a, pp. 753–4)

This narrative is prefaced with a general statement about the ubiquity of prejudice: it is constructed as being 'common in the world' (l. 1), including the interviewee's country of origin. This serves to highlight the relevance of racism to the narrative which follows. Furthermore, by presenting this form of prejudice as common across different countries, it implies that the events the interviewee is about to describe are not necessarily specific to Scottish society. It, therefore, functions to avoid appearing to make a negative claim about Scottish society – which is particularly sensitive for someone who is reliant on the society for refuge, and generally runs the risk of undermining the speaker by suggesting they are prejudiced themselves – and to some extent reduces the culpability for racist behaviour as it is so common. Framing the account in this way, therefore, appears to serve two contradictory roles: it makes racism relevant, while also minimizing the culpability for racism.

As with most of the other extracts in this chapter, these negative views are linked to ignorance: 'they didn't know (.) why (.) we are here' (l. 4). This serves to reduce the blameworthiness of the people who are against asylum-seekers. Furthermore, it implies that the asylum-seekers have legitimate reasons for being in the host society and that, if the local people knew these reasons, then they would not be antagonistic.

The account of the violent incident is framed by, and includes references to, direct speech that invokes notions of skin colour and nationality, and is hearably racist: 'sometimes they told me (.) black (.) come back in your country' (l. 6) and 'you must (.) come back in your country, why you is (.) come here?' (ll. 11–12). This implies potentially racist motivations on the part of the student who attacked her son. Furthermore, it draws on notions that people 'belong' to particular countries and that being outside of 'your' country is a legitimate matter for question; in this regard it reinforces the interviewee's previous comment that 'they didn't know (.) why (.) we are here' (l. 4) and, therefore, implies some level of ignorance on the part of the student. The actual violent act – 'the mmm Scottish uh student (.) um (1.8) uh kick my son with glass' (ll. 9–10) – is not in itself described as racist, but rather the racial motivations are worked in both through framing the narrative in terms of people disliking others of different nationalities and by the reported speech that is hearable as racist talk. In this way, the narrative is presented as true – it happened in front of her eyes (l. 7) – yet is constituted solely of observable details. This allows the racial aspects to be understood by the hearer without the speaker having to deal with the problems of making an overt accusation of racist intent.

The racist aspects are further worked into the narrative by linking the evaluation of racial motivation to the head teacher, who says the student is 'racist' (l. 17). This relies on a form of footing (Goffman, 1981) that allows the interviewee to distance herself from this conclusion to some extent. The claim of racist motivation can be heard as having some legitimacy, given it is produced by a person in authority; yet the interviewee is able to avoid an endorsement of this evaluation, thereby avoiding the problems that are associated with making accusations of racism. More specifically, the interviewee contradicts the head teacher's portrayal of the student as 'very bad' (l. 14) and instead says 'no he is good (1.0) he didn't know (0.9) uh (1.3) about everything' (ll. 15–16). As with other extracts that portray the causes of negative behaviour towards asylum-seekers as stemming from ignorance, here the interviewee suggests that the student is essentially good, and bad behaviour related to a lack of knowledge should not be taken as an overall negative judgment of someone.

The interviewee goes on to work up a sense of empathy towards the student. For instance, this is achieved through describing her son crying and feeling in his 'heart' that the boy should be able to return to school (ll. 19–21). The genuineness of this claim is supported by stating that they later became 'very good friend[s]' (l. 27). This presents the interviewee and her family in a good light – specifically as compassionate – which works to remove any suggestion that they are prejudiced against Scottish people, and further that they support positive social change in instances of racism. In line with research by Verkuyten (2005) and Colic-Peisker (2005), this type of construction legitimizes the presence of asylum-seekers and refugees by illustrating how positive social change is possible, without which their ability to live in the host society would be compromised. As with the previous extract, this account also serves to put the topic of racism 'in play', while avoiding some of the problematic aspects of making direct accusations of racist motivations.

Summary and conclusions

This chapter has illustrated how the 'public perception' of asylum-seekers and refugees is constructed, as well as exploring asylum-seekers' and refugees' accounts of their experiences of violence and harassment in the host society. The analyses showed how negative views towards asylum-seekers are presented in terms of rational concerns over the allocation of scarce resources or access to employment. These constructions

draw on notions that resources and jobs rightfully 'belong' to members of the local community or the nation, therefore, implying that resistance to allowing asylum-seekers and refugees access is justified. However, these views can then be challenged by constructing asylum-seekers and refugees as 'part of the community', which legitimizes their access to resources, or highlighting the persecution they have had to flee, which implies they are not at blame for coming to the UK and, therefore, should not be viewed negatively for accessing employment. Negative views were also portrayed as belonging to an 'ignorant minority', which discredits them to some extent for not having the mandate of the majority, and attributing their antagonism to ignorance works to reduce their culpability while implying that their views are not justified by the truth and suggesting that there is scope for improvement.

These analyses have added to and reinforced previous discursive research that has highlighted the sensitivity of making accusations of racism (for example, Chiang, 2010; Every & Augoustinos, 2007; Goodman, 2010; Goodman & Burke, 2010; Riggs & Due, 2010). In line with Verkuyten (2005) and Colic-Peisker (2005), some of the accounts downplayed or denied the existence of racism through invoking ignorance as an explanation, producing the accounts in vague terms and suggesting other more general motivations for antagonistic behaviour. These types of accounts may emphasize the potential for positive social change, and imply that asylum-seekers and refugees have a place in the host society that would be problematized by acknowledging widespread and ingrained racism, while also putting the issue of racism 'in play' (Kirkwood et al., 2013a). However, they also appear to make racism 'disappear', meaning that it may be more difficult to identify or challenge. This raises questions about racism that are both *ontological* (what is racism?) and *epistemological* (how can you know whether something is racist?). For instance, an incident may be considered a racially motivated hate crime if the victim believes it to be racially motivated; but how might they know the motivations of the perpetrator and what sorts of social constraints may affect their reports of racist motivations given the apparent taboo on making accusations of racism, particularly in light of the analysis above? As Condor and colleagues (2006) have shown, defining certain behaviours as racist (or not racist) is a collaborative and interactional accomplishment. These complex issues highlight the importance of studying discourse for understanding relations between asylum-seekers, refugees and other members of the local population. The next chapter furthers this discussion by focusing on a concept that is central to this topic: integration.

Activity box

Search for online news articles that relate to asylum-seekers or refugees and include online comments from members of the public. How would you characterize the various views towards asylum-seekers and refugees? For those comments that are negative towards asylum-seekers and refugees, which would you describe as 'racist' or 'not racist'? Reflect on your reasons for categorizing the comments, and consider the implications for understanding and challenging racism.

Further reading

Kirkwood, S., McKinlay, A. & McVittie, C. (2013). 'They're more than animals': Refugees' accounts of racially motivated violence. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 52*, 747–762.

This article further develops some of the material presented in this chapter, with a specific focus on refugees' and asylum-seekers' accounts of experiencing violence in the host society.

Colic-Peisker, V. (2005). 'At least you're the right colour': Identity and social inclusion of Bosnian refugees in Australia. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 31*, 615–638.

This study explores issues of identity and discrimination among Bosnian refugees in Australia, highlighting the extent to which they may deny being victims of racism.

Part IV

Staying Here or Going Back

8
Refugees, Asylum-Seekers and Integration

> In a multicultural society marked by differences in culture, religion, class and social behaviour there cannot be just one mode of integration. The key question then becomes: 'integration into what'? Are we referring to integration into an existing ethnic minority, a local community, a social group, or British society?
>
> (Castles, Korac, Vasta & Vertovec, 2002, p. 13)

Introduction

The concept of integration is often used in academic literature, policy discussions, the media and everyday conversations when discussing the experiences of migrants. Despite (or perhaps because of) its wide use, the term is used in a variety of ways, some of which are contradictory. The word may be used in ways that are vague, and as highlighted by the above quote from Castles and colleagues (2002), this raises questions about what people are meant to integrate into exactly. Given its versatility and prominence, this chapter explores how the notion of 'integration' is used among people who are involved in this process, as asylum-seekers and refugees who experience 'integration' at first hand, as professionals who assist asylum-seekers and refugees with 'integration', and as local members of the community who do (or do not) 'integrate' with asylum-seekers and refugees in their area. By analysing the ways in which it is used, we should gain a better understanding of the rhetorical force of this concept as well as how certain accounts function to sustain, criticize or alter policies and social relations between asylum-seekers, refugees and local members of the host society.

In terms of social psychology, Berry's (1997; see Classic text box) acculturation framework uses the term 'integration' to describe one

possible *strategy* for people who come into contact with a different culture, whereby they engage with the majority culture while retaining aspects of their own culture. Within this framework, integration is contrasted with *segregation/separation*, where people maintain their own culture but do not engage with the majority culture, and *assimilation*, where people abandon their own culture while engaging with the majority culture. Castles and colleagues (2002) emphasized that integration does not only occur for the members of minority groups, but actively involves members of the majority group, in a *two-way* process of mutual change. Ager and Strang (2004) developed *indicators of integration,* a framework for understanding integration processes, and guidance policy and service provision. Within this framework, they outlined several dimensions of integration, including access to suitable employment, housing and education, health, social relationships, language, cultural knowledge, safety and rights. Within their framework, integration is both a *goal*, in terms of something that can be achieved, and a *process*, as something that is experienced over time (Strang & Ager, 2010). They highlight that 'integration' can apply to all members of a society, not only to people who have entered the country from outside.

Classic text

Berry, J. W. (1997). Immigration, acculturation and adaptation. *Applied Psychology: An International Review, 46*, 5–34.

John Berry's article provides a conceptual framework for understanding the experiences of people coming into contact with a different culture and has been hugely influential on social psychological research on this topic.

Especially given the various ways in which the concept 'integration' has been used, it seems appropriate to take a discursive approach to this topic in order to explore how these various constructions function. As argued by Dixon and Durrheim (2000), research on intercultural contact has tended to neglect the rhetorical functions of language when considering concepts like integration. In their analysis of the use of 'integration' in news articles on faith schools, Bowskill, Lyons and Coyle (2007) found that 'integration' was treated as being inherently good, despite it being used to justify different and even opposing policies.

Horner and Weber (2011) have also explored how the use of the term 'integration', while often seeming to be progressive, can include negative aspects, such as blaming migrants for their lack of integration and reinforcing a 'deficit' model of those who enter a new country by focusing on what they lack. Due to the centrality of the concept of integration to the settlement of asylum-seekers and refugees in the UK, this chapter focuses on how the interviewees constructed this notion in their responses, with a particular emphasis on the types of social relations these support and the responsibilities they imply.

The data presented in this chapter were chosen after a close reading of extracts in our sample that used the word 'integration' and were selected so as to identify variation in the way this term is used. This chapter focuses on responses from locals and professionals (including some who are asylum-seekers, refugees or migrants themselves), as these interviewees tended to use the term 'integration', whereas the refugees and asylum-seekers (other than those who were employed in a supportive role) usually did not. The chapter is divided so as to address three prominent themes within this data set: (1) the relationship between housing and integration; (2) culture and integration; and (3) the role of the local community in integration.

Housing and integration

The first extract in this chapter is from an interview with a Scottish local in which she discussed the problems with housing asylum-seekers in high-rise flats.

Extract 8.1: Local 8 (Scotland)

1.	L8	it's just not right (.) it's not- they wouldn't consider puttin' (2.5) a child out of care
2.		into there
3.	SK	right
4.	L8	so why put someone else that's <u>need</u>in' care in there (.) [that's just]
5.	SK	[mm-hmm]
6.	L8	my views on it again
7.	SK	yeah
8.	L8	you know it's just=
9.	SK	=mm-hmm
10.	L8	I just think it's wrong (.)

11. SK right=
12. L8 =and if they are gonna put them in there (.) then get back the concierge (0.6)
13. SK right
14. L8 (0.8) bring back some security- that feels secure and safe (.)
15. SK right
16. L8 I don't think they (.) flats are (.) very safe
17. SK okay (.) right
18. L8 they are not↓ (.) and every young (1.1) person that's got a (.) jail wish (.) shall we say
19. (.) is up they flats (.)
20. SK °okay°
21. L8 so it's (.) not fun (.) drugs and (.) drink and (.) all sorts go up there and it's a shame
22. SK yeah
23. L8 that's the only thing, and that that that feels wrong (.) there is not plenty of houses but
24. there is houses that they could've (1.2) helped with the integration (0.6) by putting
25. (0.6) maybe two families (.) in the one street (.) two families in another street (.)
26. rather than this (.) lump all families together and put them all up the high risers
27. SK right
28. L8 and I think that's what caused a lot of disquiet to start with
29. SK right
30. L8 it was like en masse

(Kirkwood, 2012b, p. 134)

This extract can be understood in terms of place-identity (Durrheim & Dixon, 2005), as it draws on particular constructions of place as well as the use of identity categories and descriptions that are relatively prescriptive in terms of who belongs where. In particular, the high-rise flats are constructed as incompatible with asylum-seekers and this is linked to the concept of integration. For instance, the interviewee draws equivalency between children who have been in care homes and asylum-seekers: 'they wouldn't consider puttin' (2.5) a child out of care into there [...] so why put someone else that's needin' care in there' (ll. 1–4). In this way, the identity of asylum-seekers and the place where they are housed are mutually constituted so as to criticize the housing policy. More specifically, asylum-seekers are constructed as being

vulnerable and 'needin' care' (l. 4), whereas the housing is constructed as being a place that is unsuitable for such people. This construction is given a form of moral weight through the interviewee's evaluation of the situation, as she says: 'it's just not right' (l. 1) and 'I just think it's wrong' (l. 10).

This argument is reinforced through the interviewee's construction of the flats as being unsafe (l. 16). In particular, the flats are associated with illegal behaviour and drug and alcohol misuse: 'and every young (1.1) person that's got a (.) jail wish (.) shall we say (.) is up they flats [...] drugs and (.) drink and (.) all sorts go up there' (ll. 18–21). Although previous discursive research has highlighted how asylum-seekers are often associated with criminality (for example, Leudar et al., 2008; Malloch & Stanley, 2005), it is interesting to note that here it is the host community, or specifically the housing, that is associated with criminality, so that in fact the asylum-seekers, through the contrast, are presented as *not* criminal. Whereas portraying asylum-seekers as potentially criminal may function to argue against their presence in the host country, here it is their supposed *lack* of criminality that functions to argue against their presence in the specific form of local housing.

In terms of place, the tall flats are then contrasted with 'houses' (ll. 23–4), which are deemed more appropriate for asylum-seekers. Here there is a spatial reference in terms of having the 'families' spaced out – 'maybe two families (.) in the one street (.) two families in another street' (l. 25) – in order to help integration. This is in comparison to the description 'lump all families together' (l. 26), whereby 'lump' can be heard negatively, particularly as seeming careless or without strategy and, therefore, not rational. Here also is a form of *systematic vagueness* (Edwards & Potter, 1992) in terms of the reference to 'disquiet' (l. 28) that was seen to result from the families being 'lumped' together in the 'high risers'. This has the effect of suggesting there was some negative reaction from the local community, and that this had to do with the way in which asylum-seekers were housed, without having to get into the specifics in ways that may be more easily challenged. It also has the effect of implying that having large numbers of asylum-seekers together – 'en masse' (l. 30) – causes a negative reaction in the local population. This is not necessarily a positive suggestion because, although it does not condone the response, it does not criticize it either and does imply that the mere presence of asylum-seekers can cause a negative response rather than, say, the negative response being due to racism or other unreasonable views.

The extract, therefore, constructs integration as relating to the spatial organization of people. In particular, the construction of asylum-seekers as vulnerable is contrasted with the construction of the high-rise flats as unsafe so as to argue against them being housed there. Furthermore, the concentration of asylum-seekers in one place is presented as being problematic and as playing a vaguely defined role in creating problems in intercultural relations. In this way, the constructions of place and integration work to advocate particular policies in relation to asylum-seekers, specifically a policy of dispersing asylum-seekers across communities.

The following extract, from a professional, also addresses the role of accommodation in integration but does so by contrasting the experiences of adult asylum-seekers with that of their children. This extract comes from a section of the interview in which the interviewee was talking about the contact between asylum-seekers and other members of the local population.

Extract 8.2: Professional 16 (Scotland)

1.	P16	it is about exposure, it is about integration, but it's also about us creating those
2.		opportunities for networking and integration [because]
3.	SK	[right]
4.	P16	I think people again because of their housing they have been ghettoized, they are
5.		alienated, they are isolated (.) I have to say that in my experience working with
6.		separated children now they do better, because they tend to be placed in residential
7.		units with Scottish children
8.	SK	oh I see
9.	P16	so from very very early on, in fact from immediately upon arrival they are thrown
10.		into (.) um a situation where they have to learn English really quickly, they do have
11.		to work out what's going on really quickly (.) obviously they're young people, they
12.		wanna go out, they wanna have fun, they wanna get clothes they want to go to the
13.		pictures they wanna do (.) so in fact they do it much better and much more quickly

14.		because they're forced into it and [they have]
15.	SK	[I see]
16.	P16	to fit into it whereas I think (.) still because of our housing policies, we have people
17.		who <u>are</u> ghettoized, who <u>are</u> alienated (.) and it's a bit more con<u>triv</u>ed actually trying
18.		to work out how to get people to integrate and it's a bit more (.) stilted, it's a
19.	SK	[right]
20.	P16	[bit more] controlled
21.	SK	yeah
22.	P16	whereas the kids do get on with it

(Kirkwood, 2012b, p. 137)

In lines 1–2, the interviewee suggests that contact between asylum-seekers, refugees and locals requires that people are exposed to each other, and suggests that it goes beyond this, in that opportunities need to be created in order for people to meet each other. In particular, saying 'but it's also about us creating those opportunities' (ll. 1–2) functions to highlight the responsibility of people other than the refugees and asylum-seekers; that is, other members of the local population, broadly defined, are portrayed as having a role to play in integration. In lines 4–5, the interviewee goes on to suggest that the way in which asylum-seekers have been housed has led to them being 'ghettoized', 'alienated' and 'isolated'. These results can be heard as negative, in the same way that the mode of 'segregation' in Berry's (1997) acculturation model is not merely a neutral way of describing a particular set of social relations, but also has obvious negative connotations. Moreover, in this case, the construction presents the 'housing' as being the agent in determining the integration process, so that it is the accommodation arrangements, rather than, say, the actions of asylum-seekers, that are portrayed as being responsible for the implied lack of integration.

In lines 4–10, the interviewee suggests that children who are separated from their families actually make better progress in terms of integration because they are forced into contact with Scottish children and are therefore required to learn English quickly. This contrasts with the previous construction of the segregation caused by standard housing policies, and together they suggest that the close proximity of people of different groups is important for integration, whether this is forced – 'they are thrown into [. . .] a situation' (ll. 9–10) – or more through people's own volition – 'opportunities' (l. 2). In lines 11–13, professional 16 constructs

the children in such a way to suggest that they actively seek out enjoyable and social activities: 'go out', 'have fun', 'get clothes' and 'go to the pictures'. Constructing children in this way suggests that they will naturally integrate more quickly through their social contact and desire to fit in; this implicitly suggests that the opposite may be true for adults, in that they are less naturally predisposed to such active social engagement and, therefore, integration (Kirkwood, McKinlay & McVittie, 2015). This is reinforced in lines 16–18, as those others are once again portrayed as 'ghettoized' and 'alienated' and, therefore, attempts at integration are more 'contrived' or artificial. The implication is that contact that occurs 'naturally' is more effective at assisting integration and is also hard to replicate.

Overall, this extract involves a complex set of constructions in relation to integration, accommodation and asylum-seeker identity. Specifically, housing policy is constructed as a determinant of integration so that geographical proximity is presented as a major driver of integration. Furthermore, adult asylum-seekers are constructed differently from young asylum-seekers, so that the young people are presented as more naturally disposed to activities that will lead to integration. Responsibility for integration (or lack, therefore) is thus shifted off adult asylum-seekers.

Integration and culture

While the previous section focused on the very concrete topic of housing, this section addresses the more abstract concept of culture and explores how it features in talk about integration. The following extract is from the interviewee's response to a question about how well asylum-seekers and refugees adjust to life in Scotland, and is in the context of a discussion about access to employment.

Extract 8.3: Professional 2 (Scotland)

1. P2 I think the success rate could be a lot higher if the attitude (1.0) of some members of
2. the community change (.)
3. SK mmm
4. P2 and if people have to understand that (1.0) um (3.0) these people are already here,
5. whether they like it or not, under international law, Britain are signed up (1.0) and

6.		they have to honour its obligation (0.8) and if they can understand that (1.5) they
7.		should rather be promoting integration (1.2) and that (1.0) integration is a two way
8.		process
9.	SK	mm-hmm
10.	P2	it's not (0.6) th- th- th- the majority culture (1.2) recolonizing the minority culture by
11.		forcing its meals its language its way of life on people

(Kirkwood, McKinlay & McVittie, 2014, p. 380)

In lines 1–2, the interviewee suggests that refugees and asylum-seekers would adjust to Scotland better if the attitudes 'of some members of the community' were improved, which places some responsibility for integration upon general members of the public. By then arguing in lines 4–6 that 'people have to understand' about the presence of asylum-seekers and refugees and the UK's legal obligations, he suggests that negative attitudes within the host society may be due to a lack of knowledge. As with some of the extracts analysed in Chapter 7, this construction suggests that these negative attitudes may disappear when people learn the 'truth' but also that there are other external responsibilities for bringing about these understandings, perhaps through campaigning and advocacy. By highlighting that asylum-seekers are 'here', the interviewee implies that it is not a question of keeping people out of the country or even removing them once they have arrived, but rather it is about dealing with them in the communities in which they have now come to belong. The mixture of legal and emotive language used to describe Britain's 'obligation' (l. 6) to refugees and asylum-seekers suggests that it is a legal requirement to provide sanctuary to refugees; therefore, not doing so would be criminal and thus unacceptable.

In lines 7–11, the interviewee constructs integration as a two-way process, challenging the standard approaches to acculturation which conceive change as mostly occurring among the minority group (Berry, 1997). Constructing integration as two-way suggests that, when there is contact between cultural groups, there is a responsibility on the host culture to change in some ways and/or that this contact will result in some change among the host culture. This challenges the implicit links between integration and assimilation that can be found in public discourse, whereby what is referred to as integration often holds the assumption that it is up to the incoming group to change (Bowskill et al.,

2007). In lines 10–11, the interviewee makes this challenge explicit, by arguing that integration is not about incoming people having the 'majority culture' forced on them. By describing this as non-consensual, using the descriptions of 'recolonizing' (l. 10) and 'forcing' (l. 11), the interviewee implies that being forced to take on another's culture entirely is unethical and that it is also a misconception of the process of integration.

Overall then, this extract constructs the host society as being at least partially responsible for integration through portraying Britain as having a legal and moral obligation to asylum-seekers and refugees. Moreover, integration is constructed as a two-way process through portraying one-way forms of integration as involving unethical elements of force. The following extract further develops the notion of two-way integration by highlighting the benefits that this brings.

Extract 8.4: Professional 3 (Scotland)

1.	SK	what amount of contact do um asylum-seekers and refugees have with other
2.		communitie:s or with other people from the same nationality and that sort of thing?
3.	P3	eh (.) hhh that's why I'm here (.) that's why my organization come to life (1.8) we
4.		are going to make integration to the community
5.	SK	okay
6.	P3	there must be still barriers and (2.0) I mean, are things and obstacles which is
7.		preventing the community to integrate with other people including the culture (.) the
8.		religion and things like that
9.	SK	sure
10.	P3	but (1.0) to be honest with you, when two communities or three communities or four
11.		communities come together (1.0) they will, what's it called? e:em (.) reconciling each
12.		other (0.8) if a community is learning from the other community their good side (0.6)
13.		they will draw- they clean out the other community's their bad- (.) bad culture or bad
14.		behaviour=
15.	SK	=right

16. P3 or bad things like that
17. SK yeah
18. P3 (.) so that is making the life very better

(Kirkwood et al., 2014, p. 384)

The interviewee answers the interview question about contact by suggesting this is the reason for his organization existing (l. 3). Specifically, he says that 'we are going to make integration to the community' (ll. 3–4), and thus equates intercultural contact with integration. The interviewee makes reference to various problems – including 'barriers' and 'obstacles' (l. 6) – which justify the existence of the organization through constructing and identifying issues that the organization will help to address. In this way, the interviewee answers the question by specifying that this issue – contact (or lack thereof) between asylum-seekers and others in the community – is specifically the problem that needs to be addressed. In doing so, the interviewee suggests that 'culture' and 'religion' (ll. 7–8) may constitute specific barriers in relation to integration. The interviewee, therefore, builds up integration as a problem in the sense that it is not happening without intervention.

However, from line 10, the interviewee goes on to reconstrue integration so that it is not simply a problem. In particular, starting with 'but (1.0) to be honest with you' (l. 10) signals that the subsequent account should be taken as a more fair and accurate assessment of integration (Edwards & Fasulo, 2006). This seeming contradiction suggests that the interviewee is managing a dilemma (van den Berg, 2003). More specifically, constructing integration as a problem may function to justify the existence of his organization, but it risks constituting asylum-seekers and refugees themselves as a problem. The interviewee then deals with this dilemma by presenting integration as something that is beneficial. Thus, in lines 10–12, the interviewee suggests that, when different 'communities' come together, it results in them 'reconciling each other'. This suggests that they bring themselves into friendly relations with each other and/or that they come together in a form of mutual agreement. In lines 12–16, the interviewee goes on to suggest that this process involves each side 'learning' about the good parts of the other communities and, therefore, 'bad culture or bad behaviour or bad things like that' are 'clean[ed] out'.

This construction extends the previous extract's portrayal of integration as two-way by highlighting the positive results of this process. Specifically, it suggests that two-way integration benefits all cultural communities, as the good aspects are shared and the negative aspects

are removed. Not only does it suggest that the incoming cultures have positive things to provide to the host society, but it suggests integration has inherent benefits for the host society and further emphasizes the importance of change on both parts. The interviewee then provides the upshot of this construction by suggesting that this process results in 'making the life very better' (l. 18).

Integration and the local community

While the first section focused on the situation of asylum-seekers and refugees, specifically in relation to housing, and the second section explored the role of 'culture', this section places greater attention on the role of the 'local community' in relation to integration. The next extract, from a professional, makes explicit reference to the conditions of the local community, in the context of a discussion about what could be done to better help asylum-seekers and refugees.

Extract 8.5: Professional 5 (Scotland)

1.	P5	I think (0.8) probably if we weren't here (1.8) then people would find it very difficult
2.	SK	right sure
3.	P5	(1.0) so probably that question would be (0.7) that they they'd still continue to fund
4.		(1.3) grassroots organizations that [deliver]
5.	SK	[sure]
6.	P5	that deliver em (1.0) vital services for (.) em the community
7.	SK	yeah (.) okay
8.	P5	(.) because it is about integration, it's no just about asylum and refugees it's also
9.		about
10.	SK	right
11.	P5	coz in the communities we live in we (.) we have (.) high deprivation and
12.		unemployment (.) drugs and alcohol misuse
13.	SK	right
14.	P5	so (1.0) it's not one lot of people you're trying to integrate, we have (.) whole
15.		communities (.)
16.	SK	yeah
17.	P5	that we're trying to integrate

(Kirkwood et al., 2014, p. 383)

As with the previous extract, here the interviewee answers the question in such a way as to justify the existence of her organization. In particular, she states that 'if we weren't here (1.8) then people would find it very difficult' (l. 1), suggesting that her organization is justified on the grounds that it helps people in the local area. In this way, the interviewee argues for the continuation of funding to her organization (ll. 3–6). In part, this is achieved through construing their work as involving the delivery of 'vital services for [...] the community' (l. 6). This construction works by not only portraying the work as essential, but also as being in the interests of the 'community'; the 'community' constitutes an appropriate beneficiary for activities in the local area, making this legitimate grounds for justifying the organization's existence.

What is particularly interesting about this extract is the way in which the interviewee goes on to explain how the work of the organization, and the notion of 'community' she is invoking, extend beyond the specific interests of asylum-seekers and refugees. She begins this by stating that 'because it is about integration, it's no just about asylum and refugees' (l. 8). This formulation implies that the issue of integration is also relevant to those who are not asylum-seekers and refugees. The interviewee develops this argument through highlighting some of the problems that exist in the local area: 'in the communities we live in we (.) we have (.) high deprivation and unemployment (.) drugs and alcohol misuse' (ll. 11–12). The construction of these problems suggests that the 'vital services for [...] the community' (l. 6) are needed for general members of the local community. In this way, the interviewee is able to construct integration as something that is needed for all members of the local community: 'it's not one lot of people you're trying to integrate, we have (.) whole communities [...] that we're trying to integrate' (ll. 14–17). In this way, the concepts of community, integration, the aims of the organization, and the needs of asylum-seekers and refugees are all brought together so that they are portrayed as compatible. That is, asylum-seekers and refugees are presented as part of the community, and the organization is presented as addressing integration, and both asylum-seekers/refugees and other members of the local population are presented as having issues that the organization helps to address under the auspices of integration.

This extract is particularly interesting, as it illustrates a construction of integration that challenges more assimilationist versions (Bowskill et al., 2007) and instead draws on an account that can be applied to anyone in the community, including non-migrants (Ager and Strang, 2004). Moreover, this account suggests that integration is not simply about integrating asylum-seekers and refugees with a pre-existing and

homogenous local community, but rather it also involves integrating members of the local community who are already present with each other. This provides a serious challenge to standard conceptions of acculturation, which tend to imply that incomers adapt to an already existing cultural community rather than also portraying the potential divisions within the host society or the need for non-migrants to become integrated with other locals (for example, Berry, 1997). This conception also has important consequences for practice: rather than asylum-seekers and refugees being the sole ‘client group’ for integration services, it is now potentially extended to cover any members of the local community, regardless of immigration status. This construction also addresses the potential perception that integration services are only for asylum-seekers and refugees, which may be a point of conflict between asylum-seekers and locals who see resources being ‘diverted’ to people coming into the area when a need already exists in the local community for assistance (Barclay, Bowes, Ferguson, Sim & Valenti, 2003; Wren, 2007).

The final extract in this chapter illustrates that Scottish locals may also construct integration as being two-way and may specifically criticize the one-way conception of integration. The extract follows a discussion in which the interviewee talked about issues asylum-seekers had in terms of integration and some of the ‘trouble’ that occurred when asylum-seekers were first dispersed to the area.

Extract 8.6: Local 8 (Scotland)

1. SK so you said there was a bit of trouble, what sort of form did that take?
2. L8 (1.0) there was eh (1.9) I think (1.1) because it’s quite socially deprived here (.)
3. people thought (.) that they were gettin’ things (.) for nothing (.) that they weren’t
4. gettin’ and that kinda caused a lot of (.) they get this (0.7) they get that, they get this
5. free that free
6. SK right
7. L8 we’ve got to do this, we don’t get this and it still does go on (.) quite a bit
8. SK mm
9. L8 (.) they don’t realize >I don’t know how many times< say they’ve organized a bus trip

10.		(1.4) people don't realize that they're welcome to go as integration (.)
11.	SK	right
12.	L8	they think integration means (0.8) just refugees
13.	SK	right okay
14.	L8	and they're- it's oh their kids get it for nothing (.) how do our kids not get it? (0.7)
15.		well they do
16.	SK	heh=
17.	L8	=ya bring them down into integration (0.8) then they will get it I think it's the word
18.		integration they don't get
19.	SK	ah okay
20.	L8	integration just means (0.6) refugee↑
21.	SK	right
22.	L8	to a lot of people round here
23.	SK	ah I see
24.	L8	↓so that's a bit o' a ↑shame but that's just the way it is
25.	SK	right=
26.	L8	=and I think now that they've been accepted that they're here, coz they've been here
27.		for a while now
28.	SK	mmm
29.	L8	that (0.7) the asylum-seekers and refugees should now (.) try mix

(Kirkwood et al., 2015, p. 10)

This extract begins with the interviewee being asked to elaborate on the 'trouble' that arose when asylum-seekers first came to the area and which she had previously mentioned in the interview. The interviewee begins her answer by commenting on the sorts of discourse produced by locals regarding the impression that asylum-seekers were 'gettin' things (.) for nothing' (l. 3). As discussed in Chapter 7, this characterization of resource allocation implies that asylum-seekers are receiving resources unfairly, therefore, justifying antagonism against them. Furthermore, the interviewee presents the local area as 'quite socially deprived' (l. 2), which is presented as an explanation for the resulting conflict over resources. However, she goes on to suggest that this view is incorrect by stating that 'they don't realize' (l. 9), before giving an account of the true situation. This is similar to some previous extracts, particularly in Chapter 7, whereby antagonism is accounted

for by a false understanding of the situation. In this case the interviewee suggests that one source of the problem is that some local people have a misconception regarding the term 'integration' (l. 10).

From line 9 onwards, the interviewee explains the nature of the misunderstanding in relation to integration. First, the notion of 'integration' in line 9 suggests that it is a form of process or activity that applies both to local people and to refugees: 'they're welcome to go as integration'. As with other extracts, where negative views towards asylum-seekers are related to a lack of knowledge or understanding, here the 'true' nature of these activities is presented as being open to locals and refugees, and local people have a distorted view that leads them to make negative judgments: 'people don't realize' (l. 9), 'they think' (l. 12). These two formulations of integration map on to one-way and two-way conceptualizations, so that the view attributed to locals implies that it is refugees who are responsible and active in terms of integration processes, whereas the second view – which is presented as the correct view by the interviewee – is that both locals and refugees can and/or should be involved in integration. In part this works by presenting the reported speech of locals – 'oh their kids get it for nothing (.) how do our kids not get it?' (l. 14) – which then allows the interviewee to comment on the problems with this view. By constructing the issue in this way, the antagonism that is presented as being held by local people is both criticized and to some extent excused by associating it with misunderstanding. Moreover, this construction implies that the allocation of resources solely to refugees may be problematic, and has an inbuilt notion of 'us' and 'them' – 'their kids [. . .] our kids' (l. 14) – but the problem is avoided as these activities are presented as being open to both refugees and to local people. As with the previous extract, this functions to deal with any accusations that the activities associated with integration networks amount to special privileges for refugees. Applying the concept of integration to both refugees and local people works in a similar way to those constructions of 'community' that include refugees, in that they present everyone as belonging to the same group, thus dealing with apparent conflicts over resource allocation.

However, while the first part of this extract seems to suggest that responsibility for integration falls on both locals and refugees, the latter part of the extract suggests that it is refugees who are responsible for integration. This is done by drawing on the 'false' understanding of integration that is allegedly held by locals and, rather than making a case for how this should be challenged, the interviewee suggests that this is an unchangeable, if regrettable, fact of reality: '↓so that's a bit o'

a ↑shame but that's just the way it is' (l. 24). Presenting the situation in this way shifts the final responsibility back on to refugees. In particular this is done by drawing on a notion of the way time has created circumstances in which refugees may now become involved in the local community – 'they've been here for a while now' (ll. 26–7) – and so ending by stating that it is the refugees who should take action: 'the asylum-seekers and refugees should now (.) try mix' (l. 29). As illustrated by Tileaga (2005), this type of construction places the blame upon asylum-seekers for any apparent lack of integration. This extract, therefore, presents a more complex view of integration than that found in the research by Bowskill and colleagues (2007), so that different notions of integration are juxtaposed, and in fact it is the notion of two-way integration that is presented as being true, which both legitimizes the work of the integration network and places some responsibility on local people for integration. However, this construction is then undermined, not by challenging its accuracy as such, but rather by suggesting the false view is the one that is held by local people and, therefore, difficult to change, so that responsibility for integration ultimately falls on refugees themselves.

Summary and conclusions

Overall, the analyses in this chapter illustrate a variety of ways in which integration may be constructed and highlight some of the functions this may perform. More specifically, some of the extracts constructed integration as being related to the spatial or geographical location of people. In this construction, the policy of housing asylum-seekers in high-rise flats in deprived areas was criticized for being counterproductive for integration. This type of argument works to shift some of the responsibility for integration off asylum-seekers and refugees. Similarly, extracts in the second section constructed integration as two-way, which functioned to emphasize the responsibility of members of the host society in working towards integration or portrayed integration as having benefits for the host society. Moreover, extract 8.5 presented integration as being applicable to non-migrant members of the local population. This served to justify the work of the support organization, by suggesting that they act in the interests of all members of the community, while also countering the impression that asylum-seekers were receiving preferential treatment. However, extract 8.6 highlighted the responsibility of asylum-seekers and refugees in relation to integration, either in terms of needing to take an active role in integrating or possibly being

reluctant to integrate. These analyses have added to previous discursive research on integration (for example, Bowskill et al., 2007; Durrheim & Dixon, 2005) by illustrating some of the alternative ways in which this notion may be constructed and the various functions it may perform.

These constructions may have close ties to the ways in which asylum-seekers and refugees are perceived; for instance, depending on whether local people see themselves as having a responsibility in relation to integration and being able to benefit from some of the services in the local area. Different concepts of integration may also be reflected in the ways that services and policies are initiated. For example, a broad conception of integration that includes all members of the local society may be used to justify the provision of more general services, but may lack the specificity required to deal with the unique needs of asylum-seekers and refugees. The two-way version of integration also puts more emphasis on the host society's responsibility in relation to integration and may result in initiatives that involve members of the local community to a greater degree. In line with the arguments of Scuzzarello (2012), this analysis illustrates how politically important concepts, such as 'integration' are negotiated in social interaction. Importantly, it shows how conceptual frameworks related to integration have rhetorical force just as the way such notions are used in discourse has implications for our conceptual understandings of integration (Kirkwood et al., 2014, 2015). Building on the work of Durrheim and Dixon (2005), this demonstrates how concepts related to intercultural relations are not neutral and, even when treated as being inherently positive (Bowskill et al., 2007), need to be interrogated in terms of how they function discursively to support or challenge a particular set of social relations.

So far in this text we have examined the arguments relating to the presence of asylum-seekers and refugees, the ways in which the relations between asylum-seekers/refugees and the host society have been constructed, asylum-seekers' access to paid employment and notions of integration. The next chapter will build upon these analyses by addressing some of the harshest aspects of asylum-seekers' experiences: destitution, detention and forced return.

Activity box

What does 'integration' mean to you? What expectations do you have of other people who come to the society in which you live? To what extent do you actively engage with other people from

different cultural, national or ethnic backgrounds? Discuss these questions with your peers and reflect on the way that you talk about integration, particularly in terms of any assumptions that are apparent regarding the way that people should behave and the way that responsibilities are allocated.

Further reading

Kirkwood, S., McKinlay, A. & McVittie, C. (2015). 'He's a cracking wee geezer from Pakistan': Lay accounts of refugee integration failure and success in Scotland. *Journal of Refugee Studies, 28*, 1–20.

Kirkwood, S., McKinlay, A. & McVittie, C. (2014). 'Some people it's very difficult to trust': Attributions of agency and accountability in practitioners' talk about integration. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology, 24*, 376–389.

These two articles further develop the work presented in this chapter. The first focuses on 'lay' accounts of integration, particularly in terms of the way that even 'positive' accounts of integration may be problematic, whereas the second article focuses on professionals' accounts of integration and how these attribute agency and accountability to different actors.

Bowskill, M., Lyons, E. & Coyle, A. (2007). The rhetoric of acculturation: When integration means assimilation. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 46*, 793–813.

This article discursively analyses newspaper discussions of 'faith schools' in terms of the way that notions of integration are used, particularly in terms of how such accounts 'covertly' support assimilation.

9
Destitution, Detention and Forced Return

> I'm an asylum-seeker [...] what difference between me and refugee? only a one word [...] and what is label of an asylum-seeker? we are human.
>
> (Refugee 13; Kirkwood, 2012b, p. 203)

Introduction

Asylum-seekers face the constant threat of having their claims for asylum refused, in which case they may have their support ended and become *destitute*, or may be detained or forced to return to their country of origin. These issues are closely related; for instance, people whose asylum claims have been refused and have been become destitute must agree to 'voluntary return' in order to access a form of 'cashless' support known as *Section Four* (Green, 2006; Reynolds, 2010). Obviously the notion that this is 'voluntary' is undermined by the lack of choices that people in this situation must face. However, the former Minister of State for Borders and Immigration, Phil Woolas, stated: 'I reject any proposition which says that the Government uses destitution as an instrument of policy' (Refugee Council, 2009, p. 8). Despite this statement, the policy seems designed to function in such a way to encourage people who have had their asylum claims refused to agree to return to their countries of origin in order to address the issues associated with destitution. Therefore, the way in which such policies are justified will have discursive effects in terms of positioning asylum-seekers as well as material effects in terms of their access to support.

Similarly, the way asylum-seekers are constructed may function to justify the use of detention and removal. In particular, constructing asylum-seekers as 'criminal' may justify the use of detention centres (Malloch & Stanley, 2005). Moreover, the use of detention may function

to reinforce the perception that asylum-seekers are criminal and do not belong in the host society. Therefore, the discursive constructions and material circumstances may work together to exclude asylum-seekers, both in terms of their social position in the host society and in terms of actually removing them from the host country altogether. As in the quote above, asylum-seekers, and others, may resist or challenge these forms of control and exclusion, particularly through drawing on discourses related to humanitarianism (Every, 2008). This chapter, therefore, builds upon the previous chapters to explore how interviewee discourse constructed these issues, particularly in terms of challenging some of the more exclusionary policies and practices. The interviewees generally talked about these issues in a critical way; therefore, the extracts have been selected in order to provide a range of constructions of these issues, generally aimed at changing and improving the policies and the associated positions of asylum-seekers. Analytically, this chapter is informed by the concept of subject positions, which brings attention to the way that people position themselves, and are positioned through, discourse (Davies & Harré, 1990; Hardy, 2003; Hollway, 1984; see Classic text box).

Classic text

Hollway, W. (1984). Gender difference and the production of subjectivity. In J. Henriques, W. Hollway, C. Urwin, C. Venn & V. Walkerdine (eds.), *Changing the Subject: Psychology, Social Regulation and Subjectivity* (pp. 227–263). London: Routledge.

Wendy Hollway's study of gender, sexuality and subjectivity explored and challenged assumptions regarding heterosexual relationships and the way these were commonly researched. In particular, drawing on the notion of 'subject positions', it highlighted the way that discourse would reinforce and reproduce certain assumptions regarding men and women's roles in relationships, and such an analysis opened up possibilities for this to be critiqued and challenged.

Destitution

The first extract directly relates to the statement by the former Minister of State for Borders and Immigration. The extract comes during a section

of the interview in which the interviewee was highlighting issues that need to be addressed in relation to asylum-seekers and refugees.

Extract 9.1: Professional 13 (Scotland)

1.	P13	I think ↓destitution: (1.0) you know is a key thing, not using destitution as a tool
2.	SK	right
3.	P13	to try and get people to comply with the immigration system [you know]
4.	SK	[right]
5.	P13	(1.5) from our perspective it's extremely inhumane=
6.	SK	=mm-hmm=
7.	P13	=and from theirs it just doesn't work

(Kirkwood, 2012b, pp. 190–1)

This extract begins with the interviewee naming 'destitution' (l. 1) as an issue that should be addressed. The interviewee goes on to argue against 'destitution as a tool [...] to try and get people to comply with the immigration system' (ll. 1–3). This is very similar to the construction mentioned above that the minister rejected; specifically, 'destitution as an instrument of policy' (Refugee Council, 2009, p. 8). The notion of destitution, whereby someone is without food or shelter, is hearably a negative state, so the implication that this is being used as a 'tool' or 'instrument' by the government functions to criticize this policy as being somewhat unethical.

The critique of this policy is further worked up through the presentation of two different perspectives. First, the interviewee portrays the policy as inappropriate from the perspective of the voluntary organization: 'from our perspective it's extremely inhumane' (l. 5). This presents the organization as concerned about the *means* of the policy and suggests that it fails to meet certain ethical conditions related to the treatment of any people. Second, the interviewee suggests the policy is also inappropriate from the point of view of the Home Office: 'and from theirs it just doesn't work' (l. 7). This presents the Home Office as being concerned about the *ends* of the policy and, therefore, the policy is criticized for not meeting their objectives. This also positions the organizations slightly differently, as the voluntary organization is positioned as concerned about the asylum-seekers as people, whereas the Home Office is positioned as concerned about asylum-seekers to the extent that it allows them to meet certain policy objectives. The construction, therefore, works by drawing on a combination of humanitarian and

utilitarian discourse to portray the current policy as against everyone's interests. Moreover, these different discourses imply different positionings of asylum-seekers, either as people with humanity or as objects of policy interventions.

The next extract similarly focuses on the issue of Section Four support and destitution, making a more explicit case regarding the negative effects of this policy. The extract is in response to a question about what could be done to better help asylum-seekers and refugees.

Extract 9.2: Professional 15 (Scotland)

1.	P15	I think the system of Section Four support (.) for people, this voucher only
2.		accommodation, this cashless support (0.5) thirty five pounds per week
3.	SK	mmm
4.	P15	um (.) I think it's grossly (1.0) unfair and it really (.) makes people (.) live at a level
5.		where they can- they can't hope in any way to integrate (0.8) to society or lead their
6.		lives with dignity at all

(Kirkwood, 2012b, p. 192)

In this extract, the interviewee portrays the use of Section Four support as 'grossly (1.0) unfair' (l. 4). As with the previous extract, this draws on notions related to the ethical treatment of people in order to criticize the policy. The interviewee goes on to argue that the policy means that people 'can't hope in any way to integrate (0.8) to society or lead their lives with dignity at all' (ll. 5–6). As illustrated in the previous chapter, integration is generally taken to be something that is desirable; therefore, portraying something as preventing integration functions as a criticism. Moreover, the references to 'dignity' (l. 6) draw on a form of humanitarian discourse (Every, 2008), suggesting that the policy is in some way inhumane, in a similar way to the previous extract. So, as with the previous extract, this extract focuses on both the processes and the outcomes in order to criticize the policy of Section Four support. This discourse implies that the policy positions people as being objects of the asylum policy and as lacking the rights generally afforded to humans, and works up a challenge to this through asserting their right to dignity.

The following extract is from an asylum-seeker and also relates to the issue of destitution. The extract is in response to a question about what could be done to better help asylum-seekers and refugees.

Extract 9.3: Refugee 7 (Scotland)

1. R7 I have this couple of friends here (1.2) when they've stopped their support (0.6) they
2. don't have nowhere to run to
3. SK right okay
4. R7 (0.8) so (2.2) I want that to be changed (.) if someone uh (0.8) if uh (0.8) uh if
5. someone is still in the country, they have not deported him
6. SK mmm
7. R7 (0.6) at least the support should continue
8. SK yeah sure mmm=
9. R7 =yeah because you find some others (.) like I met some guys (2.0) they would get
10. into a bin you know (2.7) so (0.8) that's what I hhh that's what I think
11. SK right okay (.) so (0.8) yeah so to continue support
12. R7 es- especially those who are on Section Four yeah
13. SK right yeah
14. R7 it s- (0.8) it scares you
15. SK yeah
16. R7 mmm
17. SK okay yeah so some of your friends have been on Section [Four support yeah]
18. R7 [yeah yeah]
19. SK aha
20. R7 and their support has been stopped
21. SK mm-hmm
22. R7 (1.2) right now they have don't have nowhere to turn to (.) they resort to begging
23. SK right yeah
24. R7 they resort to begging

(Kirkwood, 2012b, p. 193)

Towards the beginning of the extract the interviewee states that the end of someone's support has the result that 'they don't have nowhere to run to' (ll. 1–2). This highlights the plight of these asylum-seekers through the use of the extreme case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986); the implication is that they have no other options but to be supported by the Home Office and, therefore, there is a moral obligation for them to do so. The interviewee outlines his argument in the following way:

'if someone is still in the country, they have not deported him [...] at least the support should continue' (ll. 4–7). The implication here is that someone should not be left without any means to support themselves if they are living in the host society. The potential consequences of destitution are illustrated by the interviewee stating: 'I met some guys (2.0) they would get into a bin you know' (ll. 9–10). In this case, the image of people getting into a 'bin' – perhaps for food or shelter – works to criticize this policy. In particular, this is hearably a bad experience and one that should not be created by governmental policy, as is implied by the interviewee. In this way, the interviewee highlights the responsibility for the government in preventing people from being destitute.

The problematic nature of this situation is further emphasized by the interviewee stating 'it scares you' (l. 14). This portrays the situation as not only inhumane but also as frightening; the statement has particular resonance given that the speaker is an asylum-seeker who could end up in the same situation. The interviewee's characterization of the situation is emphasized by the repetition of 'they have don't have nowhere to turn to' (l. 22). Moreover, stating that 'they resort to begging' (l. 22) both highlights how the situation is inhumane – in a similar way to the references of people getting into 'bins' – while also implying that the government has some responsibility, as they 'resort' to this behaviour given no other options. So although the people the interviewee refers to are positioned as being without means and relying on particularly undesirable tactics to survive, the responsibility is ultimately placed with the government for not continuing to support them, given that they are still in the UK.

The extracts relating to destitution, therefore, highlight the culpability of the government in terms of either purposively making people destitute in order to encourage them to leave the country or through a form of neglect. In these cases, the speakers emphasize issues of dignity and humanity in order to criticize the policies around destitution and, at times, present the Home Office as neglecting to treat asylum-seekers as people, and rather position them as objects of policy.

Detention

The following extracts illustrate how similar constructions are used to criticize the policy of using detention. These two extracts draw on notions of family and children in order to criticize the use of detention. They come from different points in the interview with one professional: the first extract is in response to a question about the difficulties faced

by asylum-seekers and refugees, and the second extract comes towards the end of a long discussion about issues relating to accommodation.

Extract 9.4: Professional 1 (Scotland)

1. P1 the other issue that came out is obviously ch- children being detained (0.6) em for us
2. is just something that should should never happen (0.6) em (.) I don't (0.8) believe
3. that (0.8) kids and (.) like babies or that should be (2.5) I dunno sorta punished
4. because decisions that (0.8) that their their parents have made (0.6) em (0.8) or just
5. because of the situation that (.) they were born (.) into that, it wasnae a decision that
6. they made to leave the country or they could've done things differently

(Kirkwood, 2012b, p. 195)

Extract 9.5: Professional 1 (Scotland)

1. P1 you've got prisons for for criminals, you've got detention centres for for who?
2. families? and (.) for people who (.) shouldnae be detained in the first place

(Kirkwood, 2012b, p. 195)

The arguments in extracts 9.4 and 9.5 criticize the use of detention through constructing the subjects of its use in particular ways. Specifically, they are constructed as 'kids' and 'babies' (extract 9.4, l. 3) and as 'families' (extract 9.5, l. 2). As we have seen in the earlier chapters of this text, constructing asylum-seekers as 'families' presents them as having particularly good qualities and serves to support actions that are in their favour. In this regard, Goodman (2007) illustrated how damaging aspects of the asylum system could be criticized through construing the subjects of the policies using informal terms, such as 'kids', which serve to normalize them, and through portraying them as 'loving families', which presents the policies as morally wrong. Similarly, portraying the asylum-seekers as 'kids' or 'babies' associates them with connotations of innocence; by then arguing that they should not be 'punished' due to their parents' decisions (extract 9.4, ll. 3–4) 'or just because of the situation' (extract 9.4, ll. 4–5), the system is not only portrayed as unfair for punishing someone who has done no wrong, but as particularly unjust

given that the subjects are young and, therefore, more vulnerable. The use of detention for children is thereby condemned on grounds that it is morally unjust in an absolute sense: 'something that [...] should never happen' (extract 9.4, l. 2).

Extract 9.5 takes this further by arguing that detention should never be applied to anyone who has not committed a crime. This is done through the juxtaposition of two identity categories: 'criminals' (l. 1) and 'families' (l. 2). By associating prisons with criminals, this implies there is a rightful place for those who break the law; by contrast, those who have not broken the law are not criminals and, therefore, should not be imprisoned. As with the work of Goodman (2007), the association of 'families' and 'detention' suggests an absurdity: families have a natural place in society and, therefore, a system that detains them without having broken the law is inherently immoral. When considered in terms of membership categorization analysis, being held in 'prisons' functions as an appropriate category-bound activity for 'criminals', whereas suggesting that 'families' are held in 'detention centres' constitutes a category-activity 'puzzle' (Stokoe, 2012), in that the two concepts are hearably incongruent, which implicitly criticizes or questions such procedures. Lynn and Lea (2003) similarly illustrated how the use of detention could be criticized by portraying detention centres as prisons and construing detainees as children, pregnant women and other vulnerable people. This draws on a form of place-identity (Durrheim & Dixon, 2005), whereby the identity categories associated with detainees are placed in stark contrast to the way in which the detention centres are portrayed. Ultimately this has the function of suggesting that asylum-seekers do not belong in detention centres, thereby criticizing the use of detention. In terms of subject positions, this type of discourse attempts to position asylum-seekers as children and families, rather than criminals, thus highlighting their humanity rather than portraying them as objects that may be controlled by the asylum system.

The following extract similarly draws on notions of children and families in order to criticize the use of dawn raids and detention. This extract is from two Scottish locals and comes during a discussion of their reasons for campaigning against the dawn raids of asylum-seekers.

Extract 9.6: Locals 5 and 6 (Scotland)

1. L6 [imagine your son in handcuffs]
2. L5 [imagine you wake up] (.) you watch [two you watch little] (0.9) boys
3. L6 [(unclear) handcuffs]

4.	L5	(.) come doon like that with their night- their pyjamas on (0.9) and the boys were
5.		separated from their mum=
6.	L6	=yep=
7.	L5	=they had to go with the father=
8.	L6	=they went [with the father
9.	L5	[they were pushed into a (.) a big van
10.	SK	yeah
11.	L6	in a cage
12.	L5	((high pitched squeaky voice)) what have they done? (.) not
13.	L6	in a cage [in the] back of a van
14.	SK	[yeah] right yeah
15.	L5	and as my husband said (.) just think that if that was your grandchild
16.	SK	mmm
17.	L5	I said I couldnae watch it
18.	SK	mmm
19.	L5	so that was what we did so as I say so (1.0) we only done I think what any decent
20.		human being would say well Christ no I cannae watch it let's do- and we had time on
21.		our hands as I say I dear say if we'd had to go to work we couldnae have done it but
22.		we didnae↑ (0.9) we could go back up the road and have a wee nap so
23.	SK	hhh hhh=
24.	L5	=but we didnae do anything great↑ (.) we didn't think so, still don't to this day don't
25.		think I've done anything [great
26.	L6	[this one girl taken away from here (.) she was taken three
27.		times away=
28.	L5	=God I know
29.	L6	and I went up to visit her up at Dungavel ((detention centre)) (1.0) and (0.7) she was
30.		talking to the guy (.) who took us up (0.8) and her wee boy (.) now we watched this
31.		wee fella grow up (1.1) and he was talkin' to me and he went a:h (0.6) auntie

32.		((name)) (.) can I ask you a question? (0.6) I says of course you can (1.0) auntie
33.		((name)) why am I in prison? (0.6) did I do anything wrong?
34.	L5	[yeah
35.	SK	[mmm=
36.	L6	=why am I in prison? (1.0) and I'll tell you that will live with me till the day I [die
37.	L5	[yep

(Bates & Kirkwood, 2013, pp. 24–5)

In this extract, locals 5 and 6 jointly produce an account relating to the dawn raids of asylum-seekers and their involvement in a successful campaign to end them in Glasgow. Both of the interviewees start this account with the word 'imagine' (ll. 1–2), which has the effect of locating the listener in an empathetic position in relation to the asylum-seekers who were being detained. Local 6 uses this to position the listener in the place of a parent of a child who was being taken away: 'imagine your son in handcuffs' (l. 1). In a slightly different way, local 5 requests the listener to imagine watching little boys coming down with 'their pyjamas on', being separated 'from their mum' and 'pushed into a (.) a big van' (ll. 4–9). As with the previous extract, both of these constructions, and the narrative which follows, draw on a notion of family that is construed as incongruous with notions of criminal justice as well as implying that children should not be separated from their mothers (Goodman, 2007). Terms such as 'handcuffs' (l. 1), 'a big van' (l. 9) and 'a cage' (l. 11) are hearable as severe forms of intervention and restraint that appear out of proportion, harsh and unreasonable in relation to those they restrain, the 'little boys' in their 'pyjamas' (ll. 2–4).

Furthermore, not only are children implicitly associated with an innocence that is incompatible with these harsh forms of intervention, they are more explicitly presented as innocent through the rhetorical question: 'what have they done?' (l. 12). Asking the listener to imagine that this is happening to their children or grandchildren also has the function of constructing a form of close relationship between the listener and the asylum-seekers, so that they are presented as people for whom one should care, rather than, for example, non-nationals who do not deserve the sympathy of British citizens. This construction works to address the issue of 'costs to self' versus 'duty to others' (Every, 2008) by re-construing the 'others' as 'self' through positioning them as belonging to one's own family.

This narrative leads into local 5's account of why she and local 6 became actively involved in campaigning to end the dawn raids. Through the production of the reported conversation with her husband, local 5 is positioned as being a grandmother of one of the children who was being detained and, by saying 'I couldnae watch it' (l. 17), her actions are justified through an inability to avoid taking action. This is further developed when she says 'we only done I think what any decent human being would' (ll. 19–20) and stating 'we didnae do anything great' (l. 24). In this way, their activities are not presented as, say heroic or politically motivated, but rather as stemming from a natural sense of empathy and a sense of human decency. This has the effect of normalizing the behaviour, so as to suggest that other people should take a similar stance in relation to dawn raids, as well as positioning those who tolerate or support dawn raids as lacking attributes that are central to being human, and thus criticizing them.

This narrative is reiterated by local 6 in her account of visiting the Dungavel detention centre. As with the account of the 'little boys', stating that a 'girl' was 'taken three times away' (ll. 26–7) can be heard as harsh and unfair, as the term 'girl' implicitly references a sense of innocence and being taken away three times is hearable as excessive. Similarly, presenting the boy as 'her wee boy' (l. 30) and 'wee fella' (l. 31) likewise presents him as innocent as well as constructing a close connection between the interviewee and the boy. The use of the term 'auntie' (ll. 31–2) further draws on the theme of 'family', so that the relationship between asylum-seekers, particularly young ones, and local people is presented as a close relationship that should not be severed. The reported speech of the boy asking the rhetorical questions, 'why am I in prison? (0.6) did I do anything wrong?' (ll. 32–3), further builds on this sense of innocence through a lack of knowledge. Furthermore, presenting the detention centre as a prison, which implies the 'prisoners' must be responsible for a 'wrong', works to criticize the practice of detaining children, as the innocence associated with children is placed in clear opposition to the idea of imprisoning them for doing wrong (Lynn & Lea, 2003). Moreover, the implied answer – that the boy has done no wrong – portrays the system as being inhumane and unfair by 'imprisoning' someone who is innocent. The impact of such speech from the boy is portrayed by local 6 saying 'that will live with me till the day I die' (l. 36), and works to further explain and justify their actions in campaigning to stop dawn raids.

Overall then, this extract illustrates how notions of family and the positioning of local people in an imagined and empathetic relationship with the children of asylum-seekers, alongside the depiction of dawn raids and detention as harsh and prison-like forms of intervention, work to criticize the use of dawn raids and child detention, as well as normalize and legitimize the actions of local people to campaign against their use (Bates & Kirkwood, 2013). The following extract also relates to detention, and provides one asylum-seeker's views on the experiences of being detained. The extract follows the interviewee explaining his accommodation situation and mentioning that he had been detained.

Extract 9.7: Refugee 10 (Scotland)

1. SK what was it like (0.5) in detention?
2. R10 (1.8) ppwww (.) it's all right heh heh heh (.)
3. SK [okay heh heh]
4. R10 [heh heh] (0.6) yeah know it's all right heh
5. SK yeah
6. R10 (0.8) yeah it's (.) it's hard but you just have to cope with it
7. SK okay
8. R10 yeah
9. SK mmm
10. R10 (0.8) it's it is so slow (0.8) for me I've always believed that (1.2) you can only
11. change something which is within your hands (.) eh
12. SK right=
13. R10 =if some f- something's out of your hands
14. SK mmm
15. R10 you cannot change it
16. SK yeah
17. R10 so you just have to wait the situation to cha(h)nge=
18. SK =yeah sure
19. R10 so once you're there (.) you can't do anything
20. SK okay right
21. R10 you can only handle your part which is (1.0) to put in your case
22. SK yeah
23. R10 yeah (.) and if they're convinced or not then (.) it's up to them

(Kirkwood, 2012b, pp. 200–1)

In line 2, the interviewee describes the experience of being in detention as 'all right'; however, his laughter suggests that this might be an unusual response to a question about an experience which would be assumed as quite unpleasant. That the interviewee goes on to provide an account for this experience being 'all right' provides some evidence that this evaluation is somehow strange. The experience is explained in more detail as being both 'hard' and something 'you just have to cope with' (l. 6), which mitigates the difficulties of being in detention, particularly through the use of 'just' (l. 6), which suggests it is something minor. This is further accounted for by relating it to personal characteristics: 'for me I've always believed' (l. 10). This suggests the reason the experience was not so bad relates to an individual disposition rather than the experience being a general aspect of being in detention that is likely to be common across all those who have been detained. The portrayal of detention as something that is 'all right' may suggest that the speaker is negotiating a dilemma in which 'complaining' about his experiences in the host society could portray him in a negative way (Goodman, Burke, Liebling & Zasada, 2014; Kirkwood, 2012a).

The situation described by the interviewee also positions asylum-seekers in a place of relative passivity in contrast to those who decide their cases. For instance, the interviewee says that 'you just have to wait the situation to cha(h)nge' (l. 17). He also says that the only thing you can do is 'put in your case' and whether 'they're convinced or not' is 'up to them' (ll. 21–3). In a way, this legitimizes the asylum process by suggesting that there is nothing else that can be done to challenge the system; rather, all asylum-seekers can do is put forward their case and wait for the decision makers to make their decision. It also positions the speakers as being relatively rational and respectful of the asylum system, and willing to go along with the policies and procedures they have in place. This extract is, therefore, interesting for the ways that it actually serves to legitimize the use of detention to some extent, even though it comes from an asylum-seeker who has direct experience of being detained.

Forced return

The final extract deals with the related issue of asylum-seekers being forced to return to their country of origin, the most extreme form of exclusion. In a similar way to some of the previous extracts, the interviewee draws on some notions of family in order to criticize being forced to leave the country. Furthermore, they also incorporate notions from a humanitarian discourse. This extract comes during a section of

the interview in which the interviewee gave some background to her situation and discussed some of the issues she faced in the UK.

Extract 9.8: Refugee 13 (Scotland)

1.	R13	when last week we went to Home Office for (.) get a visa
2.	SK	mm-hmm
3.	R13	the result (1.0) they told me you must come back to your country
4.	SK	right
5.	R13	(1.4) e:h (.) I was crying
6.	SK	mm-hmm
7.	R13	(1.0) and em (1.0) eh I uh I put everything in my heart (0.8) because I have a ((age))
8.		(0.5) mmm (.) boy (.) he is enjoyed now in the (0.6) c- in the school and he (.) uh he
9.		is waiting for his result for ↑higher↓ education
10.	SK	yeah
11.	R13	and he wants to go to university
12.	SK	yeah
13.	R13	he lives here (.) uh for ((number)) years
14.	SK	mm-hmm
15.	R13	and then (.) why they told me you must come, because my my country's very
16.		dangerous↑
17.	SK	mm-hmm
18.	R13	and they made for me stress (.) and last week unfortunately I put in my heart (0.8)
19.		and last week I was in house (0.6) and I have a problem in my heart
20.	SK	right
21.	R13	it came and I was in hospital two days
22.	SK	oh no
23.	R13	nobody (0.8) that- they don't know about this problem because I don't like (0.8) e:m
24.		(1.0) I don't like talk to ((name of worker)) or ((name of worker)) about my problem
25.		because I want (.) the uh they will be ↑happy (.)
26.	SK	right okay
27.	R13	I don't like make stress with them
28.	SK	[sure]
29.	R13	[and] (1.8) uh but the doctor told me (.) your heart has a problem and you must come

30. (.) here to be (.) angiography
31. SK right
32. R13 okay (.) when I thinking I'm thinking about this problem (.) I'm an asylum-seeker
33. SK yeah=
34. R13 =what difference between me and refugee? only a one word
35. SK hhh
36. R13 and what is label of an asylum-seeker? we are human

(Kirkwood, 2012b, pp. 202–3)

In this extract, the interviewee portrays the asylum process as having a direct negative impact on her, both physically and emotionally. For instance, upon learning that she must return to her country, she says 'I was crying [...] I put everything in my heart' (ll. 5–7). In this way the threat of returning to her country is construed as a real danger, as it has a direct impact on her emotions. However, the interviewee portrays the negative effect as not only affecting her: it also would affect her son and his progress at school, which presents the effects as bad as they would negatively affect a child (Goodman, 2007). The use of the rhetorical question – 'why they told me you must come' (l. 15) – implies that there is no good reason for them being asked to return. Moreover, the request to return is contrasted with the construction of her country as 'very dangerous' (ll. 15–16) – in a similar way to the extracts in Chapter 3 – suggesting that the Home Office would be responsible for putting them in a dangerous situation and, therefore, any harm that might befall them. In this way the Home Office is made responsible for the physical impact of the stress: 'I have a problem in my heart' (l. 19); therefore, the Home Office is criticized for the emotional, physical and potentially life-threatening impact it is having on the interviewee and her family.

At a later point in the extract, the interviewee questions the asylum-seeker label itself: 'what difference between me and refugee? only a one word [...] and what is label of an asylum-seeker? we are human' (ll. 34–6). This takes a bureaucratic definition, albeit one that has an important impact on those subject to it, and turns it into a simple linguistic issue: the difference between asylum-seekers and refugees amounts only to words. Furthermore, the rhetorical question 'what is label of an asylum-seeker?' (l. 36) implies that it is meaningless; and further, that the interviewee and other asylum-seekers can be described in another word: 'human' (l. 36). Drawing on a humanitarian discourse associates asylum-seekers with all other people and, therefore, implies that they are

entitled to the same types of rights and freedoms, including the right to live without fear for one's life. In this way, the Home Office is portrayed as somewhat petty and lacking empathy for not recognizing asylum-seekers for what they are – that is, human. The reference to this term is used in a way which is self-sufficient and thus difficult to argue with: how could someone argue that asylum-seekers are not human? In this way, the interviewee's right to asylum is made difficult to challenge.

Overall then, this extract illustrates how humanitarian discourse can be used to portray asylum-seekers as having the right to life, freedom and staying in the UK, particularly through challenging the real meaning of the term 'asylum-seeker', as well as highlighting the way in which the speaker has been a good member of society. In contrast, the Home Office is portrayed as bureaucratic and uncaring and, therefore, to be criticized.

Summary and conclusions

Overall, this chapter explored talk about some of the harsher aspects of asylum policy, giving insight into how such policies and procedures position asylum-seekers, and how asylum-seekers and others may challenge or resist such positioning. For example, the data presented in the first section of this chapter could be understood as constituting a discursive struggle (Hardy & Phillips, 1999) over the portrayal of destitution as a 'tool' or 'instrument' of policy. Some of the professional interviewees suggested that the government used this in order to force people to comply with the asylum system and particularly in order to pressure them into agreeing to 'voluntary' return. In this way, the government was portrayed as positioning asylum-seekers as 'objects' of policy, void of ethical concerns, whereas the interviewees positioned them as people who deserved to be treated with dignity. In this regard, the government was portrayed as being responsible for forcing some asylum-seekers into inhumane and degrading positions. These constructions and arguments are evident in wider debates on the use of detention and forced return (for example, Wintour, 2015).

In line with some previous discursive research (for example, Every, 2006; Goodman, 2007), the use of detention was criticized through portraying asylum-seekers as families or children, and construing detention centres as equivalent to prisons. As a form of place-identity (Durrheim & Dixon, 2005) or category-activity 'puzzle' (Stokoe, 2012), this functioned to draw upon the positive connotations of 'family', as well as the notions of innocence associated with 'children', and place them in contrast to the harsh and criminal notions of 'prison'

in order to criticize the use of detention and imply that asylum-seekers do not belong in such places. However, it is worth noting that one of the asylum-seeker interviewees described his experience of being in detention as 'all right', and appeared to be negotiating a dilemma in terms of voicing criticisms of the asylum system while being dependent on the host society for protection (Goodman et al., 2014; Kirkwood, 2012a). In this regard, the use of detention serves to position asylum-seekers as powerless, whereas their construction as 'families' works to construe them in a positive way that challenges the policies of the UK Government (Goodman, 2007).

Finally, the last extract, from an asylum-seeker, portrayed the asylum system as being damaging to people, both physically and emotionally, through threatening people with being sent back to a dangerous place. In this regard, the Home Office was portrayed as positioning asylum-seekers in a harmful way, whereas the speaker attempted to counter this through portraying herself and her family as belonging in the host society. The extract finished by illustrating how the labels of 'asylum-seeker' and 'refugee' are presented as being merely linguistic differences, and that rather people who fall into these categories are 'human' and, therefore, entitled to the general rights they deserve.

In terms of subject positions (Davies & Harré, 1990), this chapter has illustrated overall how much of the interview talk functions to challenge the positioning of asylum-seekers as criminal, or as otherwise undeserving of dignity, and instead positions them in terms of a humanitarian discourse (Every, 2008) or as undeserving of harsh treatment. In this regard, the Home Office was often positioned as uncaring about asylum-seekers, as treating them as objects of policy rather than as people, and as being responsible for placing them in degrading situations. These discourses function not only in terms of justifying or criticizing particular policies, but may also function to reinforce some of the constructions discussed in the previous chapters. That is, constructing asylum-seekers as people who deserve to be able to live with dignity and respect works to justify their presence in the host society and reinforce positive social relations between asylum-seekers and members of the local community.

Activity box

Search online for videos regarding the experiences of destitute asylum-seekers. For instance, at the time of writing, the Scottish Refugee Council was running a campaign to end destitution

among asylum-seekers, including a video portraying destitute asylum-seekers' experiences that was free to view at http://www.stopdestitution.org.uk/. Watch one or two videos and reflect upon the way that people talk about their experiences. Discuss the following questions with your peers: What does this tell you about the way destitution is experienced? What does it tell you about the way that asylum policies and procedures function for people whose asylum claims have been rejected?

Further reading

Bates, D. & Kirkwood, S. (2013). 'We didnae do anything great . . .' Discursive strategies for resisting detention and deportation in Scotland and the North East of England. *Refugee Review: Social Movement, 1*, 21–31.

This article explores the way that local people develop discursive strategies for challenging the use of detention, dawn raids and forced removal in Scotland and England.

Hardy, C. (2003). Refugee determination: Power and resistance in systems of Foucauldian power. *Administration & Society, 35*, 462–488.

Hardy's article draws on the work of Michel Foucault to analyse accounts from immigration officials, practitioners in the voluntary sector and refugees regarding the operation of asylum procedures in the UK, Canada and Denmark, including how people resist or challenge the operation of power.

Malloch, M. S. & Stanley, E. (2005). The detention of asylum-seekers in the UK: Representing risk, managing the dangerous. *Punishment and Society, 7*, 53–71.

This article explores how asylum-seekers are linked to discourses of risk and criminality, and outlines the consequences in terms of justifying the use of harsh responses, including detention and deportation.

Part V
Conclusion

10
Conclusion

> To get through the hardest journey we need take only one step at a time, but we must keep on stepping.
>
> (Chinese proverb)

Introduction

We described in the introduction to this text the need for asylum and refuge in a world full of conflict, poverty and ensuing upheaval that has led, and continues to lead, to the mass displacement of millions of people. Many who are displaced or at risk leave their countries of origin to seek new and different lives elsewhere. The journeys that they have to endure, full of risk and uncertainty, and often arranged by people-smugglers, appear to offer some hope at least of safety in countries far removed from the dangers that they have left. Yet, as we have seen over the course of this text, for those who arrive in the UK, the journey to these shores marks only the first journey of risk and uncertainty that they have to make.

What we have seen throughout the preceding chapters is how people who arrive in the UK and seek asylum here attempt to negotiate a second journey, that of being allowed asylum and being granted leave to remain in the UK. Negotiating a path through unwelcoming UK asylum policies and practices, and against a background of at best variable responses from UK residents, involves in its own way perhaps as many turns and challenges as the geographical transitions that people seeking asylum have already made. In seeking asylum in the UK, those who arrive here 'must keep on stepping'.

The challenges

Accounting for being in the UK

A first main challenge for those who arrive in the UK is to account for their presence. In this respect, descriptions of place become a central focus of individuals' constructions of who they are and of their explanations for leaving their countries of origin to come to the UK. The notion of place-identity (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000) is useful for understanding some aspects of talk regarding asylum-seekers and refugees. For asylum-seekers and refugees themselves, the imperative is to portray themselves as people who were forced to come to the host society, rather than people who chose it voluntarily. As shown in Chapter 3, one way in which this is achieved is to portray their country of origin as a place of death and danger. The implication is that no one could live in a place of that nature, and by implication, their identity is constituted as someone who is a 'genuine' refugee. These processes are evident also in the talk of British locals regarding asylum-seekers. The way they talk about asylum-seekers' countries of origin, and the host society, has implications for the legitimacy of their presence in the UK (Kirkwood, McKinlay & McVittie, 2013b). Thus, where British locals deploy constructions that similarly depict countries of origin as places of danger and death, so those seen as making such claims are described as genuinely in need of the (relative) safety that the UK can provide. Safety, however, is potentially a double-edged sword: rather than applying danger to countries of origin, locals can argue that the UK is a less safe place precisely due to the presence of asylum-seekers and refugees. In such instances, matters of safety thereby portray people seeking asylum as a danger and as undeserving of being allowed to live here.

Not only is identity mutually constructed through the way that places are described, but speakers' 'attitudes' towards certain places also function to imply something about their nature. For example, saying 'I'm not happy but I'm OK' references the speaker's relative safety in the host country, while also managing the sensitive issue regarding their desire to be in the host society (Goodman, Burke, Liebling & Zasada, 2014). That is, if they seem too eager to be in the host country, they may be seen as someone who chose it voluntarily to seek 'a better life' rather than being a 'genuine' refugee (Kirkwood & McNeill, 2015). And yet they must also avoid being seen to complain about their quality of life in the UK, which could portray them as ungrateful or even undermine the seriousness of the situation from which they have fled (Kirkwood, 2012a).

Much of this identity work is, of course, conducted against a background that is predominantly critical of, and often openly hostile to, those who seek asylum. While asylum-seekers represent a vulnerable group of people exercising their legal right to claim asylum in the UK, this group has become a major target for mainstream media and political debate (for example, Goodman, 2010). As has been demonstrated elsewhere, the representations of asylum-seekers in the media (for example, Goodman & Speer, 2007) and by politicians (for example, Capdevila & Callaghan, 2008) are extremely negative. Examples here show that this negativity is then displayed by members of the public, for example, in Chapter 4, a contributor to an internet discussion forum presents asylum-seekers as a potential threat to children's safety and, in Chapter 5, an example of a letter to a newspaper sees asylum-seekers presented as 'bogus' and as given unfair advantages over British locals. Constructions of place, relative safety and danger, and consequent motivations for people being in the UK, are thus key features of identifying who is to count as a 'genuine' refugee rather than someone who is here for 'illegitimate' reasons.

Living in UK society

A second (and related) challenge lies in asylum-seekers' perceived relations with UK society, in the forms of economic contribution (or lack of contribution) and of their interactions with members of the host society. Access (or more accurately lack of access) to paid employment is one area where the dilemmas regarding identity categories and self-presentation are most evident. As discussed in Chapter 6, the Home Office prevents most asylum-seekers from working until their asylum claim has been accepted. Their case is that this is necessary to avoid blurring the distinction between 'economic migrants' and 'refugees'. This puts asylum-seekers in a position where they are reliant on government support to survive and any emphasis they place on their desire to work risks portraying them as entering the host society on false grounds.

Asylum-seekers and refugees themselves, as we have seen, argue for the right to work or at least to contribute in some ways towards UK society. Such claims usually proceed on the basis that a desire to work is in no way mutually exclusive from a need to flee persecution. As we noted in Chapter 6, however, professionals who work with these groups and local residents mobilize highly contrasting arguments in favour of or against such a right. One form of argument is to suggest that asylum-seekers are in practice 'spongers', in that they are dependent on financial support from the UK taxpayer and Government. On this argument, they

should be given the right to work and expected to do so in order to demonstrate a contribution to UK society: failure to contribute, regardless of not being permitted to work, becomes criticizable. A different form of argument, by contrast, is to favour existing policy on the grounds that asylum-seekers, were they given the right to work, would take up jobs that are more appropriately taken by other UK residents. On these grounds, asylum-seekers are open to criticism for seeking further rights in being here and for not being sufficiently grateful for being allowed in the UK on any basis. Taken further, this argument can be used to position those who want to work as 'bogus' asylum-seekers, suggesting that their primary motivation for being here is one of financial gain rather than that of safety. In this way, lay talk can be seen to take up and reflect the distinction provided in Home Office discourse and policy that seeks to maintain a distinction between being in the UK for reasons of safety and being in the UK to work. This is an illustration of Zetter's (2007) point that bureaucratic labels come to take on moral and political weight in the social sphere. It should be noted, however, that lay talk does not necessarily exhibit the logic that is presented in official discourse. Instead of offering alternative grounds for criticizing asylum-seekers, the two forms of argument outlined above are often conjoined in discourse that argues along the lines of 'they're spongers and they take our jobs'. In lay talk what is important is not so much the logic of the argument as its function; by combining both forms of argument, asylum-seekers can be criticized merely for their presence in the UK regardless of whether or not they take up employment.

Similar issues of motivation can be seen as relevant in descriptions of asylum-seekers' interactions with local residents. We see a number of local residents stating that asylum-seekers have fled persecution and suggesting that they should be treated with sympathy in recognition of the problems that they have faced. As noted in Chapter 7, speakers often combine descriptions of this kind with criticisms of other residents who respond unfavourably to asylum-seekers and of the media that portray them in highly negative ways. Asylum-seekers themselves, however, are very careful in their descriptions of interactions with local residents, typically avoiding any criticism of how they might be treated or minimizing the difficulties involved in any of their experiences with locals. Indeed, asylum-seekers play down any problems that they might have experienced, even to the extent of minimizing physical violence used against them (Kirkwood, McKinlay & McVittie, 2013a).

What these descriptions gain for asylum-seekers is to bolster their ostensible credentials for living in the UK. Were they to complain about

how they are treated, or to dwell upon negative experiences that they have encountered, then any such descriptions risk being heard either as contradicting other claims that, relative to their countries of origin, the UK is a safe place to live, and/or as suggesting that their primary motivation for living here is not one of being away from the dangers and risks to be encountered elsewhere. These descriptions, then, display sensitivity to the issue of potentially being heard as complaining about their treatment in the UK: regardless of the quality of their treatment by UK locals, any problems are presented as inconsequential in comparison to those that they have left behind and would otherwise face.

Integration or return

A further set of challenges arises in relation to the more enduring outcomes of the process of applying for asylum. We have noted throughout this text how talk about asylum-seekers and refugees functions to allocate responsibility and blame, and to justify particular responses. The action-orientation of such talk becomes evident once more as we turn to the topic of integration. The different ways in which integration is portrayed function to allocate different levels of responsibility to asylum-seekers and refugees, vis-à-vis local members of the host society. Certain accounts of integration imply that it is asylum-seekers and refugees who are responsible for their own integration, and they accordingly are treated as blameworthy if they are seen not to be making sufficient effort to integrate. Two-way versions of integration, conversely, place greater responsibility on the host society itself, and on local members of the population. This version of integration requires the host society and its members to engage with asylum-seekers and refugees, to ensure that they are responsive to their needs, and it even recognizes or encourages an amount of change within the host society at a cultural level. In this regard, the accounts given by practitioners or lay people are not entirely separate from academic concepts of integration. Rather than describing clearly identifiable processes or outcomes, all accounts of integration function rhetorically and need to be understood in terms of the responsibilities they assume and the type of society they imply (Kirkwood, McKinlay & McVittie, 2014, 2015).

For many who seek asylum, however, the challenges far exceed those of seeking to integrate in whatever way. Those whose applications for leave to remain are unsuccessful find themselves facing destitution, detention and forced return. As we noted at the beginning of this text, the UK asylum and immigration system is designed not to be open to

all and to deter people from applying: in the words of the UK Prime Minister, David Cameron, the UK should not be viewed as 'a soft touch in terms of people coming here' (2013). And, as we have seen, the policy and operation of the system that implements this policy rely on a binary distinction between those who are to count as 'genuine' and others who are treated as 'bogus', 'illegitimate' or similar. Moreover, this discourse, as well as underpinning and attempting to justify practices that render the experiences of asylum-seekers highly difficult, permeates much media coverage of these issues and provides ready-made categorizations for other UK residents to take up should they choose to do so. The harsh treatment of people that enter the UK – and indeed many other countries – to claim asylum is made possible through portraying these individuals as entering on illegitimate grounds or as otherwise lacking the human qualities that would demand a more ethical response. Thus, despite Home Office claims to the contrary, it is difficult to see how policies related to destitution and forced return function other than as tools to force people to leave the country through making their lives unnecessarily miserable. For those whose claims do not succeed, the inevitable action outcome of such discourse and of a process that is designed to deter will be a return to the places from which they originally sought to escape to safety with potentially deadly risks.

Asylum and discourse

Studying discourse

The approach that we have adopted throughout this text is one that focuses on the detailed examination of discourse, that is, language as used in everyday life. We described in Chapter 2 three main properties of discourse: its role in constructing different versions of people, events and social phenomena; its action orientation in being used to accomplish social outcomes; and the rhetorical force of the language that people use in seeking to persuade others of the claims and arguments that they propose. In setting out this approach, we also argued that, for the present text, analysis of discourse offered three specific advantages: first, that it allowed us to examine how people used particular terms, such as 'genuine' asylum-seeker; second, that we did not require to search for consistency in the versions of what was being described but instead could work with the variations that these descriptions involved; and third, that by means of this approach we could focus on what people were saying in their own terms instead of attempting to match these up to any external criteria.

We hope that, having read this text, the reader will recognize the value of this approach. As we have seen, terms such as 'genuine' asylum-seeker, economic migrant, 'bogus' asylum-seeker and others are used in a number of ways to categorize and to construct the identity of individuals who arrive and seek to remain in the UK. Such terms are no mere descriptions: they are used to evaluate certain individuals positively and others negatively; to criticize the motivations and actions of some individuals who make claims for asylum here; and to attempt to persuade voters of the merits of imposing distinctions of this sort on people arriving on these shores. Above all, these terms, and the implicit suggestion that they are depicting rather than constructing different groups of individuals, form a central part of justifying official policies and a system that claims to make precisely this kind of distinction in processing claims, and in making decisions as to who is allowed to remain here and who is required to leave and return to a country of origin. The way that asylum-seekers and refugees are talked about – particularly how their identities are constructed through discourse – plays an important role in relation to the asylum system, the public view of asylum-seekers and refugees, and is implicated in the policy responses as well as their experiences at the local level.

To offer but one further example, let us take the term 'integration'. Integration can mean many different things to different people. We have seen versions of integration that are designed to emphasize the role of those coming into UK society to adapt to it, versions that emphasize two-way processes involving those coming in and other members of UK society, as well as different constructions that present integration as a strategy or as a process. Equally there are also available other descriptions of community relations that rely on terms other than integration itself. Each of these varying constructions carries with it responsibilities for particular individuals or groups of people, and can be deployed to argue for a range of social outcomes, depending upon whether integration is achieved or not, and indeed whether it should be achieved or not.

When we consider such variation in terms commonly used in relation to asylum-seekers and refugees, the diverse ways in which speakers construct and deploy them, and the outcomes that might result, there is little to be gained by attempting to match up these descriptions against single definitions. Discourse, as the site of these constructions, identities, claims and arguments, provides a rather more fruitful focus if we are meaningfully to study how matters of asylum in the UK are worked out in everyday life.

In approaching people's descriptions of asylum and asylum-seekers in this way, we have sought also to demonstrate how these everyday versions reflect and are reflected in the descriptions that are found across broader social domains, such as political speech and the media. In Chapter 2 we discussed micro and macro approaches to studying discourse, and set out the main foci and key concerns of each approach. Micro approaches draw our attention to fine-grained detail of what people say, but run the risk of paying less regard to the broad social practices within which everyday talk takes place. Macro approaches, in contrast, emphasize the role and the power of broad social patterns but potentially have less interest in what individuals themselves do in everyday life. In adopting an approach that synthesized elements of both forms of approach (Wetherell, 1998), we have aimed to make explicit how people's lived experiences of seeking asylum, of interacting with others (whether asylum-seekers or local residents) and of matters of integration connect with a social backdrop of mass displacement of people, UK policies and practices, and other broad features of the context of asylum such as media coverage of the issues. Throughout this text we have seen how people construct and deploy different versions of identity, including those of asylum-seekers, to argue for or to accomplish specific outcomes. In doing so, however, speakers do not have to devise new arguments on every specific occasion but can instead take up, resist or rework the language that permeates the broader social backdrop of asylum, whether in the media, in political discourse or elsewhere. Equally asylum-seekers can be seen throughout this text to orient to what they take to be common constructions of them and of asylum, in minimizing any difficulties that they come across, for example, in order to warrant their claims to be in the UK for 'genuine' reasons. We, therefore, need to direct attention to the broad context and to how individuals negotiate their own local concerns if we are to gain a more complete understanding of how those who arrive in the UK work out asylum in relation to their lives and to others.

Asylum talk and racist talk

There remains the question of whether the talk that we have seen and considered here should be treated as comprising racist talk. As we saw in Chapter 1, what is to be taken to comprise racist talk is by no means settled, with different writers taking up different positions. Whereas Wetherell and Potter (1992) argued that racist talk involved (in part) definition of people as 'racially or ethnically different', other writers (for example, Capdevila & Callaghan, 2008; Every & Augoustinos, 2007)

have argued that talk can be equally racist in circumstances where speakers design their talk to avoid explicit references to race. Furthermore, to accuse others of being racist in itself raises the possibility of being challenged for doing so (for example, Goodman, 2010, 2014; Goodman and Burke, 2010), leading to problems in attempting to arrive at any clear definition of what is to count as racist talk and for whom.

What does this mean for understanding the talk that we have seen here? It is evident throughout the talk that we have examined that speakers avoid reference to race. Politicians, the media and local residents thus avoid accusations of being heard as overtly racist. And, the asylum-seekers and refugees that we spoke to also make no reference to racism, even playing down or mitigating any suggestions that difficulties they might have encountered arise on racial grounds. Notwithstanding the absence of explicit references to race, however, our argument here is that the findings presented in this text support both of the positions on racist talk set out above. Certainly, there are no explicit references to race as *race*: the explanation for this absence, however, is that such references are rendered unnecessary by the rest of the talk. The discursive process of categorization, as noted throughout, is one that is used to accomplish social outcomes. Moreover, the most common categorization in play is that of asylum-seeker. This can, of course, be further developed in references to groups such as 'genuine asylum-seekers' but the description of asylum-seeker remains a categorization itself. What the categorization asylum-seeker achieves is to mark out as different a group of people who previously resided elsewhere and who have now arrived in the UK. The difference though does not lie merely in place of residence; the categorization simultaneously attributes to members of that group the characteristic of belonging to a race or ethnic group that can be distinguished from those of other UK residents. Thus, speakers do not have to invoke race directly; rather race is already made relevant in the context of the discussion of asylum. Where such categorizations and talk are used to argue for oppressive power relations that operate against asylum-seekers, we would suggest that such talk cannot usefully be treated as anything other than racist talk: precise descriptions of race are unnecessary where people argue for the oppression of those who are already constructed as being different.

Hearing asylum-seekers and refugees

One aim of this text has been to consider asylum-seekers' and refugees' own stories. We noted earlier (Chapter 2) that their voices are often missing from discussions of issues of asylum in that they are not often

included in accounts produced in the media and other sources. Thus, they are commonly excluded from coverage and discussion of the issues that affect them most of all. While, therefore, we have here examined discourse of asylum and refuge from various sources, in line with many other recent writers on such topics (for example, Colic-Peisker, 2005; Durrheim & Dixon, 2005; Goodman & Burke, 2010; Hardy, 2003; Kumsa, 2006; Lacroix, 2004; Leudar, Hayes, Nekvapil & Baker, 2008; Pearce & Stockdale, 2009; Saxton, 2004; Wetherell & Potter, 1992), we have drawn heavily on data collected from research interviews which have featured in the majority of chapters in this text.

Careful examination of asylum-seekers' and refugees' talk has shown how they make sense of what is relevant to them in terms of identities and leaving their countries of origin to come to the UK. We have seen their descriptions of the dangers that they faced and of their expectations in leaving these countries, of their attempts to persuade others that they are 'genuine', of their relations with other UK residents, and of attempts to settle. Throughout these accounts, we can see their own stories; for example, of how they deal with hostility and violence towards them, or of how they cope with being detained. As we read and consider these stories, there is little to suggest that these interviews are all about the researchers' agendas rather than the interviewees' talk and that, for those who tell their stories, 'the stakes are low' (Stokoe, 2010). More usefully, we might view these interviews as offering the interviewees possibilities of describing their experiences in their own ways and in so doing making these available to a potentially broader audience than would otherwise hear them.

Asylum: Going forward

In current times, we are constantly reminded of the need for asylum and refuge, and of the plight of those across the globe who flee their countries of origin in hope of finding safety. For example, in the ongoing Mediterranean crisis, we are recurrently presented with coverage of the struggles of thousands of refugees fleeing Africa for Europe with many of them drowning while attempting this dangerous crossing. Much of this coverage, however, describes the ongoing crisis as a 'migrant issue'. Furthermore, a lot of the debate surrounding the issue and the actions that Europe might usefully take to address it focuses on how people leaving Africa can be prevented from entering Europe rather than on how they might be protected. Far from being a crisis of asylum and refuge, and one that involves individual rights under international law, the situation is

presented as one of migration and of how it can effectively be discouraged. Discursively, issues of asylum, refuge and rights are massaged away from public view and international concern.

One response to these issues could be that the approach currently presented is the most useful one in that others should not be encouraged and, indeed, should be deterred from undertaking similar journeys. And, even if individuals succeed in escaping to countries that they envisage will provide them with the safety and the potential lives that they seek, they will find themselves bitterly disappointed and their hopes dashed. In the UK (as throughout Europe) asylum-seekers are treated extremely harshly. Refugees flee appalling conditions abroad, with countries of origin presented overwhelmingly as places of death. The journey to the UK is often perilous; however, policies in place are designed to prevent refugees from arriving in the UK in the first place. If they do manage to arrive, they become asylum-seekers, who are subject to minimal benefits that can lead to destitution (for example, Liebling, Burke, Goodman & Zasada, 2014), while not being able to work. They are faced with the threat of detention and, worse still, forced return, while feeling controlled by the bureaucracy of the Home Office system in which they are involved (see Liebling et al., 2014). It is unsurprising that asylum-seekers in the UK report extremely high levels of mental health problems (for example, Bernardes et al., 2010). The language of asylum is predominantly negative and, importantly, leads to very real harm for asylum-seekers.

A response of this sort, however, does not provide a complete picture of how asylum is understood in the UK context. One thing that we must bear in mind is that not all descriptions of asylum-seekers and refugees are as one-sided as the foregoing response might suggest. Despite all the negativity directed towards asylum-seekers, there are also many positive aspects to take from the talk about asylum featured in this text. Given the dominance of the hostility towards asylum-seekers in the media, it could be expected to find everyone speaking negatively about asylum-seekers; however, the examples of locals featured in these chapters show that this is far from the case. Instead locals have many positive things to say about asylum-seekers, for example, with a professional in Chapter 7 claiming that refugees are now part of the community, and in Chapter 5 a local claiming now to understand the difficulties that asylum-seekers have experienced in their countries of origin after initially believing (as the media and politicians often argue) that they were here only for financial gain. As some of the other descriptions demonstrate, accounts that restore or recognize people's humanity – for example, as children

and families – work to legitimize local people's actions in solidarity with asylum-seekers to challenge and transform certain aspects of the asylum system, such as the use of dawn raids (Bates & Kirkwood, 2013; Goodman, 2007). Rhetorically, these accounts work to undermine the treatment of asylum-seekers as mere 'objects' of asylum policies and procedures.

What this evidence suggests is that the experiences of meeting asylum-seekers and hearing their stories can result in more positive representations of them. There is also growing evidence of wider support for asylum-seekers in the UK from a number of sources. For example, at the time of writing there is a growing movement to oppose the use of detention against asylum-seekers, particularly following a Channel 4 news exposé on the treatment of detainees in the Yarl's Wood detention centre. There are also a range of protest and support groups that have developed to support asylum-seekers and their rights in the UK, including organizations such as Migrant Voice, Asylum Aid and Refugee Action. Furthermore, Refugee Week celebrates the contributions of asylum-seekers and refugees, and is intended to increase understanding about their circumstances. These have all emerged within a wider climate of hostility towards asylum-seekers and all work towards challenging this hostility. The extent to which these efforts will change official policy or widespread media coverage of the issues remains uncertain. It is to be hoped, however, that at least much of the discourse of asylum and refuge in the UK will move beyond a mere distinction of who is 'genuine' and who is 'bogus', and instead attend to what people need and do *as* people.

Key Terms

Accountable: this refers to the way that speakers do rhetorical work to present suitable accounts of their actions and of what they are talking about (see Edwards & Potter, 1992 for more on this).

Acculturation: often defined as 'those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups' (Redfield, Linton & Herskovits, 1936, p. 149, as cited in Berry, 1997, p. 7).

Action orientation: the orientation of discourse towards accomplishing specific outcomes.

Assimilation: in Berry's (1997) acculturation framework, this involves people abandoning aspects of their own culture yet engaging with the majority culture.

Bogus asylum-seeker: one of the negative terms used to describe asylum-seekers; used to denote people who are claiming to be asylum-seekers but who are really economic migrants.

Categorization: the process of describing someone as belonging to a category in order to achieve discursive outcomes.

Construction: presenting versions of people or social phenomena in discourse.

Continuer: something that speakers do that acknowledges that they have heard what another speaker has said, and encourages them to continue speaking; can take the form of 'hmm' or 'yeah' (see, for example, extract 3.5, line 17).

Conversation analysis: the study of how speakers construct and organize their turns in talk, and how they use particular lexical items and forms in interaction.

Country of origin: the countries that asylum-seekers have left in order to seek refuge elsewhere.

Critical discourse analysis: the study of how dominant ideologies are produced and reproduced in language; aimed at exposing inequalities in order to effect change.

Destitution: in the UK, a person is considered destitute if they do not have adequate accommodation (and are unable to attain it) or are unable to meet their essential living needs.

Disclaimer: feature of talk first discussed by Hewitt and Stokes (1975) who showed how certain phrases are used by people to disassociate themselves from potentially negative connotations of what follows. A classic example is 'I'm not racist, but' followed by something hearably racist. In extract 3.6, the participant claims 'I love my country but' to move him away from being seen as unpatriotic.

Discursive psychology: the fine-grained study of talk to examine how people negotiate psychological concerns.

Dispersal: practice of sending different asylum-seekers to a range of locations spread across the UK.

Dispreferred response: a concept developed by Pomerantz (1984) in which it is shown how some features of talk – like pauses, restarts and hesitations – suggest that what is being said is a difficult thing to say, that may be responded to as problematic.

Economic migrant: someone who has entered a country primarily to access employment opportunities; this term is often used in debates on asylum to portray asylum-seekers as acting fraudulently by suggesting they are motivated by economic concerns rather than a genuine fear of persecution.

Epistemological: relating to the grounds of knowledge.

Ethnomethodology: the study of how people themselves understand their interactions and how they negotiate their concerns in the immediate context.

Footing: a term used by discourse and conversation analysts introduced by Goffman (1981). It refers to who a speaker is claiming to be speaking on behalf of (for example, her/himself or on behalf of a group to which s/he belongs).

Foucauldian discourse analysis: an approach to studying discourse inspired by the work of Michel Foucault that examines how language reflects the social and ideological practices of particular historical periods.

Genuine asylum-seeker: another term used to describe asylum-seekers; used to denote those who are supposedly genuinely in need of asylum-seekers; however, it is often used alongside 'bogus asylum-seekers' and has, therefore, been shown to be damaging to all asylum-seekers.

Home Office: the ministerial department of the UK Government that has responsibility for immigration.

Hostility theme: refers to key arguments identified by Leudar, Hayes, Nekvapil and Baker (2008) that are used against asylum-seekers to which asylum-seekers can be seen responding.

Illegal immigrant: a general term to refer to any immigrants who should not be in the country, including 'bogus asylum-seekers'. Asylum-seekers are not illegal immigrants but, in much of the discussions about them, they are presented as such.

Indicators of integration: different areas of social activity that can demonstrate the extent to which an individual is included in society or not; a framework developed by Ager and Strang (2004) to conceptualize the integration of asylum-seekers and refugees.

Integration: term used in various ways, generally referring to the process by which people become included in a different culture or society; in relation to Berry's (1997) acculturation framework, it specifically refers to a 'strategy'

whereby people engage in the host culture while retaining aspects of their own culture.

Macro approaches: approaches to studying discourse that emphasize how broader patterns of social structures and practices shape and are enacted in everyday interactions.

Micro approaches: approaches to studying discourse that emphasize examination of the fine-grained detail and sequential organization of talk.

Moral categories: the ways in which social categories, which are constructed through talk, infer a particular moral status. For example, 'bogus asylum-seeker' infers an immoral status.

Nail down: a term used by Matoesian (2005) to describe the ways in which interrogators push responders for a specific, rather than general, answer to a question.

Naturally occurring data: data that occur in everyday life and that do not involve the intervention of a researcher.

Ontological: relating to the nature of being or existence.

Orienting: a term used by discourse and conversation analysts to refer to the ways in which speakers respond to the talk of others. For example, in Chapter 5, asylum-seekers are seen to be orienting to the suggestion that they may be 'bogus'.

People-smugglers: the people who move asylum-seekers around the world. They are often regarded negatively because of their high charges and the dangers they can put refugees in; also referred to as 'agents'.

Place-identity: constructions of identity that are connected to notions of place or belonging (see Dixon & Durrheim, 2000; Proshansky, Fabian & Kaminoff, 1983).

Racism: prejudice involving race or ethnic differences between people.

Racist talk: talk that seeks to establish, sustain and reinforce oppressive power relations between people defined as racially or ethnically different.

Reformulation: where a speaker repeats what a previous speaker has said, but presents (or formulates) the talk in a slightly different way from the original talk.

Repertoire (interpretative repertoire): defined by Potter and Wetherell (1987, p. 138) as 'basically a lexicon or register of terms and metaphors drawn upon to characterize and evaluate action and events'. They represent common sense arguments that can be drawn upon to support speakers' points.

Researcher-saturated: primarily concerned with the agenda of a researcher, with little regard to the participants.

Rhetoric: language that is designed to persuade others to the claim or argument being expressed.

Rhetorical question: a question that is posed in talk but that does not require an answer, because the stating of the question produces its own rhetorical effect.

Rhetorical work: ways in which speakers discursively organize their talk to achieve a particular outcome.

Section Four support: under Section Four of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, a person who had an asylum claim that was rejected, and who has become destitute, is eligible to apply for a limited form of support that includes accommodation and 'cashless' support through an Azure card.

Segregation: process whereby members of a particular group are excluded from another group; in Berry's (1997) acculturation framework, this is a 'strategy' whereby people maintain aspects of their own culture but are excluded by the majority cultural group.

Separation: in Berry's (1997) acculturation framework, this refers to the process by which people choose to maintain aspects of their culture but not to engage with the majority culture.

Stake: a person's personal interest or investment in a particular issue or course of action.

Stakes are low: the claim or suggestion that people have little to gain or to lose in an interaction.

Subject positions: analytic concepts that bring attention to the way that discourse 'positions' people in certain ways (see Davies & Harré, 1990), such as the way that discourse around asylum policies may 'position' asylum-seekers as the 'objects' of asylum procedures, and the way that people may attempt to resist or challenge such positions.

Subject side: aspects of discourse that relate to someone's 'subjective' or personal reaction or feelings towards an object, issue or experience; it can be contrasted with 'object side', which refers to those aspects that pertain to the object or issue itself (see Edwards, 2005).

Systematic vagueness: presenting an account in ways that are lacking in detail, often with the effect of avoiding claims that might be controversial, negative or would otherwise place the speaker in a vulnerable position (Edwards & Potter, 1992).

Transcription: process of transferring audio-recorded talk to written words and features.

Transcription notation: the system of symbols used to denote specific features of talk.

UK Visas and Immigration: the division of the Home Office that is responsible for decisions relating to asylum and immigration in the UK; it replaced the UK Border Agency in 2013.

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